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Language Desire:
A Critical Ethnography of Japanese Women
Learning English in Australia

Kmie Takahashi

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Education and Social Work
University of Sydney

September 2006
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Abstract

This thesis expands on the notion of language desire by exploring the discourse of Japanese women's *akogare* (desire) to learn English and to go overseas. It draws on poststructuralist frameworks to investigate processes by which *akogare* is constructed and impacts upon the linguistic, social, and romantic choices young Japanese women make in Japan and Australia. I argue that language desire connects three discursive spaces: English, the West, and identity transformation. The study also highlights the multidirectionality of power in the discourse of *akogare* in the context of second language learning (SLL).

The study was conducted using a critical ethnographic methodological approach to Japanese women's experiences in using and learning English. The data were collected in Japan and Australia between 2001 and 2005. The data included the micro domain of in-depth interviews and fieldnotes and the macro domain of media discourses. Content analysis and critical discourse analysis were used to analyse the data from multiple perspectives.

The thesis consists of three sections. Chapters 1-4 introduce the theoretical backgrounds to the research. Chapter 1 states the research aims, and illustrates how the main theme of *akogare* emerged. Chapter 2 reviews literature on SLL with a specific focus on poststructuralist approaches to language, identity, and gender. Chapter 3 examines the theoretical notion of desire and Japanese women's discourse of *akogare* from a historical perspective. In Chapter 4, the methods of data collection and analysis are described.

The second section, chapters 5-9, reports on the findings of the research on the construction and negotiation of *akogare* for English, the West, and identity transformation. Chapter 5 focuses on the participants' discursive construction of *akogare* in the Japanese context, while Chapter 6 deals with their *akogare* for English and overseas study and decision-making processes of coming to Australia. Chapters 7-9 illustrate the constitutive effect of the *akogare* discourse on Japanese women's experiences in learning English in Sydney. Chapter 7 discusses the Japanese women's perception of desirable interlocutors. While Chapter 8 sheds light on the way in which their agency in learning English is constructed and exercised. Chapter 9 focuses on their increasing hybridity and ambivalent feelings about returning to Japan.

The conclusion, Chapter 10, synthesises the findings and offers a conceptualisation of language desire and its implications.
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Kimee Takahashi
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<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>akogare</td>
<td>desire, longing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bunmei kaika</td>
<td>civilisation and enlightenment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>damenzu</td>
<td>ugly, bad men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eikaiwa</td>
<td>English conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaijin</td>
<td>foreigner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hikikomori</td>
<td>socially withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ie</td>
<td>family line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikemen</td>
<td>good-looking men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakkoi</td>
<td>good-looking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kenbo</td>
<td>good mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kikokushijo</td>
<td>returnees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kokusai teki</td>
<td>being international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kokusaika</td>
<td>internationalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ryosai</td>
<td>good wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ryugaku</td>
<td>study overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sakoku</td>
<td>foreign relations policy of seclusion that lasted from 1641 to 1853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>samurai</td>
<td>military warriors in pre-industrial Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terakoya</td>
<td>private education institutions that taught reading and writing to commoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yassashii</td>
<td>kind, courteous, and generous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Abbreviations

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEI Australian Education International
DIMA Department of Immigration, Multicultural, and Indigenous Affairs
EEOL Equal Employment Opportunity Law
EFL English as a Foreign Language
EGI English as a Global Language
ELICOS English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
ELL English Language Learning
ELT English Language Teaching
ESL English as a Second Language
ESP English for Specific Purposes
IDP International Development Program
JAWHM Japan Association for Working Holiday Makers
L2 Second language
NESB Non-English Speaking Background
NGO Non Government Organisation
NPO Non Profit Organisation
NSW New South Wales
OL Office ladies
RAA Recreation Amusement Association
SATC Sex and the City
SCoE Sydney College of English
SCAP Supreme Commander of the Applied Powers
SLA Second Language Acquisition
SLL Second Language Learning
TAFE Technical and Further Education
TESOL Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TIF Tokyo International Friendship
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The beginning

In July 2001, I began my ethnographic data collection at a university-affiliated school in Sydney, Australia. I first headed down to the busy school canteen to look for Japanese students during the lunch break. Although there were over 100 students having lunch and chatting in various groups, locating those from Japan was unproblematic. Establishing rapport with them was also relatively easy. One after another, these young Japanese students were happy to introduce me to more Japanese students. Within a few visits, I knew of almost all the Japanese students at the school. This trouble-free beginning to my fieldwork was reassuring and being Japanese was a great advantage for a student new to ethnography, as I was at that time.

Slowly but steadily, however, I began to feel puzzled about what I was learning from these students – particularly the female students. Back then, I was still formulating my specific research question, and in order to do so, I asked very basic questions of both male and female Japanese students. These were: What were their reasons for wanting to study English?; what were their reasons for wanting to study English overseas?; and what were their experiences of learning and using English in Sydney? The responses to these questions brought to light noticeably different responses between the men and women. Male students on the one hand were more or less straightforward and practical: English was necessary to get into an Australian university and an overseas qualification would be useful upon their return to Japan. They were seriously concerned that lack of progress in English would be fatal to their chances of getting into a university course.
In contrast, female students’ responses would often start with their childhood *akogare* (desire or longing) for English and Western countries. These responses usually extended to their encounters with Western men either in Japan or in Sydney. For example, their *akogare*, many enthusiastically told me, came from watching *Sesame Street*, Hollywood movies and Western pop/rock stars. Others professed to be in love not only with Western culture and lifestyle, and Western male stars, but also with the idea of one day finding a *gaijin* (foreign) boyfriend. Sitting down in the canteen, these female students would giggle as they related their experiences of meeting a *kakkoii* (good-looking) Western man on the street or at a party, and how they regretted not being able to have a proper conversation in English to get his phone number. Ichi\(^\text{1}\), who later became one of the main participants in this study, excitedly told me in detail about her quest to establish a romantic relationship with a particular Australian man. She showed me all the text messages that they had exchanged in organising a date, and commented on his good looks and the coolness of his manner. I also felt that I was becoming a counsellor for another female student who was in a rather difficult intercultural relationship with a Korean schoolmate. She confessed that although she felt comfortable with him, his accented English was not authentic enough and she was worried that this might be a bad influence on her English.

At that time, all these narratives seemed naïve to me. I considered the student’s *akogare* confessions and their desire to meet Western men as rather irrelevant to English language learning (ELL), which was the central theme of my research. I even began to think that I needed to change my approach to the female students from that of a friendly fellow-Japanese woman to an authoritarian researcher, so that they would stop “chatting” about their “girlish” *akogare* and instead start

\(^{1}\) Names have been changed in this report to protect the privacy of participants.
answering my questions more seriously. A few weeks went by without me being able
to gain what I then saw as “relevant” data from female students and my frustration
was growing. A short conversation with a female student, however, changed my
perspective on the whole *akogare* discourse.

### 1.2 “I need a man”: gendered motivation

In August 2001, I was waiting for a Japanese student who I had scheduled to
interview in the canteen. One of the female students that I had briefly met previously
came to greet me. Kaori was a university graduate in her late twenties and was
planning to apply for entry into a master’s degree at a university, paying for this with
her own savings from Japan. In anyone’s eye, Kaori was a studious and serious
student: She socialised very little and used all her time to study English. Thus, what
she said on this particular day surprised me greatly.

Kaori: Kimie-san, I need a man.

Kimie: what? why? @

Kaori: @I told you that I have been studying in the uni library before and after
the class here. I have been studying by myself for six months since I came. but
you see, my English hasn’t been getting any better. I finally got it, though! it’s
really a man. I need a native-speaker boyfriend so that I can practice my English
with him. (f13aug01kaori)

As she rushed off to her classroom, I remained in my seat, absorbing the
meaning of her declaration. It was not something that I had never heard of; although I
was quite familiar with the popular discourse of "pillow talk" as a means of learning a foreign/second language. In my limited imagination, however, it was entertained only amongst the gaijin groupie Japanese women, described as "Yellow Cabs" in the 1980s in Japan (this issue is further discussed in Chapter 3) and Kaori certainly did not fit into this stereotypical, socially stigmatised group.

Moreover, there was a strong sense of seriousness and conviction about her comment: she was not joking, but talked in the way that language learners do when they debate learning strategies, such as the best way to memorise vocabulary.

Suddenly the fact that akogare narratives or native speaker-partner approaches were entirely absent among Japanese male students who I had interviewed took on a new significance for me.

It was this gap between the male and female students and Kaori’s seriousness about the need to find an English-speaking boyfriend that drew me initially to the gendered and romantic aspects of language learning and to the role of relationships with male native-speakers in this process. It allowed me to see what I initially thought was the “irrelevant” data on Japanese female students’ akogare narratives of English, the West and Western men, in a different light. After this exchange with Kaori and consultation with my supervisors, I decided to direct my theme to Japanese women’s akogare narratives in relation to second language learning (SLL) and use.

It was around this time that I came across the work of an American anthropologist, Kelsky (1996; 2001b). She investigated the phenomenon of increasing engagement with the West and particularly with the United States among educated, internationalist, middle-class Japanese women. Although Japanese women’s desires and experiences are changing, educational opportunities, social relations and the labour market in Japan are still largely characterised by rigid, traditional gender
stratification (Bailey, 2002). Kelsky (2001b) argued that many women were attracted by the allure of the foreign realm and associated activities such as foreign language learning (almost always English), studying overseas, working for a foreign-affiliated company, Non Government Organisations (NGOs), or Non Profit Organisations (NPOs) or romances with Western men. All of these factors provided "a foreign-inflected vocabulary for a sustained critique of Japan’s gender relations, as well as the means to circumvent or reject them" (Kelsky, 2001b, p. 3). Although I found Kelsky’s work to be enormously informative, language learning was not her main focus. A question was forming in my mind: How does such akogare for the West, the English language and romance with Western men affect the ways in which Japanese women learn English?

With my initial fieldwork and Kelsky’s work in mind, I revisited the literature from the field in which my research primarily belongs: second language acquisition (SLA). I found that Japanese women’s akogare neither had been addressed in the field of SLA nor had it been adequately theorised (Piller & Takahashi, in press). Moreover, the notion of motivation in SLA has long been treated as a given, unitary and fixed entity and there has been very little regard for the effects of gender, romance or sexuality. Success in SLL has been conceptualised as achieving linguistic competence or a native-like fluency, with little attention being paid to the influence of gender. Little or no attention has been paid to the identities, expectations and desires of Japanese women and how these may have co-constructed the meaning of SLL. There has been equally little exploration in SLA studies of how these factors have fashioned Japanese women’s opportunities to practice their second language (L2).

The field of SLA took a social, political and gendered turn in the 1990s through the work of several poststructuralist theorists (Block, 2003). Norton’s (2000)
ethnography on immigrant women in Canada was a landmark in this regard. She rejected the earlier essentialised notion of motivation and advanced the concept of "investment" (Bourdieu, 1991) that regarded the language learner as having a complex social history and a wide range of desires. She argued that in social contexts, language learners were not only practicing their L2 with target language speakers, "but they were constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (Norton, 2000 p. 11). As such, an investment in a L2 needs to be understood as an investment in the language learner's identity which, in turn, was fluid across time and space.

Although Norton's (2000) work was useful for my gender-focused research, her concept of L2 investment as being concerned primarily with economic and social advancement could not fully explain the romantic and sexualised akogare phenomenon that I had observed to that point.

More recently, Piller (2002a, p. 270) argued that "the sheer 'sex appeal' of certain languages for some people has been widely overlooked." To fill this lacuna, she introduced the concept of "language desire," in which wider ranges of romantic and sexual desires were linked with language shift and language learning. She called for a further context-specific investigation into this notion (Piller, 2005a). My research responded to this call through the conduct of an empirical inquiry into the relationship between the gendered, romantic and sexual aspects of SLL for young Japanese women.

At this stage, I formalised three main questions for my project.

1. How was young Japanese women's akogare for English constructed in Japan?
   • What were their attitudes towards English?
   • How were those attitudes constructed?
• What was the relationship between their akogare and their identities?

2. What was the meaning of overseas English study for young Japanese women?
   • What were the factors involved in the decision-making process that resulted in them coming to Australia in preference to other countries?
   • How were their goals for English ryugaku (study overseas) constructed?

3. How did young Japanese women’s akogare and their identities impact upon the processes, practices and outcomes of learning English in Sydney and vice versa?
   • What did they think was the best way to learn English, and how did they actually approach the learning process?
   • What were the factors that structured their opportunities to practise English and what role did their akogare and identities play?
   • What was their idea of success and failure in language learning and ryugaku?

These were the questions that I set out to answer. My ethnographic data collection was based on interaction with five primary participants and several secondary informants. In addition to field notes, telephone conversations, email exchanges and interviews, I collected a wide range of public discourses on women’s experiences in relation to SLL and ryugaku. To effectively investigate akogare discourses, I combined ethnographic data with public discourses evident in media and other public arenas since media material such as advertisements, television programs and publications play a significant role in producing certain social realities (Chang, 2004; Piller, 2002a; Piller & Takahashi, in press). I also investigated English textbooks, English school promotional materials, women’s magazines, English study/ryugaku magazines, women’s comics and government documents. As the following chapters demonstrate, the critical discourse analysis of such macro-data contributes enormously to understanding the mechanisms of akogare discourses.
Toward the end of my data collection, I became curious about another widespread phenomenon evident among many Japanese women I met in Sydney. Although from mid-2004 onwards, many of my participants began talking about leaving Australia, their reluctance to return to Japan was remarkable. At that point, a survey of literature from the field of SLA and international migration revealed that this phenomenon had not been integrated into existing theories. Current SLA theory does not see desire for language learning as being linked with migration desires, while international migration theory considers international students as temporary residents who invariably return to their country of origin (Ono & Piper, 2004). In this respect my data yielded a great deal of contradictory evidence. At this stage in my research, I began formalising a further question:

4. What were the consequences of ryugaku?
   - What impact did ryugaku experiences have on students’ identities?
   - Where did they feel they belonged?
   - What was the relationship between their identity reconstruction and future career trajectories?

All four questions contribute to an in-depth picture of gendered practices and outcomes of SLL among Japanese women and the impact of these phenomena on their lives before, during and after their ryugaku experiences in Australia.

In the next section, I give a brief description of the city in which my participants and I were located during the present research.
1.3 Sydney’s multicultural society

I carried out the majority of my fieldwork (i.e., interactions with participants) in Sydney, New South Wales, one of the six states\(^2\) of Australia. New South Wales (NSW) is the most populous State, containing 6.7 million of the total Australian population of 19.9 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2004a). Sydney is the capital city of NSW and is the largest city in Australia, with a population of over 4 million, and located on the eastern coast of the country (ABS, 2004b). The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games was instrumental in showcasing the city\(^3\) to the world, and over 5.6 million international tourists visited the Sydney metropolitan area in 2005 (City of Sydney, 2005).

There have been three distinctive phases in the history of Australian immigration policies (National Multicultural Advisory Council, 1999). These were: assimilation closely associated with the “White Australia” policy (1850s to 1960s), integration (1960s to 1970s), and multiculturalism (1970s to the present). The White Australia policy, which was in force between 1901 when the Australian federation was established and the 1960s, prevented “non-White” people (e.g., Asians and Pacific Islanders) from migrating into Australia. Although after the Second World War an increasing number of people from Southern Europe migrated to Australia, the White Australia policy laid down that immigrants of non-British descent should assimilate into the mainstream community, accepting its values and customs and, importantly, its official language, English.

\(^2\) The other States are Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland. There are in addition, two non-sovereign Territories, these being the very small Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in which the capital Canberra is situated and the geographically large but thinly populated Northern Territory.

\(^3\) The Central Business District (CBD) of Sydney is also called, “the city.”
In the 1960s, there was a shift from assimilation to a policy of integration, which meant that migrants’ were no longer expected to forsake their original cultures and languages, but were still expected fully to participate in the mainstream Australia community.

Pressured from inside and outside Australia, the first Labor Party government to hold office in 23 years took power in 1972. Under the radical Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, this government abolished the White Australia policy in 1973 and it was then that the term *multiculturalism* first entered Australia’s immigration history. Since that time, much effort has been made at all levels of society to raise awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity while at the same time attempting to promote social cohesion, inter-ethnic understanding and tolerance. However, there is a view that the more conservative federal government, which has been in power since 1996 to the present, has been less enthusiastic about multiculturalism (e.g., Welsh, 2005). Moreover, as the racially motivated riot between Muslim Lebanese youths and their White Australian counterparts in Sydney in December 2005 demonstrated, some sections of Australian society are still reluctant to embrace multiculturalism (e.g., Kelly, 2005). It should be said that Australian multiculturalism is not a rigidly defined policy, but is an on-going process that is constantly being negotiated at all levels of the society.

Although Australia’s national language is English, today there are over 200 languages spoken in the country and some 2.8 million people, more than 10%, speak a language other than English at home (ABS, 2005a). The cultures of Sydney range from those of early post World War II immigrants from Italy and Greece, to much later and much larger waves of immigrants from China, Vietnam and other parts of Asia, South America, Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. In inner Sydney,
where the most of the fieldwork took place, this diversity is even more pronounced: Demographic data show that over 40% of its residents were born overseas and only 34% of these use English as their sole language at home (ABS, 2001). The three most common languages spoken at home other than English are Chinese (15%), Indonesian (6%), and Korean (2%) (ABS, 2001).

Other than the universities, there are many private colleges and English schools that cater for international students particularly in Sydney’s central business district. It is common to see groups of Asian students, including those from Japan, chatting outside their “campus” buildings. There are also many backpacker hostels, pubs, restaurants and grocery shops where conversations are carried on in a wide variety of languages, one of which is typically Japanese. My participants and I were a constitutive part of Sydney’s multicultural/multilingual landscape while this study was being carried out between 2001 and 2005.

One point that deserves mention because it seems to me to have a bearing on the subject of this thesis is that while I have seen many a Western man and Japanese woman walking hand in hand I hardly ever run into a Japanese male/Western female couple. Although it is always dangerous to draw general conclusions from personal observation alone, none the less what I have observed of romantic Japanese/Westerner relationships in Sydney could indicate that, as suggested above, Japanese men and women may not feel the same need for or have the same opportunity to find Western partners.

1.4 Overview of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, the next two chapters provide a background to the present research, which has explored young Japanese women’s experiences in
learning and using English both in Japan and in Australia. In Chapter 2, I review the literature on the poststructuralist framework of SLA and attempt to explain how language is understood within this framework as well as in the present research. This is followed by a discussion of English as a global language (EGL) in relation to the notion of symbolic capital and power. I go on to review SLA poststructuralist approaches to identity, focusing on the notion of gender. I also highlight the link between gender and three aspects of SLL: language desire, access, and agency.

In Chapter 3, I examine the notion of *akogare* in terms of its nature with reference to the existing literature from several fields of studies. Subsequent to that, I provide a detailed overview of the historical background to Japanese women’s lifestyle and contact with the West from the late Tokugawa (1603 – 1868) period to the present day. Finally, I review the literature on English education in Japan and the participation of Japanese women as international students in Australia.

In Chapter 4, I describe the methodology and design of the present research. This chapter firstly situates the study in the qualitative research paradigm and provides a rationale for using the critical ethnographic approach to investigate the notion of young Japanese women’s *akogare* for English and the West and their experiences in Sydney. I provide descriptions of data sources, data collection methods and methods of analysis.

Chapters 5 to 9 comprise a discussion of the results of fieldwork and interviews with my participants who have given rich insights into the notion of *akogare* and its effect on their SLL and their lifestyles in Sydney. In Chapter 5, I first present a media discourse analysis, which looks at the ways in which the discourse of *akogare* in relation to ELL and Western males has been constructed by mass media in Japan. Following this, I provide analyses of my participants’ accounts of their
child/girlhood fantasies about the West and the way these have affected their contacts with the English language.

In Chapter 6, I first examine media images of language ryugaku and using this provide a background for the subsequent section in which I discuss factors involved in my participants’ decision-making process that led them to choose Australia as a study destination. Overall, Chapters 5 and 6 include insights into the ways in which meanings of English usage and overseas travel have been created for and by my participants within the Japanese context.

In Chapters 7 to 9, I present my participants’ accounts of their experiences of learning English and participating in Sydney’s multicultural society. In Chapter 7, I first report on the frustration created by the gap participants typically find between their prior image of ryugaku and social participation and the realities of their lives in Sydney. Then, I introduce a particular ELL discourse entertained by the majority of my participants, particularly in relation to their perceptions of romantic relationships with native English-speaking Western males as a special learning aid. Following this, I examine several factors that have enhanced or have reduced the desirability of non-Japanese males as interlocutors or romantic partners. This chapter shows that construction of interlocutor desirability is context-specific and is closely linked with my participants’ continually changing linguistic, social and romantic needs.

In Chapter 8, I report various choices that my participants have made in terms of their home environment and work as part of their effort to learn and use English in Sydney. In the first part of the chapter, I show the ways in which the meaning of “home” during ryugaku is constructed in the media. This is followed by an examination of my participants’ choices of residence and share mates or home stay families. In the second part, I examine the media representation of work during
ryugaku and reveal how work, using English with locals, is portrayed as an opportunity to learn authentic English. I show the difficulties associated with working in English through the case of Yoko, who employed a wide range of tactics and strategies in working in an English-medium environment. This chapter reveals that for my participants, both home and work during ryugaku meant much more than just an opportunity to learn English and that their choices were largely created in negotiation with a host of non-linguistic needs.

In Chapter 9, I address the construction and negotiation of my participants’ future options in regard to residence in Japan, Australia, or other countries. First, I discuss the notion of hybridity, as it appears to be relevant to their emergent desire to remain overseas. A media image of women returning to Japan from ryugaku is briefly discussed to show that the present study provides a different picture to the conventional one of that image. Then I report several factors that seem to underlie my participants’ increasing reluctance to return to Japan. I then look at the ways in which each main participant imagined, negotiated, and decided on their residence options in Sydney after the expiration of their Australian visas and how their language desire may have influenced such options.

In the concluding chapter, I summarise the findings presented in the thesis and provide some responses to the main research questions. Following this, I propose a conceptualisation of language desire in terms of its construction and possible effects on SLL, international mobility and gendered life choices. Based on the findings and the notion of language desire so defined, in conclusion I offer thoughts on implications for SLA theories, ELL in Japan and Japan’s quest for internationalisation.

Overall, this thesis adopts a context-based approach to investigating young Japanese women’s desire to learn English. I provide an in-depth picture of their
experiences in Sydney's multicultural society and offer evidence that language desire is a powerful explanatory variable for the processes, practices, and outcomes of SLL, language choice and language maintenance and also life choices relating to education, occupation, relationships and residence. By taking this approach, I hope to contribute to richer understanding of gendered processes of SLL.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Language learning and teaching has been a significant site of intellectual and public debate (Pennycook, 1990). Particularly since the mid 20th Century, migration and the globalisation of economy, transport, communications and education have brought a new level of political, social, and commercial interest to language learning and teaching (Graddol, 2000). Against this background, studies of ELL, SLA and English language teaching (ELT) have become increasingly important in recent decades (Block & Cameron, 2002; Jenkins, 2003).

According to Pavlenko (Pavlenko, 2002), there have been significant developments in the way in which SLA scholars embrace poststructuralist approaches to the study of SLL and learners. In particular, feminist poststructuralist scholars have made a considerable contribution through the reconceptualisation of various language learning-related issues since the 1990s (Gordon, 2004; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004a; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pavlenko, 2001a; Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller, & Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001; Piller & Pavlenko, 2004; Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004). Feminist poststructuralist scholarship is committed to highlighting and changing the social inequality experienced by language learners; its theoretical approaches are often based on experiences of women in various social, linguistic, and political contexts (Blackledge, 2001; Burton, 1994; Goldstein, 2001; Kouritzin, 2000; Pavlenko et al., 2001; Polanyi, 1995; Widdicombe, 1998). My study follows this current within the discipline.

Before reviewing the relevant literature, it needs to be said that although my topic intersects a number of research areas, this chapter focuses mainly on literature
from the field of SLA. In this chapter, I discuss my understanding of language, identity, gender and the English language in relation to the lives of Japanese women both in Japan and overseas. A review of the literature that deals more directly with Japanese women and their desire to learn both about English and the West is presented in Chapter 3.

This chapter begins with a review of the theoretical assumptions common to poststructuralism in general, and the poststructuralist approach to the concept of language in particular. Then, to contextualise my study I move to a discussion of the global spread of English, the research on this issue having been undertaken both in Japan and Australia. Next, I provide an account of the poststructuralist conception of identity and review feminist poststructuralist approaches to the study of SLL and use. This is followed by a survey of several studies that have informed the direction of my research. These studies are particularly concerned with the aspects of SLL considered to be highly gendered, namely language desire, access and agency in SLL.

2.2 Poststructuralism and SLA

Poststructuralist approaches to SLL have, over the last decade, become a burgeoning field of study, and the notions of language, identity, and power have gained a significant level of appreciation (Blackledge, 2001; Heller, 1999; McKay & Wong, 1996; McMahill, 2001; Miller, 2000; Nelson, 1999; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001; Piller, 2001; Piller & Takahashi, in press; Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001). In this section, I am interested in such questions as: What exactly does poststructuralism entail and what makes it so attractive to SLA scholars? What does it mean to make a poststructuralist inquiry and how can it be applied to the issue of Japanese women's eagerness to learn English?
Weedon (1997) points out that poststructuralism is an umbrella term for a wide range of theoretical positions, critiques and new forms of analysis. However, although poststructuralist scholarship is diverse, it also shares certain commonalities. According to Peters and Burbules (2004), poststructuralism is generally committed to critiquing dominant modes of thinking, speaking and writing. Such critiques typically involve questioning the prevalent scientific standard of social inquiry and are often directed at Enlightenment norms such as "objectivity" and "truth." Thus, poststructuralist inquiry typically challenges the notion of a fixed reality that can truthfully be represented in the form of knowledge. Instead, proponents of poststructuralism argue that realities are multiple and are socially, historically and politically constructed.

Furthermore, poststructuralism problematises essentialised concepts of the human persona (Peters & Burbules, 2004). Poststructuralist scholarship claims that humans do not possess a unified consciousness but assume multiple and even contradictory identities, depending on the context in which they are exercised (Sarup, 1993).

In addition, poststructuralist scholars tend to adopt a politically-critical stance in their research and theorising. An analysis of power/knowledge relations is a common feature of poststructuralist inquiry, which attempts to unmask the social structures that produce and maintain inequitable relations of power (Weedon, 1997).

Most importantly, poststructuralism emphasises the centrality of language to social organisation, power and subjectivity (Weedon, 1997). In this view, language is not just a tool to express human individuality, but is rather a site where possible forms of identities and social relations are produced, performed, and negotiated.
One of the foremost SLA advocates of poststructuralism in the study of SLL and use, is Pavlenko (2002, p. 282). Her arguments concerning poststructuralist approaches have been closely followed in conceptualising the present study on the desire of Japanese to learn English. According to Pavlenko (2002, p. 282), poststructuralism in SLA can be understood as:

an attempt to investigate and to theorise the role of language in construction and reproduction of social relations, and the role of social dynamics in the processes of additional language learning and use.

In outlining poststructuralist approaches, she emphasises that poststructuralist scholarship has a different view of language and identity when compared to other traditions in SLA. She argues that poststructuralism offers a framework that allows scholars to:

examine how linguistic, social, cultural, gender and ethnic identities of L2 users, on the one hand, structure access to linguistic resources and interactional opportunities and, on the other, are constituted and reconstituted in the process of L2 learning and use (p. 283).

To fully understand these conceptualisations, it is necessary first to examine several notions that are central to poststructuralist approaches in SLA. In the following three sections, the ways in which language, identity, and gender are theorised within the SLA poststructuralist framework are discussed. It is demonstrated how these have influenced the approach taken in this study to examine the way Japanese women construct their identity through their attempts to learn and use English.
2.3 Introduction: language

Any discussion of SLL assumes a theory of language. Although language has traditionally been conceptualised as linguistic and communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Swain, 1985), poststructuralist approaches commonly view it as discourse (Foucault, 1972), symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), and a site of identity construction and power struggle (Weedon, 1997). This section discusses the ways in which language is conceptualised in the poststructuralist paradigm in SLA.

2.3.1 Language as discourse

Language in poststructuralism is not just an abstract construct but is considered to be a discourse, which is in turn seen as a social practice that both produces and prevents possibilities for change in human life (Norton Peirce, 1989). This view is most closely associated with Foucault (1972), whose influence is evident in the work of many SLA poststructuralist researchers who are increasingly using the term “discourse” instead of the word “language” (Block, 2003; Kubota, 1999; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; 2001b; Pavlenko, 2002; Pennycook, 2001; Piller, 2002a; 1995; Rampton, 2001).

Although the traditional conceptualisation of discourse in SLA commonly describes the concept as “a continuous stretch of language larger than a sentence” (Crystal, 1980, p. 404), a Foucaudian poststructuralist theory of discourse goes far beyond words and sentences. In his famous work on The Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault (1972, p. 49) defined discourse as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.” Discourses function to create and maintain “reality” and they serve as “socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of
thinking, valuing, acting and interacting in the right places and at the right times with the right objects” (Gee, 1999, p. 17). In other words, poststructuralists treat these practices not as static and unchanging, but as socially and historically constructed and as having been promoted as “true,” “natural,” and “valuable.”

For instance, scholars and students of SLA are familiar with discourses about gender, family, work, nation and language. Each discourse has a range of practices and subject positions, the meanings of which change over time and across space. Looking at gender as a topic, discourse encapsulates the meaning of what it means to be a woman, for example. This approach is based on the postulation that the concept of womanhood is neither universal nor inherent but has been socially and historically produced at different times and in different places and hence has changed over time in different communities, regions, and countries (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). For poststructuralist scholarship, therefore, the objective of study is not to evaluate which discourse is more accurate than others, but to investigate “historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false” (Foucault, 1980, p. 118).

How is such knowledge/discourse produced? As Gee (1999, p. 11) describes it, language has a “magical property”: We not only use language to manipulate ourselves to “fit” the context in which we find ourselves, but what we say “creates” and “reproduces” the context itself. This notion makes a clear break from the “language reflects society” belief or, in Cameron’s (1990, p. 81) words, the correlational fallacy. Cameron (p. 81-82) argues that such a fallacy implies that “social structures somehow exist before language which simply ‘reflects’ or ‘expresses’ the more fundamental categories of the social” and urges that we adopt a
framework that “treats language as part of the social, interacting with other modes of behaviour and just as important as any of them.”

For poststructuralists, not every discourse has equal value. Weedon (1997) points out that some discourses are made more dominant than others, and discourses used in areas such as law, politics, religion, the military, medicine and education, have a firm institutional and disciplinary basis in society. These institutions and disciplines play a major role in creating “expert” knowledge and legitimising and promoting it as “truth.” For instance, examination of the discourse of English as a second language (ESL) education indicates that it enables ESL-related organisations (e.g., Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages or TESOL, and the British Council), universities and associated practitioners to define what, how and for how long English should be taught and also who are the qualified teachers or potential learners of the language. Thus, knowledge embedded in ESL discourse powerfully forms the identities of consumers of “English as a commodity,” and organises social relations with respect to the different types of individuals in and across the discursive space.

As such, discourse is a site of identity construction and power struggle (Weedon, 1997). Poststructuralists have the view that social institutions and individuals produce, but are also constituted in and by, varying discourses that in turn function to form multiple, overlapping and contradictory identities. Discourses also serve to legitimise the varying positions as “normal/abnormal” and “natural/unnatural,” particularly through the institutionalisation of such positions. If the knowledge of “right” and “wrong” are produced within discourses, it follows that “power is exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects” (Weedon, 1997, p. 112).
Women's magazines form one of the best examples of a discursive space in which multiple and contradictory subject positions are constructed and normalised. Articles, photos, advertisements, and supplements in these magazines offer various complementary and competing meanings of femininity, for instance ranging between a career woman, a caring mother, a rebellious daughter, a female rock star, a female academic, a female porn star and a hard-line female environmental activist. Piller and Takahashi (in press) report that women's magazines in Japan often carry articles on ELL and argue that such articles create and promote multiple gendered and sexualised identities. The role of media discourses in creating subject positions and also the desire to learn English and Western customs among Japanese women are discussed in Chapter 3.

Another crucial aspect of the poststructuralist notion of discourse is that despite their tremendous social impact, even the most dominant discourses are not seen as "absolute" or "definite." Discursive fields (e.g., education, gender, nation, and so on) are themselves sites of contest, as within each field there is a range of discourses competing with and complementing each other in the quest for greater legitimacy, while even the dominant discourses are "under constant challenge" (Ramazanoglu, 1993, p. 105). Indeed, individuals do not always subscribe to dominant discourses and sometime construct critiques of those discourses that are found unacceptable. In fact, Foucault sees power as producing "resistance" in the form of a counter-discourse that constitutes new "knowledge" and "truth," hence producing new power relations (Ramazanoglu, 1993).

The dominant gendered discourse about womanhood in Japan defines what it means to be a "good daughter," a "good wife" and "a good mother" (Tipton, 2000) and lays down that it is "natural" and "normal" for women to take up these identities
in succession. In the past, deviation from this normalised developmental path has been severely punished, both socially and politically. However, in the last few decades various counter-discourses have emerged, with the result that Japanese women today have access to a wider range of identity and life options (Kashima, 2000).

Nevertheless, marginal positions evident in counter-discourses such as being a lesbian, a single mother or a career woman remain sites of contestation and social marginalisation (Frank, 2002; Habu, 2000; Hagiwara, 1997; Kobayashi, 2002; Kubota, 2002; McMahill, 2001; Misago, 2004; Ono & Piper, 2004; Sakai, 2003).

In all of these ways, the poststructuralist notion of discourse is well suited to my topic of research. It provides a useful and dynamic framework within which to examine social practices, identities, power relations and the role of social institutions, including media practices. To understand and explain the desire of Japanese women to learn and use English and their actual experiences of doing so, this study identifies the relevant discourses and the subject positions that these discourses make available, particularly with respect to the media.

The next key aspect of the poststructuralist notion of language, that is language as symbolic capital, is considered in the following section.

2.3.2 Language as symbolic capital

Poststructuralism recognises that not all languages, and not all individuals who speak them, have equal status (Pennycook, 1994). In contrast to views prevalent in modern linguistics that all languages are equal, poststructuralists argue that because some languages and even accents are given more value than others, by extension, those who use such languages and accents have more access to symbolic/material resources and hence greater power (Heller, 1999; Lippi-Green, 1997; McMahill,
2001; Norton, 2000). To investigate and explain this phenomenon, poststructuralist theorists have increasingly drawn on Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of language as a form of symbolic capital.

According to Bourdieu (1991), there are four major types of capital: economic (money, property, etc), cultural (artistic knowledge, education, etc), social (networks of family, friends, acquaintances and contacts) and symbolic (socially recognised legitimisation: prestige, social recognition, etc). In this framework, poststructuralist SLA scholars understand linguistic practices as a form of symbolic capital, which, in turn, can be converted into economic and social capital. Furthermore, it is considered that some types of cultural capital are more valued than others. This is because cultural capital, in the form of different languages, accents or education, inheres in the social divisions constituted by social classes or groups of people characterised by their cultural, racial or social orientations. This results in clear variations and quality of symbolic capital held by different groups.

Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of linguistic practices as symbolic capital is useful in understanding both the discourse of English as a global language and the inequalities produced within that discourse. As Phillipson (2000) points out, because English has increasingly achieved prestige as a global language, it has become one of the most valuable “commodities” of the world. On this basis it is often assumed that those who have access to English benefit from the symbolic capital attached to it. However, a growing number of studies (Canagarajah, 2001; Cho, 2004; Han, 2005; Kanno, 2003a; Kim, 2003; Kubota, 1998; Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996; Norton, 2000; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Piller, 2005b; Reichelt, 2005; Tollefson, 1991) demonstrate that this is not necessarily the case. They emphasise that the commodity value of English and the way in which it is learned, are both highly context-dependent. In other words, the
symbolic value of English is not universal; rather, it depends largely on the local
construction of the social meaning of English and what it means to be a speaker of a
particular variety of English or to have a particular type of accent in a given context.
This issue is elaborated in the next section.

2.4 The status of English as a global language

The global spread of English is an uncontested statement (Crystal, 2003;
Jenkins, 2003; McKay, 2002). As the British Council proclaims, English has become
"the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control,
international business and academic conferences, science technology, diplomacy,
sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising" across the world (Graddol,
2000, p. 2). According to Crystal’s (2003) most frequently-cited estimates\(^4\), English is
the first language of about 380 million people, while anywhere between 150 to 300
million people have learned ESL in countries such as Singapore, India, Hong Kong
and South Africa. The largest group of speakers of English are those who speak
English as a foreign language (EFL) in countries such as Japan, Korea, China, Poland,
Greece and Russia and whose numbers are estimated to range from 100 million to 1
billion, depending on how fluency is measured. English is the most widely taught
foreign language in the world. It is taught in over 100 countries (Crystal, 2003), and
the demand for English education from these countries is said to be increasing
(McKay, 2002). In these EFL countries, English is often seen as a means of achieving
modernisation, internationalisation, economic and technological competitiveness and

\(^4\) Calculating the number of speakers of English in the world is considered to be a “tricky statistical
exercise” (Phillipson, 2000, p. 95) and other researchers cite different figures (Skutnabb-Kangas,
2000).
as such, a great deal of symbolic capital has been accorded to the language (Chang, 2004; Kubota, 2002; Pennycook, 1994; Reichelt, 2005; Tsuda, 2000; Ustinova, 2005).

In contrast, the discursive practices relevant to the notion of English as a global language are not uncontested. A number of researchers (Canagarajah, 1999; Norton Peirce, 1989; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) have expressed their concern that the global spread of English has led to the linguistic dominance of EFL/ESL countries by several English speaking Western nations, especially the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Phillipson (1992; 2000) and Kachru (1986; 1992) are two of the leading scholars advancing the argument that the spread of English is problematic. They argue that such linguistic dominance leads to social, cultural, and economic inequalities between those who symbolically own the language and those who do not. Phillipson (2000, p. 92) points out that the ELT industry (e.g., the British Council, TESOL), and the experts and practitioners associated with them, have been “significant agents in the spread of English.” He considers them to be “imperialistic,” given their role in producing and maintaining oppressive power.

The review of literature above suggests that there are two general views on the spread of English as a global language: the view that it is a useful tool for bringing the world together; and the view that the language’s spread creates unequal power relations between Centre and Peripheral countries (Phillipson, 1992), and between native and non-native speakers of English. Both those who are placed in the “English triumphant camp” and those of the “English imperialism camp” contribute to understandings of the role of English in a globalising world. Several issues associated with these discourses of English are relevant to this study.
First of all, although it is generally believed that English proficiency gives better access to symbolic resources (e.g., education, social status) and material resources (e.g., economic enhancement), the value and power of English are by no means universal. Several studies (Chang, 2004; Dor, 2004; Grin, 2001; Kubota, 2003; Norton & Kamal, 2003) suggest that the value of English in the linguistic market is not fixed, and that is best understood as a local, social and political construction in a given country and community. For instance, Grin (2001) found that, in Switzerland, having English language skills did not always lead to increased income; income was linked, rather, to factors such as educational level, labour sector employment and gender. Grin also reported significant differences between Swiss language regions: English competence was highly valued in the German-speaking regions of Switzerland, while knowledge of German as a second language was more handsomely rewarded than that of English in the French-speaking Switzerland. This study confirms that as noted above, the symbolic and economic capital of English is not universal or fixed, but is a social, regional, and gendered construction, which is in turn negotiated with respect to other resources and skills.

Grin’s (2001) study also highlights an important aspect of English as a commodity: As the number of English users increases, the value of English proficiency alone may actually decline. For instance, Matsubara (1989) reported that even in Japan, where knowledge of English had long been associated with career competitiveness in the foreign-affiliated job market, ability to use English was no longer adequate by itself to ensure employment since there were so many English speakers in Japan. Thus, most of the English-speaking Japanese women who participated in Matsubara’s study found they needed extra qualifications such as an MBA degree or translation or other language skills to secure employment.
Furthermore, while "Englishisation" is an important facet of globalisation, Dor (2004) argues that the current linguistic reality is one of increasing multilingualism. He pointed out that although the spread of English is a significant phenomenon, most people in the world, apart from those in particular professions, did not need more than a superficial knowledge of English in their daily lives and work. Given the fact that these people feel more comfortable conducting their everyday business in their own languages, even the most multinational of companies have adapted to local cultures and the use of local languages. In this light, local knowledge as well as multilingual skills emerged as the most valuable attributes for those seeking work.

Nevertheless, multilingualism was a relatively new experience for most of my participants. They, like many Japanese women, imagined that they would journey from monolingual Japan to a monolingual English-speaking Australia, occupied by White Anglo-Saxon Australians (see Chapter 6). However, when they arrived, one of their first impressions of Sydney was its linguistic and cultural diversity and the presence of immigrants and overseas students from all over the world, particularly Asia. Their reactions to the multilingual reality of Sydney were highly complex and ambivalent.

In the field of SLA, there is a tendency to focus on the use of English by language learners, even in ESL settings. In this way, little attention is directed toward the notion that their ESL experiences and the value of English are often constructed and negotiated in relation to other languages and linguistic practices. Taking multilingualism as one of the salient realities of the Australian context, this study captures the ambivalence of Japanese women towards learning and using English after the reconstruction of their desire for English in Sydney's multicultural society.
Another contestable issue with regard to the discourse of English linguistic imperialism is its assumption that native speakers dominate non-native speakers of English. However, several research reports suggest that power is exercised in a highly complex way, and that the context within which power relations are constructed and negotiated must be taken into consideration. For instance, Chang (2004) reported that in Taiwan, although White native speakers of English appeared to dominate the teaching market, closer examination revealed that power relations between Western native speakers and local non-native teachers were in fact, quite complex. She found that, although White native speakers of English were preferred as conversational teachers in private schools, “star teachers” who prepared local students for examination courses and who earned significantly more than the conversational teachers were Chinese locals who spoke English as a foreign language.

Furthermore, linguistically and socially disadvantaged speakers of English were sometimes capable of fighting back and creating changes in the context that seemed to marginalise them. Clear evidence is provided by Norton’s (2000) study in which she recounted the case of Eva, a Polish immigrant working in an Anglophone dominated workplace. Although at first she was given very limited acceptance by her co-workers and thus had little opportunity to improve her English, she was gradually able to renegotiate her relations with her colleagues by capitalising on her knowledge of Europe and Italian as well as on other non-linguistic resources. That ultimately led to more opportunities to practice English.

These studies suggest that, although the discourse of English as a prestige language may accord power to those who “own” the language, such power is never absolute, and needs to be examined in the context of the wider range of surrounding local discourses such as the way the importance of university exams in Taiwan
conferred power on local non-native speakers of English. Therefore, this study takes a context-based approach when investigating the symbolic capital represented by Japanese women’s knowledge of English and their desire for and actual usage of the language in Australia.

What emerges from the above discussion is that there is no guarantee that one’s acquisition of English is valued equally across different communities and countries. Thus when EFL speakers move to “Centre” countries such as Australia, the value of their linguistic identity is likely to be significantly reconstructed and renegotiated in the light of wider social and local discourses in these new communities and countries (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). For instance, during my fieldwork, I met several Japanese academics who were highly respected in Japan for their competence in English. However, when they came to Australia, they were not perceived as “Westernised, competent speakers of English” but as mere “non-native speakers of English” from Japan, in need of assistance from Australian native speakers of English. This observation suggests that the value of linguistic identity, along with other available subject positions such as gender, race, socioeconomic status and occupation, constantly shifts in response to negotiation with other social actors, across differing contexts (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

For instance, Miller’s (2000) study on high school students suggests that the race of speakers of English is a strong factor in constructing the value of English in Australia. Her Chinese ESL participants reported that although their English was not so different from that of Bosnian ESL students’, the latter were more accepted by their Australian peers. This is another indication of the fact that having English knowledge does not necessarily result in the expected outcomes (e.g., friendships and social acceptance) and that the symbolic capital of one’s English is negotiated in
relation to other factors, race being one of these in the Australian context. The relationship between race and the symbolic value of English is crucial to this study, as my Japanese participants had moved from one location, Japan, where English is a highly valuable commodity, to Australia where different discourses of English, and racial and gender relations are in circulation. The study captures the ways in which Japanese women engage in negotiation and renegotiation of English as symbolic capital. It also investigates the power relations between my participants and the various social actors with whom they came into contact. On these bases it aims to show what local and global discourses are at work in such processes.

In this section, it has been argued that to understand the symbolic capital of English and desire for learning English, it is necessary to go beyond the economic value of the language and to question the validity of non-contextual approaches to the role of English (Dörnyei, 2004). My literature review suggests that the value of English, and how it is desired, learned and used, is locally structured in relation to a wider range of discourses and that it is also inextricably linked with the subject positions that English makes available. In Chapter 3, the Japanese context is discussed by focusing on how relevant local and global discourses of English and gender construct Japanese women’s desire for learning English and travelling overseas.

2.5 Identity

The notion of identity is neither new nor unknown in SLA (McNamara, 1997). There has been a wealth of research investigating individual characteristics of language learners and their effect on SLL (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Ellis, 2004; Gardner, 1985; Oxford, 1990). Although these studies have contributed to the field of SLA, poststructuralist approaches to identity mark a clear move-away from previous
conceptualisations (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). In this section, poststructuralist approaches to identity are discussed, and the term “identity” is defined on these concepts in this study.

First of all, it needs to be emphasised that poststructuralism moves away from the essentialised notion of identity and instead embraces the view of identity as something that is historically and socially constructed in and by discourse (Weedon, 1997). This implies that identities are always in a process of change across time and space, as individuals constantly construct, negotiate and contest who they are in relation to other social actors and social structures. For instance, in this view, my own Japanese identity is not an inherent category; rather, it has been constructed over time in and by a wide range of discourses. Thus, what it means to be a Japanese person for me does not necessarily concur with what it means to others, such as my participants, since despite being born in the same country at around the same time, we were each exposed to a different range of discourses.

In poststructuralism, the idea of being a Japanese person does not only vary for different people at different times and places. This idea also varies within the one person because identity is not understood as singular, but as multiple and contradictory (Weedon, 1997). Humanist discourses often presuppose that all people possess an essential unified identity and this romantic idea of a “true” or “core” identity is in wide circulation, particularly in the popular mass media. In contrast, in poststructuralism it is understood that people “perform” multiple identities which may be contradictory and which present differently in different times and places (Norton, 2000; Piller, 2002a; Zimmerman, 1998).

One of the most illuminating SLA studies on the notion of identity as multiple, contradictory and subject to change can be found in the work of Norton (2000). In her
ethnographic study of five immigrant women in Canada, she reported that they performed complex, non-static social identities, which were in turn constructed in relation to wider social structures and everyday social interactions in key locations: the ESL classroom, the workplace, the home, and public places. Norton found that their investment and actual practice in learning and using English were closely bound up with their changing identities as well as with the results that they wanted to achieve. For instance, Martina, a married woman with three children, worked in a restaurant where she was silenced as a result of marginalisation by her Canadian co-workers who devalued her migrant, non-native speaker, identity. At home, however, her salient identity as a carer enabled her to effectively deal with her landlord, in English over the telephone on an important financial matter. Martina told the researcher that as protector of her family, she could not afford to accede to a demand that put her family at financial risk.

The first time I was very nervous and afraid to talk on the phone...our landlord tried to persuade me that we have to pay for whole year, I got upset and I talked with him on the phone over one hour and I didn’t think about the tenses rules. I had known that I couldn’t give up. My children were very surprised when they heard me (Norton, 2000, p. 96)

In this comment, Martina emerges as a powerful negotiator and a proud mother, in sharp contrast to the identity of a silent, unskilled worker imposed on her at her workplace.

Furthermore, Norton’s (2000) study informs us that although identity is multiple and fluid, some subject positions are more central than others. Zimmerman (1998) identifies three types of identities: discourse (e.g., speaker, hearer), situational (e.g., bus passenger, shopper, student), and transportable (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age). He argues that depending on the context, some subject positions are more prominent and significant than others. For instance, Martina’s identities as an immigrant
(transportable), non-native speaker (discourse/situational), and an older woman (transportable), seemed to dominate her relationship with her Canadian co-workers, which in turn initially led to her marginalisation, and limited her opportunities for her to use and improve her English at work. At home, however, it was her maternal (situational), caretaker (situational) identity that became primary in her interaction as a negotiator (discourse) with the landlord. Piller (2002a, p. 10) argues that one of the challenges in the study of SLL and its use is to be able to deal effectively with participants' “multiplicity of identity.” Following Norton (2000) and Piller, I allow for performed identities that are multiple, fluid and contradictory and that certain identities of the female Japanese participants can be more salient than others, depending on the context. For this reason, the present study investigates how my participants performed their identities in the process of, and also as a result of, SLL and establishes “which identity, if any matters in a given context” (Piller, 2002a, p. 10)

Piller’s (2002a) statement cited above becomes particularly important in multilinguals context, including those of SLL. As mentioned earlier, poststructuralist scholarship considers that a range of possible subject positions are acted, produced, negotiated, and contested in and by language. If, as Lippi-Green (1997, p. 5) points out, language is “the most salient way we have of establishing and advertising our social identities,” and that lives are often lived in more than one language system (Graddol, 2000), this holds implications for the study of identity and SLL. Pavlenko (2001a, p. 123) suggests that “bicultural and bilinguals may perform different identities in their two languages, or find linguistic means to construct identities unique to bilingual contexts.” Pavlenko’s suggestion forms an important dimension of this
research that deals with Japanese women who operated in two, if not more, languages across different geographic, social, and linguistic locations.

When it is understood that identities are discursive constructions and that they are multiple and constantly in the process of change, the "categories-and-labels approach" is no longer tenable (Piller, 2002a, p. 11). Since the 1990s, scholars have increasingly discarded the idea that individuals "have" identities, but rather, they "do" (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and "perform" (Butler, 1999) them. Although language is a crucial means of doing and performing this, it is increasingly acknowledged that other forms of discourse (residence, education, romantic partners, occupation, clothes, and other material possessions) also constantly co-construct identity. Poststructuralist scholarship emphasises that the meaning and acts of identity cannot be understood without reference to a wide range of macro discourses. Following Woolard (1998), Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001, p. 246) argue that discourses of language are "not about language alone, but are always socially situated and tied to questions of identity and power in societies." Furthermore, several researchers (Burton, Dyson, & Ardener, 1994; Gal, 1978; Piller, 2002a; Piller, 2005a; Piller & Takahashi, in press; Polanyi, 1995) point out that discourses about romance, marriage and family also have significant implications for linguistic practices. This point is further expanded in Section 2.6, in which gender identity as "a system of social relations and discursive practices" (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001, p. 23) is discussed.

This raises the question of whether "knowledge" of certain subject positions enables the individual to take on any identity. Piller (2002a, p. 13) makes the point that for people to feel comfortable and legitimate performing their identities, "other people need to accept the identity [they] aspire to." In fact, individuals have access to a large range of discourses that offer a wide variety of subject positions. As Mathews
(2000) points out, globalisation of technology and media, particularly through the Internet, provides access to an almost limitless number of discourses. Nevertheless, “access” does not mean that the individual feels “entitled” to perform any type of identity (Davies & Harré, 1990)

Davies and Harré (1990, p. 48) state that positioning is “the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines.” In a social interaction, individuals can both position themselves (reflective positioning) and be positioned by others (interactive positioning). According to Davies and Harré, this notion of positioning involves five processes:

- Firstly, a range of social categories is learned, which include some people and exclude others (e.g., women and men, native speakers and non-native speakers).
- Secondly, individuals participate in various discursive practices that attribute different meanings and values to those categories.
- Thirdly, individuals position themselves in terms of these categories or story lines that develop around them. Individuals imaginatively position themselves in some categories and not in others (e.g., a woman and not a man, or a native speaker of English and not a non-native speaker of English).
- Fourthly, individuals begin to “recognise” that they have such characteristics that position them as a member of a certain group and not of other groups. They also start to develop a sense of themselves in relation to the world that they inevitably see from the vantage point of that position (e.g., race, nationality, gender, sexuality, and linguistic status). Thus an emotional and moral commitment attached to particular subject positions emerges.
- Fifthly, individuals come to terms with their own theory of the self and understand themselves as “historically continuous and unitary” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 47).

One important implication of the notion of positioning is that it is not necessarily intentional or free of contestation. Blackledge (2001) notes that in
interactive contexts there is a tension between self-chosen social positions and attempts by others to position self incongruently. For instance, although my participants may position themselves as “speakers of English” and attempt to act accordingly, those they interact with may not always agree with their self-chosen identity, and thus position them differently. Such tension leads to contestation and power struggles that result in a range of emotional and behavioural reactions. Following Blackledge, the degree of my participants’ resistance to their being positioned by others as “non-speakers of English” or “deficient communicators,” depends on how important it is for them to have their self-chosen image as a speaker of English validated by others. Also important to them is their access to other symbolic, social, and cultural capital that they can use to contest incongruent positioning.

In sum, the notion of positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990) has proved a very useful analytical tool for my research, facilitating analysis of the power relations that are constructed, negotiated and contested in everyday interactions between people of different racial, linguistic, gender, national, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

One of the identities that has the potential to have an enormous impact on the way individuals position themselves and are positioned by others is that of gender, which is discussed in the next section.

2.6 Gender and poststructuralist discourse

In the introductory chapter, I referred to my initial fascination with the clear difference between Japanese women and men in terms of their attitude to the English language and their approach to language learning. The poststructuralist framework raises questions about which of the discourses may have contributed to the
construction of such differences. To provide insights into gendered linguistic and social phenomena, an increasing number of researchers in the study of language and gender, and also of gender and SLA, draw on poststructuralist approaches (Block, 2002b; Butler, 1999; Davis & Skilton-Silvester, 2004; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Ehrlich, 1997; 2004; Goldstein, 2001; Kubota, 2003; McMahill, 2001; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko et al., 2001; Piller & Takahashi, in press; Siegal, 1996; Sunderland, 2000). What follows is a review of several assumptions that underlie many of the poststructuralist inquiries into gender and SLA.

2.6.1 The construction of gendered discourses

The present research is principally informed by the feminist poststructuralist notion of gender as “a system of social relations and discursive practices,” as outlined by Pavlenko and Piller (2001, p. 23) and Pavlenko (2001a). Drawing on Cameron (1997) and Weedon (1997), Pavlenko and Piller describe their feminist poststructuralism as an approach, “which strives to theorize and to investigate the role of language in the production of gender relations, and the role of gender dynamics in language learning and use” (p. 22). Four key notions that underscore their feminist poststructuralist inquiry are discussed below.

Firstly, Pavlenko and Piller’s (2001, p. 23) approach considers gender as “a system of social relations.” In this view, what it means to be a woman never operates in isolation, but rather is always related to other social positions including race, ethnicity, nationality, age, sexuality and economic status. According to this argument, gender—“proper/improper” social behaviour and expectations are produced and organised in such a way as to construct individuals’ everyday actions, which includes linguistic choices and practices (e.g., Ohara, 2001). Thus, for feminist poststructuralist
scholarship, gender is viewed as "a system of social doings" (Pavlenko & Piller, p. 22), rather than an inborn, fixed, and stable property. Therefore, within this paradigm, gender as a category is no longer accepted as an adequate "explanation" for linguistic practices and beliefs (Cameron, 1990; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). This view on gender being a system of social relations and social doings has significantly shifted the focus of inquiry. Pavlenko and Piller outline two major foci of such inquiry within the feminist poststructuralist paradigm: Their intention, they state, is "to study gender as a system of social relations constructed and negotiated in discourse through naming, representation, and interaction practices, and...to investigate effects of gender as a system of social relations on individuals' access to linguistic resources and possibilities of expression" (p. 23).

Secondly, the feminist poststructuralists argue that if gender doings are intimately linked with other social identities and social relations, linguistic practices cannot be understood as being based on gender identity alone. Although gender is used by individuals as a salient way of organising their lives, it may not necessarily always be foregrounded in everyday interactions and decision-making (Zimmerman, 1998). This position further avoids the simplistic invocation of gender as an all-embracing explanation of all action and behaviour. Taking into consideration a wider range of other prominent social identities such as nationality, speaker status, sexuality, race and class evokes a more nuanced understanding of gender. Thirdly, feminist poststructuralist scholarship understands that the meaning of gender is inextricably embedded in a whole range of discourses of gender and language. This view suggests that the linguistic practices and experiences of women cannot be understood without paying close attention to the larger social systems in which they are located. Recent research on language, gender and SLA that has employed anthropological and
ethnographic approaches demonstrates that macro- as well as micro-discourses in society powerfully construct women’s linguistic practices and their attempts to learn second languages (Burton, 1994; Chinchaladze & Dragadze, 1994; Hong, 1994; Kobayashi, 2002; McMahill, 2001; Piller & Pavlenko, 2001; Piller & Takahashi, in press).

For instance, McMahill’s (2001) study demonstrates how the discourse of English as an international and emancipatory tool in patriarchal Japan not only serves to motivate Japanese women to learn the language, but also influences the way in which a certain group of Japanese women organise their English lessons. McMahill’s findings, as well those of other researchers (Gal, 1978; Goldstein, 2001; Kobayashi, 2002; Norton Peirce, 1995a; Piller & Takahashi, in press; Siegal, 1996), highlights and contributes to two feminist poststructuralist positions. These researchers found, firstly, that the way the meaning of gender mediates language learning is locally constructed in and by discourses that circulate at global as well as local levels. Their second finding was that what it means to be a woman, and the way this structures women’s desires to learn and use additional languages, varies across cultures and time: in other words, across historical space. Following Pavlenko and Piller (2001), this study explores the macro- and micro-discourses that construct gender and SLL. It also investigates the ways in which these discourses help to create Japanese women’s desire for the English language and construct their attempts to learn and use English in Japan and Australia.

Lastly, but of key importance, the feminist poststructuralist approach is concerned with women’s power struggles. Viewing gender as “a system of culturally constructed relations of power, produced and reproduced in interaction between and among men and women” (Gal, 1991, p. 176), many feminist poststructuralist theorists
have increasingly turned to the study of language ideologies that oppress women and other disadvantaged groups of speakers. Following Foucault (1980) and Weedon (1997), however, power is not viewed in this thesis as simply oppressive and negative, nor are women considered primarily as a disadvantaged group. As mentioned in Section 1.3, power in this study is considered as relational and operative at various levels of social interaction. It is also exercised in the form of a counter-discourse to those discourses that disadvantage them. As is demonstrated when reviewing more work on gender and SLA in the next section, there is evidence that women are not just victims of oppressive discourses and social systems but are agents of change and often do not see themselves as victims or as disadvantaged. This study aims to shed light on the ways in which Japanese women negotiate and produce counter-discourses to practices which threaten to oppress and suppress them.

Poststructuralist studies on gender and SLA have increasingly indicated that gender, as a system of social relations and discursive practices, functions to affect the process and outcomes of SLA through: Motivation, or language desire; access; and agency. A discussion of each of these notions and what is known about them follows.

2.6.2 Language desire

For the last two decades, Gardner’s (1985) notion of motivation has enormously influenced the direction of research in SLA. Since the 1990s, however, there has been a call for a reconceptualisation of the construct and, today, the poststructuralist notion of investment (Bourdieu, 1977; 1991) has gained prominence in SLA literature. This shift was sparked by Norton (2000, p. 10-11) who argued:

The conception of instrumental motivation presupposes a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner who desires access to material resources that are the privilege of target language speakers.
Instead of seeing motivation as a fixed entity, Norton drew on Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of “investment” to theorise the “socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (Norton, 2000, p. 10). Thus the five immigrant women in Canada who featured in her study exhibited different degrees of investment in learning and using English and such investment was inextricably linked with their identity construction and negotiation in a given context and time. For instance, Katrina, formerly a teacher in her native Poland, invested strongly in English, not because she wanted to speak the language, but because she saw English as a resource which would enable her to “work in a stimulating job and form a set of relationships with people of her professional class” (Norton, p. 93). Yet Katrina often hesitated to use her limited English in the presence of certain people such as her daughter who was a fluent speaker of English and also those professionals with whom she wanted to associate.

It is evident that learners’ investment is highly context-dependent. Although Norton’s (2000) notion of investment is useful in highlighting the multiple and fluid nature of investment, its economic connotations make it somewhat rigid and mechanistic. It is in my view that Norton’s conceptualisation of investment can be further developed by that phenomenon which Piller (2002a; 2005a; Piller & Takahashi, in press) describe as language desire. Piller (2002b, p. 6) argues that language learning or gender relations cannot be reduced to “questions of economic and social power” and that romance and sexual appeal in the form of language desire strongly influence the processes and outcomes of SLL.

In a series of recent articles, Piller (2002a; 2005a) and Piller and Takahashi (in press) demonstrate that many bilinguals and successful second language learners
reported that they began with a passionate desire to learn an additional language which was inextricably linked with their romantic, and sometimes erotic, desire for a partner who spoke that language. Such desires were seen by Piller (2002a) as a major factor in success in L2 learning. She reports (2002a) the case of a Japanese woman who began her serious quest to learn English after falling in love with the Hollywood star, Tom Cruise. The Japanese woman, identified as a successful second language user, spent years polishing her English in order to express her love for the actor. She reported to the researcher: “My desire for meeting a man like Tom Cruise has carried me a looooong [sic] way” (cited in Piller, 2002a, p. 271). Likewise, Piller’s (2002a) study of English-German couples demonstrates how language desire drives the learner to gain access to linguistic resources. A German woman in her study confessed that during her adolescence she used to listen to English songs, dreaming all the time of finding an English-speaking romantic and sexual partner.

Language desire is not a new phenomenon, however. In fact, Piller’s (2002a) work can be seen as having been informed by the research of Gal (1978) and McDonald (1994), who earlier acknowledged the link between desire, romance, ideologies and SLL. Gal reported that the language shift from Hungarian to German in the Austrian-Hungarian bilingual town of Oberwart was spearheaded by young women who were motivated firstly to find jobs in German speaking urban areas and secondly, to find German speaking partners so as to escape from the hard life in the Hungarian speaking villages. Desire for German speaking jobs, romantic partners and intermarriage resulted in the switch from Hungarian to German. Similarly, in his ethnographic study carried out in Brittany, France, McDonald (1994) found that the Breton language was associated with a “hard, dirty life” (p. 100) and was considered by young Breton women to smell of “cow shit” (p. 91). French and Frenchness in turn
were associated with sophisticated femininity and to constitute the height of "refinement" (p. 100). Consequently, young Breton women have increasingly preferred French and French speaking men to Breton and Breton-speaking men. The shift in their linguistic and romantic desires has produced a massive exodus of young women to urban areas, leading to a surplus of unmarried males among the rural peasantry of Brittany.

These studies suggest that romantic desires attached to a certain language may operate as an incentive not only to pursue the acquisition of that language, but may also affect the process of decision making concerning their prospective romantic partners, friends, jobs, and even place of residence.

Japanese women’s romantic desire for English speaking Western men has been widely discussed in sociology, anthropology and especially in the popular media (Bailey, 2002; Ieda, 1991; Kelsky, 1996; Kelsky, 2001b; Ma, 1996; Toyota, 1994). Tsuda (2000) reports that the multimillion dollar English language industry in Japan capitalises on the way in which Japanese women attach symbolic value to English and Western men to express their resistance to the patriarchal values Japan. Although the issue of gendered English language education in Japan (Bailey, 2002; Kobayashi, 2002), and Japanese women’s longing for Western men (Kelsky, 2001b; Toyota, 1994) is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, it needs to be said here that the link between Japanese women’s desire for English, for the West and Western masculinity is well known in Japan (Bailey, 2002; Kelsky, 1996; Ma, 1996).

However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, researchers in SLA have paid scant attention to Japanese women’s romanticisation and eroticisation of the West. Conversely, ELL is treated as marginal in sociological and anthropological investigations of the occidental longings of Japanese women. My study addresses this
lacuna by including language desire into the analysis of Japanese women’s attempts to learn English, thereby adding a new dimension to the notion of motivation/investment.

Another aspect of SLL and use that has been found to be gendered and possibly affected by language desire: namely, access to linguistic resources, is discussed in the next section.

2.6.3 Access

There is a general view in SLA that second language learners are free to make choices about who they can speak with, when and where (Norton, 2000). This assumption leads to the belief that the lack of L2 attainment is a result of learners’ lack of motivation or will to interact with native/proficient speakers. Many poststructuralist theorists have increasingly objected to this understanding of access (Bremer, Roberts, Vasseur, Simonot, & Broeder, 1996; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2000; Siegel, 2003; Tollefson, 1991). On the one hand, an increasing number of studies show that the learners (non-native speakers) do not necessarily have a full or even desired level of access to linguistic resources, in other words, interactional opportunities with native/competent speakers, even if they are fully motivated to learn the L2 and to “integrate” into the L2 culture. On the other hand, a range of researchers (Ehrlich, 2001; Kouritzin, 2000; Piller & Takahashi, in press; Polanyi, 1995; Talburt & Stewart, 1999) suggest that power relations played out in the discourse of gender, romance and sexuality have a tremendous impact on access to linguistic resources and on possible interactions and, by extension, on learning outcomes.

For instance, Polanyi’s (1995) study demonstrates that gender identity, in general, and sexual harassment, in particular, serves to produce unequal access to practicing L2 and is a possible site of marginalisation for female students. This
finding was based on the differential degrees of improvement she found between American male and female students who participated in a study program in Russia. In investigating why the men scored significantly better in speaking and listening tests in Russian than the women, she asked the students to compile a journal recording when, how and with whom they spent their time. She reported the male and female participants had had very different experiences and also that their interpretations of these experiences differed significantly. On the one hand, the men’s journal entries were full of accounts of pleasant and romantic episodes of sexual, or potentially sexual, encounters with Russian women. The female students, in contrast, reported being harassed by Russian men and having had little chance to practice Russian with native speakers. Polanyi’s (1995) conclusion was that their encounters with Russian speakers of the opposite sex, contributed to the male students’ superior performance on the post-trip test.

Pichette’s (2000, cited in Pavlenko & Piller, 2001) study is also illustrative of how gender relations and sexual and cultural politics can structure access. Through her interviews with Westerners studying Japanese in Japan, she found that White Western men had much more access to informal socialisation in Japanese and hence greater success is learning Japanese than did White Western women. On the one hand, the men could “pick up” the Japanese language by socialising with Japanese people in pubs and having romantic relationships with Japanese women who constantly attended to their linguistic needs for conversation in Japanese. On the other hand, the women felt uncomfortable with the idea of pub socialisation because of their fear of harassment and they did not consider romance with a Japanese partner as a possible road to greater fluency in Japanese.
To understand why the White Western men were able to opt for Japanese romantic partners as learning aids and the females could not, it is necessary to understand the racial, gender, and sexual discourses that construct the relationships between Western and Japanese people (Dower, 1999; Leupp, 2003). Kelsky (1996; 2001a; 2001b) reports a widely circulating discourse of *akogare*, desire, for White men among Japanese women had developed in Japan, particularly after the end of the Second World War. Such discourse portrayed White men as sophisticated, gentlemanly and more attractive than Japanese men (Russell, 1998). There is also a widespread discourse of unattractive, chauvinistic Japanese men, who were unwanted not only by White women, but also by internationally oriented Japanese women (Kelsky, 2001b). Pichette's (2000) study makes an important case for the need to take into account the micro- and macro-discourses on race and gender that structure interactional, romantic, and sexual opportunities.

The studies by Polanyi (1995) and Pichette (2000) clearly demonstrate that access to linguistic resources is highly gendered and that discourses of gender, romance and international relationships in the prospective international travel destinations, construct women's identities and that these in turn affect their interactional opportunities and chances of forming relationships in the L2 environment. However, according to Piller (2002a), the notion of gendered and sexualised access to linguistic resources is relatively under-researched in SLA. This is certainly true of the SLA literature on the way in which Japanese women's ideas about femininity and romance may structure their access to linguistic resources and L2 social interaction.

As mentioned earlier, literature from other disciplines (Ieda, 1991; Kelsky, 2001b; Russell, 1998) indicates that many Japanese women have considerable
romantic desire for Western men (particularly, but not limited to, White men). Indeed, in Japan success in ELL has even been associated with finding a Western male partner (Bailey, 2002; Miyazaki, 1997; Piller & Takahashi, in press; Tsuda, 2000). This thesis bridges the gap between the two areas of literature concerned with Japanese women’s romantic desire for the West and SLA. The thesis also investigates the way in which discourses of English as a global language, gender, romance and the West, may function to construct Japanese women’s access to social interaction.

Another aspect of SLL that is reportedly highly gendered: agency, is discussed in the next section.

2.6.4 Agency

Agency has become a fashionable but at the same time highly contested notion, in the social sciences (e.g., Burr, 2003; Pennycook, 2001). According to Ahearn (2001), there has been a move away from the conceptualisation of the term “agency” as a synonym for “free will exercised by completely autonomous individuals” (p. 115) to the view of agency as “socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (p. 112). Pennycook (2001) argues that this shift has also begun to take place in SLA. A number of SLA theorists (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001), particularly from the poststructuralist framework, have sought to reconceptualise the notion of agency and have paid increasing attention to its link to the processes of, and its contribution to success in SLL.

The basic assumption within the poststructuralist framework is that learners are agents who “actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 145). At the same time, most poststructuralist
theorists fully acknowledge that agency never works outside power structures (Canagarajah, 1993; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001; Pennycook, 2001). Pennycook notes that learners’ decisions and actions are socially and historically constructed by a wide range of macro- and micro-discourses and, therefore, the theorising of agency requires “complex thinking about social class, gender, ideology, power, resistance, human agency” (p. 120). Thus, following Pavlenko and Piller, this study considers agency as “co-constructed and learning options as predicated on language ideologies and power structures within a particular society” (p. 29).

Recent studies in the poststructuralist paradigm have increasingly shown that gender, along with other social identities, constructs learners’ agency in learning and using a second language in various contexts (Kobayashi, 2002; McMahill, 2001; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001; Piller, 2002a; Piller & Takahashi, in press; Siegal, 1996). For instance, Siegal’s (1996) study recounts how two Western women resisted adopting Japanese gender identities (humble and inferior) by refusing to use the high voice register that was culturally expected of them in most speech events in Japan. These women made the decision not to refashion their gender identity even though that was likely to result in limited improvement in their Japanese fluency and possible conversational difficulties. Siegal concluded that “second language learners do not merely model native speakers with a desire to emulate, but rather actively create a new interlanguage and an accompanying identity in the learning process” (p. 362). Similarly, Ohara (2001) reports that even though the use of a high voice pitch is a socially imposed way of “doing” gender in Japan, competent female learners of Japanese did not adopt such a linguistic practice due to their critical attitudes towards Japanese traditional expectations about gender.
McMahill (2001) discusses a great deal of agency exercised by groups of Japanese and Japan-born Korean women when designing English classes in Japan. To pursue their feminist interest, they formed "the Colors [sic] of English" (p. 308); classes that they not only supervised themselves, but for which they also chose their own instructors and negotiated the content and learning materials with the instructors. McMahon argues that the these "Colors [sic] of English" can be considered as "an example of Japan-born women attempting to appropriate English as a weapon for self-empowerment as women in Japan and as women of color [sic] in the world" (p. 332).

These studies demonstrate that language learners are not just passive receivers of input, but rather are agents who actively fashion their learning opportunities and experiences by negotiating their identities. It is evident in their studies that gender as a social relationship and as a discursive practice, along with other macro discourses (e.g., that of gendered voice register as sign of powerlessness, and discourse of English as an emancipatory tool), constructed the process of language learning, emphasising that agency is not an individual property. This view of gender and agency allows for a more nuanced understanding of learners' behaviour that appears to contradict their desire to learn and use the L2. This study examines micro- and macro-discourses that construct Japanese women's agency in learning and using English as a second/foreign language in two geographical locations.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, it has been argued that to investigate the relationships between identity, power and SLL effectively, it is important to adopt a context-sensitive approach. It has been further argued that the poststructuralist discourse-analytic approach permits a nuanced investigation into Japanese women's desire to learn
English and also their experiences in learning and using the language in
gеographically and ideologically different locations. Several lacunae in the literature
on SLA have been identified and on that basis, the following research questions have
been formulated.

First of all, reference has been made to the tendency to assume that English has
universal value. It has been argued that in fact the commodity value of the English
language is a local and historical construction and therefore the context has to be
taken into consideration in any analysis of the role of English. Therefore, I investigate
the local and historical construction of the value of English by examining macro- and
micro-discourses that produce Japanese women’s desire for English, and provide a
context-sensitive picture of the negotiation and renegotiation of their English as
symbolic capital.

Secondly, there is discussion of the notion that because power is exercised by
those who “own” English over those who do not (including non-native speakers and
speakers of non-standard Engli shes), and that the latter are dominated and
disadvantaged by the former. The literature review and personal observations suggest
a more complex picture of power negotiation. In this study, power is considered in
terms of relationships rather than as the property of individuals. I provide a context-
sensitive picture of the ways in which my participants exercise and negotiate power
relations with the social actors with whom they come into contact as they attempt to
learn and use English. The question of what discourses give them more power in a
particular context and less in another is considered. In addition, the possibility that
their negotiation of identities is the key to understanding of power is discussed.

Thirdly, it was argued that the current concept of motivation or investment may
not fully capture the role of romance and sexual attraction in the process of SLL and
use. In the field of SLA the social phenomenon of the romantic desire of Japanese women for English and English-speaking Western men has been given little attention, while extant sociological and anthropological studies do not provide a detailed investigation into the link between the desire of these women for the West and their linguistic practices. To bridge this gap, language desire (Piller, 2002a; Piller, 2005a; Piller & Takahashi, in press) is incorporated into my analysis of Japanese women’s attempts to learn and use English.

Fourthly, it was determined that the notion of gendered and sexualised access to linguistic resources has been relatively under-researched in the field of SLA. Given the widely circulating discourse of Japanese women’s desire for Western English speaking men, which is further discussed in Chapter 3, it is appropriate to expect that my participants’ access to linguistic resources may be gendered, and perhaps even sexualised. However, there is currently little information within SLA about the nature of the access of L2 learners. Thus, I examine the ways in which discourses of English, gender, romance and the West function to construct my participants’ access to linguistic resources and the impact this has on the outcomes of language learning.

Fifthly, reference was made to the way that agency is increasingly seen as a socioculturally mediated act and constituted in a wide range of discourses. Although there is a growing understanding that language learners are not mere passive receivers of input and are actively involved in fashioning their own learning, there is very little research that links Japanese women’s agency in acquiring English to discourses of gender and romance. This study attempts to bridge this gap by investigating the ways in which micro- and macro- discourses in Japan and Australia serve to form Japanese women’s agency to learn and use English.
The next chapter focuses on the Japanese women who are the subjects of this study as well as on discourses of their akogare for the English language, the West, and Western men and ELL industry in Japan.
Chapter 3: Akogare

3.1 Introduction

The concepts of *kokusaika* (internationalisation) and *kokusai teki* (being international) are very glamorous for many Japanese. In the long history of their country, however, attitudes towards the outside world in general, and the West in particular, have been ambivalent (Befu, 1983; Hashimoto, 2000; Miyoshi, 1991; Morita & Ishihara, 1989; Mouer & Sugimoto, 1983). This chapter looks at one particular aspect of this discourse – contemporary Japanese women’s experiences with internationalisation. Several scholars (Dower, 1999; Kelsky, 2001b; Leupp, 2003) have pointed out that *kokusaika* and the surrounding practices are highly gendered, or more precisely feminised domains. In her decade-long research, Kelsky found that Japanese women have long seen the West as an emancipatory ally against gender-biased Japanese society, while many Japanese men seem to have had ambivalent, if not ill, feelings about the West and its power.

In this chapter, I focus on this gendered discourse of *kokusaika*, and more precisely, on Japanese women’s *akogare* for the West, Western men and the English language. Throughout the chapter, I argue that the links among these three discursive fields are socially and historically constructed and are embedded in power relations between Japan and the West. First of all, I review the literature on the notion of *akogare* and discuss how this concept is understood in my thesis. Secondly, I discuss the historical, political and social contexts in which Japanese women’s encounters with the West have occurred. Then I proceed to discuss the centrality of *akogare* in Japanese women’s imagery of the West. Later, these discussions are linked with the ways in which English language studies, English-language related professions and
intercultural/racial romance are predominantly seen as being within women’s spheres (Kelsky, 2001b; Ma, 1996; Matsubara, 1989; Miya, 1997; Miyazaki, 1997). As Matsubara insightfully points out, the following historical perspective on the relation between Japanese women and the West allows us to understand that English is not just another foreign language, but it is a weapon with which many Japanese women use in an attempt to transform themselves.

3.2 *Akogare*: beyond an inner state

*Akogare* is a Japanese word, roughly translated as desire or longing or fantasy. In an everyday context, the Japanese use the word to describe the object of their dreams, fantasies and hopes. They may say that they have *akogare* to live in a foreign country, obtain a native-speaker level of fluency in English, or find true love and get married. The object of *akogare* is often something that is unattainable or difficult to obtain (Bailey, 2002), but that very unattainability and difficulty seem to fuel the intensity of the *akogare* of Japanese women. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, narratives of many of the female Japanese students I met almost always began with “I had *akogare* for English/overseas” or “I had *akogare* for finding a foreign boyfriend.” For them, *akogare* for the West and English was so “natural” that they had no doubt that I would have the same *akogare*. They assumed that I, as a 30-something Japanese woman who had spent her child/girlhood in Japan and who currently lives in Australia, must have fantasised about the idea of living overseas and having a *gaijin* boyfriend. They were right: I actually did share these feelings.

In this section I attempt to understand how this form of *akogare* has come to be seen as natural for Japanese women. While this *akogare* may be a taken-as-given part of the world of Japanese women, my review of literature suggests that *akogare* is
a contested concept in the literature (Harvey & Shalom, 1997). For instance, in recent years a series of publications by Cameron and Kulick (2003a; 2003b; 2005) and Kulick (2000; 2003) have brought a new level of interest to the notion of desire in the study of language and sexuality (Ahearn, 2003; Eckert, 2002; Kang, 2003; Kiesling, 2002; Rumsey, 2003; Valentine, 2003). Underlying their argument is that the scope of the study of language and sexuality can be expanded by incorporating the notion of desire which they approach with an eclectic selection of theoretical frameworks. In investigating the meaning of Japanese women’s *akogare*, it is the Cameron and Kulick approach that my study primarily adopts. In the following section I discuss the nature of their approach and why I find their framework appropriate for my study.

To begin with, psychoanalysis is probably the best-known paradigm for the notion of sexual desire in Western academia. What Cameron and Kulick (2003b) take from this paradigm is that “sexual desire is not a wholly conscious and rational phenomenon, but is partly constituted by unconscious psychic processes” (pp. 111-113). According to Cameron and Kulick, Freudian psychoanalysts postulate that as infants grow up, they learn how to resist and manage sexual impulses that are present from birth and this learning supposedly takes place largely beyond one’s consciousness. Thus, in the classical psychoanalytic view, desire is a developmental history, primarily sexual and unconscious and is a constitutive part of our existence.

Cameron and Kulick’s (2003b) inclusion of the psychoanalytic notion of desire in their framework has been received with some scepticism. Several researchers (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Eckert, 2002) point out that to view desire as a private and unobservable phenomenon makes empirical investigation unfeasible. Eckert argues that the view of desire as being internal and unconscious brings “mystification” and “naturalization” (p. 100) into the study of language and sexuality/gender. Instead, she
calls for an approach “that focuses on the social mediation of desire: to construct a view of desire that is simultaneously internal and individual, and external and shared” (Eckert, p. 100).

Cameron and Kulick (2003b) state that they also consider that “desires are not simply private, internal phenomena but are produced and expressed – or not expressed – in social interaction, using shared and conventionalized linguistic resources” (p. 125). To highlight this aspect of their approach, they draw on work by Billig (1995; 1997; 1999), one of the best-known representatives of the relatively new field of discursive psychology. In his work, Billig (1997) argues that phenomena that were traditionally considered as “inner processes” by psychologists were in fact “constituted through social, discursive activity” (p. 140). He therefore urges that researchers should focus on studying “the outward activity rather than upon hypothetical and essentially unobservable, inner states” (p. 140).

According to Billig (1999), repression, which in Freudian psychoanalysis occurs in the unconscious, is in fact demanded and created by language and thus is a conscious interactional phenomenon. He uses a further example, that of adults teaching politeness to children, to point out that parental and social demands on the avoidance of prohibited behaviour, are made by means of linguistic commands such as “You must say please,” “Don’t speak when others are speaking” and “You mustn’t use that word.” Yet these demands create “the temptation of rudeness” (p. 94). In this sense, a model of and a desire for, rudeness are constructed in and by language.

I also follow Cameron and Kulick’s (2003b) argument that desire is not necessarily always bound up with sexuality and that it does not have a single origin, but has multiple sources and workings. Their position was informed by Deleuze and Guattari (1996). In Cameron and Kulick’s view, these researchers reject
psychoanalysts' insistence on equating desire solely with sexuality as a form of reductionism. This is because there are in fact a wide range of desires such as desire for sleeping, listening to music, writing and eating, none of which were not necessarily associated with sexuality. In this sense, desire is understood as multi-dimensional and one study exemplifies this point.

Ahearn's (2003) study of love letters written by villagers in Junigau, Nepal, demonstrates the multiple dimensions of desire. Prior to the 1990s, the literacy level of the villagers was low so that young people, particularly girls, had few literacy skills to express romantic desires in writing. As part of the Nepali government's effort to encourage national development, increasing emphasis was placed on raising literacy rates. As a result young female villagers began writing love letters through which they began redefining romantic love and desire. What is interesting about Ahearn's (2003) study is that desire expressed in those love letter was not simply a result of the passion that the young people felt for each other, but was bound up with the discourse of emerging desires for "education, development and success" (p. 107) in this small village.

Having argued for multi-dimensional and fluid nature of desire, Cameron and Kulick (2003b) consider Deleuze and Guattari's (1996) approach to desire in terms of geography useful. That is to say, examination of desire involves "mapping the ways desire is made possible and charting the ways it moves, acts and forms connections" (Cameron & Kulick, p.110). Advantage of such approach is the fact that desire can be considered as "something that is continually being dis/re/assembled" (Cameron & Kulick, p.111). In this light, mystification and naturalisation as mentioned earlier can be avoided.
Furthermore, Cameron and Kulick (2003b) see a similarity between Deleuze and Guattari’s (1996) geographic approach to desire and Foucault’s (1978) approach to power because both approaches attempt to “locate” how desire/power are re/produced, exercised or repressed historically and discursively. Indeed, Foucault argued that desire is always an expression of power: “Where there is desire, the power relation is already present” (Foucault, p. 81).

Foucault’s approach is evident in Kelsky’s (2001b) work on Japanese women’s *akogare*. Kelsky points out, their *akogare* for the Occident needs to be understood as something which is “embedded in, indeed constituted by, power relations between Japan and the West...in an ongoing dialectic modernity that makes the West the inevitable destination in a unilineal tale of progress” (p. 10). In her view, Japanese women’s desires for the West are not a mysterious emergence of passion, but are rather:

...produced by globally circulating means both domestically and internationally. The lures of the glittering global career/lifestyle/romance are regularly features in women’s magazines, from Cosmopolitan Japan to the businesswomen’s Nikkei Woman. To attract the mainstream female market, television and magazine advertising, the multimillion-dollar-a-year “ladies comic” industry and other mass media persistently exploit the trope of the sophisticated globe-trotting woman, often as the lover/muse of the White man (p. 10-11).

Furthermore, Kelsky (2001b) considers global media to be responsible for the deliberate promotion of desire for the Occident:

...women’s desires are incited by transnationally circulating Western media – most commonly, American movies – that make America and the West not simply glamorous locales but the very center of the universe...and the inevitable destination for those fleeing the “backward” places of the world (p. 11).

What this may suggest is that if Japanese women’s desires are constructed in and by macro-discourses and propaganda, they can exist outside their consciousness
and control to an extent. Nevertheless, this understanding of desire as residing in the unconscious differs significantly from classical Freudian psychoanalysis. Following Cameron and Kulick (2003b), my interest in this thesis is to locate such discourses and examine the ways in which they co-construct Japanese women’s *akogare* and their social, linguistic and lifestyle choices.

It is important to note two issues regarding the discourse of *akogare* as a site of power relations: (a) the multidirectionality of *akogare* and (b) counterdiscourses. Firstly, the discourse of *akogare* constructs Japanese women not only as desiring subjects and powerless language-learners, but also as occupying a powerful position as customers of language schools. As I discuss in the next section, the English language teaching industry in Japan is heavily dependent on that market comprised of young Japanese women as customers/students (Tsuda, 2000). The types of English taught are often “tailored” to students’ preferences in terms of race of teachers, types of English and classroom environments (see Bailey, 2002 and Chapter 5).

Furthermore, the discourse of *akogare* is not one-sided: a large volume of literature suggests that some Western men have, over the last few centuries, also had sexual desires for Japanese women (Dower, 1999; Kelsky, 2001b; Leupp, 2003; Matsubara, 1989). Kelsky notes that Western men’s exotic and erotic fascination with Japanese women began with Western encounters in the 18th Century. Their desire for Japanese women was intensified through the discourse created by plays such as Pierre Loti’s *Madam Chrysantheme* (1888) and Puccini’s opera *Madam Butterfly* (1906) which reproduced and capitalised on “the myth of the subservient Japanese women” (Marchetti, 1993, p. 158). Therefore, to a large extent, the desires of some Western men and those of Japanese women can be considered as reciprocal and this means that
that akogare constitutes a multidirectional power relationship (I. Piller, Personal communication, August 16, 2005).

Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 2, power and discourse are never static or complete. The influence of mass media and how people react to it vary widely. Although most Japanese women would acknowledge the power of the discourse of akogare for English and the West, this does not imply that reactions are either uniform or uncritical. For instance, Kelsky (2001b) recounts the cases of several Japanese women who critiqued and rejected the discourse of Western men as “must-haves” after having experienced the gap between that ideal and the reality. Matsubara (1989) also talks about many Japanese women who regret investing time and money in learning English and studying overseas. One woman in Matsubara’s study confesses: “I think that there are a lot of women who love studying English, lost life opportunities because they were focusing on foreigners. Myself included...nowadays, those foreigners who looked so gorgeous seem like countryish to me” (p. 214). This woman thought that her loss of akogare for foreign men was due to the fact that Japan outperformed America economically and the feeling that there was nothing that she could gain from America. She continued; “I have nothing to gain from and have no interest in foreigners and this is why I have no interest in speaking English” (Matsubara, p. 216).

Overall, the fascination of some Western men with Japanese women, and the reaction against English and Western men by some Japanese women indicate to me that the akogare discourse cannot be treated as a monolithic, unchanging entity, but is multidirectional, fluid and a site of contestation. In this thesis, I highlight this multidirectionality of akogare as a power relationship by paying close attention to the
negotiation of Japanese women’s subject positions and power relations in their interaction with various interlocutors.

In sum, following Cameron and Kulick (2003b), Deleuze and Guattari (1996), Foucault (1978) and Kelsky (2001b), I consider Japanese women’s akogare not simply as unconscious and physiological, but as something which is socially and historically constructed. Furthermore, I see it as not only sexual, but also as a way of life, a subject position, consumed and constructed by both micro- and macro-discourses. Finally, I believe it is a site of multidirectional power relationships. My study provides insights into such questions as: How does the akogare of Japanese women impact upon the construction and negotiation of power relations between themselves and those whom they desire or do not desire? In particular how is their language desire played out in relation to desires of male interlocutors? To provide a context for these questions, in the next section, I offer a historical overview of Japanese women’s akogare for the West, for learning English and for Western men.

3.3 Japanese women, the West and English

The relationship between Japan and the West has its origins in a history of trading, conquest, occupation and cultural and economic competition. According to Dower (1999), the Japanese experience of the West has always been gendered and to understand the akogare discourse among Japanese women, it is essential to examine the historical context of the wide range of changes in Japanese women’s lives resulting from contact with the West. In this section, I focus on their educational, political, social, romantic and carnal, if not erotic, encounters with the United States and its citizens, who have been the most dominant Western figures in Japanese women’s experience since the 19th Century. I begin with an account of the lives of
Japanese women during the Tokugawa era (1603 – 1868) through to the reopening of Japan to the West which took place during the subsequent Meiji period. Then I provide an account of Japanese women’s historical encounters with the West and English and examine more recent developments in the relationships between the West, English language and Japanese women.

3.3.1 Japan and Japanese women in the Tokugawa era: 1603 – 1868

Seventeenth century Japan was a feudal society, centrally controlled by the powerful Tokugawa shogunate. Tokugawa Japan based its political structure on a Confucian ideology that embraced “loyalty, obligation and obedience to authority” (Rose, 1992 p. 3). Confucianism was a convenient religious doctrine for the Tokugawa rulers, as it promoted a “hierarchical society in which every member knows his place and his duty to both his superiors and inferiors and in which order, stability, balance and harmony are valued above individual achievement or satisfaction” (Moore & Lamie, 1996, p. 2). A strict class system was established to control what people could do or could not do. The Tokugawa laid restrictions upon dress and domicile codes according to class and they forbade upward social mobility from the lower to the higher classes.

As much as the class system, gender was a powerful determinant of one’s life course. As Confucianism upheld the view that women were naturally impure, being born as a girl meant having a lifelong inferior status within her own class. The family system was based on the neo-Confucian principle which placed most importance on maintaining “household continuity, not the well-being of individual members” (Uno, 1991 p. 23). In the family system during the Tokugawa era, the patriarch was usually the father and he had absolute power over other family members. According to Dower
(1999), "good" women were taught that they were forever inferior to men and thus required to be obedient to the patriarchy of the husband/father or, upon the death of this patriarch, the elder son/brother. A woman's supreme task was to give birth to a son who would continue the *ie* (the family line) into the next generation. According to Yoshizumi (1995), a standard way of expressing affection in such a patriarchal family was by "serving" obediently.

Marriage was more or less a contract between two families aimed at ensuring the continuity of the *ie* and was often arranged by the heads of the family (Leupp, 2003). With governmental restrictions on marriage across status groups and to non-Japanese, as well as the Confucian view of romance as weakness and sex as a mere act of family continuity, the concept of romance and marriage based on love was rare and women had very little say in who they could marry (Reishauer, 1988; Ueno, 2002).

Education was no less affected by the gender inequality promoted and maintained under Confucianism and the feudal system. According to Hara (1995), education for women up to the end of WWII could be characterised as being "gender segregated, gender stereotyped, inferior and less valued compared to that for men."

Throughout the Tokugawa period, government officials were mostly interested in samurai (male) education, leaving commoners to their own devices, which might include their participation in the *terakoya* system (Passin, 1965). Although reading, writing and abacus were taught to both boys and girls at the *terakoya*, the emphasis of female education consisted mainly of instruction in household needlework and the performance of household tasks (Mackie, 2003).

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5 The name *terakoya* is derived from the small temple outhouses in which the education was delivered during the Muromachi Period (1392-1573). The nature of the *terakoya* system, had changed over the
In a radical attempt to ensure social, political and religious control, the Tokugawa administration adopted the policy of sakoku (seclusion), in the 1630s. Over the next two centuries, Japan virtually cut itself off from the outside world to eliminate all possible foreign challenges, particularly that of Christianity. This meant that no Japanese person was allowed to go overseas and those who were already outside the country at the time the policy was introduced were not allowed back in. Leupp (2003) shows that in the 17th Century, marriages between Japanese women and men from China, Korea, Portugal and the Netherlands were not infrequent. However, Westerners were increasingly seen as inferior and a threat to the religious harmony of the country. The sakoku policy forced all wives of foreigners and children of mixed blood to leave the country (Leupp, 2003). Except for highly controlled trading with Dutch and Chinese merchants, Japan had little foreign contact or interference from the West for over 200 years.

On one hand, the sakoku policy allowed Japan to secure internal stability and to nurture its national identity in the form of education, arts, agriculture and politics. On the other hand, the policy caused Japan to fall technologically far behind Western nations, which were rapidly developing modern science at the time and were going through commercial and industrial revolutions during the 19th Century (Reishauer, 1988).

In the 1800s, however, anxiety was growing rapidly as the threat of the West loomed larger to Japan and its regional security (Bennett, Passin, & McKnight, 1958). Japanese government officials were rapidly learning about the Western nations' modern and progressive technologies, medicine, education and (above all) military

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6 Christianity was banned in Japan by the Shogun Ieyasu Toyotomi in 1612.
technology. China’s defeat in the Opium War in 1842 clearly signalled to the
Japanese the decline of Chinese cultural supremacy and gave warning of Western
military superiority (Rose, 1992). In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry of the United
States Navy arrived at Edo7 bay, demanding that Japan open its ports for international
trading. Concluding that Japan’s military strength was no match for that of the
Americans, the Tokugawa government abandoned its two centuries-long seclusion
policy and signed rather unequal treaties with the United States as well as other
powerful Western nations in the following years. The Tokugawa government was
increasingly accused of an inability to deal effectively with the Western nations and
was finally overthrown in a palace coup in 1868. During the subsequent Meiji
Restoration, an era of rapid and radical change affecting all aspects Japanese life
began. Kelsky (2001b) asserts that in many ways those who were the most affected by
these changes were Japanese women.

3.3.2 Japanese women and their earlier contact with the West

Prior to the Meiji Restoration, women had virtually no official contact with the
West. Closer investigation however, reveals various informal encounters between
Japanese women and the West occurring on the margins of the life of the closed
country (Kelsky, 2001b; Leupp, 2003).

Dower (1999) observes that “Enlisting a small number of women to serve as a
buffer protecting the chastity of the ‘good’ women of Japan was well-established
policy in dealing with Western barbarians” (p. 126). For instance, some women,
known as the Deshima prostitutes, were assigned by the government to serve the

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7 Edo is a former name for Tokyo city. It literally means “bay-door” or “estuary.”
Dutch traders who were allowed to operate only on the little island of Deshima in Nagasaki (Dower, 1999). Furthermore, after the opening of the country in the 1850s, the Tokugawa government set up special brothels for Western men in the treaty ports. Leupp (2003) shows that the most elaborate system of this kind of sex-work was developed in Yokohama, which had 15 brothels (also called “tea-houses”) and 1,000 prostitutes. Japanese advertisements proclaimed, “This place is designed for the amusement of foreigners” (p. 151).

Leupp (2003) states that it was common practice for Western men to develop “cohabititve relationships” (p. 152) with local Japanese women: “In Yokohama nearly every foreign male resident (excepting missionaries) came to employ a musume or ‘young woman as a mistress’” (p. 154). The Japanese women who serviced these men were called “rashamen” (washer women) and they were often ostracised by Japanese society.

It was also at the beginning of the Meiji era that Japanese women began to have official encounters with the West. The Meiji government’s changing attitude towards female education created the first opportunity for women of the middle and upper classes to have a first-hand educational experience in the West. The reform of female education in the Meiji era, including the emergence of the discourse of feminised ryugaku or study overseas, is discussed in the following section.

3.3.3 Women’s education from Meiji Restoration to pre-WWII

The impact of the first educational reform at the beginning of the Meiji Restoration was phenomenal, particularly for women. Central to women’s education was the famous twin ideal of ryosai (good wife) and kenbo (wise mother). According to Nolte and Hastings (1991), ryosai-kenbo propaganda urged women to “contribute
to the nation through their hard work, their frugality, their efficient management, their care of the old, young and ill and their responsible upbringing of children.” In short, a woman’s main task was seen to be to raise children (more specifically, boys) to be disciplined and useful citizens for the country and the emperor.

At the same time, the reform had an element of a call for gender equality. According to Hara (1995), the reform included two main streams of educational ideology: bunmei kaika (civilization and enlightenment) and a Confucian-based philosophy which emphasized loyalty to the emperor. Hara (1995) notes that the concept of bunmei kaika promoted the idea of personal advancement through education and marked the breaking down of the strict class system and promoting of the idea of equality among ‘all’ people regardless of gender, age and class. Thus, the bunmei kaika ideology saw the elimination of illiteracy among both sexes as being crucial to the building of a strong, modern nation.

The Meiji government had another incentive for improving women’s education. At that time, officials were concerned about the way Japan was viewed by the Western nations and they saw the unequal treaties with the United States as being a clear sign that the West considered Japan uncivilized (Rose, 1992). In order to improve its international standing, the Meiji government adopted the Western ideal of elevating women’s education and social status, even to the extent of sending Japanese women overseas for their education.

In terms of the "Iwakura" Mission" in the 1870s, the Meiji government began sending elite politicians, scholars and students to the United States and other European countries. As it was an enormously expensive operation, initially only elite

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8 However, the emperor remained sacred and above all the commoners who were taught to treat him as a god and the father of Japan as a family nation-state (Hara, 1995).
9 The mission was named after the Japanese oligarchy.
males were sent overseas. Therefore, it was a radical decision to include five young girls in the Mission to the United States. Their main purpose was to acquire American knowledge and apply such knowledge in Japan to build a modern nation which in their view required educating women to be good daughters and mothers.

One of the five girls, Ume Tsuda, profoundly changed Japanese women’s education in terms of studying English as a foreign language (Kelsky, 2001b; Rose, 1992). Upon return to Japan, Tsuda established the first women’s college in which English was introduced as one practical means through which women, by qualifying as English teachers, could become financially independent and thus physically and spiritually break away from the backward, chauvinist Japan of old. Tsuda’s experience is one of the first historical links between English and Japanese women’s way of life. It indicated that the English language had begun to be seen as a woman’s means of making a living and escaping from dependence on men and thus achieving more control over her life course. This history helps to show why how and why, from Tsuda’s time, English language education, English-related jobs and ryugaku increasingly became a woman’s domain, a point which is explained more fully later.

Kelsky (2001b) point out that another historically significant figure in the discourse of akogare for the West is Yukie Mishima, who was active in both the pre- and post-WWII eras. As a graduate of Tsuda College, she was a true believer in the West, Western masculinity and Western romance. She used the teaching of English as the means of financially supporting herself and her family. To earn American dollars, she published several books in English giving an account of her five-year experience of living and studying in the United States. Central to her narrative was her admiration for Western men and her abhorrence of Japanese men and the Japanese
patriarchy. The first incident after her arrival in the United States confirmed her longstanding image of the gallantry of American men.

In a distracted state of mind, I dropped all sorts of things in the street – handbag, gloves, hat, umbrella... - but there was always some American gentleman appearing and picking them up for me...[my fellow students and I] were overwhelmed by the masculine courtesy shown in this country” (Mishima, 1941, p. 100).

Mishima (1941) also described Western men and Western romance as superior to that available in Japan men by recalling the way young people interacted with her at a party which led her to proclaim “it was entirely natural that I was more attracted to American than Japanese boys” (p. 128-129).

With increasing foreign contact during the post-World War II period in Japan, women’s contempt for Japanese men and akogare for Western men and the concept of Western romance, evident in Mishima’s writings, were going to grow even more intense.

3.3.4 The Occupation period: suffrage and the panpan

Johnson (1988) describes the Allied Occupation between 1945 and 1952 as the “sexual nexus” (p. 73) for Japanese women and Western men (mainly Americans). When Japan surrendered unconditionally and the America-led occupation began under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur (the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers or SCAP), the encounters between the two parties inevitably increased and grew more intimate, both officially and unofficially. The Occupation was a historically significant period in the development of the discourse of akogare for the West and Western men. During this time, Western men were increasingly seen as
liberatory agents and Japanese women’s relationships with them were further romanticised and eroticised (Kelsky, 2001b). Two contexts below attest this claim.

Firstly, there was the reform of women’s legal rights. One of the first initiatives taken by SCAP was to give women the right to vote and participate in the political life of the country. According to Pharr (1987), a quick move to improve women’s status in Japan immediately after the surrender was considered by the Occupation authorities as “part of a larger effort to reform an antidemocratic family system considered by the Americans to be a root cause of the militarism and fascism that had led to the war” and thus it was seen as a “basic step toward the goal of democratizing Japanese society” (p. 222). Many Americans had the view that Japanese women, oppressed under the feudal social and familial system, needed to be liberated and the Occupation’s role was “to assist in this process” (Hirano, 1992, p. 72). Kelsky (2001b) points out that gradually, many Japanese women began to associate such liberation with the Occupation and America, intensifying their narrative of the West as a liberatory agent. Therefore, as Dower (1999) suggests, a certain picture had emerged during the Occupation period, in which Japan was seen as an oppressed female figure in urgent need of liberation with America acting as a masculine force on a mission to save the collective Japanese “damsel-in-distress.”

A second notable development in the overall context was the eroticisation of the power relations between Japanese women and American men. According to Yoneda (1972), when the unconditional surrender was announced, the first action the Japanese officials undertook to protect the chastity of Japanese women was to establish an organised system of prostitution to cater for the sexual needs of the hundreds of thousands of American GIs and other allied soldiers who were arriving in several major cities in Japan. The government advertised for what were called “comfort
women” suggesting they would fulfil a role of national honor. Hundreds of young women, often from the lower class or orphans, responded to the appeal and 1,360 women, with little experience in the sex industry, began working in the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) (Dower, 1999). By 1946, there were reportedly 668 registered brothels in Tokyo alone and approximately 8,000 Japanese women were working in them (Gayn, cited in Johnson, 1988, p. 75). These sex workers and other women who intimately associated with the Allied troops came to be called *panpan* and became symbolic figures of Japan’s early years after the defeat (Leupp, 2003). Dower (1999) points out that similar to *geisha*, the *panpan* capitalised on their most valuable talent, English proficiency, in servicing their American customers. Although their English was often ridiculed as ‘*panglish*’ (for its mixture of a prostitute’s rough Japanese and a GI’s unsophisticated English), these women’s ability to speak English was highly envied in post war Japan where “hundreds of thousands of men were also struggling to survive by dealing with the conqueror in the conqueror’s tongue” (Dower, 1999 p. 135)\(^{10}\).

Japanese women’s encounters with American GIs were not limited to sex work: genuine romance and marriage did occur and was not infrequent. According to Johnson (1988), although interracial marriage was officially prohibited at first, an estimated 20,000 American GIs had married Japanese women by 1955 and during the 1950s, war brides of servicemen constituted 80% (36,000) of the more than 45,000 Japanese immigrants in the United States (Espiritu, 1997).

As mentioned earlier, there had already been ample carnal encounters between Japanese women and Western men prior to WWII. However, the American-led legal

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\(^{10}\) I recall that my supervisor for a master’s thesis once told me how as a student of English after WWII, he envied the *panpans’* fluency in English and access to native speakers of English (i.e. their
and educational reforms, the phenomena of the “panpan” and increasing numbers of
encounters between ordinary Japanese women served further to construct the Japanese
image of interactions between feminine Japan and masculine United States (Dower,
1999). The next section provides an account of further social and educational changes
in the lives of Japanese women since the 1980s.

3.3.5 Japanese women, English and study overseas in postwar Japan

During the post-war years, a small but increasing number of Japanese women
began to travel overseas to study (Bennett et al., 1958). However, the opportunity to
specialise in English and study overseas was still limited to women who were
fortunate enough to receive a rare scholarship or had family financial support.

In post-war Japan, the good mother/good wife ideal persisted (Tipton, 2000).
Women were not expected to enter the mainstream workforce after their compulsory
education and often did nothing more than await a proposal of marriage. Even if they
did work, they were only allowed to occupy a position of little importance (e.g.,
receptionists, elevator girls, office clerks), as they were seen as “cheap” and
“disposable” (Tipton, p. 214). Their wages were generally much lower than male
workers and they had few prospects of career promotion; resignation after marriage
was the norm, rather than an option. Although women were not prevented from
entering higher levels of education in post-war Japan, societal expectations pushed
girls towards two-year women’s junior colleges and away from four-year university
courses.
In the 1980s, one of the most significant measures to rectify the issue of gender inequality in the workplace was introduced in the form of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL). The EEOL was introduced in 1985 to encourage employers to ensure equal opportunity in “recruiting and hiring, job assignment and advancement, vocational training and dismissal procedures” (Iwao, 1993, p. 177). In practice, however, researchers point out that the law was “toothless” (Bailey, 1996, p. 163) as it lacked stipulations for enforcement. In reality, many companies that seemed to incorporate the idea of equal opportunity did not take the EEOL seriously and continued to discriminate against women. Even after the long awaited changes in the law, many Japanese women faced many forms of discrimination and could not improve their chances of advancing their career within company (Allison, 2004).

According to Andressen and Kumagai (1996), as a result of frustration at their marginalised social positions and the slow pace of improvement in gender equality in Japan, an increasing number of women were “opting to spend some time outside of their country” (p. 69). These women, who tended to be young female workers (often called “OL” for “office ladies”) were beginning to exert their increasing financial power. In the late 1990s, a bestselling book called the *Parasite Single’s Generation* (Yamada, 1999), referred to this newly affluent group of single young women who, as a result of living with their parents, had a high level of disposable income and free time, as ‘parasites’. With the strong yen and the advantage of having relatively few career commitments and responsibilities and with the ever growing allure of internationalisation, many young Japanese women began to invest in learning English and to pursue their dreams of living and studying overseas (Kelsky, 2001b; Kobayashi, 2002; Matsui, 1995). It was also around this time that, due to the booming
economy, many affluent parents in their 40s and 50s began to send their daughters overseas for an opportunity to learn from an international perspective.

The gender differences in motivations for international experience had already been identified in the 1950s. Bennett, et al. (1958) argue that Japanese women’s key motivation in seeking education in the United States had been “the desire to live in a freer social climate, one in which they could expect some social equality with men” (p. 158). With the social and educational system designed to discourage women from taking an active role in society, it was, as Bennett et al. noted, “little wonder that the romantic conception of emancipated Western women diffused rapidly throughout the world of women’s education in Japan” (p. 158). Bennett et al. point out that Japanese women were in general more socially outgoing than their male counterparts, making the interesting observation that women who had the greatest social participation were those who were physically attractive, young and unmarried and had diffuse or weak academic goals or commitments. Those young, single, attractive women were invited to social occasions much more frequently than older, married, or physically unattractive women. It was reported that Japanese men had few such opportunities.

Matsubara’s (1989) interviews with female “English experts” are also illustrative of the feminisation of English study and study overseas. During the bubble economy period of the 1980s, Matsubara investigated what it meant for Japanese women to be able to speak English and the perceived benefit of English language skills. She found that although men’s attempts to study English had very little effect on their already secure career path, women’s lifestyles, identities and career and marriage prospects were enormously changed by studying English and living/working overseas. Matsubara’s informants’ initial reasons for studying English or going overseas were often their admiration for the West (particularly America). As one of
her informants commented, “I think I wanted to study English because of the American TV soap opera. I used to think, ‘Wow, that’s fantastic, what a nice house.’ It was my *akogare* [for America]” (Matsubara, 1989, p. 24). One secretary at a foreign affiliated company confessed that, to a large extent, English was at “the core of her being.” She believed that “As long as a woman can speak, type and do shorthand in English, she can take care of herself” (p. 28). On the other hand, she believed that it was necessary to have a university degree in order to move up the ladder and become a “true” expert in the international business world. Despite the fiercely competitive nature of the international business scene, these internationally-minded women preferred working in foreign affiliated companies, as there their worth was judged on their skills and performance, as opposed to in Japanese companies where their value was immediately undermined by chauvinistic middle-aged Japanese men who hated “women like us” (p. 25).

A recent study by Kobayashi (2002) sheds more light on the feminisation of the English language study/professions and highlights several feminist issues surrounding the phenomenon. Kobayashi found that female secondary school students expressed more positive attitudes towards learning English and were likely to consider English related occupations more attractive than their male counterparts. Based on a multidisciplinary literature review, she explains the growing popularity of English among women as having been motivated by (1) the status of English as a feminised area of study and profession and (2) Japanese women’s marginalized status in a male dominated society. In Kobayashi’s view, Japanese media is largely responsible for creating, disseminating and maintaining the discourse of “English for women” resulting in their more frequent choice of English as a major at university and an occupation being chosen more frequently by women than by men.
According to Norton and Pavlenko (2004b), foreign language study, and particularly ELL, is generally a feminised domain across the world. The literature review above highlights a similar trend in Japan. Research by Bennett et al. (1958), Matsubara (1989), and Kobayashi (2002) raise a wide range of crucial issues vis-à-vis the feminisation of English-related study and careers. These authors provide an important insight into how gender as a system of social relations impact on educational, occupational and linguistic choices for Japanese young women. Their findings are further evidence for the necessity of investigation into gendered language desire, the object of my research which attempts to provide further insight into the gendered nature of language learning experiences of Japanese women in intercultural encounters.

An increasing number of studies have argued that English study and study abroad are not only feminised but also highly romanticised avenues for Japanese women as they seek to break away from outdated Japanese traditions and find a new self and pursue their often sexualised and eroticised akogare for the emancipatory West and its modern and liberatory White males subjects (Kelsky, 2001b). This topic is dealt with in the next section.

3.3.6 Japanese women and Western men: the “yellow cab” discourse

During the bubble economy period of the 1980s, the public image of English and overseas study by Japanese women became rather problematic. In the late 1980s, Japanese women’s (sexual) adventures overseas began to be the centre of media attention and these women were called “yellow cabs,” nicknamed after taxis in New York which were said to be easy to get in and out of. Ieda’s (1991) controversial “non-fiction” book Yellow Cabs, which became a best seller, initiated the “yellow
“Yellow cab” discourse about groups of young Japanese women who were sexually adventurous in foreign metropolitan cities. It turned out, however, that the “yellow cab” discourse was largely fabricated by the author, and some consider that the male dominated Japanese media simply used the criticism to exercise control over young Japanese women overseas (Ma, 1996; Toyota, 1994). Nevertheless, “yellow cab” quickly became a popular term and was increasingly used to describe Japanese women who associated with foreign men, stigmatising their attempts to study English both in Japan and overseas.

Although the “yellow cab” phenomenon was blown out of proportion by the media, studies show that many Japanese women did have an admiration for the West and Western men and that some groups of women did engage in romantic and sexual adventures with foreign men both on- and off-shore (Kelsky, 1996; Kelsky, 2001b; Ma, 1996; McGregor, 1996). With their increasing financial power combined with strong yen, a growing sense of independence and changing views on marriage, many Japanese women became eager to pursue romantic and sexual fantasies with foreign men in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Honolulu, Yokosuka and Roppongi. One of Ma’s “OL” informants for example, claimed that having a gaijin boyfriend was in fashion (p. 69-70). Her informant’s female friends were also eager to date foreigners, equating walking with gaijin men to “wearing Chanel perfume and carrying a Louis Vuitton bag.” Miyazaki (1997) quotes a Japanese woman who succeeded in finding a “White” marriage partner in England as saying, “It brings me tremendous pleasure to see the envious looks of my friends when I say, ‘my husband is British’” (p. 135). She confessed that, “I was afraid that if I married an average kind of Japanese man after the age of 32, my friends would think, ‘Her husband is not so great’. But if it is a gaijin husband, they would think, ‘she has done well’” (p. 135).
This comment as well as the many narratives about Western men (and their differences to Japanese men) that I collected from my participants during my fieldwork indicates to me that there is a widely circulating discourse in which White boyfriends/husbands are constructed as a sought-after commodity, conferring on the Japanese female partner an international status and upward social mobility which are the envy of friends (Kelsky, 2001b).

Kelsky (2001b) points out that Japanese women seem to be attracted to two qualities in foreign/Western men. Firstly, in general, foreign men are considered to be kakkoii, or good-looking. Miyazaki (1997) found that many Japanese women admitted that gaijin “looks” were an important factor in their preference for Westerners over Japanese men. One woman said, “If I had to choose based on the looks, it is definitely the gaijin. There is no Japanese man who looks like Tom Cruise, is there?” (p. 145). Another woman confessed, “children of mixed nationalities are so cute. So, the absolute requirements (for my gaijin partner) are blond hair and blue eyes” (p. 145). Secondly, apart from the facial features, being tall and having long legs are also widespread images of Western men admired by many Japanese women. In one of the websites for “international understanding,” one Japanese woman described an average looking gaijin man as “1,000 times better looking than a Japanese movie star!!!!!!!!!![sic]” (Tokyo International Friendship, 2001).

Ma (1996) argues that Japanese women’s akogare for Western men is rooted in their fantasies about Western chivalry. Japanese women tend to believe that Western men are all yasashii (kind, courteous, understanding, generous, believers in the “ladies first” principle), and that they apply this “indiscriminately to every gaijin man they meet” (Ma, 1996, p. 92). Behind Japanese women’s narratives of the kakkoii and yasashii gaijin man is that Western men seem to embody all the desired qualities
lacking in Japanese men (Russell, 1998). For example, in Takahashi’s (1989, p. 236) book, *How to Date a Foreign Man*, she openly criticises Japanese men by saying that they are “the least popular among all the men of the civilised world....Added to their meager physiques is their clumsiness in treating women and their lack of gentlemanly manners.” Given this dichotomy, the *akogare* discourse about Western men can be understood as a counter discourse to that of Japanese patriarchy and the demands that the backward and unromantic nature of Japanese men be accepted without question.

In addition, race is a crucial factor in the *akogare* discourse about foreign men among Japanese women. Their idealised foreign friends, lovers and husbands are often White Westerners from the major nations such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia. In contrast, although there was a popularised discourse about black men among Japanese women during the “yellow cab” frenzy, Kelsky (2001b) and Ma (1996) point out that being black lacks the universal appeal that the White men have enjoyed for decades. For instance, Miyazaki (1996) reported that Japanese women who attended “international singles parties” did not find Asian foreign men attractive and were usually looking for blue-eyed, blond-haired White men. Miyazaki cites the case of one girl who complained that it was difficult to find the White man of her dreams, claiming that “I am not a racist, but, I trusted the title of the party – Elite European salary men only – but when I attended it, it was all Asian men” (p. 143). She spelled out her true desires by saying, “When I talk about the foreign country of my dreams to live in, I mean Canada or England, so I want to meet blond-haired good-looking Canadian or English men...” (p. 143). Kelsky concludes that Japanese media tend to represent the White lover “as the most coveted status symbol and route towards social upward mobility” (p. 143).
As mentioned in Chapter 2, Japanese women's romantic *akogare* for Western men has not attracted the attention of researchers in SLA studies (Piller, 2002a; Piller & Takahashi, in press). Such studies contain very little information as to how the desire of young Japanese women for foreign men, the West and for English become established and connected or how they impact on the way in which they pursue the task of learning English as a foreign/second language. If female students do have *akogare* for White Western men, how does that construct their sociolinguistic practices in their everyday life in Sydney? Even if Japanese women do not particularly have *akogare* for White men, how does being exposed to the widely circulating discourse of *akogare* for White men affect the way they make social and linguistic choices in Sydney? My study aims to provide an insight into these questions.

### 3.4 Gendered English education and *ryugaku*

As in many non-English speaking countries involved engaged in processes of rapid globalisation, the spread of English in Japan has been phenomenal. Since the 1970s, English has been the icon of the government-led effort aimed at achieving “*kokusaika*” (internationalisation) of technology, education, commerce, transportation and communication (Kubota, 2002). There has been much debate as to how Japan can produce citizens who can use English to communicate effectively in international settings (Ministry of Education Culture Sports Science and Technology, 2003).

Since the end of World War II, English has been a compulsory subject in secondary and tertiary schools. In general, however, many Japanese consider school English education as being rather ineffective in producing fluent speakers. Teaching methods (i.e., rote memorisation), teachers' lack of fluency, the nature of university
entrance examinations and the lack of opportunity to practise outside school are believed to have contributed to this problem (Tsuda, 1995).

The bubble economy of the 1980s saw a mushrooming of hundreds of thousands of eikaiwa (English conversation schools) schools throughout the country (Bailey, 2002). Their success was largely due to their ability to provide what school English education could not offer: small classes, native-speaker teachers, conversation-based teaching methods and flexible time tables. Recent studies (Bailey, 2002; Kobayashi, 2002) show that Japanese female students have more positive attitudes towards the English language than those of the male students and that more women than men study English at university and private schools. Bailey and Tsuda (2000) report that much of the English language industry in Japan is indeed supported by young Japanese women (see also Chapter 5 for more discussion on this topic). Furthermore, during the bubble economy period, young Japanese women (i.e., teens to 30-year olds) began going overseas to study English on both short- and long-term bases. In particular, short-term ESL study programs in the United States became popular among middle class Japanese women. The scope of these programs ranged from serious academic endeavour, and attempts by individuals to test their progress in English after several years of eikaiwa training, to a modified version of a short-term vacation before marriage (Seo, 1992). According to Miya (1997), the term “OL ryugaku” was invented to refer to two types of feminised study overseas. The first type, the “career-up ryugaku,” OLs would resign from their jobs and enrol in a certificate course (most popularly a secretarial course) at a college or a vocational school overseas with the hope that their English skills and international exposure would earn them employment at a foreign affiliated company in Japan. The other type was the “little adventure ryugaku.” Dissatisfied with their OL jobs, women in this
category would often resigned in order to enrol in short-term ESL courses overseas, either to change their life-course or to enjoy their last years of freedom before their inevitable marriage.

Due to the historical factors mentioned earlier (Dower, 1999; Kelsky, 2001b; Leupp, 2003), the United States has dominated Japanese people's imagination of ryugaku for decades. However, Australia also began to attract Asian students in the 1980s and the number of young Japanese students coming to Australia has been on the increase. According to Australian Education International (AEI) (2000), the overwhelming majority of overseas students studying in Australia have come from Asia since 1994. Japanese women have become a significant part of the landscape of the growing Australian market for global international students, which are discussed in the next section.

3.4.1 Australia's international student market

In the past few decades, the global international student market has experienced phenomenal growth. In 2000, there were approximately 1.8 million international students in higher education institutions around the world. In the 1980s, Australia made a crucial shift, "[moving] away from providing education" as a part of its overseas aid program, to seeing education as an export commodity (Andressen & Kumagai, 1996, p. 34). In 1986, the Federal government began allowing international students into higher education courses on a full-fee paying basis (Sharpham & Harman, 1997). Since then, Australia has enjoyed economic success in internationalising not only higher education, but also all other types of educational services, including secondary education, vocational education and ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students). In 1993-94, only 722 full-fee
paying international students studied in Australia, but the number increased spectacularly (despite the Asian Meltdown in the late 1990s) to reach 303,324 in 2003 (AEI, 2005b), contributing well over $5 billion to the Australian economy (International Development Program [IDP], 2005). Australian education services have become Australia’s third largest “service” export after tourism and transportation and now constitute the ninth biggest export of all goods and services (IDP, 2005). IDP (2005) forecasts that the demand for international higher education in Australia will exceed 996,000 students by 2025.

Table 1

*International Student Enrolments in Australia from Top 10 Source Countries in 2003* (Source AEI, 2005a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Territory</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>57,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>23,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>22,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>20,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>19,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>18,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>17,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>14,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>12,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>11,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td>218,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other countries</strong></td>
<td>85,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>303,324</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 1, Asia is the decisive factor in Australia’s success in international education: Nine of the top ten source countries are in Asia, making up over 85% of the total international student population (Nelson, 2005). Australia’s popularity with Asian international students is conditioned by a variety of factors including its geographical proximity to Asia, relative safety, political stability and
relaxed lifestyle. Additional factors that have shaped this popularity include power relations between Asia and the West and English as a global language (EGL). Even in this post-colonial era, there is still tremendous prestige attached to education obtained from a Western country and studying in the West is considered to be a means of improving social, cultural and economic capital. ELICOS has attracted tens of thousands of Asian students from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and generated $800 million in 2004.

3.4.2 Japanese women in Australia

In the beginning of Australia’s international education enterprise, its share of Japan’s potential student market was relatively small. In the 1990s, in pursuit of finding new source countries, Australia began substantial marketing of its education opportunities to Japanese students (Andressen & Kumagai, 1996) and consequently, the number of Japanese students coming to study in Australia increased from 13,424 in 1996 to 18,987 in 2003. Table 2 shows the numbers of Japanese students in each educational sector for 1996 and 2003.

Table 2

Japanese students in Australia and Major Sector, 1996 and 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Vocational Education</th>
<th>School Education</th>
<th>ELICOS</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>2,911</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>7,994</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>4,639</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>8,790</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>18,987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The striking characteristic of Japanese international students in Australia has been their concentration in ELICOS schools and since the 1990s, they have
dominated the sector. The above statistics, however, may not effectively capture the extent of their presence. Statistical data on Japanese studying English in Australia that are currently available do not include learners of English on tourist and working holiday visas (Andressen & Kumagai, 1996). Japanese students can study English either full- or part-time for up to three months on a tourist visa in Australia and those coming to Australia on a working holiday visa can also study English during their stay. In 2003, approximately 628,000 Japanese people visited Australia and some 20,000 of these declared they had an “educational purpose” (ABS, 2005b). Furthermore, in the 2003-2004 period, approximately 10,000 Japanese received working holiday visas (Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs [DIMIA], 2005a) and many are believed to have enrolled in an English school at some stage during their stay (Nakane, 2003). Including visitors in their survey on ELICOS students, English Australia (ABS, 2005b) reports that Japan, along with the emerging source country, China, dominated the Asia Pacific market, contributing 32 percent of the region’s total enrolments in 2003.

Table 3

Japanese students in Australia by gender and age group, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18 yrs</td>
<td>1,285</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>2,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19 yrs</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>1,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 yrs</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>1,465</td>
<td>3,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29 yrs</td>
<td>1,323</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>1,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 yrs and above</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>1,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,239</td>
<td>3,981</td>
<td>10,220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another significant characteristic of Japanese students in Australia is the growing presence of young Japanese women in Australian education. As Table 3 shows, they significantly outnumbered their male counterparts in Australia in 2000.
(AEI, 2000). One of the earliest to recognise this phenomenon was Atsumi (1992), who stated:

The prevalence of females in this age group [i.e. 15-29] indicates certain characteristics of Japanese society...Some of these young women may come to Australia after finishing high school or some tertiary education or after working for a few years in Japan, wishing to learn English and/or taste life abroad (p. 17)

The way in which Japanese women outnumber men in overseas education enrolment (Ichimoto, 2000) is an unparalleled phenomenon in the Asian region. The pattern of stated motivations for studying English in Australia among Japanese women students provide little support for the general belief that Asian students undertake overseas education courses for economic or career reasons. Studies of Japanese female overseas students conducted by Andressen and Kumagai (1996), Habu (2000), Matsui (1995), and Ichimoto (2000) found that women who leave for overseas are not primarily driven by career-related future prospects, but rather, “in their pursuit of greater freedom and self-development, to relax, to escape from social pressures and to look for an alternative way of living that can free women from the constraints of life in Japan” (p.2). As mentioned earlier, although some Japanese women’s engagement with English language studies and ryugaku may be motivated by economic factors, the literature suggests that hopes of economic advantage are not necessarily the only or even the primary factor. Several researchers (Bailey, 2002; Kelsky, 2001b; Matsubara, 1989) suggest that desire for an English language-related career is also linked to the empowerment Japanese women believe they will gain as they struggle to escape from the traditional Japanese workplace as well as to the belief that it will also give them more access to the alluring international world. Further, they may also believe that this will enable them to participate in a social space in which they can invent and perform their international identities.
The studies and statistics cited above suggest important links between the situation of women in Japan and the study of the English language and ryugaku. Nevertheless, there has been a lack of empirical inquiry into how Japanese women's socioeconomic, gender, cultural, political and historical backgrounds affect their day-to-day experiences in learning and using the English language in Australia. For example, once they arrive, how do they negotiate their opportunities to practise English and how does this change over time? How are they positioned by local people with whom they come into contact and how does this affect the way they see themselves and socialise in Sydney? Are their commonalities between those types of individuals with whom Japanese women interact while overseas? Furthermore, if ryugaku is not primarily driven by economic factors, what do they consider as success or failure in their ryugaku and English-learning experiences and how does that affect the way they position themselves in society? My research aims to provide context-based insights into these questions.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the discourse of Japanese women's akogare for the West, for English and for Western men. My theoretical framework for desire is based on the contributions by Cameron and Kulick (2003b), Deleuze and Guattari (1996), Foucault (1978) and most especially, by (Kelsky, 2001b). She sees desire, specifically Japanese women's language desire for English, as a historical and discursive construction embedded in power relations between Japan and foreign countries, in particular, the West.

As discussed in Chapter 2, little attention has been paid to the link between motivation for learning a second language and the romantic meanings attached to the
language and the speakers of that language (Piller, 2002a; Piller, 2005a; Piller & Takahashi, in press). However, as my review of the historical relationship between Japanese women and the West suggests, an investigation of such links may provide meaningful insights into understanding how people choose to learn or not to learn a second/foreign language and may reveal a complex relationship between gender, race, power and language learning.

Furthermore, I have identified some evidence that Japanese women's language desire for English and *akogare* for going overseas are intricately linked, not simply with desire for improvement in economic status, but also with desire for self-fulfilment (Andressen & Kumagai, 1996), a new lifestyle (Kelsky, 2001b) or identity reconstruction (Matsubara, 1989; Matsui, 1995). To date, there is little research that investigates how such desires affect the way Japanese female learners of English interact with various social actors in everyday contexts. In addition, little information is known about how such desires may change as a result of their exposure to, attainment of, or disillusionment with, their objects of *akogare* (e.g., the West, Western men, and English speaking ability) and how such experiences may affect the way Japanese women construct their future life trajectory. My ethnographic study offers a longitudinal picture of Japanese women's language desire and how changes in their *akogare* discourses, increased English fluency and knowledge of another culture, may together assist in the construction of future life courses.
Chapter 4: Research design

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, data collection and data analysis used in this study. The following section provides a rationale for developing this particular research methodology. The third section contains a description of the types of data collected and discusses the participant selection process. The fourth section introduces the participants in this study. The fifth section describes the method of data analysis. The sixth section discusses possible limitations of the study and this is followed by the last section which summarises the chapter.

4.2 Research method and design

4.2.1 Research questions: from the exploratory stage to the present focus

Wolcott (1992, p. 7) points out that to conduct an inquiry of any form, one must have an idea that inevitably reflects “human judgment.” As the inquiry proceeds, this initial, rough idea must become both better focused and informed (Madison, 2005b).

My research began with a broad interest in understanding Japanese students’ experiences in learning and using English in Sydney. In keeping with the spirit of the qualitative research paradigm (which is discussed in more detail in the following section), I first explore what was considered as important by the Japanese students so as to narrow the focus to a more specific issue to be investigated. Therefore, at the exploratory stage of data collection, three broad questions were asked about my participants:
1. their reasons for wanting to study English;
2. their reasons for wanting to study English overseas; and
3. their experiences of learning and using English in Sydney.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the exploratory analysis of the informal conversations based on these broad research questions helped to identify a specific phenomenon, namely the discourse of *akogare* among Japanese female students. Substantial differences between the men and women were identified in terms of their accounts of their reasons for studying English in Australia. On the one hand, the male students’ explanations focused on English as an international language and its link with their future careers. On the other, although female students also discussed that link, many provided a more “romantic” view of English and its association with the West and Western male celebrities, while at the same time elaborating on their feelings of *akogare* from their childhood. Consultation with supervisors and the ongoing literature review ultimately led to the study being focused on the experiences of Japanese female students and on an exploration of the notion of their *akogare* in relation to ELL.

The development and refinement of the research questions continued throughout the study, following the techniques described in Neuman (2000). Based on the initial finding at the exploratory stage and continuing literature review (e.g., Kelsky, 2001b; Matsubara, 1989; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001; Weedon, 1997), three specific research questions were developed, while later fieldwork and analyses led to the fourth question:

1. How is young Japanese women’s language desire constructed?
2. What does it mean to the young Japanese women to go overseas to study English?
3. How do young Japanese women’s language desire and their identities impact on the process, practices and outcomes of learning English in Sydney and vice versa?
4. What are the consequences of *ryugaku*?

As discussed in Chapter 2 and 3, *akogare*, or language desire, is considered in this study as a socio-historically specific discursive construction, rather than an internal state of mind (Bailey, 2002; Cameron & Kulick, 2003a; Kelsky, 2001b). Thus, the aim of the first question is to gain insights into how the nature of language desire is constructed and re/produced at macro and micro levels. This is coupled with an investigation of the link between that concept and the women’s decision to move overseas for *ryugaku*.

Taking *ryugaku* not only as a way of changing lifestyles and reinventing identities (see Chapter 6), but also a gendered form of international migration (see Chapter 9), the second question addresses the relationship between language desire, international mobility and women’s identities.

Regardless of the outcome of research questions 1 and 2, it is necessary to examine the constitutive day-to-day effect of language desire on identity and language learning experiences in Sydney. Question 3 is in many ways the core part of the fieldwork, in which I observe the ways in which language desire and the identities of participants constructed, and are constructed, in and by power relations and sociolinguistic practices in various social spaces in Sydney. Furthermore, the salient finding that many participants became increasingly reluctant to return to Japan, led to the fourth question, which address the consequences of *ryugaku* in terms of participants’ relations to language desire, emergent hybrid identity and migratory desire.

These research questions have been designed to shed light on the social and gendered discourse of Japanese women’s desire for the English language, Western masculinity and identity transformation. As such, the present research offers a culture-,
gender- and context-specific conceptualisation of language desire among young Japanese women (see Chapter 10). Furthermore, this study explores the relationship between language desire and ryugaku as a migratory desire.

The processes of developing research questions are within the parameters of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998), which is discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Qualitative research

Since the concept of “qualitative research” often means different things to different researchers, it is necessary to outline first how it is understood in this thesis. Qualitative research is characterised by the belief that “reality cannot be subsumed within numerical classification” (Burns, 2000, p. 11). According to Foley and Valenzuela (2005), qualitative researchers have moved away from “the grand positivist vision of speaking from a universalistic, objective standpoint for a more modest notion of speaking from a historically and culturally situated standpoint” (p. 218). In this paradigm, reality and experience are considered as socially and historically constructed and thus they have multiple realities and interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). Qualitative researchers are often interested in investigating how experiences and subjectivities are created and the ways in which people give meaning to these experiences (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). In other words, qualitative researchers are not primarily interested in objectivity or value neutrality, but rather, aim to produce “authentic interpretations that are sensitive to specific social-historical contexts” (Neuman, 2000, p. 122). The present research aims to achieve this goal with the focus on Japanese women’s language desire and its effect on their experiences in learning and using English with various social actors.
As described in Chapter 1, qualitative research is a cyclical, non-linear process (Burns, 2000; Davis, 1995; Neuman, 2000), which involves “collecting data, conducting data analysis through which propositions are formed, testing these through further, more focused data collection and so on until redundancy is achieved” (Davis, 1995, p. 444). Flick (2002) states that circularity is one of the advantages of qualitative research because “it forces the researcher to permanently reflect on the whole research process and on particular steps in light of the other steps” (p. 43). As mentioned earlier, my four research questions were formed and refined in this manner.

It must be noted, however, that qualitative research is not a single, coherent school of theory approach, or methodology. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005b) point out, it consists of “a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions” (p. 2) and is based on differential and sometimes competing, paradigms such as postpositivism, interpretivism, constructivism, hermeneutics and feminism. Therefore, qualitative research is a rich site of multiple paradigms and offers a wide range of research strategies and techniques (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, 2003). There are no “preferred” research methods: Depending on the nature of research questions asked and the targeted audience, qualitative researchers may draw on a wide range of methods, strategies and reporting styles (Burns, 2000; Madison, 2005b; Marcus & Fischer, 1986).

While acknowledging its diversity, there are nevertheless several common elements of qualitative research that also underlie the nature of the present research. According to Merriam (1998, p. 6-8), it is possible to assume five commonalities in qualitative inquiry:
1. development of an “emic” or insider view;
2. fieldwork;
3. the researcher as a research instrument;
4. inductively oriented approach whereby theory is born out of data collection and analysis; and
5. a thick description of the phenomenon under investigation.

The current research employs each of these characteristics, which are discussed in the following section.

4.2.3 Ethnography with a critical orientation

An ethnographic approach has been adopted in this study to achieve the research aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of Japanese people's experiences in learning English. Although there are different terms and genres in ethnography, they share both a context-rich, interpretive orientation and the primary goal in that they seek to capture the "insider account of what is going on in a particular society" (Piller, 2002a, p. 184). Ethnography incorporates a variety of research designs, data collection techniques, various levels of data analysis and ways of representing data (Agar, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b; Rice & Ezzy, 1999; Tedlock, 2000; Watson-Gegeo, 1988). There are two commonly employed ethnographic methods include participant observation (whereby the ethnographer directly takes part in everyday life in a chosen setting) and interviews (e.g., structured, unstructured, open ended) (Agar, 1996). This research mainly draws on both of these but also includes a collection of documents (media discourse). A more detailed description of methods of data collection will be provided in Section 4.3.

Ethnographic practice is characterised by the general belief that human reality is a social construction, as are theories and values (Lather, 1991; Strine, 1991). On that basis the research was designed to produce what Geertz (1973, p. 5) and Denzin (1989, p. 159) call "thick description," which in this context consists of a detailed
account of discourses of Japanese women’s *akogare*. Additionally, this research has been organised to provide interpretations that are sensitive to the specific socio-historical context within which my participants, the related discourses and I, as a researcher, have been situated.

The orientation of the current research was initially descriptive. However, following the work of critical discourse analysts and critical SLA researchers such as Norton (2000), Canagarajah (1999), Goldstein (2001), Piller (2000), and Burton (1994), a critical approach has been increasingly adopted. Although these researchers have different research aims and operate in different contexts, they share some important similarities.

First of all, in keeping with the tenets of qualitative research described above, critical ethnographers challenge the view that any research can claim to be objective or unbiased (Carspecken, 1996; Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Madison, 2005b; Norton Peirce, 1995b; Thomas, 1993). Critical ethnographers consider that reality is an “interpreted” reality (Strine, 1991) and thus see themselves as a primary instrument or “co-performer” (Madison, 2005b, p. 22) in constructing and interpreting meanings with participants.

Secondly, critical ethnography focuses on the issue of power relations (Grbich, 2004). Critical ethnographers assume that inequalities based on gender, race, language and sexual orientations are reproduced in and by unequal power relations in society (Norton Peirce, 1995b). Madison (2005b, p. 5) argues that the critical ethnographer “takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the status quo and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control.” Therefore, a crucial task of critical ethnographers is to pay close attention to the interrelationship between human
experiences, discourses and wider social, political and historical contexts in which power relations are constructed, promoted and contested.

Lastly, critical ethnography is oriented towards social change (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Madison, 2005a, 2005b; Norton, 2000; Toohey, 1995). Anderson (1989) considers that this emancipatory interest is what distinguishes critical ethnography from other interpretivist research. Madison (2005b, p. 5) points out that to achieve this goal, critical ethnography demands an ethical responsibility to “explore possibilities that may challenge institutions, regimes of knowledge and social practices that limit choices, constrain meaning and denigrate identities and communities.” Thus, she terms the end-product of a critical ethnography as the “performance of possibility” (Madison, 2005a, 2005b).

As the following chapters reveal, these four common characteristics of critical ethnography underlie the critical ethnography of Japanese women’s language desire in the present study.

4.2.4 Ethical considerations

To ensure an ethical form of knowledge production, two strategies were used to safeguard the rights of the participants in this study: informed consent and confidentiality (Fontana & Frey, 2003). These criteria were included in the application for ethics approval from the University of Sydney’s Human Ethical Review Committee.

All primary participants and several secondary participants received an information statement about the project (see Appendix 1) and their written consent (see Appendix 2) was obtained prior to interviewing. During the initial interview, it was explained that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to
withdraw at any time during the study. Pseudonyms were used for all participants in
the study.

A particular ethical issue with regard to the researcher-participant relationship
that was approached with care was the benefit of their participation. Participants had
busy lives and faced many difficulties in Sydney. Nevertheless, they contributed their
time and insights for the current study. Following Norton (2000) in her critical
ethnography, help with assignments, translation or transportation was offered in return
for their precious time. This ensured that the benefits of the research were not only
bi-directional, but that rapport between the researcher and participants was also
achieved (the issue of rapport is further discussed later in this chapter).

4.3 Data collection and analysis

The methods of data collection is discussed in this section. The first section
presents the participant selection. In the second section, the methods of data collection
of two types of data (i.e., micro- and macro-domain data) are discussed.

4.3.1 Participant selection

In June 2001, approval to recruit Japanese informants for the current study was
gained from a university-affiliated ELICOS school, Sydney College of English
(SCoE)\textsuperscript{11}. At the exploratory stage (July – August 2001), several male and female
Japanese students at SCoE were approached. From the time of the focus change to
Japanese women’s \textit{akogare} and its effect on their language learning, a search for more
female informants was performed. In ethnography it is a standard practice to study a

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spatially defined community of people and their "unique" culture. However, Kelsky (2001b) points out that Japanese women's desire for and the way they imagine the West are not "quantifiable or reducible to the standard ethnographic legitimizing techniques" because "[T]hey float in space, alight unexpectedly and resist institutionalization" (p. 27). Thus, it was decided that data collection would not be on a neatly unified community of Japanese women (e.g., female students at SCoE), but rather on a variety of discourses that circulate in various social spaces as reflected in the personal narratives of several Japanese women living and studying English in Sydney.

Criteria for selection of primary participants were that they be:

- Japanese women between the ages of 20 and 40;
- ESL students; and
- long-term (three months and more) students in Sydney.

In total, five Japanese women agreed to be primary participants. The first participant, Ichi, was recruited when she was enrolled in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at SCoE. All other participants, primary and secondary, were recruited through personal contacts in Sydney and Japan. Three of the primary participants, Yuka, Yoko and Chizuko, were introduced to me through Japanese social networks. The fifth primary participant, Eika, was a personal acquaintance from Japan. A detailed description of each participant and processes of recruitment and observation can be found in Appendix 3. Ethnographic data was collected from several other individuals, the secondary participants, to supplement the data provided by the primary participants. Descriptions of these secondary participants are also

11 This is a pseudonym for the language school.
included in the Appendix 4. The next section presents the types of data collected and how such data were gathered.

4.3.2 Methods of data collection

4.3.2.1 Overview of data sources

I collected discourses of akogare from multiple perspectives to gain in-depth insights. Data were drawn from the following sources:

1. Micro-domain data
   - Interviews
   - Participant observation

2. Macro-domain data
   - Media discourses (e.g., magazines, websites, advertisements and textbooks)

The following section discusses methods of data collection in more detail.

4.3.2.2 Interviews

Madison (2005b) points out that interviewing is “a dynamic process fundamental to ethnography” (p. 35). This study initially employed unstructured interviews with participants to ascertain what was central to their life experiences in living and learning English in Sydney. Once several salient themes emerged, interview questions became more focused to gain further and more specific insights into these themes. To be sensitive to my participants’ needs, these interviews took place in locations convenient to them such as cafés, at their places of residence, in my own home and my office at the university.
Due to the ethnographic nature of my fieldwork, it is somewhat difficult to distinguish between what could be classified as an “interview” and what could be classified as a “participant observation.” Fontana and Frey (2003, p. 74) discuss this issue and state that unstructured interview and participant observation “go hand in hand.” For the purpose of record in this chapter, the appointments made formally with my primary and secondary participants were considered to be interviews. There are a total of 23 informal interviews with the main participants. These interviews were all tape-recorded and ranged in length from half-an-hour to two hours. Tables giving the date of the interviews, their length and the main topics covered, are provided in Appendix 5.

Prior to each interview, I asked for permission to tape-record it, explaining that the participants had the right to refuse if they felt uncomfortable and assuring them that their anonymity would be protected. Tape-recording was stopped if participants became emotionally upset when talking about sensitive issues. All the interviews were conducted and transcribed in Japanese by me alone. In the later chapters, participants’ quotes are given in both the original Japanese and in English with my own translation (see Appendix 6 for transcription conventions).

The interview transcriptions were used to perform an in-depth analysis of the emergent focus of the data. Notes were made on frequently mentioned and emotionally expressed issues during and after the interviews. I kept notes of my own thoughts and reflections about the interviews kept, which ensured that not only were ideas recorded but that I remained self-reflective about interview techniques and their impact on the participants. Notes were also kept on recurring patterns and themes and likely explanations for these during transcription. The interview transcriptions were examined in detail:
1. to identify accounts on the focus issue of *akogare* mentioned by my participants and
2. to ascertain their explanations of their *akogare* and its effects on them from their own perspectives.

4.3.2.3 **Participant observation and fieldnotes**

Running concurrently with the interviews was a longitudinal observation of my main participants. Due to the nature of the study, the beginning and end points, as well as the amount of individual observation, varied for each participant. In general, the exploratory fieldwork began in July 2001 with several Japanese students (including Ichi) at SCoE. Once the main theme was narrowed to Japanese women’s *akogare* discourses, work with the other main participants commenced at different points in the data collection process (see Appendix 3) and lasted until approximately the beginning of 2005 (although information from some of the participants was being received even at that time of finalising the thesis). As mentioned earlier in the interview section, increasing participation in participants’ lives and changes in the topic itself led to frequent changes in my styles of participation, while types of observation also changed over time and across different contexts.

In the early stages of the research, it was explained to the participants that their lifestyles would be observed wherever and whenever possible. Due to the fact that the main participants were not located in a physically coherent space such as a school, or a workplace, interaction with them varied depending on their availability and their willingness to share their private space. Contact details including phone numbers, email addresses and home addresses were exchanged in order to facilitate meeting arrangements. Gradually, I began to be invited to social occasions such as having a coffee/dinner/drink, often with their other Japanese friends, going to
parties/pubs, going shopping, studying for exams, accompanying them on dates, 
visiting other friends, cleaning houses, moving houses, and so on. During the 
fieldwork phase, there was increasing e-mail, telephone and text message contact with 
my participants. Permission was sought and obtained, to make notes on these 
conversations.

Although attempts were made to take fieldnotes whenever possible, because 
so much was happening during these episodes, it was impossible to record everything. 
However, I attempted to be observant and self-reflective and, as recommended by 
Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 51), I noted down observations which included:

1. descriptions of people, events, or situations,
2. main and recurring themes,
3. research questions central to the particular contact,
4. "hunches" and speculation about what was happening.

I processed the fieldnotes as soon as possible after contacts and these were 
transcribed into the contact summary form (Miles & Huberman, p. 53). The form 
consists of the following questions:

1. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?
2. Summarize the information you got (or failed to get) on each of the target 
questions you had for this contact
3. Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating or important in 
this contact?
4. What new (or remaining) target questions do you have in considering the next 
contact with this site?

Over time the fieldnotes changed in style and length. As the research questions 
became more focused and refined, notes became more specific about those issues that 
were closely associated with the main interests. As is demonstrated in the analyses in 
the following chapters, the fieldnotes provided much rich data and insights.
4.3.2.4 Notes on relationships with participants

Over the close-on five-years of data collection, the rapport and relationships with my participants continued to change. Initial rapport was established relatively smoothly thanks to my cultural, linguistic and gender background as a Japanese woman. With younger participants (Yuka, Ichi, and Yoko), my seniority was a significant factor in gaining respect from these age-conscious Japanese participants at the start. As more informal relationships were established, similarities in age or of generation became a salient factor that helped create and maintain rapport. Although Chizuko was six years older than me, rapport was established relatively easily thanks to her youthful personality, friendliness and the fact that both of us were single women concerned with similar women’s issues. Eika was a longstanding acquaintance from Japan, and thus a strong sense of trust had already been developed.

As mentioned earlier, close friendship was highly facilitative during the data collection and analysis phase at the end of the study. Overall, the firm sense of rapport that I was able to achieve and maintain as a researcher and friend throughout this longitudinal ethnographic study contributed a great deal to the attainment of rich information during the interviews and the period of participant observation.

The latter increasingly involved the private lives of the main participants. Sometimes I, rather than being an impersonal academic researcher, took on the identity of a friend who simply happened to be doing a research project relevant to their lives. Participants seemed to be proud of being a part of a university study and in an attempt to be helpful, often introduced other Japanese women friends who were also enthusiastic about relating their stories about their *akogare* for English, the West and their internationally-oriented futures. Their enthusiasm confirmed the prevalence of *akogare* discourses among many Japanese women. During many “single girls”
nights out, I was positioned (and positioned myself) as “another single Japanese girl looking for a good-looking gaijin boyfriend.” On these occasions, the way the participants handled “ugly White men” or men that were non-English native speakers of English provided valuable insights into how they negotiated power and also acted as warning against seeing them simply as powerless victims of Occidentalism and English imperialism (see Chapter 10 for further discussion).

In the final analysis, therefore, the strength of this type of “intimate” fieldwork was the richness of the data it provided. If a single method of data collection or more formal approach had been taken, it is unlikely that the context-rich data that facilitated an in-depth understanding of their experiences would have been obtained. This richness in terms of contexts and sources strongly indicates that any analysis of the construction and negotiation of akogare, identity and power, needs to be context-specific. Another strength was my increasing sense of moral obligation in terms of interpretive and representative consequences. Feelings of gratitude for their participation and appreciation for their friendship, made it important to ensure that the current study did not represent them in a way that disempowered them or compromise their integrity. Moreover, the intimate nature of the friendships and interaction that developed, meant that data which went beyond polite comment and feedback (as is seen in the analyses of the following chapters) could be gathered. When checking interpretations, many felt free to say that these were mistaken on one point or another, which was highly valuable.

On the other hand, some weaknesses of this type of participant-researcher interaction were evident in the fact that in comparison to other more structured methods of data collection, the fieldwork raised pressing ethical issues at many times. Being a research student raised concerns about whether participants’ lives were being
changed as a result of the interaction. In some cases, getting to know my personal friends appeared to impact the way in which some participants perceived their experiences in learning and using English. For instance, one male acquaintance developed a romantic interest in Yoko during her visits to my office. Although she was not interested in him romantically, she considered friendship with him as an opportunity to improve her English.

However, these intimate, friendly associations with my participants in this study arose out of my realisation that attempting to maintain an objective stance in the fieldwork would not serve to obtain in-depth insights. It also became clear that it was not possible to interact with the participants without making an impact on their lives. Therefore, every attempt was made, in consultation with the supervisors, to ensure that my participants suffered no physical or emotional harm in the process. For instance, in the case of Yoko and her admirer, while both were seen as adults capable of making sensible decisions for themselves, the ethical issues were discussed with the male acquaintance. It was made clear to him that I had a strong feeling of responsibility for Yoko’s emotional wellbeing and that he needed to keep this in mind in his dealings with her.

4.3.2.5 Media discourses

The macro-domain data were drawn from media discourses that circulated in Japan and Australia during the process of data collection and analysis (2001 – 2005). At any one time, there are an enormous number of media circulating, particularly in “cyber space.” As mentioned in Chapter 3, studies by Kelsky (2001b), Bailey (2002) and Chang (2004) made it clear that media discourses found in women’s magazines, comics, advertisements, websites and English textbooks, would provide valuable data
in any investigation of the discursive construction of identities and SLL. Inspired by these studies, the following materials were collected and the description of them can be found in Appendix 7.

- Advertisements of English schools/courses
- English textbooks
- Magazines

With regard to choice of advertisements, Bailey (2002) points out that formalised sampling strategies are not necessarily useful when the purpose of the examination of particular images is to demonstrate analytical points. Nevertheless, it is important to be specific about how and why the advertisements analysed were chosen.

Firstly, I collected advertisements which seemed most representative of the genre under consideration; namely, those of English conversation schools and ryugaku programs. Due to their large variety, what was obtained cannot be considered as comprehensive. However, the fact that they were found in major books, magazines and social spaces in Tokyo indicates that they were reasonably available in the lives of the Japanese who were interested in learning English and studying overseas.

The materials were gathered during visits to Japan (January 2002, June 2002, December 2004, and December 2004-January 2005). These advertisements were found on trains, buses and in bookstores, but were mainly located in women’s magazines and ryugaku magazines. The major focus of the current study was on the advertisements used by one of the most major and popular English conversation schools in Japan: Gaba. Gaba’s advertisements were collected from various magazines as well as their website (http://www.gaba.co.jp). The case of Gaba has been briefly examined by Bailey (2002) and the present study aims to supplement his
findings by conducting a more comprehensive analysis of gendered-akogare
construction evident in Gaba promotional materials (see Chapter 5).

A variety of magazines was also collected for the current research: namely
women's magazines, English magazines and ryugaku magazines. As mentioned in
Chapter 3, women's magazines often carry articles on ELL and ryugaku programs.
While there is abundance of women's magazines, those of most interest were major
and popular publications, i.e., Cosmopolitan, an an and Nikkei Woman. Those
selected for the current research carried articles on English studies and also tips about
embarking on ryugaku. They were collected during visits to Japan, purchased through
the Internet or sent from Japan to Sydney.

Magazines that specialise in English studies were also collected and they were
selected on the basis that they carried features of renai (relationship) English (an
emerging genre of ESP which is further discussed in Chapter 5). Examples included:
English Zone, Virgin English and Good Luck by English. These magazines might not
be regarded as major publications in comparison to the women's magazines
mentioned above; however, they specifically target the audience of single Japanese
women aged between 20 and 40, the same age and gender demographic occupied by
most of the participants in the present study. These English study magazines were
widely available in major bookstores visited during data collection in Japan.

Ryugaku magazines were also collected and examples included major ryugaku
journals such as Ryugaku Journal and Wish. Magazines of particular interest were
those that featured ryugaku in Australia and these were gathered either during visits to
Japan or through their websites.

When asked about these publications, almost all of my participants said they
knew of or had purchased some, while only a few knew the English magazines. Yet,
when shown these magazines, most participants showed a strong interest in reading and purchasing them, particularly *Virgin English* with its overall theme of women wanting to learn English.

Furthermore, eight English textbooks were purchased for the current research. Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) point out that language textbooks play a "unique role in the process of potential empowerment or disempowerment of language learners" (p. 28). Textbooks of interest were those with gender and *renai* angles and a selection of books with titles and contents related to *renai* English were obtained.

Examples included:

- *Making out in Japanese* (Geers & Geers, 2003),
- *Dr. Ozeki no girl talk* (Dr. Ozeki’s More Girl Talk) (Ozeki, 2002),
- *Otoko to onna no eikaiwa* (English conversation for men and women) (Johnson & Sasaki, 2005); and
- *Yoiko wa micha ikenai eikaiwa* (English Conversation not for the Naïve) (Sugaya, 2001).

Although the textbook collection may not be comprehensive, it is representative of the genre as those purchased for this study were on sale at most of the major bookstores in the metropolitan areas of Tokyo and Yokohama.

### 4.4 Primary participants

The five primary participants of the study, in order of joining the research, were Ichi (21), Yuka (22), Yoko (29), Eika (30), and Chizuko (39) (these are all pseudonyms and the number in the bracket indicates their age at that time of joining my research). All had come to Sydney with the explicit purpose of improving their English and all began their lives in Sydney as ESL students, apart from Eika, who
arrived on a working holiday visa and started taking English lessons several months later. Their status changed over the duration of their stay as they became involved in other forms of tertiary education. As the following chapters show, however, improving English remained one of their main goals in living and studying in Sydney.

Given the main theme of the current research, *akogare* for English, the data obtained from them centred on their reasons for and experiences of learning and using English. However, what could be obtained from each participant varied depending on their educational, professional and romantic commitments prior to and after arriving in Sydney. For instance, Yoko’s data was full of her accounts on success or failures in using and learning English, while Ichi’s accounts often focused on her relationship issues with men.

Table 4 below is a summary of some basic information about the main participants.
Table 4

Key Information of Primary Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Arrival Date (Age)</th>
<th>Date of joining study (Age)</th>
<th>Departure from AUS</th>
<th>Year &amp; month in AUS</th>
<th>Education in JPN</th>
<th>Work in JPN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ichi</td>
<td>May 2001 (21)</td>
<td>July 2001 (21)</td>
<td>Jul 2005</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Women's College</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoko</td>
<td>Jan 2002 (29)</td>
<td>Apr 2002 (29)</td>
<td>Sep 2004</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Women's College</td>
<td>Public servant (9 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Office worker (9 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eika</td>
<td>Mar 2003 (30)</td>
<td>Apr 2003 (30)</td>
<td>May 2005</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Vocational College</td>
<td>Sports instructor (15 yrs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed description of them is provided in the Appendix 3. It includes:

1. Biography;
2. Recruitment and collection of data; and
3. Life in Sydney and beyond.

4.5 Data analysis

Wolcott (1994) argues that the major challenge for qualitative researchers is not how to collect data, but how to make decisions on what to do with data obtained. This study adopts the approach known as content analysis and applies it to transcribed interviews and fieldnotes. Content analysis is one of the most frequently and popularly used analytical strategies by qualitative researchers and is described by Berg (1998) as “a passport to listening to the words of the text and understating better the perspectives of the producer of these words” (p. 225).
Following Agar (1996) and others (Madison, 2005b; Wolcott, 1994), the present research adopts the ethnographic approach to content analysis and in line with their thinking, the data were examined without imposing predetermined categories at the exploratory stage of the research project. The transcriptions of interviews and fieldnotes were thoroughly perused in an attempt to become more familiar with the worlds of the participants. Then, when the transcripts were rechecked for recurrent themes, issues and topics, these were marked off and reorganised into more systematic and appropriate categories that were guided by the theoretical framework of poststructuralist SLA. This content analysis was performed on Ichi and several of the secondary participants who were similar to the primary participants. As a result, *akogare* for English emerged at the exploratory stage as a main theme in the lives of Japanese female students.

Thereafter a more focused approach to content analysis was applied. Data were collected and selected for three types of references:

1. *akogare* narratives such as preferences of types of English, music, movies, countries, nationalities, friendship, romance and sex;
2. comments about ELL, including learning strategies, opportunities to practice and use English, who participants aspired to socialise with, who they actually socialised with and how they felt about themselves and their interlocutors in these particular interactions; and
3. their views on the relationship between their future and English.

Madison (2005b) points out that critical ethnographers employ theory at several levels of analysis. This means that when used as a mode of interpretation, theory is also a method of analysis. Transcripts were studied and a single case content analysis of these references was applied within a poststructuralist framework. Cross-case analysis was carried out by comparing and contrasting participants' references. As a result of this analysis and consultation with the literature, five categories were
identified: 1, *akogare* for English, *ryugaku* and Western men; 2, identities; 3, power relations; 4, agency; 5, future options.

Macro-domain data of media discourses were analysed using critical discourse analysis based on the general framework proposed by Fairclough (1992; 2001). Critical discourse analysis holds that there are mediated connections between texts and social and cultural structures and processes. The critical interpretive approach allows for an analysis of the assumptions that underlie particular subject positions, omissions of other positions and power relations produced in these discourses. For this study, references and images in five categories from the macro-domain data have been selected. They have been analysed in terms of who and what is presented and how they are portrayed in each text and image. More specifically, a critical discourse analysis has been conducted to investigate how English and *ryugaku* are portrayed and how Japanese women and their interaction with other social actors were represented in the text.

Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004, p. 30) point out that different interpretations of texts "come from different combinations of the properties of the text and the social positioning and knowledge of its interpreters." For instance, I am a Japanese woman who has studied English in Japan and has admired the West, but am currently also a Western educated doctoral student interested in power relations. The selection and interpretations of the media discourse in this study were informed by my theoretical framework, knowledge of the historical relationship between the West and Japan, and personal experiences in teaching and learning English. What I hope to show in using media discourse is that relating the critical discourse analysis of macro-domain data to my analysis of the micro-domain data is a useful tool in unveiling the ways in which
realities and power relations are constructed and negotiated at macro and micro levels of the society.

4.6 Limitations of the study

Several limitations of the present study need to be addressed. To begin with, the current research did not aim to determine how much change there was in my participants’ fluency in English as a result of their stay in Australia. Thus, no data on linguistic performance in English in the form of standardised proficiency measures was collected. This was a conscious decision because, it appeared that the fluency of the participants varied considerably from one context to another and depended on who they were interacting with. In hindsight, the current research may have benefited from systematic survey of participants’ own perceptions about improvement in their English on a long-term basis. Nevertheless, as the tables with interview details in Appendix 5 show, the participants’ personal opinions on their fluency and progress or lack of it in English were frequently expressed during the interviews and fieldwork. It was often the case that when the issue of interaction with non-Japanese people were discussed, they tended to view their limited command of English as one of the main causes of difficulties in socialising in Sydney. Although their personal assessment of their own fluency in English was incorporated in the analysis, future research on language desire may profit from having a systematic approach to collecting this type of data.

Another possible limitation of the study includes the fact that the experiences of this small group of Japanese women in Sydney are unlikely to be representative of all Japanese women of their generation or of those who desire to study English. In fact, comparatively few Japanese women act on their akogare, actually move to a Western
country or find a foreign romantic partner (Kelsky, 2001b). Kubota (1999) argues, however, that the previous practice of homogenising Japanese culture is problematic and what is needed is, in Kelsky’s (2001b) words, is an “ethnography that accounts for spaces of agency and identity within configured regimes of truth” (p. 30). That position is taken in this study.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has summarised the research methodology used in this study. The methodological orientation of critical qualitative research and the specific approach of critical ethnography were first described. Secondly, the types of data collected and how they were gathered and analysed was described. In this chapter, the aim has been to demonstrate that developing a method design and conducting data collection and analysis are on-going processes.

The fieldwork posed a range of challenges. In particular, there was an overwhelming volume of information generously provided by my participants. As Miles and Huberman (1994) state, this is a common problem with qualitative data. Initially, it was difficult to determine which data were important as they all appeared crucial at the beginning of the research. However, once several major themes had been decided on and the data began to be organised according to these themes and categories, it became increasingly easy to keep track of the new information afforded by willing participants.

To conclude, by taking the methodological approach described in this chapter, what this thesis offers is a thick description of Japanese women’s akogare; that is to say, it is rich in information in terms of contexts, the history and the social actors
involved. The next several chapters present an analysis of Japanese women’s discourses of *akogare* and offer critically oriented interpretations of their experiences.
Chapter 5: Language Desire

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I pointed out that Japanese women’s language desire can not be fully understood without reference to larger discourses that circulate at macro levels in a given society. In this chapter, I present my analysis on media discourses of ELL and their constitutive effect on Japanese women’s akogare for English, the West and romance with Western men. In Section 2, I examine multiple media discourses of language desire. Firstly, attention is given to the ways in which media discourses of ELL construct and promote certain identities for English language teachers in Japan and show how such teachers are portrayed as an effective strategy for learning English. Secondly, I examine the promotional materials of an English language school to illuminate how sexual innuendos between a Japanese woman and a White man constitute the media discourse of language desire. Thirdly, I discuss the discourse of renai (relationship) English that was briefly introduced in Chapter 4. Section 3 contains an examination of how media discourses were played out in my participants’ akogare narratives. In this section, it is demonstrated that, during adolescence for these women, desire for the West, Western men and English became romanticised and increasingly linked with ELL.

5.2 Media discourse of language desire

Bailey (2002) and Kelsky (2001b) observe that the ELL industry and the media in Japan target the most enthusiastic consumers of English – young Japanese women. According to Odagiri (2004), as many as 80% of women in their twenties were found
to be interested in learning English. There are other ramifications; as Tsuda (1995) points out, "the eikaiwa (English conversation) industry in Japan comprises half of the international market, reaching one trillion yen [approx. AUSS$11.48 billion]" (pp. 156-157). Major sources for these large revenues come from ELL magazines, tapes, videos and textbooks for radio and TV programs on English and English proficiency tests (Tsuda, 1995). According to J Net 21 (2005), the number of eikaiwa schools in Japan in 2003 totalled 3118, producing revenues of 129 billion yen [approx. AUSS$1.48 billion].

As is demonstrated in this section, ELL has become a business strategy for magazine publishers. In numerous women's magazines, ELL-related articles are regularly featured and advertisements for eikaiwa schools and ryugaku agents abound (Kelsky, 2001b). According to Kimura, a media development manager of ALC\textsuperscript{12}, a special feature on an English-related topic often leads to an increase in sales (Odagiri, 2004, p. 5).

This section presents an analysis of ELL media discourses in Japan. The main aim of the analysis is to show ways in which media discourse constitutes, promotes and reinforces Japanese women's language desire. It does so by endorsing and connecting three discursive spaces: English, the West and Western masculinity, as desirable means of creating a new lifestyle and identity. Firstly, it is shown how White male native speakers of English are sold as ideal English teachers in media discourse. Secondly, the promotional strategies of Gaba, a popular English language school, is analysed in order further to demonstrate the ways in which romance with a

\textsuperscript{12} Established in 1969, ALC has become a major publishing house that specialises in publishing works on language learning and teaching and ryugaku (http://www.alc.co.jp/index.html).
White Western man is linked with English language learning. Thirdly, media discourses of renai English are analysed.

5.2.1 The White native speaker male as an ideal English teacher

In examining women’s magazines, one of the first things that I noticed was that many of the English teachers depicted in advertisements and other ELL-related articles were smiling White men wearing suits and ties. Although female teachers were not totally absent, the intended usage of Western female teachers seemed to differ considerably from that of Western male teachers. For instance, as Bailey (2002, p. 297) reports, in eikaiwa advertisements, on one hand, western women were often depicted as “professional” so as to appeal to the Japanese female clients who seek to enhance their professions through English. On the other hand, it seemed that eikaiwa English schools and publishers were well aware of the market value of White men and by using them tried to appeal to Japanese women’s romantic akogare for English and romantic involvement with such men. At the same time, these magazines defined and promoted the meaning of English learning for Japanese women by stating and disseminating a view of what is proper and successful and therefore desirable for
female learners of English. In particular, such media discourse seemed to construct an English-teacher identity in terms of “good-looking” White Western men, conflating them with ELL and romance.

For instance, in a special edition of *an an* (2002, p. 37) on learning English, what is implied is that male teachers are not only desirable but are also effective in teaching English to Japanese women. One article from this edition of *an an* (see Figure 1) presents a portrait feature of five *ikemen* (good-looking) teachers representative of their English conversation school. All the *ikemen* teachers in their neat suits are White males, presumably native speakers of English. The camera shot is “close-personal” (including only head and shoulders), minimising the space between the viewer and the *ikemen* teachers (Kress & van-Leeuwen, 1996). In the article above, the editor implies that good-looking male teachers are conducive to language learning by stating:

 sekkaikyo ingo shiyou nanada to, “tsuki moto hou no ga natsukashii” sonna nigori ni naosan ni担当しはほしい・・・。

Having made the decision to learn English, you want to be taught by a teacher that makes you think “I look forward to the next lesson” (*an an*, 2002, p. 37).

The text attached to the photos of the *ikemen* teachers, focuses on their positive personal traits rather than their educational background or teaching career. Although the text was produced by the editor and not by the teacher himself, the content shows some resemblance with dating advertisements. For instance, the description of Kevin Black of the Gaba English conversation school is as follows:

「Gabaマンツーマン英会話ケヴィン・ブラック先生 日本の歴史と、温泉が大好きで、箱根に足繁く通っているらしい。「生徒さんによって教え方を変えるのが僕のやり方。英語に対する恐怖心を取り除く事も意識しています。」カラオケに行くのが好きで、なんと、ケミストリーなどのJポップの歌を日本語で歌うのだろうと、びっくり。


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13 One of the most famous hot spring towns in Western part of Japan

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policy is to change my teaching method depending on my students. I try to get rid of their fear of using English.” He likes going to karaoke and what’s more, he likes singing Japanese pop songs like those of Chemistry. It’s a surprise (an an, p. 37).

Coupland (1996) reports that those who place personal advertisements often represent themselves by referring to a list of attributes from the following sets: gender, age, location, appearance, personality/behaviour traits, interests, career/solvency/status, generational/marital status and ethnicity (in order of frequency of mention). In the example above, characteristics of the teacher including gender (male), location (language school), appearance ("good-looking" White male) and career (English teacher) are self-evident from the photo and the theme of the article. The text constructs Kevin Black not only as an ikemen teacher, but also as a likable and approachable man by mentioning his positive "personal" traits and behaviours (he likes Japanese culture, history, hot springs and music; he goes to Hakone and sings karaoke), none of which are directly related to language teaching. Desire for the teacher is created not primarily for his teaching qualifications or educational background (neither of which is referred to in the text) but for his personal qualities as a good-looking Western man, interested in the culture of the targeted consumers of English language learning. In this example of media discourse, English language learning and romance with Western men become mutually constitutive.

The image of White men as good-looking teachers of English can be found in women’s comics too. Usually, characters in these comics
are said to resemble Westerners to begin with (Kelsky, 2001b) and this
Westernisation of cartoon characters reflects and intensifies Japanese women’s
*akogare* for blue-eyed, blond-haired Western men with long legs and arms and small
faces. For instance, in this highly erotic love comic, titled, “彼はシーフ (He is a thief)”
and written by Yokota (2004), a young “good-looking” Australian man, Josh, is not
only presented as a typical “ladies-first” and all-knowing gentleman, but also as a
private teacher of English and love. In one scene (see Figure 2), a young Japanese
girl, Meg, tries to apologise for mistaking Josh for a thief at Cairns International
Airport. In the first speech bubble, Meg says shyly: “I’m sorry... I mistook you えーと
(umm) a thief.” Then, in the second speech bubble, Josh accepts Meg’s apology by
saying with a shy smile, “No problem but......” As the “but” indicates, he then goes on
to correct a grammatical error by stating in the third speech bubble: “I mistook you
FOR a thief.” In the fourth thought-speech bubble, Meg’s face closes in as she says to
herself, “添さく (Correction).” Although a grammatical correction can threaten loss of
face (Ellis, 1994), the air between them is overwhelmingly romantic with the soft
tones of several pentagonal patterns in the background.

The story leads to Josh’s erotic act of “stealing” her sexually on the beach in
Cairns (once again, he is a thief) and ends on a happy note with Meg’s decision not to
pursue tertiary education in Japan and instead study in Australia. Her romance with
Josh dramatically changes Meg’s life and identity, from that of an ordinary Japanese
university student in Japan to a *ryugaku* student in Australia with a *gaijin* boyfriend
who is good-looking, sexy and an empathetic teacher of English.

Kelsky (2001b) notes that White men “appear in women’s media as sensitive,
refined and without sexism” and “they are *redi fasuto jentoruman* (ladies-first
gentlemen)” (p. 145). As exemplified above, a similar tendency is evident in the case
of the *ikemen* teachers in the *an an* magazine and Josh in the women’s comic. In reality, however, it is likely that the behaviour of such Western men is motivated differently in different contexts; namely, these men would behave differently in an EFT business context to a non-business context. In the former, the Western teachers are presumably paid and trained for the emotional work of being gentlemanly to their students. However, media tend to blur the boundary between the teachers who are being paid to “act” and the general populace of White men who have no material inducement to act in a gentlemanly fashion.

In addition, the media discourse of Western men as good-looking teachers of English place Japanese women in contradictory positions. On the one hand, the discourse promotes the value of Western men as desirable and effective English teachers, merging ELL and interracial romance. Young Japanese women – the targeted readers – are turned into the desirous consumers of Western masculinity and of English as an international language. On the other hand, the discourse also functions to construct these women as powerful consumers of such commodities, or in other words, grants them the power to choose, buy or reject such commodities on the basis of criteria such as race, nationality, eye-colour, hairstyle, fashion sense and so on. As will be further illustrated below, the women’s buying-power has an effect on the practices of media and the ELL industry whose existence depends largely on Japanese women’s participation as consumers.

5.2.2 Promotional materials: the case of Gaba

There are several genres of promotional materials for *eikaiwa* schools in Japan (Bailey, 2002). Chang (2004) argues that examination of such media discourse is a useful tool in revealing the mechanism of language ideology in a specific context.
Although media discourse analyses of ELL advertisements in Japan have been rare in the field of SLA, increasing attention has been paid to eikaiwa advertisement as a gendering practice in anthropology (Kelsky, 2001b), geography (Bailey, 2002) and critical applied linguistics (Tsuda, 2000).

Researchers Bailey (2002), Kelsky (2001b), Ma (1996), and Tsuda (2000) report that the creation of romantic and sexual chemistry with White men has been one of the most frequent strategies used by English language schools in Japan. In their view, eikaiwa advertisements play on Japanese women’s romantic and sexualised akogare for White masculinity. Of course, the use of sexual innuendos in advertising is an ancient practice. “Sex sells” has been the entrenched truth in advertising in many capitalist societies: Certainly Japan is not an exception (Russell, 1998). In his research on the eikaiwa industry in Japan, Bailey found that the eroticisation of Western instructors was obvious only in Japanese female accounts. He identified the primary difference between eikaiwa advertisements and others in Japan as:

the extent to which the promised discovery of new selfhood – atarashii jibun – is bound up in an Occidentalist West through the practice and customs of mythicized English language learning and how they rely on the presence of the White male signifier (p. 275).

His point is best exemplified in the promotional materials produced by Gaba. In fact, Gaba is identified as one of the most rapidly expanding eikaiwa schools in Japan (Shuukan Diamond, 2005) and as is demonstrated below, its commercial success owes a great deal to its campaign which draws on, and further strengthens, the link between ELL and romance with White Western men. In his study of gendered participation in the eikaiwa industry, Bailey (2002) had his informants (Japanese female students studying English in Japan) look at several advertisements from major English-conversation schools in Japan and asked them for their opinions. He reports
that Gaba’s was identified as “the most sexualized of all advertisements” (Bailey, 2002, p. 286).

Although Bailey’s analysis of Gaba’s advertisement is insightful, what is not mentioned is that this highly sexually-charged advertisement is not a “one-off” attempt by the school. In fact, Gaba makes a concerted attempt to commodify *mantsuman* (individual) lessons as a romanticised and sexualised product by making strategic use of various media and promotional materials. In particular, its advertisements and homepage contents seem to be designed to appeal to Japanese women’s desire for “private” and “intimate” times with White men in a fashionable space.

According to Odagiri (2004, p. 5), 70% of Gaba’s 60,000 registered students are women in their twenties and thirties. When Gaba was established in 1995, the “*mantsuman*” (individual) lesson was promoted as the distinguishing feature of its English-teaching. Previously, group lessons had been the norm in the *eikaiwa*: private lessons were thought of as expensive and the thought of spending one hour alone with a native-speaker teacher may well have been considered to be uncomfortable for shy students. Gaba’s *mantsuman* lesson challenged these stereotypes. In terms of the lesson fee, Gaba’s *mantsuman* is not inexpensive. For instance, a regular *mantsuman* student pays approximately 8,285 yen [approximately
A$100.00] per lesson while other eikaiwa schools offer 2,000-yen private lessons [approximately AUS$23.00]. However, the ways in which mantsuman lessons are packaged and promoted in advertisements on the Gaba homepage evidently boosts the attractiveness of the program.

As mentioned earlier, Gaba’s advertisement (see Figure 3) was identified as the most sexualised in Bailey’s (2002) study. His female informants saw the Japanese woman in the advertisement as having control over the White male teacher and their relationship was sexualised through the use of the handcuffs. Her knowing smile (as opposed to the White man’s non-smiling face) and her pull on the handcuffs were signifiers of power, which led the researcher to conclude that this advertisement “inverted the customary gendering of such images in such a way as to empower the female eikaiwa clients” (Bailey, p. 286).

Gaba’s later advertisement (Figure 4) takes a similar approach and further mystifies its romanticised product of mantsuman lessons. In this monochromatic composition, a young Japanese woman and a tall White man stand face to face on a small boat in a dark, mysterious cave. What is most striking about the Japanese woman is the way she is positioned as the holder of power. For instance, she holds the oar (a symbolic act of power similar to the handcuff pull) that signifies control and agency, while the man remains faceless: his identity is to be determined by the
viewer, i.e., the female client. Back-lit by a soft glow, she emerges as the focus of the advertisement. This light can also be interpreted as signifying the hope of a brighter future that is connected with her intimate relationship with the White man.

What makes this advertisement different from the first is the emphasis on the sense of privacy and intimacy with the White man. Unlike the portrait style of the first advertisement, the camera shot in the second is long, distancing the viewer from the two people in the frame (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). This creates a sense of isolation from the ordinary and mundane world, while intimacy between the couple is visually and instantaneously created. The mantsuman promotion emphasises and guarantees this sense of intimacy with a White man by transporting the client and her White male teacher to the world of fantasy.

In this advertisement, the catch phrase also seems to be designed to promote desire and need for intimacy with an English-speaking Western man. It reads: “二人だから、あなたは話したくなる (Because there are only two of you, you will want to speak).” According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 43), unequal relations of power are established by the text postulating the needs and wants of the reader, even though there is no channel of negotiative reciprocity between them and the text. The catch-phrase states and defines what the reader should want and how they should behave. Having opportunities to spend time in private with the White man is posed as a major motivation for female clients to learn English and in doing so, positions Japanese women as desirers of English-speaking Western men.

The online photo demonstration of a mantsuman lesson on Gaba’s homepage (see Figure 5 below) functions to illustrate the exact process of the lesson (www.gaba.co.jp). It leaves very little to the reader’s imagination.
The first frame depicts the introduction phase in which the instructor greets his student. The second frame shows the beginning of the *mantsuman* lesson. The third indicates the middle of the lesson and the fourth shows the role-play method of the lesson. Finally, the last frame shows how the lesson ends. Throughout the demonstration sequence, the student (a young Japanese female) and the instructor (a tall White male) are seen interacting in complete privacy with each other. The social space between them is very close and the instructor’s full attention is on the student throughout the lesson. There is a physical contact (holding hands) in the forth frame of the sequence. However as can be seen in the photo, the contact is depicted as not being overly sexual or threatening, but rather as an honourable or romantic gesture as both instructor and the student smile at each other. As the student waves goodbye to the instructor, the last frame creates the sense that it is the student who, in leaving her instructor, positions herself as the powerful customer who can choose to purchase the intimacy with the instructor.

As is the case of the discourse of *ikemen* teachers, Gaba’s promotional materials simultaneously position their targeted customers, i.e., young Japanese women, as being desirous of White masculinity and as the consumers of Western men and English as products. It is clear that Gaba actively participates in the construction of the media discourse of *renai* English, which capitalises on and promotes language desire among Japanese women. Attention is now turned to analysis of the discourse of *renai* English in the next.
5.2.3 Understanding David Beckham: “renai English”

The focus of this section is the analysis of a particular media discourse, called, “renai English.” My interest in this topic came from conversation with Yoko:

ヨウコ：君江さん、英語でセクシーってどうやってやるんですかね？
Yoko: Kimie-san, how do you do sexy in English (emphasis original)?

This topic emerged one day as she found she was often unable to ‘chat up’ a gaijin man in a pub despite her obvious eagerness for intimacy, even if that included a “one-night stand.” To remedy these failures, Yoko began paying close attention to perfecting “sexy” lines and the seductive body language of Hollywood actresses in the movies that she saw. During the fieldwork, I often saw Yoko practicing romantic and provocative lines and “sexy” movements such as looking over the shoulder while winking and puckering her lips, all of which reminded me of Marilyn Monroe’s classic “sexy” look. Yoko was not alone in this respect. I found that most of my primary participants considered talking romantic and “sexy” English rather challenging and often looked to Hollywood movies as source of information and inspiration.

In fact, the media and ELL industry in Japan have been providing materials for the specific purposes of learning how to negotiate in English in a renai context. Women’s magazines and websites sometimes feature English lessons titled “Renai English” and there are a number of textbooks that teach romantic English phrases and vocabulary. ESP genre of publications, such as English for business, travel and academic purposes, seems to have a much larger presence in the ELL industry. Renai English as an ESP genre has received very little scholarly attention to date. As is demonstrated below, renai English provides a rich site for gaining insights into the relationship between gender, power and ELL in the Japanese context.
Among the data collected for the research, three common characteristics of the renai English discourse can be identified:

(a) ELL is linked with romantic relationships with gaijin men;
(b) Hollywood movies as legitimate sources for learning English; and
(c) The portrayal of Western style romance and sex as romantic and desirable.

Renai English offer multiple and contradictory identities for Japanese women and their possible romantic partners; i.e., White Western native-speaker men.

In most cases, the discourse of renai English promotes the idea that success in learning English is linked to romance with Western men. For example, Virgin English\textsuperscript{14} is published for the ELL women’s market by ALC, based of a unique sales proposition that women can beautify themselves through becoming proficient in English. Oonoki, the media development manager of ALC mentioned earlier, explains:

英語というツールが身につくと内部に自信がわく。それが「美しさ」となる。
When one acquires English as a tool, she becomes more confident inside. That creates ‘beauty’ (Odagiri, 2004, p. 5).

In this magazine, success in ELL is routinely linked with romantic relationships with Western men. However, by that the magazine does not mean to signify just any Western man, but encourages the readers to find ikemen gaijin (good-looking foreigners). One section of the magazine offers various linguistic strategies for developing relationships with ikemen gaijin and for rejecting damenzu gaijin (useless/ugly foreigners) (Virgin English, 2004 March, pp. 48-51). Thus, the readers can learn not only romantic English phrases (see below) but are also are exposed to

\textsuperscript{14} Although many English-study magazines have been geared to female consumers, Virgin English, first published in February 2004, was one of the first of the genre of the women ELL magazines.
the categorisation of “good gaijin men” and “bad gaijin men.” The most typical ikemen gaijin men are Hollywood stars and Western sports stars.

In the Japanese media space, renai English is presented as the necessary means for attaining imaginary romance with Hollywood stars and international sports players. For instance, David Beckham, a British soccer player, has become an icon of glamorous Western masculinity for many Japanese women since the sensational media coverage of his on-field exploits during the World Cup in 2002. Beckham appeared in an edition of an-an as part of its theme focus on “methods for mastering English” (an an, 2003) (see Figure 6). One of the headlines on the cover page of this issue suggests to Japanese women that it is important that they understand Beckham in English:

英語できちんと理解しよう！ベッカムが語った本音
Let’s understand what Beckham is really saying in English!

This headline suggests that knowledge of English can be the only proper vehicle for apprehending the persona of Beckham who is represented as the epitome of desirable White masculinity.

Another significant feature of the renai English discourse is the promotion of Western women’s identity as a key to success in English. To communicate
effectively, Japanese women are urged to imagine themselves within the linguistic and romantic identities of Western women. Typically, female stars of television and Hollywood are set as desirable models. Women’s magazines often run articles featuring lines delivered by famous female stars in movies.

For instance, the aforementioned *Virgin English* (2004) features ways to “learn love and sex through movies” (pp. 52-57). Provocative phrases from Hollywood movies are suggested such as:

- “I will have poetry in my life, and adventure and love above all.” (Gwyneth Paltrow in *Shakespeare in Love*, 1998);
- “You know what’s going to happen? I am gonna fall in love with you. Because I always do.” (Marilyn Monroe in *The Prince and the Showgirl*, 1957);
- “Oh yeah, right there” (Meg Ryan in *When Harry Met Sally*, 1989);
- “To hell with Brett, you know? I’ve got a vibrator” (Cameron Diaz in *There’s Something About Mary*, 1998); and
- “We had a great weekend, Leo. And that’s that. Now, it’s Sunday. And it’s over.” (Meg Ryan in *Kate and Leopold*, 2001).

These lines, printed in pink, are presented as effective and “sexy” and each phrase is recommended differently depending on the types of romantic outcomes desired. All of these actresses are White native speakers of English and the readers are advised that the effective way to memorise these lines is to imagine themselves as one of these actresses.

Furthermore, the discourse of Hollywood movies and TV programs as *renai* English promotes Western fictional models of romantic heterosexuality as highly desirable. A clear example comes from the growing popularity of *Sex and the City (SATC)* in ELL material. *SATC* is a popular American TV program that took Japan by storm. Its four main characters are in their thirties, all good-looking, fashionable and
successful career women, whose vivid and sensational girl-talk centres on romance, sex and life choices.

Japanese portal website for SATC run by Rakuten Inc. describes it not only as a hit TV program, but also endorses fictional models of Western heterosexual romance and links them with ELL. The website carries five subsections including: (1) News; (2) how to enjoy the program; (3) cast; (4) quotes of renai conversational English; and, (5) the episode. In the section on quotes of renai conversational English, provocative and “useful” SATC phrases and expressions are periodically introduced and explained by a native English speaking teacher from Gaba. The bottom section features a native speaker instructor, Jonathan. The first two sentences of the advertisement read:

せっかく英語を身につけるなら、SATCの4人みたいに洗練された会話ができるようになりたいもの。そこでオススメなのがGabaマンツーマン英会話。ネイティブスピーカーの講師とのマンツーマンレッスンだから、ナチュラルで洗練された英会話のセンスをしっかり身につけるのがGabaの魅力。

If you are going to learn English, you want to be able to carry on a sophisticated conversation like the four women from SATC. That’s why I recommend Gaba’s mantsuman English conversation course. An attractive point of the mantsuman lesson is that you can learn natural and sophisticated English usage through one-on-one lessons with a native speaker instructor.

These women’s lifestyles are fictional. Yet, in this advertisement the English used by them and their lifestyles (particularly the romantic and sexual aspects of their lives), are positioned and promoted as “sophisticated” models to be adopted by Japanese women learning English. The text conflates English language learning with learning about a fictional model of contemporary Western romance.

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In most of the *renai* English textbooks examined, there were similar tendencies to endorse the allegedly Western style of communication and romance. Ootomo’s (2004) “**恋愛イングリッシュ 簡単なフレーズで話せる** (*Renai English: Speak English with Simple Phrases*),” one of the *renai* English textbooks collected for this research, provides an example. The author, Sanae Ootomo, is a freelance writer specialising in (British) English language learning and an online column writer of “**Renai English**”\(^{17}\).

One of the fundamental tenets of her textbook (Ootomo, 2004, p. 11) is, as she asserts in the first section, improvement in English proficiency through the power of love. She states:

> 外国人に恋をすると英語がうまくなるのは本当です。
> It is true that English improves when you fall in love with a foreigner (p 11).

Ootomo’s “**Renai English**” consists of 160 pages and is divided into five sections:

1. Improving English proficiency through the power of *renai*.
2. Simple dialogues that connect romance and conversation.
3. Improving English and *renai* through 180 basic phrases.
4. Practical *renai* English – the use of 180 phrases; and,
5. Sending cards and emails.

The first section comprises several short essays in which Ootomo makes the case for the link between romantic relationships with a foreigner and success and enjoyment in English language learning. The second section introduces simple English sentences covering issues ranging from dating to marriage. In this section, thirty topics are covered. On the left hand page, a theme (e.g., talking about oneself, expressing love) and a grammatical form (e.g., do/did you...?) are introduced; the author’s short comment on the theme is provided on the right hand page. In the third

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\(^{17}\) Although her column ended in March 2005, it is still available at [www.kaishaseikatsu.jp](http://www.kaishaseikatsu.jp)
section, examples of conversational exchanges between a Japanese woman and a foreign man are provided. The last section contains several examples of how to write to a foreign man (e.g., birthday cards, thank you cards, email and text messages).

In her renai English textbook, the illustration of the student and her boyfriend indicates that the reader is assumed to be a young woman while her boyfriend is presented as a White native speaker of English (see Figure 7). Typically, her examples are situational and phrase-based, accompanied by explanations and advice from the author. One example from her textbook demonstrates the ways in which gender, linguistic and sexual identities are constructed and offered to Japanese women.

The example (see Figure 8) comes from Lesson 20 in the third section entitled:

Figure 8. Lesson 20 from Renai English (Ootomo, 2004, pp. 94-95)

“Talking about yourself” (Ootomo, 2004, pp. 94-95). The grammatical point to be
covered for the lesson is the use of the words “I’ve/I haven’t ~” The first example is the sentence: “I’ve just started my period” which is suggested by Ootomo as a possible excuse for turning down a sexual suggestion by a boyfriend/man. On the right hand side of the section is a box carrying advice on how to answer if you are told “I want to be with you tonight.” In the advice box, Ootomo suggests that it could be time for your relationship to become intimate if “your boyfriend” asks “Would you like to come to my place?” Ootomo goes on to suggest that if things are getting “moody” at your boyfriend’s place and he asks, “Why don’t you stay with me tonight?,” he really means “I want to make love to you” or “I want to sleep with you.” Ootomo also warns the reader, “Don’t get fooled by the ‘why don’t you~’ expression.” Ootomo also says that sometimes men can be more direct and ask, “Shall we go to bed?” or “Do you fancy going to bed?,’’ then goes on to offer some “advice” on how to turn down the offer/suggestion such as: “If you are going to use your period as an excuse, you can use roundabout British-style expressions like (a) No. It’s a bad time for me; or (b) ‘It’s the time of the month’. However, she goes on: “recently there is an increasing number of people who use more straightforward expressions even in England such as: (a) I’ve just started my period; (b) I’m having a bad period; (c) I’ve got period pains; or just, (d) period.” In this text, the way in which British women are thought to refuse unwanted sex is constructed as a desirable model. The examples begin by being traditionally indirect but become increasingly more straightforward.

Furthermore, on the bottom of the page is the “Communication Tip,” Ootomo gives a final piece of advice, stating: “If you want to say no (to the suggestion for sex), express yourself firmly and properly”: but “If yes, just nodding is OK.” In this example the author offers options that are widely advocated in media and romance literature. The “say-no” option, seems to be influenced by assertiveness training and
anti-rape discourses that blame women for being afraid to refuse sexual advances and simply advise them to say “no” clearly and loudly (see Kitzinger & Firth, 1999). More significantly, signalling the “yes” option by nodding, as recommended by Ootomo seems, to reproduce the idealised gendered identity of the passive Japanese woman. This passive identity is not what the author initially claims learning English can do for them. In the introduction titled “This is what is wonderful about a gaijin darling” (Ootomo, 2004, pp. 26-27), the author claims that although Japanese women who are expressive and direct are not popular with Japanese men, gaijin men often find these women desirable and attractive. Yet the subject position that the author offers in the example above seems to contradict her argument. However, it is important to point out that this passivity is also reported in a study by Talbot (1997) on Western romance literature who examined representations of heroes and heroines in romance fiction. She found that a romance hero is typically portrayed as a dominant man who always knows the heroine’s desires and helps her admit to them. The heroine on the other hand, is represented as a recipient of the hero’s education about her secret desires. Her emotional and sexual passivity is presented as “a natural and even desirable element of femininity” (p. 119). Therefore, Ootomo’s “yes option” may not only reproduce the idealised Japanese culture-specific identity, but also reproduce this normalised heterosexuality (i.e., the sexual agents of men as active and women as passive), which circulates widely in international contexts. Similarly, the majority of other renai English texts collected for the present research did not offer set dialogues in which women initiated sexual encounters.
5.2.4 ELL, consumerism and international heterosexual romance

An examination of women’s magazines, “ladies’ comics,” advertisements for English language schools and *renai* English materials indicates that the meaning of and images of success in learning English are highly gendered and sexualised in the Japanese ELL market. More specifically, English language learning is powerfully associated with the media discourses of international heterosexual romance that reifies particular subject positions: the “sexy,” provocative, and demure femininity (for Japanese female learners of English) and the good-looking, chivalrous, and powerful masculinity (for male English teachers).

The inclusion of field work in this thesis created several opportunities to discuss the media discourse of *renai* English with my informants. Most of the participants showed keen interest in purchasing *renai* textbooks and some wanted to borrow my magazine collections. When Eika was going out with her first *gaijin* boyfriend (White Australian) in March, 2003, she expressed her interest in buying such a book. Until she came to Australia, she had little knowledge of this genre of English. At that time, communicating her needs and emotions to her Australian boyfriend was constrained by her lack of English vocabulary. Discussing *renai* textbooks one day, Eika jokingly said:

エイカ：そういう本があったら買うよぜしたい＠＠
Eika: I would definitely buy a textbook like that ＠＠ [i.e., a textbook designed to teach how to negotiate in a romantic context] (f27march03eika)

Although *renai* English may be a fairly recent development, Hollywood movies have long been making their mark on Japanese women’s imaginations about the West, English and heterosexual romance. The implications of exposure to Hollywood movies in Japanese girlhood and adolescence for the construction of *akogare* for English and the West are examined in the next section.
5.3 Dreaming of Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt

All of the primary participants and many of the secondary participants reported having developed a varying degree of fascination for Westerners, particularly Hollywood stars and Western musicians, in their girlhood and adolescence. For example, in her first interview, Chizuko enthusiastically told me about her growing admiration for the "beauty of Western people" when she was growing up in a country town (i10oct03chizuko). When she was a junior high school student, she travelled by train to the next town to take a photo of an American exchange student which she still cherishes in a photo album.

Although the participants seem to have had a general admiration for the West in their childhood, it became rapidly gendered and romanticised as they entered adolescence. For instance, in their secondary school years, Eika and one secondary participant, Miri, had a romantic obsession with Tom Cruise, particularly as the star of Top Gun (1985). Miri believes that women of her generation (i.e., born in the 1960s or 1970s) have a soft spot for a man like Tom Cruise and she still believes that "he is really hot" (f15aug02mi). Chizuko fell in love with Christopher Atkins who starred in Blue Lagoon (1980) while another secondary participant, Sato, devotedly listened to the 1980s Norwegian but US-based pop group, a-ha, in her junior high school years. Yoko professed to have been obsessed with the Hollywood movie star Brad Pitt, since her early twenties.

Although my participants' akogare for specific movie stars and musicians differ, the objects of these feelings are usually White Western men, from or based in, the United States and act or sing predominantly in English (See Chapter 7 for the racial implication of language desire for their socialisation in Sydney). During the participants' adolescence, their romantic akogare for Western stars became
increasingly conflated with a desire for learning English, resulting in an immediate or future increase in their contact with English.

To express their admiration for movie and rock/pop stars, some of the participants wrote them fan letters in English. For instance, after seeing *Top Gun*, Eika and her classmate decided to send a fan letter to Tom Cruise. At that time, their English was not advanced enough to compose such a letter but that did not deter them and they actively sought resources to achieve their goal. Initially published in the 1970s, a popular movie magazine *Screen* (Kindai Shoten), often carried articles advising Japanese fans how to write a fan letter in English to Hollywood stars. Using the template letter provided in *Screen*, Eika sought help from their English school teacher who proof-read and edited the letter. Eika recalls that as they were busy writing the letter, they began imagining the possibility of receiving a personal invitation from Tom Cruise.

エイカ：あの時あれだったよー、ビックドリーマーだったよね＠ あたし達書いてる時さ～ウッキウキじゃない？ で彼[トム・クルーズ]がさ～、日本の女子高生の情熱を知ったらひょっとしてハリウッドにご招待とかね～考ええてさ～！＠＠＠

*Eika*: you see, we were big dreamers at that time@ when we were writing the letter. we were so excited about the whole thing and we thought if he [Tom Cruise] found out about our passion for him from Japanese high school girls, we thought that we might get invited to Hollywood!@@@ (i4june03eika)

Although neither a personal response nor an invitation from a Hollywood star was likely, their fantasy about meeting him was powerful enough to motivate them to rehearse their self-introduction in English.

エイカ：でき〜、もし本当にそういう事になったらどうする〜とか言ってて。そんな時にじゃあトムにどうやって自己紹介するみたいな？彼女とあたしささ～＠

*Eika*: we were talking about what if it really happened. how should we introduce ourselves to Tom? she and I @

キミエ：＠＠

*Kimie*: @@
Eika: we were practicing together.

Kimie: what, English?

Eika: yeah, practicing English.

Kimie: @ are you kidding me?

Eika: imagining him in front of us, ‘How do you do?’ ‘my name is Eika’ [with deliberately stronger English intonation and higher pitch of her voice] @@@. we were so stupid then, really. we were @@@ (i4june03eika)

The secondary participant, Sato, provides another case of the link between akogare for the West and ELL. When Sato was thirteen years old, she “fell in love” with a-ha, the Norwegian pop group popular in the 1980s. Since childhood she had had a positive relationship with English so it became the cause of her “mission” to improve her English.

Sato: I felt comfortable with English since my childhood. I went to an international school for a year in Thailand and my parents were fluent in English. it was after I fell in love with a-ha that I started to think I must get serious about English. I used to think, @ ‘my love for them will help me learn English!’ @

Kimie: @

Sato: @ yeah, you think it’s pretty stupid, don’t you?
Kimie: no, no @@

Sato: @@but I had unshakable faith that with my love for them, I would be able to master English@@ (f26feb04sato)

The majority of my primary and secondary participants told me similar stories indicating how their already existing akogare for the West became gendered and romanticised in adolescence. These examples illustrate how emergent romantic desire for Western stars was the first in a series of links created between ELL and romantic attraction. In practicing how to introduce themselves in English to Tom Cruise, Eika and her friend created an imaginary relationship between the Western actor as their object of akogare and themselves, hence constructing a gendered, romantic and national identities as young Japanese girls in love with a stern male star. Growing up in the midst of a national campaign of internationalisation and surrounded by the multiple micro-discourses of English as a desirable and powerful language, my participants report having akogare for the English language and Western culture since their childhood.

Yoko’s case presents another example of English and Hollywood movies as a site of lifestyle and identity construction. Unlike most of the other participants who caught the “fever” of movie stars in their adolescence, Yoko’s passion for the West and English was intensified and romanticised during a turbulent marriage in her mid-twenties. Highly disillusioned with her married life, she began investing energy and time in learning English and watching Hollywood movies which provided her with an emotional refuge.
Yoko also said that through the movies, she developed a great deal of akogare for the concept of White men, White women, White society and the White Western family.

キミエ：何に対して憧れがあったの？
Kimie: what did you have akogare for?

ヨウコ：白人。白人男性、白人女性、白人社会。なんでいうんですか、アメリカの映画に出てくるような、典型的な感じ。
Yoko: White people. White men, White women, White society. how can I put it? like the ones that appear in American movies. a traditional image...

キミエ：どんな感じ？
Kimie: like what?

ヨウコ：ハニー、ダーリン、「行ってきま～す」。チュ、みたいな感じ。で、学校行こうって子供も「行ってきま～す」とか言って黄色いスクールバス乗って行くみたいな。
Yoko: honey, darling, "see you later." kiss, something like this. and children when going to school say, "see you later" as they get onto a yellow school bus (i30april02yoko)

Yoko thought that her rapidly increased akogare for the West resulted from an extensive exposure to Western ideals of love and family through movies at that time.

ヨウコ：映画を見出してから特に。だから、「ああ、こういう世界があるんだな～」って思いました。
Yoko: especially since I started to see movies. I used to think, ‘wow, there is a world like this’ (i30april02yoko)

Most notably, Brad Pitt, a Hollywood celebrity, emerged as the object of Yoko’s intense romantic desire during the movie craze. The star thus became a
signifier of ideal Western masculinity and a tremendous item of symbolic capital. As will be discussed later, for Yoko, standards of desirability and worthiness of male Western interlocutors were almost always judged against those set by Brad Pitt. Furthermore, Yoko’s comment indicates that English is intricately linked with her desire not only for White men, but also the image of the typical heterosexual romantic/marital relationship that circulates in international media.

5.4 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present an analysis of the media discourse of ELL in Japan and Japanese women’s discourses of akogare. The second section showed that ELL in the Japanese context is closely linked with power and the discourses of race and heterosexuality. It was suggested firstly that the ELL media discourses examined in this chapter function to blur the boundary between good-looking, chivalrous White Western men as the desirable English teacher and romantic partners.

Secondly, the example of Gaba was used to argue that the ELL media can conflate ELL and romance and can use that to generate further desire to “consume” English and White masculinity as commodities. Using examples of ikemen teachers and Gaba promotional goods, I argued that the media promotes the consumerist mode of ELL: The type of instructors and the style and place of learning are presented as within the control of Japanese women. Thus, in this mode of ELL, contemporary femininity merges with a consumer identity; English and romance become objects of consumption.

The media discourse of renai English was presented as a further example in which ELL and international heterosexual romance become mutually constitutive.
The analysis indicated that such discourse endorses particular subject positions, those of “sexy,” provocative and also romantically passive femininity, which have circulated widely in the international media for some time (Marchetti, 1993; Talbot, 1997). English has become a new element in an ancient script of gender identities and heterosexual romance, which is resold to young Japanese women as something modern and sophisticated.

The final section presented an analysis of Japanese women’s discourses of akogare in their adolescence. The majority of the primary and secondary participants reported having developed a passion for Western musicians or/and actors in their teenage years and had dreamed of communicating their romantic desires to these celebrities. Such passion worked as a link to the increased desire for and use of, English in their lives. In contradiction to the discourse of English as an emancipatory tool for women (Matsubara, 1989), my participants’ examples indicated that English functions as a means to perform their typical heterosexual identity as adolescent girls desiring a Western male.

In conclusion, subject positions that are offered in the media discourse of language desire are many and complex. This raises the question of how the subject positions available to young Japanese women may in fact impact upon their actual linguistic practices in interactional contexts. Chapters 7-9 provide some insights into this question. However, first, it is necessary to consider the ways in which my participants decided to leave Japan and go on ryugaku to Australia. This is the main focus of the next chapter.
Chapter 6: Going on Ryugaku

6.1 Introduction

From the outset of my fieldwork, I was struck by my participants’ eagerness to
tell me about their akogare for English and ryugaku. It was as though I did not even
have to ask questions. It appeared that they genuinely wanted me to understand their
reasons for learning English and going on ryugaku. It also seemed as though they
were reassessing their choices and the realities of their situation in our dialogues. At
the same time, I felt that they were looking for my acknowledgement that what they
were doing in Sydney was meaningful despite all the difficulties they were
experiencing. Although this enthusiasm was common among my participants, their
reasons for ryugaku varied widely. As Ahearn (2001) reminds us, “motivations are
always complex and contradictory.” Indeed, my participants’ narratives of ryugaku
life in Sydney revealed motivations and desires which were multiple, fluid, complex,
and sometimes conflicting.

This chapter presents an analysis of Japanese women’s narratives about
language ryugaku in Australia. Firstly there is an exploration of the ways in which
Japanese media promote certain countries as destinations of language ryugaku and
construct the practice of ryugaku as a way in which a woman can decisively reinvent
their identities and lifestyles. This is followed by an examination of issues
surrounding participants’ decisions and experiences of English ryugaku in Sydney.
6.2 The media discourse of English ryugaku

In the major bookstores that I visited in Tokyo, there was often a special booth set up by an English school and/or ryugaku agent. The agent was there to promote a wide range of services and products of English learning and ryugaku. Perhaps because I was walking around with a pile of English textbooks and ryugaku magazines for my research, I was often stopped by a female representative from one of these booths and asked if I was interested in learning English and going on ryugaku one day. They then proceeded to offer me a special deal and also invited me to attend their "free" seminar. One female representative said to me, "If you have time right now, I can take you to our office which is near by and help you figure out what type of ryugaku is suitable for you."

Although I didn’t ever accept such offers, I found that their catch phrase, "help figure out what type of ryugaku is suitable for you" could be appealing to those who are considering the subject. As there are so many different ways in which ryugaku can be arranged, those new to this discourse might be easily confused and feel at a loss as to the best option for themselves. Numerous magazines and guidebooks offer a vast variety of ryugaku programs from small-scale one-week ryugaku to a long-term university degree ryugaku. They are often published by ryugaku agents, travel specialist publishers, or publishing companies that specialise in foreign language education. Women’s magazines, too, often carry special articles dealing with the topic of ryugaku and offer wide-ranging advice to their readers.
Despite all of the varieties of ryugaku, two common characteristics can be identified in the media discourse of language ryugaku. Firstly, in most ryugaku magazines and ryugaku articles in women’s magazines, the choices of language (usually restricted to English) ryugaku destinations are often limited to five or six major English-speaking nations, almost always including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. ALC’s comprehensive guide to ESL programs (2002) (see Figure 9) provides a typical example of the media representation of ryugaku destinations. The headline on the top right hand side, referring to a ryugaku destination, poses the rhetorical question: “How should I choose?” The main body has a list of six destination countries (from the top: America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Ireland) and their characteristics in terms of ESL programs.

What is missing from this example is that despite its claim to being a comprehensive list, other English-speaking countries of the Outer Circle of countries in which English is widely used (Kachru, 1992) including, for example, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and countries in Africa, are not mentioned as possible destinations. The media discourse of ryugaku functions to legitimatise the ownership of English by the Inner Circle countries by ignoring the status of other countries, namely those in the Outer Circle. However, ALC’s representation is by no means an isolated practice. Most ryugaku magazines examined follow the same line.
As is discussed below, options that were entertained by most participants prior to their coming to Sydney were also limited to these countries, in particular, America, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Secondly, Japanese media typically portray ryugaku as a glamorous means of reinventing and empowering womanhood and launching a new lifestyle. Ryugaku magazines often carry sensational headlines such as “海外生活で見つける新しい自分：留学で人生を変えよう in Australia (Finding a new self overseas: Change your life through ryugaku in Australia)” (Ryugaku Journal, 2002) and “オーストラリア&ニュージーランド新しい生き方始めよう (Australia & New Zealand: Let’s start a new life)” (Wish International, 2002). The heading and the photo in the ryugaku magazine, “やっぱ海外へ行こう (Let’s go overseas)” (2000, p. 38) (see Figure 10) reflects this tendency. The headline states “For ryugaku and language training without regret: Going overseas to find a new self” while the young woman in the close-up camera shot looks to the left with a sense of determination and hope. As is demonstrated below, participants in this research also considered the act of learning English overseas as a means of finding a new self and/or lifestyle.
6.3 Ryugaku in Australia

Kelsky (2001b) points out that despite the dominant discourse of *akogare* for the West and English language learning and in spite of the large number of women choosing to study English domestically (Kobayashi, 2002), those who actually commit themselves to *ryugaku*, particularly long-term *ryugaku* programs, are still a minority. This suggests that there could be a wider range of factors that together with *akogare*, may lead to the decision to go on *ryugaku*. In fact, my participants had a tendency to narrate their particular experience of a critical life event/experience as affecting their final decision to act on their *akogare* for going overseas. The following sections present an analysis of participants’ personal reasons for coming to Australia to study English and/or work. It highlights the issues surrounding their decision and experiences of *ryugaku*. Such issues include: critical events that led to *ryugaku*; the political economy of Australia as a *ryugaku* destination; the working holiday program; age and *ryugaku*; and images of Australia.

6.3.1 Critical events and *ryugaku*

Linde (1992) points out that an individual needs to have “a coherent, acceptable and revised life story” (p. 3) in order to live comfortably in the social world. In particular, when it comes to professional identities, life decisions that hold considerable significance for the individual, it becomes increasingly important to account for particular choices. When I first met my participants, I usually began my interview with a question, “Why did you want to come to Australia?” From their replies it was evident that a host of complex social, economic, cultural and familial factors were at play. Put another way, their decisions to leave Japan and spend time
overseas studying and working in an English-language environment were inextricably bound up by a complex host of “push” and “pull” factors. Nevertheless, in each case one particular factor was described as their final reason for undertaking ryugaku with Australia as their study destination. It is these key events and experiences that are explored in this section.

For Yoko, her final push was narrated as her experience of divorce in her late twenties and her desire to escape gossip in a country town where “everyone” knew of her ordeal. Her emotional turmoil was heightened by the fact that her husband and his new girlfriend worked in the same public office as she did. She found an emotional refuge in Hollywood movies (see Chapter 5) and in secret affairs with a Japanese speaking American man and a second-generation Japanese-Brazilian boyfriend. However, it was not until she visited her friend in Sydney for a holiday that she was able to find a new direction in her life. During this trip, she found she was able to forget tormenting thoughts about her divorce.

ヨウコ：それで、全然[主人]思い出さなくてそこで私、あっ忘れてた！とか思って。あ、もういいやって。だから仕事もう辞めて [...] 私もずっと前から海外行って英語マスターしたいな～と思ってたんで。

Yoko: and I didn’t remember it [the divorce] at all and I thought, “oh, I’ve forgotten about it!” it didn’t matter anymore. I was ready to quit my job [...] I’ve always wanted to go overseas to master English (i30april02yoko)

After returning to Japan, she decided to resign from her job and move to Sydney as an international student. Thus, ryugaku for Yoko served as a means of rejecting her identity as a miserable divorcee and of restarting her life by reinventing herself as an international woman with fluency in English. As is discussed in the following chapters, this personal reason for ryugaku had a tremendous impact on the way in which she approached socialising and language learning in Sydney.
Similarly, Chizuko considered the painful break-up with Tony, her Australian boyfriend in Tokyo, to be the main reason for ryugaku in Australia. In our interview, she described him as a man of every woman’s akogare and I could sense that for her he was still a very special person, an unattainable ex-lover. Although their break-up was amicable, Tony proved to be unforgettable and when she discovered that he was married to someone else a few years later, she was devastated to the point that she decided to change her life through relocating herself overseas.

Chizuko: [...] when I asked him if he was happy, he said, “yes, I am.” I said, “I wish you a lot of happiness, bye” in parting, but then, I thought to myself, “I am going overseas!”

Kimi: why?

Chizuko: I don’t know, but I wanted to change my everyday environment

Kimi: you were shocked, weren’t you?

Chizuko: yeah, I must have been still obsessed with him. but as long as I was in Japan, I would have been hoping that I might be able to see him again. I was still so attached (i10oct03Chizuko).

As discussed in Chapter 5, Chizuko grew up fostering a great deal of akogare for English and Western culture. Interestingly, her break-up with Tony did not extinguish this, but seemed to have promoted an even stronger desire for mastering English. In fact, due to the fact that she saw English as the main cause of the failure of their relationship.
Chizuko: yeah, we were kind of planning to get married, wanted to marry. but in the end, the issue of children came up...it was impossible to communicate at deep levels...we broke up because of it...my proficiency was thiiniis low...(i10oct03Chizuko)

Chizuko was convinced that had she been more fluent in English, the marriage would have materialised.

キミエ：じゃあ、もしちずちゃんがもう少し英語が出来たら、トニーがもう少し[日本語できたって・・・

Kimie: then, if you had more English or he had [more Japanese,

Chizuko: [そしたら結婚してたよ！

Chizuko: [we would have been married! (i10oct03Chizuko)

For Chizuko, ryugaku to Australia was a means not only of changing her life circumstances, but also of transforming her identity as a deficient speaker of English, which, in her view, partly led to the end of her relationship with Tony who she adored and who she still describes as the “most wonderful man on the earth”

(i10oct03Chizuko).

For Eika, ryugaku to the United States had been a project in which she had invested a great deal, both emotionally and financially, for over a decade. She had been learning English since her late teenage years, which were spent on planning to study in the United States. As mentioned earlier, due to her parent’s refusal to support her studies overseas, Eika began working to self-fund her study overseas after graduating from a college of English. However, she recalls losing a sense of direction in her life after some years of working.

エイカ：だから、あの、留学がダメって言われて、取りあえず働きだした時からだよね・・・なんか目的を失っちゃったって言うの？英語が全てだったじゃない？こう、それ以来自分が何をしたいかって事が全然見失っちゃってき～。まあ、そんなに遭り
Eika: so, since the option of ryugaku was rejected and I started to work...it’s like I’ve kind of lost a sense of purpose in my life because English was everything for me, wasn’t it? like, since then, I’ve lost the sight of what I really wanted to do. well, my job wasn’t too bad, but it wasn’t a job that I was really inspired to do. I couldn’t possibly continue that mundane job. (t15april04eika)

Thus, her purpose of a working holiday in Sydney was two-fold. Firstly, she wanted to re-engage with her decade-long akogare project of mastering English, which she said had meant “everything for her” since her teenage years. Secondly, Eika was unlike Yoko and Chizuko; she had no traumatic emotional experiences in Japan. Rather, Eika had a lack of direction in her life that seems to have driven her towards the option of a working holiday in Australia (The contradiction between her akogare for the United States and her choice of Australia is explained in section 6.3.2). Like many hundreds of thousands of Japanese women, Eika wanted to find “something,” a new direction, a new life commitment that would bring about a sense of happiness and fulfilment. She had akogare for the English language and the West, both of which are central to this project.

Yuka’s case was part of an increasing social phenomenon within Japan (Saito, 2003). At junior high school, she became a victim of school bullying. As a result, she had become hikikomori, or “socially withdrawn” and dropped out of school at the age of 14. As a solution to this problem, a friend of her parents suggested that she spend time overseas studying English, of which she had had a positive image. She enthusiastically responded to the suggestion.

ユカ：あたし、全然日本になんていたくなかったから。でも英語は昔から好きだったから、行く行くみたいな@
Yuka: I didn’t wan to stay in Japan at all. I always liked English, so I was like, “I would love to go” @ (f9march03yuka)
Her case differs from other participants in my study in that her akogare for the West, and consequently White Western men, emerged after her arrival in Australia. However, Yuka’s view of ryugaku as a powerful way of reinventing identity and finding a brighter future was consistent with that of many of the other women.

For Ichi, her intense akogare for English and overseas began with her akogare for the Australian English teacher at her high school. Ryugaku became her dream after a short-term visit to Australia (this also happened to Eika and many of my secondary participants). After majoring in English at a woman’s college she, like other graduates, first considered finding a job in Japan. However, she told me that she did not want to “live the rest of her life as an office worker” (i27july01ichi) and had the ideal of building a career in a sphere in which men and women were treated equally. Ichi thought being an operator in a control tower at an airport would be an ideal job and undertook a two-year correspondence course. However, when she failed the national examination, she finally acted on her long-term akogare to study at a university overseas and persuaded her parents to fund a university degree in Australia for her. She believed that an overseas qualification as a teacher would enable her to earn social respect in Japan and obtain a job with greater gender equality. Therefore, ryugaku for Ichi was a means of resistance to an ordinary lifestyle as a young woman in Japan and also as a means of gaining social capital which would enable her to fight for greater gender equality in workplace.

Yoko, Chizuko and Yuka’s cases demonstrate that English ryugaku served as a means by which they attempted to overcome critical life events. It gave them an opportunity to leave their local area and those people who positioned them negatively. This indicates the importance of understanding that these Japanese women did not come to Australia simply to study a language, which they could have done in any
case, without leaving Japan. Their decisions to move to Australia were intimately bound up with their desire for identity transformation through the attainment of proficiency in an international language, English. Relocation to the fantasised West, they believed, would enable them to leave their problems behind.

However, not only specific negative experiences drove Japanese women out of their homeland. General frustration with their lives was often the motivation behind ryugaku. For instance, as Ichi and Eika’s cases attest, gender inequalities in the workplace still mar the prospects of working-women in Japan and, out of frustration, these women attempt to attain career-boosting overseas qualifications and English fluency often promoted in media discourses in Japan. Both Ichi and Eika had had akogare for the English language and Western countries since their childhoods. It was their disillusionment about their career prospects as women in Japan that prompted them to turn to their long-term akogare for ryugaku and ELL in order to find a new lifestyle and work opportunities. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of Kelsky (2001b) and Matsubara (1989): that highly career-oriented women in Japan tend to consider overseas education and English as indispensable to the realisation of their aspirations. Although Eika and Ichi were not as highly career-oriented, they were aware that their gender imposed constraints on their prospects in the male dominated job market in Japan.

6.3.2 The political economy of ryugaku in Australia

Rina: America would be too dangerous because of terrorism. the cost of living is high, too. and Canada and England would be too cold. after I really thought about it, Australia is the safest English speaking country and has the working holiday system. (f10dec03eikarina)
This comment by a secondary participant, Rina, well summarises a typical decision making process about ryugaku in Australia among many of the Japanese women who participated in my study. She had recently graduated from a two-year English college course and wanted to spend a year overseas before joining one of the major English conversation schools as a regional manager. When the participants of this study were nurturing their akogare for ryugaku in Japan, not surprisingly, the United States was their first choice, followed by the United Kingdom (largely England), Canada and Australia. New Zealand was only occasionally mentioned, and Ireland and Outer Circle English speaking countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, or India were mentioned not at all. This indicates the powerful influence resulting from the prevalent media representation of the most desirable ryugaku countries described at the beginning of this chapter. Consistent with media representation of ryugaku destinations and Matsuda’s (2003) report, I found that the concept of English ryugaku among my participants was always related to living in one of the Inner Circle English speaking countries.

What Rina’s account further indicated was that Australia was seldom participants’ first choice. In other words, only a few had a passionate akogare for Australia prior to their departure. Most chose Australia for socioeconomic, or “practical,” reasons rather than other Inner Circle English speaking countries, particularly the United States. Despite its popularity in Japanese women’s ryugaku narratives, the United States was often eliminated primarily for security reasons, one result of the “9/11” acts of terrorism. Moreover, the United States and the United Kingdom were rejected for their high costs of living and study, while the United Kingdom and Canada were eliminated predominantly for their poor weather: The United Kingdom was seen as “gloomy” while Canada was unpopular because it was
"too cold." Although all participants raised "mastery of English" as their first priority, Australia was their chosen destination on the basis of factors more related to lifestyle choices than to conditions for learning English.

In this ryugaku market, Australia emerged as an attractive choice thanks to its reputation for relatively low costs of living and study, its relative safety, its sunny weather and most of all, its English speaking Western identity. This view dovetailed with the way the Australian English language industry marketed Australia as "value for money"\(^\text{18}\) (Evans, 2005). Although the majority of participants knew of Australia as an immigrant-receiving country, very few raised multiculturalism or multilingualism as part of its attraction. As is discussed in the following chapters, the majority of Japanese women in my study preferred socialising with White native speakers of English and often expressed ambivalent feelings about associating with non-White, non-native speakers of English.

Australia was their first choice for both Ichi and Chizuko. What they had in common was that for both, their first, close encounter with Australia was highly gendered. Ichi's first encounter with Australia was through an Australian male teacher of English at her high school, for whom she developed a romantic akogare which was later translated into an urge to visit Australia.

キミエ：へ～あこがれてたんだ～？
Kimie: I see, you had akogare for him?

イチ：うん、すっごくかっこよかったよね。それで、オーストラリア行きたいな～って思ったんだけど。
Ichi: yeah, he was so good-looking. that's what made me want to go to Australia. (f29oct03ichi)

\(^{18}\) There is a view that with the rising Australian dollar, Australia can no longer claim "value for money" (see Evan, 2005)
In her high school years, Ichi had in fact visited Sydney on a one-month English homestay ryugaku. During the visit, she “fell in love” with Australia and became determined to return for further study. Among all participants, probably Ichi had the most positive view and strongest emotional connection with Australian people and culture, that is, with the dominant Anglo-Saxon facet of Australia. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Similarly, Chizuko's first encounter with Australia was through Tony, her first gaijin Australian boyfriend, in Tokyo in the early 1990s. As mentioned earlier, their three-year relationship ended due to a “language problem” (i10oct03Chizuko). Even after the break-up which “made the air look grey” (i10oct03Chizuko), Australia was a “natural” choice for Chizuko.

Chizuko: Tony was a wonderful person. even in hindsight, he was such a good person. and other Australian friends were nice people, too, so I thought that I couldn’t go wrong with Australia. (t5may04Chizuko)

Situations like those of Ichi and Chizuko were rare among my participants, both primary and secondary. America and American English dominated akogare narratives of ELL and ryugaku in both media discourses and those of the participants in my study, for many of whom, even after their arrival in Sydney, America remained the dominant point of reference or a standard against which their Australian experiences were measured. Among other things, they talked at length about the difference between Australian English and American English. In their narratives, Australian English was often framed as something “cute” or “strange,” constructing the language as inferior to its American counterpart. However, as their stay extended, images of America and American English began to change for them: even for Yoko, the most passionate admirer of America.
There was one significant factor that made Australia more attractive than the United States for particular participants. My data suggests that Australia would not have been chosen if it were not for its working holiday program. Based on an agreement negotiated among eight governments19, this program allows citizens under the age of 30, to travel, study and work for one year in any of the participating countries. It emerged that as in the case of English ryugaku, working holidays were also a highly gendered practice (at least among Japanese students participating in the program). According to one staff member of the Japan Association for Working Holiday Makers (JAWHM) (t7april04JAWHM), since the program began in 1980, over 70% of Japanese working holidaymakers have been women. On reason for that, as will be further explained shortly, is that taking a working holiday is impossible for Japanese men after they begin their business careers.

スタッフ：男の子は、[ワーキングホリデー]大学中に行くんですよ。それがベストな んですよ。どうしてかっていうと、大学だったら戻れるでしょう？でも、一度仕事し ちゃって、辞めて行くっていうと、大変なんですよ、社会的に。浪人になっちゃうじ ゃないですか。だから、一度就職したら減多にワーホリでは行きませんよ。仕事に戻 れませんから。

Staff: boys go [on working holiday] during university. that’s the best for them because they could go back to university, couldn’t they? but, it is a lot of trouble socially if they are already working and decide to quit in order to go [on working holiday]. they would become “roonin” (unemployed). so once they get employed, they don’t go on working holiday. they won’t be able to go back to their job. (t7april04JAWHM)

In contrast, women have less hesitation about leaving their jobs and embarking on a working holiday overseas as they consider the program to be a means of advancing their careers.

スタッフ：だいたい、ワーホリは圧倒的に女性が多いですね。7・3の割合。女の子 は仕事辞めていくんですよ、キャリアアップとかで。

19 The eight countries participating in the working holiday visa program as of April 2004 were Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Korea, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan (Japan Association for Working Holiday Makers, 2006).
Staff: fundamentally, working holiday makers are overwhelmingly women. 70 – 30 per cent. Women usually quit their job to go in order to boost their career. (t7april04JAWHM)

Eika was one of those women who saw a working holiday program as a more suitable choice than a short-term English ryugaku. Although she had had a strong akogare for the United States since her adolescence, she was deterred by the fact that America did not allow international students to work. Mastery of English was her main motivation for overseas travel, but it was not the only one. Indeed, her choice of a working holiday in Australia rather than an English ryugaku in America was constructed by her multifaceted desires.

エイカ：あたしは、オーストラリアに英語をもう一度やりに来たんだけど、それと同時に、自分の人生の中で本当にやりたい事を探しに来たってのもあるじゃない？だからまあ、最初の一年は英語の勉強したり、ボランティアの仕事したりいろいろやってみて、で、もし、大学行きたいなら行きたいで、後仕事でなんか、やりたい事見つけたりしたら二年目ぐらいいてもいいかなって

Eika: I came to Australia to study English again, but another purpose is to find something that I can get passionate about in my life. so for the first one year, I am going to do many things like studying English and doing volunteer work. and if I want to go to university or find a type of job that I want to try out, then I might consider staying here for another year. (f31march03eika)

Her choice of Australia for her working holiday also reflected her belief that ELL would be a long-term project. In contrast to most of my other participants, she had a firm conviction that mastering English would require a considerable amount of time and effort and that it would not be simply not a matter of a few months’ study. Furthermore, her decision to undertake a working holiday was associated with her identity choice, which was that she did not want to be just a student of English.

Although Eika had saved and accumulated considerable savings in Japan which lasted during her entire stay in Sydney, she had been working since she was twenty and maintaining this worker identity seemed to be of great importance in her choice of taking a working holiday rather than an English ryugaku.
What was interesting about Eika’s working holiday discourse was the age limit imposed on participants, which she set as a personal and final time limit to “get out of Japan” and give herself “one last chance” to fulfil her decade-long akogare for mastering English in a Western country. As in the case of Eika, age emerged as one of the most complex issues constructing Japanese women’s discourse of ryugaku and ELL.

6.3.3 Age and ryugaku

Male friend: hey, you, you are already 24, aren’t you? there is no point for a women of your age in going on ryugaku. (Tokyo, 1992)

In 1992, a male ex-classmate began talking to me at my farewell party in Tokyo. I was due to leave Japan soon for Australia where I intended to undertake a three-year undergraduate degree in psychology. He told me that I would not succeed because I was an “old woman” and urged me to start thinking about marriage with my then boyfriend. A female classmate, who, after listening for a while to his sexist and ageist views, erupted in anger and literally took him outside the restaurant to “sort him out.”

This incident is still vividly present in my mind. Until then, I did not consider my age, let alone my being a woman, as having been an issue in my decision to study
in English overseas. However, his comment suddenly linked age, gender and ELL in a problematic way. During my undergraduate years in Sydney, I remember recalling his comment occasionally, wondering if I was really too old to master English and succeed at a university in which I had to study in a second language. When I experienced difficulties, his comments often crept back into my consciousness and I would think to myself, “Perhaps I am too old to learn English. I should have married instead of coming to Australia.”

For many of my “older” participants, age was central to their decision to study English overseas. Age considerations were particularly serious when it came to a long-term ryugaku or/and working holiday. For instance, one secondary participant, 30-year-old Haru, who in her mid-twenties had been a working holidaymaker in Sydney and who had recently returned to live with her Australian boyfriend, said that she considered it too late to go overseas and attempt to master English.

ハル：やっぱり30近くになってくると、出にくくなるんですよ。いまさら英語やってどうすんだみたいね。
**Haru:** getting close to 30, it becomes difficult to get out. it’s like, what’s the point in studying English now? (f17march04haru)

Since her teenage years, Haru had always had akogare for mastering English. Although age did not appear to be an issue during her working holiday, she was ambivalent about going overseas and attempting to seriously learn English at the age of 30. She said that because of her age, her decision to finally return to Australia took a great deal of consideration, time and emotional struggle.

Like me, Yoko never considered age as an issue until it was mentioned by her mother. When she decided to go on a short-term English ryugaku, she was 29 years old and freshly divorced. Anxious to escape the aftermath of her divorce, and with her longstanding akogare for becoming like the actor Cameron Diaz (in terms both of
English fluency and physical appearance), there was no space left in her mind to worry about her age.

ヨウコ：全然年なんて気にしてませんでしたよ。もう、早くあの町が出たかったのと、絶対カマロが見られるんだってわくわくしてましたから＠＠
**Yoko:** I was never worried about my age. I just wanted to get out of town and was so full of hope that I was finally going to be like Cameron Diaz＠＠
(t5may04yoko)

However, her concerned mother tried to dissuade her on several occasions. In her mother’s view, English ryugaku at the age of 29 was not the right option for her daughter, who needed to reconstruct her life after the divorce.

ヨウコ：ああ、でも、母親には言われましたよね。「もう29で、英語なんて勉強しに行ってどうするの。」みたいなの
**Yoko:** yeah, but, my mother said to me, “what are you going to do, studying English at 29?”
(t5may04yoko)

For other participants, age was the very factor that “pushed them out.” They felt the urge to get out of Japan “before it was too late.” For instance, when Chizuko finally decided to go on ryugaku, she was 36 years old. She said that she felt;

今‘出ない’と、一生出られないなって言う危機感
an overwhelming sense that I may not be able to ‘get out’ if I don’t do it now
(i10oct03Chizuko)

Age was also a crucial issue for Eika since the age limit of 30 years imposed on participants in the working holiday program forced her finally to decide to abandon her career and pursue her youthful akogare for mastering English (DIMIA, 2005b).

エイカ：30歳までにワーホリのビザとって、31歳のバースデーまでにオーストラリアに入国しないといけないわけよ。だから、本当に今行かなかったらもう一生出れないような気がしてさ～。行きたい行きたいって言ってたけど、こう、重い腰だったわけじゃない、10年以上も？年齢制限があって、逆によかったみたいね。
**Eika:** I had to get a working holiday visa before 30 and enter Australia before my 31st birthday. at that time, I felt that if I don’t leave now, I will never ever leave for the rest of my life. I was always saying that I wanted to go overseas, but was inactive about it for over the last ten years. it was good that there was an age requirement. (f31march03eika)
Eika’s decade-long hesitation about going on ryugaku is related to another significant part of the discourse of age and ryugaku, that is, the problem of finding employment on return to Japan. Even though that consideration did not stop my participants from coming to Australia, many told me that they gave it much thought before leaving Japan. Quitting her job of nine years at the age of 29, Eika felt unsure about her re-employment prospects when she returned to Japan. She hoped that her (initial) plan of taking a one year working holiday in Australia would somehow create the prospect of a new career which would involve her English skills (which she expected to improve during the year in Sydney). Despite the English skills she possessed even before she left Japan, she was pessimistic about finding employment in the “tight” Japanese job market for women, particularly for those in their thirties. The same concern was expressed by many other older participants who, while wanting to find a job using English on their return to Japan, very few knew exactly how they could do this, especially now that they were older than 30.

In comparison, age did not emerge as an issue in the younger participants’ narratives. For instance, Yuka was 17 and Ichi 21 years old when they arrived in Sydney. In their narratives, age was not mentioned as a factor that might have pushed them out of Japan or made them hesitate about going overseas to study English. As was mentioned earlier, Ichi used ryugaku as a strategy to improve her career prospects in Japan, while the issue of employment upon return to Japan was never raised in Yuka’s recall of her motivation for English ryugaku. In Chapter 9, it is demonstrated that participants’ views about their age and employment changed during their stay in Sydney. In spite of the macro discourse of English ryugaku as a career tool for women, and of Ichi’s prior expectations, ryugaku experiences and language skills
were not necessarily always seen as an absolute advantage for employment, even for younger participants.

These data indicate that the discourse of English language learning and ryugaku cannot be understood without reference to the local discourse about Japanese women’s life courses and their age. Haru, Eika and Yoko were all single women in their late twenties and their age was central to their decision-making processes with reference to studying English overseas. These older participants had to deal with emotional struggles about whether they were too old to learn English or invest in a ryugaku to change their life course. On one the one hand, the discourse of English as emancipatory for all women is indeed prevalent (particularly in media as discussed earlier). On the other hand, “older” (i.e., those approaching having already passed 30) Japanese participants had to justify their decisions to themselves as much as to anyone else. They also had to negotiate the disapproval of those who disagreed with their move outside the expected life course of a Japanese woman and instead took up English ryugaku as a way of creating a new identity for themselves. Despite the macro discourse of English and ryugaku as a career booster for women, Japanese women’s micro-discourse indicates that their commitment to learning English for career purposes needs to be understood in reference to the discourse of age and the job market for women in Japan. In sum, for many Japanese women, English ryugaku is never only concerned with acquiring linguistic knowledge and obtaining “cross-cultural” experiences. It is also intimately linked with the traditional discourse of women’s life cycles (e.g., education, career and marriage) and age, which in turn powerfully influences who they desire to socialise with in Sydney (see Chapter 7).
6.3.4 Images of Australia and ryugaku life in Australia

As mentioned above, very few of the Japanese women made Australia their first choice of a ryugaku destination. For many, Australia represented a “compromise” with the more desirable United States. Nevertheless, the majority of my informants report having had a positive image of Australia prior to their arriving here. For instance, a secondary participant, Tokiko, who decided to come to Australia for the socioeconomic and lifestyle reasons mentioned earlier, said that she had a positive image of Australia.

Tokiko: I had the image of Aussies as warm, friendly and very liberating. (t8may04tokiko)

Based on many ryugaku discourses in Japan, participants typically imagined they would experience everyday life “surrounded by friendly Aussies” and believed that would provide a “natural” way of learning English. Yoko’s account of her imaginings about Australia prior to her arrival in Sydney testifies to this.

Yoko: before coming to Australia, I used to imagine myself surrounded by many beautiful White friends in a café, somewhere in Sydney, chatting and chuckling with them in my FLUENT English (i30april02)

As is evident in her comment, she imagined that the Australian community would consist almost totally of its dominant hakuin (White people) and her ideas on this score were typical of most of my participants; very few participants knew about Australia’s multiculturalism/multilingualism prior to their arrival or raised it as an attraction of Australia as a ryugaku destination. In fact, many of the women expressed surprise about Sydney’s multiculturalism, or more precisely, its Asianisation. This
feeling was often framed as a “disappointment” in typical phrases such as, “I’m so surprised that there are so many Asians in Sydney. It’s not so different from being in Japan.” What they wanted to experience through ryugaku in Australia was immersion in an imagined community of (White) Australians and they felt that the large number of Asians (who look like Japanese) in Sydney did not contribute to this aspect of the ryugaku project.

However, it is important to note that my participants’ view of the Asian population in Sydney was not static and in fact different stories were told at different points during their stay; this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapters 7 and 9. Nevertheless, all of my participants at times expressed positive identification with Asians at varying levels of social participation. For instance, discouraged by a distant Australian flatmate, Eika chose her next shared-accommodation partner partly on the basis of her Asian identity (see Section 8.3.2).

Furthermore, Yoko’s remark illustrates a common idea about ryugaku, a belief that participants would naturally pick up English while socialising with local people and thus become fluent in little time. For instance, prior to departure, Ichi’s friend told her to socialise with Australians as much as she could and that mastery of English “usually” required approximately three months (the time-bound concept of progress in English will be further discussed in Chapter 7). Prior to arrival in Sydney, the majority of the participants seemed to subscribe to the discourse that success in ELL was dependent on access to native speakers of English. This issue will be further investigated in the next chapter.

6.4 Summary

In this chapter I examined the notion of language ryugaku for Japanese women. In the first section, it was argued that the media discourse of language ryugaku
functions to give legitimacy to major Western English speaking countries as the language ryugaku destinations. It was further pointed out that the media discourses in Japan promote language ryugaku as a means of reinventing women's identity and creating prospects for a glamorous lifestyle and future career. In the second section, an analysis was made of the narratives of my participants about their decision to go on language ryugaku to Australia. For Yoko, Chizuko and Yuka, English ryugaku offered them not only a geographical and emotional break from the social space that imposed unfavourable subject positions, but also a wider range of identity options. For Eika and Ichi, in contrast, going on ryugaku was closely linked with their occupational possibilities, which in turn were connected with a sense of commitment and fulfilment and an ideal of gender equality.

On the whole, their decisions to come to Australia were not simply based on their akogare for English and living overseas (as discussed in Chapter 5), but were also closely bound up with a host of other social, cultural, economic and logistic factors, including age, education, family agreement, career, economic background of the family and types of visas available to them. Their ryugaku was not simply linguistically and educationally motivated and was not all fantasy and romance, but required a great deal of money and consideration. Therefore, the process involved making choices and revising them on a long-term basis from a variety of subject positions (e.g., that of a woman, a daughter, a worker, a divorcee) also required them to think and behave as consumers, who gathered pamphlets, visited ryugaku agencies and negotiated prices for tuition fees to help them as they decided about investing their resources (e.g., time, money) in language ryugaku.

Insights into the ways in which Japanese micro- and macro-discourses relating to English, age, occupation and gender shaped my participants' decisions to study
English in Australia was instrumental in understanding their discourse about socialisation with a variety of speakers of English. The next chapter presents findings on these issues.
Chapter 7: Desired Interlocutors

7.1 Introduction

A wide range of macro- and micro-discourses constituting Japanese women’s *akogare* for English in the Japanese context has been discussed in the previous chapters. Chapter 5 covered media discourses of language desire in which the discursive fields of English, the West and the Western men were linked and promoted. The previous chapter introduced the discourse of English *ryugaku* as a means of identity- and lifestyle-reconstruction for Japanese women and discussed the processes by which my participants decided to come to Australia to study English.

In fact, insights into my participants’ discourses of English *ryugaku* in Australia were instrumental in understanding what they considered as “learning” and “success” in ELL and who they found as “desirable” and “undesirable” interlocutors in their everyday lives in Sydney, Australia. This chapter presents an analysis of such discourses. Firstly, I examine my participants’ narratives relating to the gap between their imagined lifestyle and ELL and the reality of their experiences that set in after a certain period of time in Sydney. Secondly, I introduce the discourse of Western native speaker males as ultimate linguistic resources and teaching aids. In conclusion, I report my participants’ versions of what makes men desirable or undesirable interlocutors.

7.2 Desires, images and realities of *ryugaku* in Australia

This section presents my participants’ experiences of the gap between images and realities of language *ryugaku* in Sydney. I discuss, firstly, how they envisioned
their life in Sydney in relation to ELL and social life. Secondly, I report on their actual experiences in interacting with various social actors and their impact on the views of my participants on Australians and methods of language learning. This section provides the background context for the next section which introduces the discourse of male native speakers as a special method of improving English and a way of gaining access to the wider Australian society.

The participants’ views on ELL and success in language ryugaku varied. My data suggest, however, that there was a widely held belief among them that socialisation with Australians/native speakers of English was the key to learning English in the ryugaku context. This is hardly surprising given the fact that language study overseas has been marketed to create this image in Japan and other countries (Freed, 1995; Tsuda, 1995). Very few would argue against this general theory of language learning.

In this context, however, what was interesting was the tendency that access to and social acceptance by Australians/native-speakers, in the form of friendship or romance, become to be seen as a measure of success in language ryugaku itself. The participants, particularly Yoko, Eika and Ichi, enthusiastically talked about their desire, to “get in,” “get accepted in,” “become part of” and “stay in,” “hakujin no sekai/shakai (White people’s world/society)”; they also talked about their attempts to negotiate and their ultimate inability to achieve these aims. Particularly in the early part of their ryugaku days in Sydney, their everyday thoughts seemed occupied with finding opportunities to talk English with Australians/native speakers of English.

Most of the participants who went to an English school in Sydney told me that Asian students at school often exchanged notes as to how to meet Australian native speakers
and make friends with them (Agency in meeting locals is further discussed in Chapter 8).

In my observation, Japanese students who managed to gain friendship with Australians or other English speakers displayed a certain sense of confidence. For instance, when Ichi started the university foundation course in the end of 2001, she was happy about the fact that she was the only Japanese student in the course and that there was an increasing number of Australian acquaintances in her life. The Japanese students who seemed well immersed in Australian society, were often looked up to as successful ESL learner/users by other Japanese students; the former often becoming the object of respect and, at times, envy and jealousy of the latter.

One reason for this became clear from my observations: While in Australia my participants had the dawning realisation that gaining access to the wider Australian society was not as “natural” as they had imagined. It was often the case that their prior image of “everyday life surrounded by friendly Aussies” quickly lost its validity after their arrival in Sydney. Yoko, Eika and many similarly positioned secondary participants, were deeply disappointed by their inability to socialise with Australians/native speakers in English. They complained that their lack of knowledge of English grammar made speaking difficult, if not impossible, and also that their “untrained ear” made it difficult for them to understand what was being said particularly in “Aussie English.” This made my participants feel guilty about their inability to understand and make friends with Australians/native speakers. For instance, in the beginning of her stay in Australia, Eika blamed her difficulties in interacting with Australians/native speakers on her limited English and not being outgoing enough.
Although they continued to be self-critical, over time my participants also began expressing dissatisfaction with Australians/native speakers who rejected, ignored and ridiculed them, making social interactions not only unsuccessful but also unpleasant. All of my participants believed, albeit to varying degrees, that their racial identity was the main factor accounting for these reactions in that being Asian was associated with deficiency in English. Even one of the most pro-Australian, Yoko, often told me that:

**Yoko**: I think Aussies look down on Asians. They think Asians speak strange English. (f3april03yoko)

As a result, there was a tendency for their image of Australians to shift from that of “friendly people” to “rude and inconsiderate people.” Having worked with Australians in a restaurant, Tokiko told me that in sharp contrast to her prior positive image of Australians, she increasingly found them to be “cold and conservative” and “unprofessional at work” (t7may04tokiko). Eika too, experienced unpleasant encounters with Australians soon after her arrival in Sydney. For instance, when she was ordering a taxi on the phone, the operator rudely hung up on her when she twice failed to understand a question. Although Eika initially blamed herself this kind of incident, after repeated offensive encounters she came to reject “friendly Aussies” as a myth:

**Eika**: だって、私はそういう風には怒れないな。会話に入れないのは自分がね、もっと、積極的にいかないのがいけない訳でしょう？自分がもっと英語に磨きをかけないといけないんじゃん[...] 人の事言ってたら切りが無いしさ。

**Eika**: I can’t get mad at them, you know, because the reason why I can’t join in a conversation is because I am not outgoing enough, isn’t it? I just have to get better at English [...] there is no end to blaming others, you see. (f4july03eika)
Eika: the *ryugaku* section in *Nichigo Press* often says, “study with friendly Aussies.” what are they talking about? @@ I don’t think Aussies are friendly at all. for me, Malaysians are much friendlier. (t9may04eika)

Actual experiences of being “surrounded” by English and White Australians did not always correspond to the participants’ previous images either. In fact, socialisation with Australians/native speakers was a site of contestation of their social and linguistic identities and many reported a sense of isolation, frustration and anger in interactional contexts. For instance, Yuka lost her positive attitudes towards Australians and particularly White Australians, soon after she began a university degree in 2002. Yuka told me that she used to admire White people when she arrived in Sydney and tried very hard to learn English in order to make friends with them. But once her university experience started, she felt unable to fit in with the White Australian majority of students in her Faculty. She continuously felt discriminated against on the basis of her racial and linguistic identity. Yuka told me:

ユカ：いつも私の事英語が出来ないんだろうって感じで、[学部の白人生徒からの]扱いが最低。例えば、リサとコーヒー飲んでるじゃないですか、で他の生徒が来て一緒に座るじゃないですか。目の前に座っているのにも関わらず、無視ですよ、私が英語喋れないって決め付けてる感じで。

**Yuka:** they [White students in her Faculty] always look at me as if I can’t speak English at all and treat me like shit. for example, I am having a coffee with Lisa on campus and other students might come and sit with us, although they may be sitting right in front of me, they would just ignore me, assuming that I can’t speak English. (f4nov03yukaichi)

It is impossible to judge whether or not her interpretation of White students’ behaviour was correct. Her numerous complaints about White Australians indicate that race (Whites vs. Asians) had become one of the most available discourses in Yuka’s world, while negative interactional experiences were often interpreted as racially motivated. Furthermore, half way through her university degree Yuka developed the belief that she could not get along with “monos” i.e. monolingual
speakers of English who she considered to be narrow-minded, unsophisticated and who had a limited worldview. As a result, her social circle increasingly became multilingual and multicultural.

Similarly, Ichi often felt isolated at social gatherings with Australians/native speakers. Because she had always lived with Australian homestay families or in university dormitories, she was constantly surrounded by Australians/native speakers throughout her stay in Sydney. While this was what she wanted to achieve in her ryugaku life, being "constantly" unable to participate in conversations made her feel lonely and unworthy. Unlike Yuka, who increasingly saw White Australians as arrogant and lost her desire for making friends with them, Ichi, because of her self-perceived lack of vocabulary, poor understanding skills and limited knowledge of Australia, saw herself as the main cause of her failure to establish ongoing relationships. Although she said that to achieve her goal of becoming fluent in English she would initially rather go out with Australians and feel lonely than socialise with Japanese people, over time a growing awareness of racial and linguistic discrimination against Asians in Sydney made her "selective" about who she wanted to socialise with.

I noticed that my participants were in a dilemma. On the one hand, many continued to have a desire (although in varying degrees) to socialise with native speaker Australians, association with whom seemed indispensable to success in their language ryugaku project and this kind of association remained highly valued social capital. On the other hand, my participants discovered over time that the desire for social interaction with Australian native speakers was not necessarily mutual. Gaining access to their social circles was hard enough; my participants felt that being able to participate fully and be accepted was almost impossible due to both their limited
English (Yoko, Eika, Ichi and Chizuko in particular) and their wildly circulating racialised politics between White people and Asians (Yuka, Yoko and Eika in particular).

Those such as Ichi, who chose to follow through their *akogare* for immersing themselves in the local Australian environment continued to experience this dilemma acutely and constantly. Others such as Eika, Yuka and Chizuko, after trying hard to be accepted by Australians but finding it difficult to do so, began socialising more with other Japanese or Asians who were easier to make friends with (see Chapter 8). For instance, while Chizuko, who worked and lived with Japanese people, from time to time expressed concern about her Japanese language environment and lack of opportunity to practice English with Australians/native speakers, but did not allow this to dictate her social life in Sydney. She was happy that she had caring Japanese flatmates and a wide social circle even though it consisted solely of Japanese/Asian friends. Yet others, like Yoko and Tokiko, tried to balance the “Japanese world” and the “Western world” often by living or working with Australians but socialising with other Japanese or Asian people in their private time (also see Chapter 8). Over time, the discourse of native speakers as desirable friends and partners changed and was even contested by some of the participants, Yuka in particular, who had stayed in Sydney for a long period of time.

The next section focuses on a particular discourse of English language learning that emerged against this background.

### 7.3 Western men as markers of success in ELL

The majority of my participants reported experiencing bitter disappointment about their inability to interact with Australians/native speakers in English. Many
bought additional grammar textbooks in Sydney or asked their parents in Japan to send Japanese textbooks on English grammar. At home, they would diligently watch TV and listen to the radio in order to “train” their ear to Australian English. However, these conventional learning strategies proved to be not only ineffective, but were dull. In addition, their attempts to use and practice English in public were often met with indifference or unfriendly treatment by Australians/native speakers. Yoko, Eika and Ichi were full of complaints about their excruciatingly slow progress and the gap between their prior imagination of ryugaku life and the reality of their experience. Half way through her university degree course, Yuka no longer thought it worthwhile to socialise with Australians for the sake of improving her English as she had done in her early days in Sydney.

At the same time, at school and in their social circles of friends, my participants were increasingly exposed to success stories of other women who became rapidly fluent in English due to their romantic relationship with native speaker boyfriends. What emerged in this context was the discourse of a having a relationship with a Western man as the best means of achieving success in ELL. The case of Kaori described in Chapter 1 provided the initial lead on this discourse. Inspired by a Japanese cousin and her Australian husband, Kaori was convinced that acquiring a native speaker boyfriend would solve her frustration over her slow progress in English. Eika reached the same conclusion. She found conventional means of using textbooks, watching TV, listening to radio and so on as numbing and unhelpful in achieving her goals of developing fluency in English and establishing a social network.

エイカ：で、思ったんだよね～。もしこう、コンスタントに英語をね、ちゃんと喋れる機会を作るとしたら・・・男だって。ネイティブの彼が必要かなだってさ。
Eika: I thought, if I need to create a more constant opportunity to actually speak English...a man! I need a native speaker boyfriend. (f22oct03eika)
Furthermore, one TAFE college student, who had lived in Sydney for three years, passionately claimed not having an Australian boyfriend was the fundamental reason for her lack of success in ELL (m28mar04eikafriend). The specific advantages of a native speaker partner for ELL are summed up by Rina:

**Rina:** the amount of time spent together is so different from being with friends. we talk about different things because we meet every day. for example, because we have plenty of time, we talk about many things in details. but with friends, you have so much to catch up on in so little time, so you can’t talk in details. and when I am with my friends in a group, I become a listener. but when I am with my boyfriend, I have to talk even if I don’t want to@@ besides I feel relaxed speaking English with him because I know that he likes me. he is a great listener, too, which makes me want to talk more. (fl0dec03rina)

The most significant aspect of this perceived aid to language learning seems to be that women have more power to negotiate their self-importance through emotional/sexual relationships. For Eika, the knowledge that her Australian boyfriend romantically and sexually desired her led to a sense of importance, reassurance and bravery.

**Eika:** やっぱり、この彼が自分を好きだって知ってると有利だよね。なんかうわてに出るの言うの。相手がさ、自分に特別な感情があるって知ってるともっと自分の事話したくなるよね。で英語でやるのもそんなに怖くないみたい。**

**Eika:** I think it’s really advantageous when you know that this man likes you. you kind of have the upper hand. when you know that he has a special interest in you, you kind of feel like talking more about yourself and taking risks in English doesn’t seem as threatening. (fl7mar03eika)

Many other participants in my study agreed with Rina and Eika. While they often found it daunting to interact in a group situation, they were able to concentrate and relax more in a one-on-one context in which they were able to position themselves and be positioned as objects of desire.
Western men were much more than just a linguistic resource, however. They were also a symbol of Western romance and chivalry. In fact, quite a few participants expressed their akogare for Western terms of endearment, confessing that they had always wanted to be called “darling,” “honey” and “sweetheart.”

Ich: Westerners often say “darling,” “sweetie” and “babe” [...] I have a soft spot for these words @@@ well, on the second date, Sean cooked dinner for me. When we went shopping and I called out to him, like, “hey Sean,” he said to me, “yes, darling?” I have had so much akogare for it. it really made me feel like I was his girl @@@ (i30sep03ich)

Such terms gave the Japanese women a transformational experience from their “Asian/Japanese world” to the “Western world.” My informants believed the romantic nuances of these terms were lacking in the Japanese language and therefore being called “darling” was experienced as a discursive and emotional entry into the Western world of their akogare. Eika recalls feeling drawn into another world when called “honey” by her Australian boyfriend.

Eika: at first, I was surprised. I thought “wow, this is the Western world!” in the beginning, it was ticklish and felt like it was happening to someone else. but, I was happy and it made me feel that I was really with a non-Asian man. the Japanese language does not have the same nuance and so it made me feel like I had been drawn into a different world. what made me happy about it most really was the sound...the sound of honey, darling (m28mar04eika)

However, as is evident in the case of Yoko, this popular discourse which positions Western men as the ultimate method of ELL among Japanese women can be problematic in several ways. Although Yoko strongly believed in the efficacy of learning English from a White native speaker boyfriend, she also thought that by this
means she would be able simultaneously to attain two types of highly valued capital: White masculinity and success in English. This association became salient particularly when Yoko’s Korean ESL friend bluntly told her in front of a mutual friend that her English was not good enough to work with native speakers and that she could not recommend Yoko to her company. Publicly positioned as a deficient speaker of English by another non-native speaker of English, her deep humiliation and anger led her to re-examine her approaches to learning English.

ヨウコ：私思ったのは、本当に英語をマスターするのに努力してるなって。勉強ちゃんとしてきましたし、オーストラリア人二人と住んでるし、オーストラリア人と仕事もしてるし、いつも話す努力してるんですよ。なんか、全部やったなって、やってないのは何なんだろうって考えるようになって。

Yoko: I thought, I have been trying really hard to master English. I’ve been studying hard, I live with two Australians, I work with Australians, I am trying to speak English all the time. I started to think, “I’ve done everything...what is it that I am not doing?” (f19mar03yoko)

She concluded that romance with a native speaker would solve her problems and that sexual intimacy with a White acquaintance, Phil, was the only way to bring an end to her on-going agony about her limited English.

ヨウコ：それで思ったんですよ。あ、男だ、恋愛だって。ボーイフレンドいないから。フィルと寝て、もっとこう親密なレベルで付き合ったらもっともっと英語が伸びるんじゃないかなって思ったんですよ ((泣きながら))。

Yoko: then I thought that it was a man, or a relationship. I don’t have a boyfriend. I thought that if I slept with Phil and went out with him at a more intimate level, my English would be much better ((sobbing)). (f19mar03yoko)

She found, however, that she could not follow through this idea because she did not find Phil to be romantically or sexually attractive. Her thinking on this issue provides important insights, demonstrating how language desire, which is strategically promoted for commercial purposes (see Chapter 5), also has the power to induce romantic and sexual choices and thus helps reproduce gender inequality. Prior to the incident, Yoko and Phil had already constructed an ambivalent friendship/relationship over several months. For Yoko, Phil was the only White native
speaker friend who showed a consistent interest in socialising with her. But while there were several occasions on which Phil made emotional and sexual advances, Yoko did not see him as a desirable romantic partner and reacted ambivalently to each attempt. She had in fact joked about the association between sex with Phil and success in ELL before this, but at the time of the conversation she had given much more serious thought to it and even actually met with Phil one night with this option in mind.

As Yoko’s case demonstrates, the gendered discourse of Western men as an ELL method and the actual behaviour of my participants were not necessarily consistent. In fact, the majority of my participants approached their interlocutors in a much more complex way. In the next section, several factors that seemed to powerfully influence the desirability of native speakers will be discussed.

7.4 Desirability of interlocutors

According to Ma (1996, p. 92), many young Japanese women have what she labels as a “Western chivalry fantasy”: gaijin men are all yasashii (kind and gentle). Ma (1996, p. 92) and others (Tsuda, 2000) allege that such fantasies are applied “indiscriminately to every gaijin man [who women] meet.” This misogynistic discourse often positions female ESL students as women who desire and try to interact “indiscriminately” with every gaijin man for the sake of learning English and gaining power.

My data suggests, however, that the akogare discourse is not nearly that simple or complete. Although many of my participants did fantasise about having a gaijin partner and learning English from him, they were never the uncritical, passive recipients that Tsuda (1995; 2000) suggests. My participants regularly and critically
talked about the men they met, measuring, judging and evaluating their desirability as a friend, a romantic partner, a linguistic resource, or all of these. Among others, there were three key factors that emerged repeatedly as powerfully inflating or deflating the desirability of their interlocutors: race, linguistic background and looks. Each of these are discussed in the next section.

7.4.1 Race

As expected, race occupied a special discursive space in my participants’ narratives. I found that in Japanese women’s discourse of desirable interlocutors, Whites often emerged as the most romantically and linguistically desired race. White men were the main object of romantic and sexual *akogare* for Chizuko, Yoko and Ichi (this was also true of Yuka when she first stayed in Sydney) and as such, Whiteness triggered positive emotional and linguistic responses for them. For instance, Chizuko nurtured the image of a Western man as a “prince” and confessed that Whiteness was so alluring that it affected her speech style and voice pitch.

*Chizuko: I like White men. well, it’s my childhood akogare, so I can’t think of any other option but White. @ I know that I am too old to fancy them like this, but I still tend to get excited when I talk with White men @@ and I find myself speaking more cutely and using higher pitch of my voice @@ (t15mar04chi)*

During the fieldwork in 2004, Chizuko was particularly fond of one White Australian man, Aaron. She enthusiastically visited his work (a bar) as a customer and frequently made contact with him, often suggesting get-togethers. Similarly, Ichi was highly attracted to White men and frequently went out “man-hunting” with her Australian girlfriend on weekends. When she found her first boyfriend in late 2003,
his race and nationality as a White British national were a cause of celebration even
for her mother.

Ichii: おかあさん彼の事を喜んでるんだよね@@@
Ichii: my mother is really happy with him @@@

Kimie: @@@
Kimie: @@@

Ichii: こっから来たの~って。UKからだよって言ったら、すごい喜んじゃって、
「わ~じゃあ、イギリス人じゃない！」とか言って@@
Ichii: she asked me where he came from. I told her that he was from UK and she
was so excited, like, ‘wow, he is ENGLISH!’ @@

Kimie: @@@
Kimie: @@@

Ichii: まあ、典型的な白人イギリス人だよって言ったらよかったねって言ってくれて
さ@@
Ichii: she was excited for me when I told her that he is a classic White English
man @@ (i21nov03ichii)

Although Japanese women’s akogare for Whiteness had a positive effect on
their agency to seek out interactional opportunities, non-White males, particularly
Asian males, were often considered as an unattractive choice as a romantic partner or
a linguistic resource even if they were native speakers of English. When the main
purpose of a social gathering was to find a romantic partner, this tendency was more
pronounced. Yoko, for instance, stated that an opportunity to mix with Asian
Australian men at a barbecue, even if they were all native speakers of English, was a
waste of time.

Kimie: で、パーティーどうだったの？
Kimie: so, how was the party?

Yoko: ちょっと聞いてくださいよ~、BBQパーティーにはいっぱいオーストラリア
人来るって友達が言ってたっていったじゃないですか？で、すごく楽しみにしてた
んですよ。でも、あの、まあ 沢山人は、ああ、ほとんどはあたりの友達のフラットメ
イトの友達だったんですけど、もう、みんなアジアオーストラリアンだったんですよね！まあ、みんなネイティブか英語でるべきな人達ばかりだったんですけど、いやー、きみえさん、あたしはこういう男達と遊んでいる暇は無いなって。本当によく分かりましたよ、ああ、あたしは白人の彼が欲しいんだって。

**Yoko:** listen, I told you that my friend told me that there would be many Australians at the BBQ party? so I was really looking forward to it. but, well, there were a lot of people, mostly my friend’s flatmate’s friends and they were all Asian Australian! they were all native speakers or spoke English really well. Kimie-san, I am not here to waste my time mixing with men like these guys. once again I had this self-confirmation that what I want is a White boyfriend. (f25july02yoko)

Sometimes, my participants’ fascination with White men was stronger than their native speaker identity. Yoko and Chizuko often told me that they found their White European classmates (non-native English speakers) attractive and often daydreamed about making friends with them. However, none of my participants expressed interest in associating with Asian men who were non-native speakers of English and, in fact, some participants avoided contact with them.

The social realities of many Asian ESL students, however, constrained their access to White Australian society because of linguistic and racial boundaries. Thus, their most accessible language practice partners or friends were more often than not their fellow Japanese or other Asian ESL students. Unfortunately, due to the prevalent discourse of White native speakers as the one and only type of desirable interlocutors, many of my informants were ambivalent about their default friendship with Asian individuals, often feeling “guilty” or “ashamed” of the fact that most of their friends were Asian with poor, accented English.

For example, when Ichi was living in a university dormitory, the majority of the residents were White Australians. Although very few were friendly to Ichi, several Asians residents attempted to make friends with her. One of them, an Indian international student, was particularly interested in Ichi and asked her out on several occasions. Ichi’s reaction was mixed. She did not care for friendship with the Indian
man as he was not Australian and not a native speaker of English. Furthermore, one female resident warned Ichi that the Indian man only wanted to take her to bed. However, he was one of very few people willing to socialise with her and she continued to feel ambivalence about his friendship until he moved out of the dormitory.

A closer examination reveals that while Whiteness seems to be a norm in my participants’ realities and fantasies, not all White men were automatically desired either as a possible friend/partner or even as a linguistic resource. For instance, Eika had an adverse reaction when her friend’s White Australian flatmate, David, tried to befriend her. In her circle of friends, David was known as an eccentric (e.g., he was a dole collector, ex-alcoholic, unsuccessful hypnotherapist and scammer) with a fetish for Asian sex workers. When she encountered him on the street, she refused to engage in a conversation with him.

**Eika:** it was so close! I was like “yuck!” when he asked me for my phone number. I just wanted to get out of there, so I almost got run over by a car because I was hurrying to lose him.

Even though Eika was desperately looking for native speaker friends at that time, she did not hesitate to reject David either as a friend or as a partner with whom to practice English. When I suggested that he could probably help her with her English, she said:

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20 Eika’s Japanese friend told her that David went to a prostitute whenever he had extra money and, at that time of data collection, David had a sexual craze for Asian women.
For another informant, Yuka, over the years that she had been living in Sydney, she came to dislike White men. At the beginning of her stay, she developed *akogare* for White men and the first four males for whom she had romantic feelings were all Whites (one Canadian and three Australian males). As none of her romances with them turned out to be satisfactory, and as she was increasingly troubled by experiences of racial discrimination by White Australians, her *akogare* for White men was gradually diminishing. Also, the alternative discourse of racial choice for romance was increasingly available from 2003 as a result of her romances with Chinese men. Her interest in learning Chinese as her third language intensified after her first short trip to China in 2003, during which she met a Chinese man with whom she developed and maintained an online friendship for two years. Since then, she said that she had been attracted to Chinese men who were bi-lingual speakers of Chinese and English.

In sum, while Whiteness was often treated as the norm in my participants’ narratives (and media discourse as discussed in Chapter 5), their micro practices suggests their ambivalence, indifference and even rejection of the idea of the Whiteness of their interlocutors.

### 7.4.2 The “native”

For all participants, linguistic identity was a significant basis for emotional responses and interactional choices. In my participants’ daily narratives, they almost always positioned themselves as non-native speakers with limited English and undesirable accents, while constructing (White) native speakers as the desirable interlocutors with authentic linguistic resources. Thus, development of
friendships/romances with the "natives\textsuperscript{21}" was talked about as the most effective way to learn English and a way into the discursively constructed Western world.

The native speaker identity not only enhanced the romantic desirability of White men, but could make an otherwise unlikely romantic/sexual relationship a possibility, as is evident from Yoko's case given above, or even a reality. For instance, within her first ten days in Sydney, Eika, a 30-year-old ex-career woman, became romantically involved with a 20-year-old Australian university student. Identifying herself as a "slow starter" in romance and calling this relationship "unthinkable" in Japan because of the ten-year age gap, his student status and their limited future prospects for marriage she none the less explained that the purity of his English was what attracted her to him.

エイカ：彼ネイティブなわけだから自分の英語にはいいよね。それに、英語だといえばやたらしさが無い。表現がストレートでそんなに素直に感情を表現されるとなんか気持ちいいみたいな。いつも彼が言ってるような事をもし日本語で言われたらなんか変な感じだよね。でも英語だと嫌な感じがしないみたいだね。だから好きだよね。

\textit{Eika: [...] he is a native speaker, so he is good for my English. Besides, in English, there is no sleaziness. His expression is always straight and it is very comfortable with such honest expression of his feelings. If he had to say some of the stuff he always tells me in Japanese, it'd have been kind of awkward. But in English, there are no negative feelings to it. So I like it. (f27mar03eika)}

According to Bond and Lie (1986, p. 180), a second language is often learned in an emotionally more neutral setting than a first language and therefore, "topics that are off-limits in the first language thereby become much more approachable in the second." In their study on the code-switching between Cantonese (L1) and English (L2) by Chinese bilingual subjects, Bond and Lie (1986) found that the use of a second language allowed them to discuss emotional topics (i.e., sexual attitudes and a personally embarrassing episode) relatively more easily in their second language than in their first. In this light, Eika's comment above may suggest a lack of emotional

\textsuperscript{21}"Native" is a term commonly used among the Japanese to mean native speakers of English.
strength in her L2. She liked his use of romantic expressions in English that would have been awkward in her own language with which she has a different emotional attachment. In fact, according to one marriage consulting company in Japan, Zwei (2006), a direct expression of love was the number one reason why Japanese women were likely to choose foreign rather than Japanese men.

However, although Whiteness and being a native speaker were commonly considered as a single package by my participants, the value of the “native” outweighed that of the Whiteness in some contexts. For instance, for Yoko, that her boyfriend was a native English speaker and was a typical exemplar of Australian monolinguality outweighed his Asian-ness. Despite her openly claimed fetish for White men, her first gaijin boyfriend, John, was a Chinese Australian.

Yo uk: まあ、白人がどうのこうのずっとと言ってましたけど、結局アジア人捕まえちゃいました。ちょっと計算違いでしたよね。でも、彼ネイティブなんで、どうにかななると思います＠＠
Yoko: I was going on and on about White men for a long time, but in the end, I got an Asian. it’s a bit of a miscalculation, but really he is a native speaker, so I will survive ＠＠ (f21dec03yoko)

His native speaker identity was what encouraged Yoko to get romantically involved with him in the first place and then to remain in their rocky relationship despite their quickly fading romantic attraction to each other. As her ambivalent comment above (“I will survive”) implies, however, John’s racial heritage was continuously talked about as a problem. Any aspect of John that enhanced his legitimacy as an “Australian” native speaker was celebrated and accentuated in her narratives of their relationship. For instance, his monolinguality, which signified Australian-ness to Yoko, was repeatedly stressed in our conversations.

Yo uk: 彼はアジア人なんですから、ネイティブじゃないですか。彼の曾おじいさんがオーストラリアにきて、彼のお父さんもお母さんもチャイニーズ嫌れないんですよ。ジョンもチャイニーズ全然嫌れないし。だから、本当に中身はオージーなんですねね。ある日、彼が仕事場のコリゲに「G’day mate」っていってるのきいたんですよ。あたしてそれが感動しちゃって、ああ、彼って本当にオージーなんだって思いいました。
Yoko: he is Asian, but, he is a native speaker of English. his great grand father came to Australia, so neither his father nor his mother can speak Chinese. John can’t speak Chinese at all either. so he is really an Aussie inside. the other day, I heard him say, ‘G’day mate’ to his colleagues at work. that really impressed me and got me to realize again that he was a real Aussie. (f21dec03yoko)

For those participants who developed a romantic relationship with non-native speakers of English (Chizuko, Rina and Kaori), that identity was often phrased as a “problem.” Given the fact that they considered their own English as limited and in need of improvement, their partners’ linguistic deficiencies were believed to contribute to difficulties in their cross-cultural communication. Kaori had a negative view of her Brazilian boyfriend’s limited English as well as the tendency of both to depend on reading “body languages” rather than trying to speak “decent English” (f1april04kaori). Rina had had a few non-native speaker boyfriends (Japanese, Chinese and Korean) during her one-year working holiday in Sydney. Her first boyfriend’s (Japanese) English was more limited than her own and despite their attempt to use English with each other, his slow speech and frequent silences frustrated Rina so much that it led to their break-up. Although her second partner, a Chinese man, sounded fluent at first, Rina increasingly found his grammatical mistakes and poor pronunciation irritating. Her third boyfriend from Korea had similar problems and on the basis of these experiences with the native speaker boyfriends, she concluded:

リナ：最終的に言葉がちゃんとしてないと付き合えなって。お互い分かり合えないでしょ？心を広くせなあかんのにイラっとしてしまう所があって、勝手だと思うんだけど、少なくとも自分よりは上であって欲しいなって。

Rina: you can’t go out with someone if you can’t speak the language properly. you can’t understand each other. I know that I have to be open minded and I know that I am selfish, but I want my partner to be better than me at least. (f10dec03rina)
Her fourth boyfriend was in fact a White native speaker Australian man and she was happy with the amount and quality of interaction in English she experienced with this attentive partner (see her comment in Section 7.3).

7.4.3 “Sleazy” bilingual men

Another salient aspect of the linguistic backgrounds of Western men that powerfully mediated the participants’ desire to interact with them was their fluency in Japanese. Most participants had better access to men who had connections with Japan. In this context, being bilingual in Japanese and English and their interest in befriending Japanese people (especially women) were considered as an advantage for a time. Soon after her arrival, Eika considered bilingualism to be a window of opportunity for friendship/romance.

エイカ：日本語喋れる人たちってアジアが好きってことだから、まあ、いいんじゃないのみたいな。日本のいい所とか知ってるし興味をもってもらえるのってすごく新鮮なわけ。自分をまだ英語で完璧に出せないから普通興味を持ってもらうのって大変なわけよ。でも向こうが日本とか日本語に興味があればやっぱりおのずとね。最初から態度がフレンドリーだよね。

Eika: I like guys who can speak Japanese because it means that they like Asia. They know good things about Japan and it is refreshing to know that someone is interested in me. I can’t express myself fully in English yet, so it’s usually a struggle to get guys interested in me. If they are interested in Japan and learning Japanese, their attitude towards me is naturally much more friendly from the beginning of our meeting. (t16mar03eika)

Her comment indicates Eika’s growing anxiety over her Asian and non-native speaker identity in Sydney. Since her arrival in early 2003, she had experienced indifference from native speaker Australians and had been exposed to the racialised discourse which positions Asian non-native speakers as second-class and deficient speakers of English. Thus, the attentions and friendliness of bilingual men helped
restore Eika’s self-image, not only as a competent ESL speaker, but also as an attractive woman in the same way she had seen herself in Japan.

However, in contrast to this positive image of bilingual Western men, Eika’s romance with her bilingual ex-boyfriend revealed a constant struggle in relation to their language choice in their private time. As their relationship developed, her boyfriend increasingly spoke more Japanese than English. According to Eika, while he paid very little attention when she talked in English, he became much more attentive when she spoke Japanese. Eika confessed to feeling guilty about speaking Japanese with him, seeing that mastering English was the main objective of living in Sydney and leaving behind her career and comfortable environment in Japan. She saw using Japanese on a daily basis as a betrayal of her determination to improve her English.

This frustration can be understood in relation to her view of her relationship with this bilingual man partly as an ELL opportunity and her belief that in a relationship her partner should accommodate her needs and concerns. As mentioned earlier, his image of being “pure” was attractive to her, and was constructed by his straightforward expression in English rather than through his Japanese expression. Despite her protests, their common language remained Japanese. However, even before their romance ended, Eika already had constructed a new desire for a monolingual gaijin boyfriend.

Eika: エイカ：もう、次の彼は絶対に日本語知らない人にする！
Eika: the next time I get a boyfriend, I don’t want him to know Japanese!
(f19june03eika)

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22 While Eika reported a fifty-fifty usage of Japanese and English in their relationship in June 2003, most of their simple daily conversation was allegedly carried out in Japanese, which had become “natural” for both of them.
In similar vein, many of the women in my study expressed their reservations about the use of Japanese in their romantic or sexual experiences. For instance, although English was the common language with Ichi's bilingual Australian date, his occasional use of Japanese during sexual encounters provoked an emotional aversion.

Ich: やつがベッドで日本語使ったんよ～、もう信じられんぐらいややたわね。「すっごく濡れてるね！」って日本語で言ったんよ((with a frown on her face and frustration in her voice)). もう最低やったわ！

Ich: you know he was using Japanese in bed and it was a major turn-off! he said to me, “wow you were so wet!” in Japanese ((with a frown on her face and frustration in her voice)). it was so disgusting! (f3july02ich)

When I asked my other informants about their views on this matter, most agreed with Ich. While Mie, who openly abhors flirtatious bilingual Western men, even refused to teach Japanese to her monolingual Australian boyfriend for the fear that it would contaminate her image as a pure Western man.

Mie: なんか英語だけ喋れる方がいいかなって。イメージ悪くなるし、変なアクセントで話して欲しくないみたい。そういうのイヤだよね。

Mie: I though that it was better that he spoke only English. it would destroy a good image of him and I don’t want him to speak awful accented Japanese. it would really turn me off. (f7oct03mie)

The downsides to bilingual Western men were not only purely linguistic in nature. In the minds of many Japanese women I spoke to, any level of fluency in Japanese by non-Japanese men (particularly White men) immediately connoted sexual flirtatiousness and looseness and such men were frequently labelled as ruuzaa “losers” (f2april04tokiko). My participants tended to immediately raise their guard during encounters with Japanese-speaking gaijin men, or simply to avoid any contact with them. As pointed out earlier, there is a widespread sexist stereotype of Japanese

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23 Ichi had a casual relationship with him for a month.
women as having blind *akogare* for Western men and sleeping with just any one who is White and speaks English. It is constitutive of the widespread sexist discourse of Japanese women’s sexual easiness with White men in which a travel writer, Nishimoto (2005) participates. On his personal website, he does so by equating Japanese women’s attempt at ELL with having sex with *gaijins*.

[... ] まとめておくと、日本人女性が外国人男性と喜んでセックスする理由は、現代日本社会のあり方が嫌でそれからどこへでもいいから脱出したいという願望の表れなんだ。こう考えると、現代日本人女性が、英語を学ぶのが大好き、英語学校大盛況、英語教師はセックス放題、という現象が簡単に説明できる。英語はとにかく日本脱出のための、一つの武器なのだから。そして、英語を学ぶのと同じレベルで、外人男性とのセックスも成立する。外人とセックスするは、外人と英語をで話をすることと同じ事で、日本脱出への第一歩だ。しかも、セックスは英語を勉強するほど難しくない。というか、ちょっと簡単なんだよ。

[... ] In sum, the reason why Japanese women are so willing to have sex with gaijin men is their abhorrence against Japanese society and emergent desire to escape. This easily explains contemporary Japanese women’s passion for learning English, popularity of English schools and English teachers’ unlimited access to sex. Sex with gaijins is the same as speaking English with gaijins and is one step towards escaping Japan. What is more, sex is not as difficult as studying English. It is in fact so easy.

In my participants’ understanding, too, *gaijin* men who were fluent particularly in feminised Japanese were considered to be among those who target and play around with “stupid” Japanese women who in turn embrace the men’s bilingualism as they themselves cannot speak English but are in love with the idea of intimacy with White men. Therefore a link is made between their fluency in Japanese and an identity as a sexual predator of easy and linguistically deficient Japanese women.

ヨウコ：日本語話せる外人に会うとすぐに、「いやあ、この人ジャパニーズキラーだから気をつけないと」と書いてますもん。日本人女性好きでいてくれるのはいいんだけど。でも、なんか、かんたんにセックスやっちゃうとかいうイメージもたてると思うと嫌になっちゃうんですよね。だから、そういう人と会うと、もうふら～っていなくなっちゃいます。わざわざそういう人達と会いたいと思いませんね。そういう人たちと友達になるのって簡単だからと思いませんけど。

**Yoko:** when I meet *gaijin* men who can speak Japanese, I immediately think, “ok, this guy must be a “Japanese lady killer” and that I have to be careful. I guess it’s kind of nice that they like Japanese women. but it is their image of Japanese women as sexually “easy” which turns me off. so when I meet one, I just walk away; I don’t go out of my way to meet guys like them, even though it may be easier to be friends with them. (117mar04yoko)
Furthermore, Western men’s ability to speak Japanese was often equated with their sexist arrogance towards Japanese women. The 24-year-old Yuka disgustedly complained that there was a constant struggle between her and a bilingual Australian man, Jack, in her circle of friends. According to Yuka, Jack was attracted to Japanese girls only because he saw them as passive, obedient and convenient. When they first met, Jack immediately positioned Yuka as a submissive Japanese “girl” with little fluency in English. However, at the time of data collection, Yuka had lived in Sydney for seven years and was one of the most fluent and confident speakers of English among my informants and her proficiency in English, independence and outspokenness caused constant tension between herself and Jack.

ユカ：自分がいつも遊んでる日本人の女のこってバカばっかりだし英語喋れないから、あたしが英語喋れるって信じられないんですよ。だから彼あたしの事いやなんですよ、だって英語喋れるし言いたい事だって言えちゃうから。最初に会った時なんて、本当にバカで英語の喋れない日本人の女みたいな感じで。あたしが英語喋ってるって判ったらびっくりして信じられないって感じ＠＠

Yuka: he can’t believe that I CAN speak English because most of the girls he goes out with are stupid and can’t speak English. that’s why he can’t stand me because I CAN speak English and CAN express my opinions. when we first met, his attitude to me was obvious; he treated me as if I was a dumb Japanese girl who can’t speak a word of English. when he found out that I was able to speak English, he looked stunned and could not believe it ＠＠ (t15mar04yuka)

It is important to note that among my informants, Yuka had the least akogare, if not actual mistrust of White men, due to her disastrous relationship with a married and uncommunicative Australian man four years previously. Rather than letting Jack silence her, Yuka became even more vocal in English.

ユカ：絶対黙りませんよ、彼が日本語で話し掛けてきても、いつも英語で返して、どう思ってるか言ってやるんです。

Yuka: I never shut up, you know, even if he speaks to me in Japanese, I always talk back to him in English and give him piece of my mind. (f6mar04yuka)
Moreover, these bilingual men were not even considered as a way into
Australian society as many of them exclusively socialised with Japanese women in
Sydney.

ヨウコ：あのね、そういう人達って日本人とばっかりつるむじゃないですか。そういう
人のパーティーとか行くと日本人ばっかりなんで何これって感じて。だいたい昔の女
は日本人だったりするんですよ。だからね、英語が目的だしそういう日本語話す外
人とつるんでもしょうがないって思いません。
Yoko: you know, these guys only hang out with Japanese people. you go to
their party and it will be full of Japanese people and I feel like, what the hell?
most of their ex-girlfriends are Japanese, too. so what's the point in getting to
know Japanese speaking gaijins when my goal is to improve English?
(t17mar04yoko)

Despite easy access to bilingual gaijin, Yuka, Yoko and many other secondary
informants tended to avoid contact with Western men who were bilingual in English
and Japanese. This not only signalled their refusal to be positioned as easy and
linguistically deficient Japanese women, but also their positioning of these men as
cheap, unintelligent and unworthy of their attention.

7.4.4 Looks: the myth of “kakkoii” White men

Other than native speaker status, the factors that made men desirable as
interlocutors for my participants were their suitability as an English conversation
partner or as a friend or boyfriend. Also important was their physical appearance and
other personal attributes such as age, height, physique, hairstyle, teeth and even
clothing. Some participants said that while at the beginning of their stay in Sydney
they believed that White Western men were generally good-looking, as time went by
they began to realise that not all were attractive. For instance, Tokiko expressed regret
about choosing Australia because she found that its White men were not as good
looking as she had imagined prior to her arrival in Sydney.
Tokiko: before coming to Australia, I thought that all White men were good-looking, but I was so disappointed when I came to Australia. It took me one year to realise that that's not the case and that's why I thought that I should have gone to Canada. (f2april04tokiko)

The tendency of Japanese women to believe that Western men are all handsome was a common joke among some of my participants and other Japanese female acquaintances. For example, when one participant was considering going out with a White man, her Japanese friend laughingly told her that Japanese women who just arrived in Sydney for working holidays would go crazy for him, but not those who had been here for more than a year.

Indeed, my informants gradually became more selective over time as to who they considered as desirable interlocutors. They sought, as well as actively avoided, contact with certain types of men. Physical, romantic and sexual attractions, constructed largely by their looks, were significant factors in mediating their emotional reactions and interactional patterns.

For instance, Chizuko met a White Australian lawyer through an advertisement for language exchange partners. On their first meeting, he was well-mannered, attentive to what she was saying, paid for their expensive dinner, expressed his eagerness to see her on a regular basis, and offered to drive her in his stylish car to her friend's place after their meeting. It turned out, however, that they had a misunderstanding: his personal ad was for a romantic partner, not a language exchange partner. Chizuko briefly considered continuing to see him for the sake of her English. Finally, however, she chose not to see him again.

キミエ：彼のどこがだめだったわけ？
Kimie: what's the problem with the guy?
Chizuko: well, to be honest, he is not my type. he is not good-looking at all

Kimie: @ an old man? @

Chizuko: no @ he is younger than me and very nice. rich and smart and keen to see me. but, THAT was the problem. he saw me as a potential girlfriend and I...didn’t find him attractive. When I first met him, I asked myself, “can I sleep with this man?” and the answer was NO. I couldn’t imagine myself going to bed with him @

Kimie: @ during your first meeting? @ You were thinking about whether or not you could go to bed with him? @

Chizuko: @@ yeah, yeah, I am like that, you know @@ it’s important that I find him sexually do-able or it’s impossible for me to even keep hanging out with someone. (t15mar04chi)

Chizuko’s case highlights one aspect of second language learners: English proficiency is not necessarily always the top priority for even those who are most committed to attaining it. Furthermore, in a romantically charged context like this, her comment highlights that race (Whiteness) was not necessarily always the first priority despite her claim to have a fetish for White men. In this particular instance, Chizuko felt uncomfortable with a man who was romantically interested in her because he did not fit her personal discourse of good-looking, prince-like gaijin. For Chizuko, a 40-year-old single woman with hopes of marriage and family in mind, romance was a serious business which could be at times more vital than SLL. Although, of course,
being White and a native speaker appealed to her (at least she considered seeing him again as a practice partner), in this romantically charged-context, it was far more important that she found him sexually attractive as a man than as a linguistic resource. A 31-year-old TAFE student, Tokiko, agrees.

Tokiko: well, if I am to hang out with or go out with gaijin men, it would be better that they are good-looking. looks are very important, aren’t they? with Japanese people, we can easily understand each other, but with gaijin men, it’s hard because of the language barrier. it is almost impossible to get to know who they really are in English and it’s very tiring to have to do that. so if they are good-looking, then, at least that will give you some incentive to talk to them (@@) (f2april04tokiko)

Tokiko said that she had different ways of interacting with Western men in a pub. When an unattractive man spoke to her, she would answer questions very reluctantly and, to show her disinterest, she would not ask questions of her own.

Tokiko: their typical way of starting a conversation is, “how are you?” I would say “not...bad...” but I never ask them back @@ you usually ask back, don’t you when you meet new people? like “and you?” @@ but when it’s a good-looking guy, I will ask all sorts of questions, trying to extend our conversation @@ I think I tend to smile more, too. am I vain? @@ (f2april04tokiko)

Another example was provided by an encounter between Yoko and a 41-year-old White Australian man who she met through an online singles’ website. Before their first date, she was untroubled, if not positive about, his age of 41, as she associated it with Brad Pitt.

Yoko: ４１は結構いってるなって思ったんですね。でも、「あれ、ブランド・ピットって４１歳だ」って！@
Yoko: I thought that 41 was a little bit old. but I though, hey, Brad Pitt is also 41 years old! @

キミエ：彼の歳にしては、そんなに悪くないよね？
Kimie: he doesn’t look too bad for his age, ha?

ヨウコ：@そう、でブラッド・ピットみたいな感じの若い人を期待してたんですよ@
Yoko: @ yeah, so I kind of expected him to look as young as Brad Pitt @@
(f25feb03yoko)

On their first date, however, Yoko was horrified by his looks. Unlike other
Australian men that she had met, Yoko’s date was attentive, trying to make her feel
comfortable and showing no sign of impatience with her self-identified “limited”
English. However, during the conversation, she grew increasingly conscious of his
aging looks.

ヨウコ：こんな事をいったから失礼なんですよけど、でも、「やだ、彼すっごいいふけてる
し、肌も気持ち悪い！」って思い出したんですよ＠＠＠ オンラインの写真で
はオッケーだったんですけど、同じ年にしては全然ブラッド・ピットみたいじゃないか
ったし！彼といえば isEnabled smartにって全然想像できませんでした。
Yoko: I know it’s awful to say this, but I started to think, “oh my god, he looks
so old and his skin is so yucky!”@@@ he was ok in the online photo, but he
wasn’t at all like Brad Pitt despite their same age! I couldn’t possibly imagine
doing anything intimate with this guy. (f25feb03yoko)

When they were parting at the end of the evening, he unexpectedly kissed her
on the lips, which horrified her. The following day, she emailed him to say she had no
wish to see him again and withdrew her personal information and photo from the
singles’ website.

It is important to point out that not all participants were after good-looking
men. In fact, some were embarrassed about interacting with physically attractive men
and, as a result, they were unable to interact as well as they might with less physically
attractive men. For instance, Rina told me that she did not enjoy talking with
handsome men.
Rina: I get too nervous to speak English. I don’t like handsome men, especially good-looking men who are cool. (f10dec03rina)

These findings suggest an interesting trend. As discussed earlier, the Japanese media’s glorified representation of Western men (especially EFL teachers, Hollywood stars and sports heroes such as David Beckham) has long contributed to the identity construction of White men as attractive, sophisticated and courteous. The majority of my participants, too, had an expectation prior to their departure from Japan that “all White men would be kakkoii (good-looking)” (f2april04tokiko). After spending some time in Sydney, many of them concluded that the idea that “gaijin men are all kakkoii” was a myth and they then simply regarded physically unattractive gaijin males unworthy of their attention. The physical, romantic and sexual attractiveness of male interlocutors had become powerful measures of their worthiness or desirability not only as friends and romantic partners, but also as a linguistic resource for many Japanese women. Nevertheless, as Rina’s last comment indicates, physical attractiveness could also inhibit some participants’ attempts to interact with White native speakers as much as they motivated other participants to do so.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the gendered discourse of the ultimate methods used to achieve ELL among my participants. It was argued that while participants considered access to the wider Australian society to be the key to success in language ryugaku, they found such access difficult to attain. Most participants expressed increasingly bitter disappointment about their inability to gain interactional opportunities at the beginning of their stay. As time went by, they were all exposed to
different forms of racial and/or linguistic discrimination by those with whom they initially wanted to associate - native speaker Australians. The gap was experienced and dealt with differently by different participants.

In this context, what emerged as one of the popular discourses was that of native speaker men as an ultimate linguistic resource and teaching aid. This discourse was closely linked with the other discourse of White Western men as desirable romantic partners, which was consistent with the media representation of the White men in Japan. However, it was found that the construction of the desirability of interlocutors was more complex than simply the racial and linguistic identities of male speakers. Evidence was provided for several of those factors (i.e., bilingualism, social status and the physical appearance of men) affecting the ways in which the women found them attractive enough to engage in interaction.

In the field of SLA, there have been tendencies to assume that second language learners should naturally, and at all times, desire contact with native speakers for the sake of improving their English and expanding their social networks. For example, concepts such as acculturation (Schumann, 1978), integrative motivation (Gardner, 1985) and willingness to communicate (Macintyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2002) are based on the assumption that it is natural for language learners to want to have contact with native speakers since if they fail in this regard, they are likely to have little success in language learning.

Prior to the present research, there was little room even to speculate that such willingness was differentially constructed in interactions between interlocutors in relation to their historical, social, cultural, educational, economic and political backgrounds. Furthermore, little attention was paid to the ways in which the desirability of native speakers as gendered beings powerfully co-constructed language
learners' desire to interact. As my analysis in this chapter has demonstrated, ESL learners' desire to interact is noticeably affected by how they value their interlocutors in socially, romantically and sexually charged contexts. This indicates that the desirability of interlocutors must be gained from the learners' point of view in theorising SLL.
Chapter 8: Agency

8.1 Introduction

The last chapter presented the gendered discourse of ELL among my participants. I noted that such discourse became salient particularly in those contexts where they experienced difficulties and bitter experiences in gaining access to native speaker Australians. Their attitudes toward, and socialisations with, male interlocutors of various characteristics were complex: These were constructed in a host of macro- and micro-discourses and power relations.

Such gendered notions of ELL were not, of course, the whole story of my participants’ ryugaku and working holiday experiences. During their residence in Sydney, my participants demonstrated a wide range of agency with regard to creating an effective environment for themselves. It extended to such matters as how (strategies), where (communities), with whom and how much (desired levels of achievement) they wanted to learn and use English. At the same time, many participants became increasingly aware of the social structures and power relations that limited their participation in Australian society. As discussed in Chapter 2, this thesis adopts the view of agency as a “socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112). This chapter highlights some of the links between my participants’ agency as defined in this way with their akogare, their identities, their macro-discourses and their power relations in Sydney. In particular, I focus on two social spaces that appeared to be crucial to them: home and work.

Firstly, I present an analysis of the media discourse of ryugaku lifestyle, followed by an analysis of participants’ choices of accommodation in Sydney and their experiences in living in such environments. Secondly, I analyse the media
discourse of work and *ryugaku* and describe my participants’ views on and experiences of work as an ELL opportunity.

### 8.2 Home as an ELL opportunity

This section introduces the micro and macro discourses of home as an ELL opportunity, presenting an analysis of the media discourse of *ryugaku* lifestyle. This is followed by an examination of my participants' agency in creating home environments that were both conducive to their attempts to learn English and accommodating to their non-ELL needs.

#### 8.2.1 Media discourse of home during *ryugaku*

Home stay or share accommodation with native speakers of English is constitutive of the glamour of *ryugaku* and the working holiday. *Ryugaku* magazines typically carry sections promoting homestay as an ideal and safe method of living.

Figure 11. Photos of the Japanese student and her host mother (Wish, 2002, pp. 32-33)
overseas for those serious about practicing English and learning about the local culture. Homestay families (and other local people) depicted in these magazines are often Caucasian, and presumed to be native speakers of English, as exemplified in the section of *Wish* (2002). *Wish*’s winter edition, entitled “Australia & New Zealand: Let’s start a new way of life,” features five young Japanese individuals (four females and one male) studying in Australia or on working holidays in New Zealand (*Wish*, 2002, pp. 21-41). For example, 20-year-old Noriko Aoki lives with an Australian host family in Sydney and has private lessons with her host mother who she in fact calls “mother.” The mother is a Caucasian British-born Australian in her fifties, living in a spacious and immaculate house in a Sydney suburb. Of six photographs featuring Noriko, three depict the mother and Noriko interacting closely (see Figure 11). Each photograph constructs multiple identities for the mother including: (1) an attentive listener/advisor, (2) a cheerful and warm mother/carer and (3) a wise teacher, while projecting Noriko as a young learner who enjoys/needs the mother’s multifaceted attention.

Another section (pp. 34-37) from the same *ryugaku* magazine features a 31-year-old working holidaymaker, Sachie Komatsuzawa, pictured with her female Brazilian and male New Zealander flatmates (see Figure 12). Depicting the subjects with wide smiles and Sachie and the Brazilian woman arm-in-arm, the photograph creates an impression of

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*Figure 12. A Japanese working holiday maker with her share mates (*Wish*, 2002, p. 37)*
three young individuals as having a close and fun friendship where they enjoy each other's company. The photograph focuses on the Brazilian woman as a central figure while the New Zealand man, who looks directly at the audience, exudes a sense of confidence and control despite the fact that he is located in the far right hand corner. In comparison, Sachie is situated on the left side with her face in profile that appears to suggest her willingness to defer to the other two. Similar representations of Japanese ryugaku students can be found in many other ryugaku magazines.

Such media representations suggest particular social and power relations between the Japanese students and their host families and share mates. Through photos and autobiographical essays (see examples below), subject positions that are offered for the young Japanese women are those of guests, outsiders and learners of English, while Westerners are depicted as either caring hosts, insiders, or capable speakers of English. Aoki's accompanying essay further demonstrates this construction of identities and power relations. In her essay (Wish, 2002, p. 30), Aoki represents herself as:

- a student who desires to learn authentic English (e.g., 一度でもいいから、生の英語に触れてみたい (I want to be exposed to authentic English);

- a speaker of limited English in need of care by a generous host family (e.g., ファミリーは優しくて、私は全然英語を喋れないけど、とってもゆっくり話してくれます (Although I cannot speak English at all, the family is generous and speaks very slowly to me and tries to understand what I try to tell them); and

- in need of the mother’s care (e.g., 最初は英語だけの生活にとまどったけれど、マザーのやさしさに、緊張もほぐれていました。体が弱って、気持ちも弱くなってしまったときはつらかったけれど、それでもマザーのいたわりによって、のりこえることができました (In the beginning, I was at a loss in the English only environment, but, thanks to the “mother’s” generosity, my anxiety decreased. When I became weak physically and emotionally, it was very hard. But thanks to the mother’s care, I was able to overcome it)).
Such representations of a Japanese student and a (White) native English-speaking host family are portrayed as the norm of *ryugaku* and the best means of ELL. Indeed, for many of my participants, finding and choosing the “right people” to live with during their *ryugaku* or working holiday in Sydney was perceived to be the key to success in both ELL and the overall *ryugaku* experience. However, although it was often true that the choice of living with local Australians was popular among my participants, their decisions about who they lived with was constantly influenced and reshaped by a wide range of changing needs, conditions and belief systems.

### 8.2.2 Home

Choice of a temporary home in Sydney was one of the main concerns for all my participants. There was a widely circulating belief that living with Australian native speakers of English would give them access to authentic English and local knowledge through everyday interactions. All participants had lived with either Australian homestay families (Ichi, Chizuko and Yuka) or with Australian flatmates (Yoko and Eika) at one stage or another during their stay in Sydney. In fact, most of them had changed their accommodation several times; my participants were long-term stayers whose aims were multiple and changed over time. Although their narratives of “home” in Sydney were often phrased in relation to their learning and use English, their ideas of the ideal home environment were increasingly reshaped by a wider range of new needs and desires, as is clear from the cases of Eika, Chizuko and Yuka.

Eika lived in three different places during her stay in Sydney. After living with me for the first month of her stay, she rented a studio apartment and lived by herself for six months. This was largely motivated by her wish to create a private space with her then Australian boyfriend who was leaving Australia shortly. After he left
however, she felt that living by herself limited her opportunities to use English and she decided to find share accommodation with local Australians. She moved in with Bill, an Anglo-Saxon Australian man in his early sixties who grew up in Sydney and owned a house in a quiet suburb in Sydney. Although Bill appeared to be an ideal sharemate, she felt utterly unable to relate to him from the moment she moved in. She was increasingly aware that there were few shared social practices between them at home and as time went by, she seemed less and less motivated to interact with him. After several weeks, she even began avoiding contact with him in the house. Thus she was happy to move out when Bill’s previous housemate returned from overseas.

Her next flatmate, Jackie, was a Hong Kong Australian office worker in a multinational company. Jackie rented a large two-bedroom apartment in Chinatown near Sydney’s CBD and Eika moved in with her just before starting a TAFE diploma course on human resource management in February 2004. Jackie was full of social and academic commitments outside work and had many Chinese friends who visited her home frequently. From early on, Eika seemed comfortable with Jackie, who was genuinely interested in getting to know her and often suggested cooking dinner for both of them at home. Gradually they made friends with each other’s friends (Eika’s Japanese friends and Jackie’s Chinese friends) and their apartment became a trilingual communal space (English, Japanese and Chinese) for several Asian women in their twenties and thirties. In this community, Eika was able to perform her cherished identity as a charming and witty woman, an option that was not available at Bill’s place.

Eika’s different choices for interaction with Bill and Jackie can be best understood with reference to negotiation of identities. To begin with, she predominantly regarded Bill as a landlord, not as a housemate on an equal footing to
whom she could “casually” suggest a drink or dinner. My fieldnotes suggest that most of their interaction was restricted to logistics around the house (such as cleaning, rent and garbage clearance), positioning and distancing Eika as a tenant who lived in “his” house. During the four months she stayed in it, there was little development of their predominant identities of landlord and tenant.

On the other hand, Jackie and Eika negotiated their identities in a way that seemed to have contributed to respect and empowerment for Eika, which in turn led to an increase in her social interaction with Jackie. Although Jackie was regarded as the main tenant of the apartment and owned all the furniture and household appliances, this did not seem to translate into unequal power relations. From the beginning, Jackie showed her curiosity about Eika’s past experiences and her views on life. In their interaction, Eika was positioned by Jackie as an intelligent and mature woman on the basis of her being an ex-career employee in one of Japan’s largest companies. In other words, Jackie appreciated qualities in Eika that had been ignored by most non-Japanese people since her arrival in Sydney.

In addition, the linguistic identities of Bill and Jackie appeared to have a great impact on Eika’s agency in interacting with them. Throughout her stay, Bill’s native speaker status remained at the forefront of Eika’s experience of him. In our conversation, Eika habitually mentioned her deep embarrassment about her inability to understand his Australian English. In contrast, Jackie’s identity as a non-native speaker helped Eika become less conscious of her own non-native speaker identity. Jackie spoke Chinese as her first language and English as her second. According to Jackie, her Chinese accent occasionally caused minor communication breakdowns with her monolingual Australian co-workers (f23june04jackie) but she attributed this to their linguistic deficiencies rather than her own.
Jackie: they are really sad. they say that they can’t understand me because of my accent. what are they talking about? everyone has an accent and the Australian accent is so awful! (f23june04jackie)

Jackie and her Chinese friends frequently engaged in counter discourses such as this against monolingual native speakers of English and Eika was introduced to this alternative way of positioning “native speakers.” Foucault saw this process as opening up possibilities for change.

...change is possible through opening up marginalized and repressed discourses, making them available as alternatives from which we may fashion alternative identities (Foucault, paraphrased by Burr, 2003, p. 122).

Their gender identity in conjunction with their age also played a significant part in Eika’s interaction with her flatmates. Every now and then, Bill’s maleness and much greater age emerged as an issue in her narrative of sharing the house with him. For instance, Eika did not feel comfortable in sharing a bathroom with Bill. Also, Eika simply could not find common interests with Bill who seemed to prefer a quite retirement lifestyle with few guests coming to visit the house. It was the first time she had lived with a non-family member and she had little idea about how to negotiate her position in terms of gender and age. On the contrary, Eika and Jackie were at similar life stage as unmarried career women and, as Eika expected, it enabled them to discuss a much wider range of women’s issues such as work, being single, marriage, motherhood and, particularly, romance. The large bathroom was their common space where they shared cosmetics, clothes and anecdotes about their everyday lives.

For Chizuko, too, home increasingly became much more than just a chance for ELL. As soon as she decided to go on language ryugaku, she organised to be enrolled in an English language course and to live with an Australian homestay family. When the contract with the host family ended, Chizuko moved into an apartment with a
Japanese and a Chinese student who had been staying with the same host family and lived with them for nearly two years. Because the Chinese student was learning Japanese in addition to English, their home language was both English and Japanese. Although the increasing use of Japanese concerned her, particularly in comparison to when she was homestaying with the Australian host family, she enjoyed the company of the two flatmates and continued living with them until they had to leave Australia.

When I began my fieldwork with Chizuko, she had already left both the Australian family and the two Asian share mates, and was living with a Japanese family in an area known for its large Japanese population. At first, it was puzzling that despite her constant complaints about the lack of opportunity to speak English at home, she showed little sign of discontent with the Japanese speaking home environment. On the contrary, she seemed quite happy and reluctant even to entertain the thought of leaving.

Chizuko: well, I don’t want to move out of there because it's so much fun and easy to live with them. I know that if I live with Aussies, there will be more opportunity to speak English, but it'll be so hard to say goodbye to the kids.
(f6march04chizuko)

When she moved in, the Japanese family consisted of a husband, a wife and their seven-year- and 20-month-old daughters. Chizuko’s first point of contact with the family was with the husband; they were students together at a natural therapy school. Although her move into their flat was meant to be temporary, she gradually made it her home and was invariably included in the family outings. In this family, she was positioned as a respected classmate by the husband, while the wife saw her as her closest friend and de facto mother of her children. The children came to consider
Chizuko as their “second mother” and the younger child often went to Chizuko to be comforted when she woke up in the middle of the night.

Obviously Chizuko’s choice to live with the Japanese family contradicted her tremendous akogare for becoming part of Australian society and mastering English, as mentioned in Chapter 7. She believed that if she lived with English speakers “there will be more opportunity to speak English” and yet she chose to live with the Japanese family. This contradiction can be explained with reference to the argument of Pavlenko and Piller (2001), that language learners are capable of choosing how and how much they want to use and learn their L2. Her contradictory choice thus must be seen as a result of a tension between a beneficial learning context and other desires (see below) that were equally as important as, if not more important than, her determination to practice L2.

For instance, Chizuko often told me about her strong desire to marry and start a family. However, she had not been able to fulfil this life goal. Although she had had a few romantic experiences, she felt unable to find a long-term partner with whom she could think of marriage. Also she was becoming increasingly concerned about her ability to give birth because of her age (she was 41 years old when she joined the study). By living with the Japanese family, she could, however indirectly, fulfil what she wanted to achieve in her life as a woman. At home, she was the “second mother” to the children and had flatmates who considered her as part of the family. Thus her adopted Japanese family was not something she would easily relinquish for the sake of gaining access to linguistic resources.

In my observation, Chizuko was not troubled by the fact that she had not achieved her ideal level of fluency in English. Her proficiency was sufficient to enable her to carry out almost all her daily tasks in Sydney and also to carry on casual
conversations at social gatherings. Particularly towards the end of my study, what appeared to be most important to Chizuko was how to obtain permanent residency and maintain the lifestyle that she cherished in Sydney (this issue is re-canvassed Chapter 9); this lifestyle had come to be as important to her as her overall *akogare* for English, which formed one of the salient drives behind her decision to move to Australia.

Yuka’s choice of home environment provides a similar example of multiple and changing choices. Having lived with several different Australian host families during her first five years in Sydney, she began living by herself in early 2002. This choice was motivated by her desire to gain emotional and material independence from her host families and learn to become responsible for her own life. Although she stayed in touch with her last host family throughout her *ryugaku* years, she felt that they tended to treat her as a child and this positioning began causing friction. This was particularly so with the host mother, who often objected to Yuka’s choices in terms of education and romance and tried to persuade her to change her mind. This left Yuka feeling increasingly incapable of negotiating her values with this woman.

When she began to study for a degree, she moved into a one-bedroom apartment near the university and enjoyed the freedom of living by herself. Although she occasionally complained about being lonely, she also stated that she did not want to give up her freedom and independence, which can be understood as another example of competing interests. As mentioned earlier, Yuka initially came to Australia to study English as a means of dealing with her problem of being *hikikomori* (socially withdrawn). She made a great deal of effort to learn English and to develop social skills in order to associate with other people. She had acquired the NSW Higher School Certificate through TAFE before undertaking her university degree course.
During visits to her flat, I learned that she usually cooked for herself and kept the place in order. She often told me how her life had changed from a hikikomori teenager to being an independent woman in her twenties and, in my observation, this sense of transformation contributed to her self-esteem as a mature individual.

Furthermore for Yuka, home was her "base" where she said, "I can relax and recharge my energy so that I can get back out there and fight again (124June04Yuka)." Her choice of the term "fight" suggests her constant struggles outside home. During the study, Yuka regularly expressed her frustration with Australians’ arrogance and their domineering treatment of Asians in university classrooms and public spaces, where she said she had to resist being positioned as a deficient Asian speaker of English by speaking up constantly and even unnecessarily to show that she was competent in English. In fact, she went to see a university counsellor from time to time to discuss her emotional difficulties with interpersonal issues. With her long-term sense of insecurity (related to the hikikomori issue) and emotionally exhausting daily social practice of resistance, she needed a quiet and personal space to which she could retreat and re-energise herself. Norton (2000) reports that a Polish immigrant woman, Eva, saw her home as a "place of refuge" and constructed her private space to be Polish, "where she was respected and well liked and where she could lead a relatively independent lifestyle" (p. 61).

8.3 Work as an ELL opportunity

So far, discussion has focused on participants’ choices of a home environment during their ryugaku. This section discusses the discourse of work as an ELL opportunity. Firstly, I present an analysis of the media discourse of work and ryugaku;
secondly I present examples of my participants’ agency in ELL and social participation through work.

8.3.1 Media discourse of work during ryugaku

Tsuda (2000) points out that many Japanese women have akogare for being able to work using English:

英語はまた「自立」の気分を与えてくれる言語でもある。日本人女性はよく「英語の使える仕事がしたい」というが、このことばからも明らかのように、英語と仕事は女性たちの頭のなかでは一つになっており、その行く先というのは「女性の自立」という到着点である。そして英語は「男女平等」という先進的な思想と結びつく言語として日本では受け止められている。

English is a language that induces a sense of “independence.” Japanese women often say, “I want to work using English” and it is apparent from such comments that English and work are one in women’s minds and therefore that English can be a path leading to women’s independence. English is seen as a language that is linked with the modern ideology of “gender equality” in Japan (p. 91).

According to Tsuda (2000), a wide range of media, English language schools and ryugaku agents in Japan function as a mechanism that produces and sells the discourse of work and English. Ryugaku and women’s magazines typically carry articles that glorify the success stories of Japanese women working in an English medium workplace.

Working in the West is also constructed as an opportunity to learn “authentic” English. Such ideas have become a packaged product that is sold to Japanese women as a legitimate form of ryugaku. For instance, Koor Intercultural Programs and Education (2004), one of the ryugaku agents in Sydney, claims on their website, “オーストラリア人と一緒に英語を使う環境の中で働く事は、生きた英語を学ぶ最適のチャンス (to work in an environment where you use English to work with Australians is the best chance to learn authentic English).” In Australia, international students are
allowed to work up to twenty hours a week, while working holiday makers are entitled to work on a full-time basis for one employment for three months at a time (DIMIA, 2005b).

It was noticeable that in Sydney, however, many Japanese students and working holiday makers were employed in Japanese service industries such as restaurants, take-away shops, duty-free shops, ryugaku agencies, travel companies and massage clinics. As Norton (2000) reports in her study, this situation seemed to be a common phenomenon which can be seen to result from the fact although students are motivated to find a job with local people in order to improve their English, such work required a functional level of English to be performed competently. It was therefore easier to find work in a Japanese-speaking milieu. However, the difficulties of finding work in English language companies raised highly problematic issues in recent years because it created opportunities for worker-exploitation.

For instance, some ryugaku agents have taken advantage of those who had akogare but did not have resources to find a job in the English-speaking environment. A typical case was reported in The New Zealand Herald (2004), which recounted how, desperate to gain work experience with native speakers, Kayoko Sakamoto, 25, paid $2,400 to a Japanese agent to find her a job in a hotel in Christchurch, New Zealand. The job consisted of serving breakfast and lunch and cleaning for eight hours a day without pay. Sakamoto thought that it was “normal” that she was not paid:

I didn’t think about money, I wanted experience of working with New Zealanders and using English. I thought it was better than going to a language school. (“Japanese visitor pays $2400,” 2004)

When I discussed Sakamoto’s case with Tokiko, one of my secondary participants, (in the past she had worked as a work experience placement officer at a ryugaku agent in Sydney), she said that it was not an isolated incident.
Tokiko: there are many cases like that. so many Japanese are dying to work with Aussies even for nothing. (t20sep04tokiko)

For my participants, there seemed to be a sense of prestige attached to the concept of work with Australians. It was talked about as a window of opportunity to improve English and gain access to wider Australian social networks. Nevertheless, their interest in and opportunities for finding work using English varied considerably. Although the majority of my participants hesitated, or for a time chose not to work with native-speaker Australians, Yoko made considerable investment in the L2 work discourse and demonstrated her remarkable determination to be employed, despite enormously discouraging circumstances, in English medium workplaces. Her work experience in Sydney demonstrates the multiplicity of her choices, strategies, efforts and also the ways in which these were constructed in multiple discourses at macro- and micro-levels and in power relations.

8.3.2 Yoko’s work history in Sydney

Yoko was employed for most of her two-and-half-year stay in Sydney. She worked for three months at a Japanese restaurant, three months in a boutique hotel, and 20 months at a hotel in Chinatown. Her determination to work seemed to be based on two factors. Firstly, she was freshly divorced and had limited finances to support her stay in Sydney. Secondly, she believed that work in Sydney would increase her opportunity to meet local people and improve her English.

Initially, she worked as a waitress in a Japanese restaurant patronised by Australian, rather than Japanese, people. However, her first opportunity to work in an entirely English medium environment occurred when she was enrolled in a TAFE
hospitality certificate course. The course required her to gain 150 hours of work experience in the customer service industry. Following that, a classmate, who was already working in a boutique hotel, secured her a job as housekeeper. One week later, she was promoted to become a receptionist. This work experience gave her an opportunity to remap her career and future plans, because she had, from that point, decided to become an international hotel receptionist. As such, in her final transition she found a job as a receptionist at a three-and-a-half-star hotel in Chinatown, where she worked with a team of Australians.

Yoko’s Japanese friends often complimented her on her work experience and expressed admiration of her efforts to improve not only her English but also her career prospects as an international receptionist. Working with and for Australians was a major challenge for Yoko and her job proved so stressful that she often felt physically ill on the way to work. She frequently mentioned her constant sense of exhaustion and even occasional bouts of diarrhoea.

ヨウコ：もう本当に朝、仕事行く時にジョージストリート歩いていると、お腹が痛くなってきちょうんですよ。「ああ、行くのやめようかな」って、「やだな、また英語であの仲間と仕事するの」って。でも、結局、「こんな事で、負けっちゃダメだわ！」って行くんですよね。

Yoko: well, in the mornings when I'm walking down George Street on the way to work, I'll get a stomach cramp. I'm like, "oh, maybe I shouldn’t go to work," "I don’t want to work with them in English." but, I’m like, “I can’t let it beat me” and I go to work eventually. (f9dec03yoko)

Yoko’s agency which drove her to take up and keep the challenging receptionist job manifested a combination of strategies, discussed below, which she either consciously or unconsciously selected to suit her situation. These included: power of beliefs, asking for help, constant reminders, recognising progress, dealing with mistakes and marginalisation, and having attractive future plans.
8.3.2.1 The power of her beliefs

Yoko had a firm and unchanging belief in the possibility of “perfecting English.” In her narratives, there was a close link between working with Australians and mastery of English, which often generated actions that produced both immediate and effective results. Her belief was so powerful that very little, even including her constant and profound concern about her limited English, prevented her from seizing opportunities. Her first attempt at job hunting was typical. When shortly after her arrival in Sydney, her flatmate told her that a nearby café was looking for a waitress, she immediately made her way there and applied for the job.

ヨウコ：えーっと、もしこで仕事が出来たら、英語が上手くなるって信じてたんで。その時は、そういう英語だけの環境で働いたら、3ヶ月ぐらいでベラベラになるって真剣に思ってたんで＠＠

Yoko: well, I really believed that I would be able to speak English if I could work there. at that time, I was seriously thinking that three months would be enough to become totally fluent if I worked in an English speaking environment ＠＠ (t14june04yoko)

However, the owner of the café rejected her because she did not have enough English to work there. When I asked Yoko if she was concerned with her English level at that time, she said that this issue never occurred to her.

ヨウコ：考えませんでしたね。とにかく、英語で仕事したら英語が上手くなるからって考えてたんで。

Yoko: I didn’t think about it. all I was thinking was that my English would be better if I worked using English. (t14june04yoko)

One possible interpretation of her spontaneous reaction was that, as a recent arrival, she was relatively free of the prevalent discourse that “good English” was needed to find a job. However, her perseverance to find and perform English-medium jobs, despite her increasing awareness of the importance of linguistic skills in the workplace, suggests an unchanging strength in her belief. For example, when she was offered a position as a receptionist at the boutique hotel, she immediately accepted.
When the director of the hotel expressed his concern with her English at the interview, she told him that she was perfectly capable of handling the job and had enough English to perform competently. She told me later that she had dissimulated in this fashion to secure a job working with and for local people. However, Yoko grew acutely concerned about her English competence when she began working as a receptionist and occasionally complained about physical symptoms caused by the stress of working with local people and international English speaking customers. Even so, she consistently believed that work would improve her English. Although she often expressed anxiety, she tended to conclude her stories by saying that she would continue to do her best.

8.3.2.2 Asking for help

Yoko’s patterns of asking for help at work illuminate the complex nature of carrying out such task in the social and occupational context. For instance, at her first workplace, the Japanese restaurant, she not only keenly observed how more experienced Japanese waitresses served customers in English, but also constantly asked them for useful English expressions, phrases and questions such as “May I help you?,” “Are you ready to order?” and “Would you like anything else?” She said that she had nothing to lose by asking since she considered herself to be at the bottom of the hierarchy of English proficiency among her Japanese colleagues and, as such, did not have to negotiate her position in terms of her linguistic identity. At the hotel in Chinatown, however, the act of asking for help from Australian colleagues became problematic. She detested asking fellow receptionists, particularly Australians, for help with English because she was too embarrassed to admit that she did not understand seemingly simple exchanges with them or hotel guests.

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It may appear that the differences in her agency in these two different workplaces were a matter of racial and linguistic identities: It would have been naturally easier to ask the Japanese colleagues in Japanese. However, the comment below indicates that the picture was more complex.

ヨウコ：いつもなんかわからないと、ベルボーイに聞くんですよ。「ちょっとこっちきて～」みたいなね。で、これってどういう意味って。で、たまにふざけて、「いくらくれるの？」みたいに言ってくるから、「ちょっと、早くしてよ、あたし仕事しないといけないんだから」って言うんですよ。

Yoko: whenever I don’t understand something, I ask the bellboys. “come here for a second” and I ask them what it means. sometimes they played around, asking me how much I would pay them. I told them off saying, “come on, hurry up. I have to get back to work!”

キミエ：へ～、ベルボーイだったら恥ずかしくないんだ？

Kemie: humm, you were not embarrassed to ask the bellboys?

ヨウコ：皆若くてバカばっかりですから、向こうにバカだと思われても別に気にしません。

Yoko: they were all young and stupid, so I don’t care if they think that I am stupid. (f19jan04yoko)

At the hotel in Chinatown, it was important for Yoko to construct and maintain a professional receptionist identity in the eyes of her Australian receptionist colleagues. Asking for help with English would have stigmatised her as linguistically deficient and therefore professionally unreliable. Even though these bellboys were White Australian native speakers of English, Yoko positioned them as her subordinates based on her higher work status and older age. This positioning allowed her to make use of these bellhops as linguistic and social resources.

8.3.2.3 Constant self-reminders

Another characteristic in Yoko’s agency in the daunting English medium workplace was her constant self-reminders of her akogare for English. It was evident
that such narrative practices were often triggered by her exposure to the objects of her *akogare*: White Australian native speakers, Hollywood stars (especially Brad Pitt) and her new career prospect as a bilingual receptionist. During her stay in Sydney, she frequently went to see Hollywood movies, particularly Brad Pitt movies, usually several times, whenever she was feeling depressed about her job and slow progress in English, because they acted as reminders of the purpose of her *ryugaku*.

Yoko: while watching the movie, I remembered, “I came to Australia because of my *akogare* for the world like this!” I thought that I must try hard again. (f27may04yoko)

Furthermore, Yoko’s emotional investment in Brad Pitt movies and achieving success in ELL must be understood in relation to her divorce. As I related in Chapter 5, Hollywood movies provided moments of escape after the discovery of her husband’s extramarital affairs. She used knowledge of English and Hollywood movies/stars as social capital to rebuild her self-esteem in Japan. She had a small photo-sticker of her ex-husband and his girlfriend at the back of her diary and whenever she wanted to abandon the receptionist job, she forced herself to look at it. In other words, part of her perseverance in the job and ELL was based on her desire to take revenge by transforming herself to be a successful international receptionist, fluent in the international language of English.

8.3.2.4 Recognition of improvements

Drawing on the work of Leech (1983), Piller (2002a, p. 111) argues that due to the modesty maxim at work, “talking about one’s L2 success poses an obvious problem.” This was often the case with Yoko (and, to a large degree, the other
participants), who tended to understate her increasing fluency in English and remained self-critical. As time went by, however, she began making positive self-evaluations and praising her own achievements and this seemed to have a positive impact on her determination to learn English and persevere with her job as a receptionist. Typically, although in conversation she would first stress that her overall proficiency was still unsatisfactory, this would be followed by expressions of surprise or pleasure as she recounted improvements in specific areas of her English.

ヨウコ：イヤ～全然まだ喋れないんですけど、なんか最近仕事場の人があんまり言ってるか少しだけど分るようになって来ました。
Yoko: well, of course I can't speak well at all still, but recently, I feel more able to understand what my colleagues are saying. (fl8jan04yoko)

Yoko’s willingness to persevere in her job also resulted from her constant acknowledgment that interaction with her Australian colleagues contributed greatly to improving her English. She often said to me and her Japanese friends, who admired her courage in working in a local hotel with Australians, that despite her struggle to understand her fast-speaking Australian colleagues and customers, it was the act of working with native speakers that contributed most to her success in English.

8.3.2.5 Dealing with marginalisation

One of the most striking forms of agency that Yoko displayed was her ability to turn her experience of marginalisation at work into strength. She was aware that some of her colleagues treated her as a deficient speaker of English and for that reason often did not pass on new information to her.

ヨウコ：皆が英語できないの知ってるから、「ああ、ヨウコには、言わなくててもいいよ。どうせわからないからさ」みたいな事言ってるの何回か聞いたんですよね。恥ずかしかったし、すごく頭きしましたけど、でも、彼らの言ってる事聞かないんです、んで、言われてもしょうがないって。だから、早く英語うまくならなきゃっていつも思います。
Yoko: everyone knows that I can’t speak English well, so I’ve heard them say “don’t bother telling Yoko. She won’t understand” a few times. I was embarrassed and angry, but I thought that it can’t be helped as they aren’t wrong about me. so I always think that I have to get better at English quickly. (f19march04yoko)

Her comment, “they aren’t wrong about me,” indicates that she accepted their positioning of her as a limited ESL practitioner. However, she did not allow this marginalisation to negatively affect her socialisation with her colleagues and she was able to channel her anger and humiliation into constructive agency. For instance, whenever she was invited for a social chat with her colleagues (receptionists, bellhops and managers), she would try to participate to greatest extent possible. This was by no means a sign of submission but rather of her willingness to take advantage of her colleagues’ linguistic and social resources, even though in our conversations, she often produced a counter discourse whereby she positioned them as “three-and-a-half-star workers with no future.” She talked about herself as someone who, in contrast, had the potential to work in a five star hotel. This kind of self-esteem seemed to have helped her maintain her dignity in a situation where she felt inferior due to her limited English and was possibly seen as inferior by her co-workers. Becoming fully bilingual was the foundation for her formulating a counter-discourse. Part of her resistance to the positioning imposed on her included her habitual remark that she would surprise them by transforming herself into a fluent speaker of English one day.

8.4 A choice to work in the L2 context

Yoko’s experiences indicate that a choice to work during her ryugaku was more than just a financial necessity. Her determination to work in an English medium workplace was closely linked with her faith in employment as an ELL opportunity,
which constituted a discourse of English as empowering for internationally minded career women; in fact, Yoko’s ryugaku and work experiences can be considered as a success story. Eventually, on the basis of a number of factors: her greatly improved English, a certificate in hospitality she gained from a TAFE course and her work experience as a receptionist, she was offered an opportunity to work on Bora Bora Island, one of the French Polynesian islands. At that time of completing the thesis, she had already relocated to the Island and was working in a major souvenir shop (her new career will be further discussed in Chapter 9). Obviously, her success was a result of tremendous efforts to create job opportunities, of dealing with difficulties in interpersonal interactions in English and the stress that that caused and also of negotiating her self-identity in the workplace. Her case demonstrates that the process of building a career using English is nothing like as glamorous or as easy as the media and popular discourses in Japan about English and work would suggest.

In fact, although many other participants were equally exposed to these discourses, they chose not to pursue this option during their ryugaku. For one thing, the younger participants in their mid twenties, Yuka and Ichi, had never worked in Japan and showed little interest in gaining career-oriented work experience in Sydney. Ichi also did not see work as creating an opportunity to participate in Australian society.

イチ：うん、白人の社会とかに入るのは憧れてたけど、仕事でっとは思ったこと一度もないね。
**Ichi:** yes, I’ve always had *akogare* for getting into White society. but I never thought of doing that through work. (t1july04:ichi)

It seemed that Ichi and Yuka both considered their education in ESL and later at university to be their first priority and considered work as “distraction.” Instead they
focused on finishing their university degrees so as not to financially burden their parents more than necessary (t1july04ichi).

In contrast, Eika was like Yoko; she embraced the idea of learning English through work. As mentioned in Chapter 6, she made the choice of embarking on a working holiday rather than a ryugaku so as to be able to work and learn English in Sydney. However, she said that she discovered from her early days in Sydney that her English may be too limited to obtain a “desirable” job (e.g., human resource management). Conscious of this drawback, she feared that she would not be considered a competent worker and this thought influenced her choice not to make a commitment to finding an office job which was her preferred occupation.

Yuka, Ichi and Eika’s decisions not to work was made possible by their financial situation: Yuka and Ichi’s ryugaku was funded by their parents while Eika was making use of the large amount of the savings she had accumulated in Japan. Conversely, those who were financing themselves or had limited financial resources had an urgent need to work. For instance, Chizuko worked in a Japanese owned opal shop in Sydney’s CBD for two years. This choice was mainly motivated by her personal assessment of her English fluency and her financial needs. The salary was much better for a Japanese-speaking job servicing Japanese tourists than, with her limited fluency, she could earn in an English speaking job. Tokiko, a secondary participant, also expressed frustration about the difficulties of finding an English-speaking job with long-term prospects. She worked with a team of Australian and Japanese co-workers as a waitress on a showboat for two years. Being a Japanese speaker, she was able to win respect from her Australian colleagues, since up to two thirds of the customers were Japanese tourists. At the time she had ample interactional opportunities to speak English with her co-workers. However, she did not consider
being a waiter a desirable long-term career, as she did not see the customer service
tourism industry as being suited to her professional identity. At the same time,
however, Tokiko expressed doubts about her prospects finding higher status
employment in an English-only medium workplace in Australia.

Tokiko: well, I wanted to get office work experience, but to be honest, it’s scary
to work in an English-only environment. It looks hard to get in unless you have
perfect English. I decided not to do it because I know my personality and it
would have been stressful, having complexes about my English.
(t28sep04tokiko)

This comment underlaid her assumption that despite Australia’s claims and
indeed boasts about its multicultural ethos, gaining respect as a professional worker
was impossible without a high level of English proficiency.

Tokiko: in the end, they say that they encourage multiculturalism, but they are
in fact a White supremacist society. And they don’t treat you like a human being
if you can’t speak English. (f24sep04tokiko)

8.5 Summary

This chapter comprised a discussion of my participants’ agency in improving
English in the two key social contexts: home and work. All of them considered living
and working with native speaker Australians to be conducive to ELL and entry into
the Australian society. Yoko and Ich, for example, firmly believed in this discourse
of home as an ELL opportunity. Both lived with English-speaking flatmates/homestay
families during the majority of their stays in Australia and made a great deal of effort
to practice English with them. However, as the decisions and experiences of Eika,
Chizuko and Yuka suggest, home was not simply an ELL context and they created
and enjoyed their living environment for a host of reasons that seem to contradict their
claimed desire to improve English with local Australians. This finding provides
support to the view of agency offered by Pavlenko and Piller (2001) that:

in some cases L2 users may decide to learn the second, or any additional,
language only to a certain extent, which allows them to be proficient, but
without the consequences of losing the old and adopting the new ways of being
in the world (p. 29).

These views would seem to be complemented by the findings which emerge
from the experiences of the three participants dealt with in this chapter, namely that
their changing views and needs as well as emergent goals, powerfully influenced their
exercise of agency in shaping their home environments. Home formed a crucial space
in which Eika and Chizuko could nurture a sense of emotional security as an
important member of the household. For Yuka, her flat was where she could take
refuge from her daily emotional struggles and also nurture her new identity as a
responsible adult, something which had been missing from her teenage years of
hikikomori. In this way, the choices of home environment for long-term stayers, like
my participants, have to be understood with reference to their previous as well as their
emergent needs and desires which may have outweighed their desire to improve
English.

My analysis of Yoko’s work experience indicates that it was by no means easy
or enjoyable: she constantly suffered from stress, fatigue and even occasional
diarrhoea as a result of having to constantly negotiate her identity and power relations
with her Australian co-workers who, in Yoko’s belief, did not consider her to be as
competent due to her limited English. However, her strength was manifested in her
ability to employ several effective strategies to deal with interpersonal difficulties and
power struggles at work. Firstly, the power of her beliefs in the connection between work and ELL demonstrate the importance of having confidence in a chosen method of language learning as this was the key to her action in pursuing and persevering in an L2 job, despite difficulties she encountered at such work. Constant self-reminders of the original reason for ELL and recognition of the progress she was making also proved to be important strategies for maintaining her commitment to mastering English through work experience. Furthermore, although she may have feared the loss of status in the eyes of her Australian receptionist colleagues, she was able to position herself as superior to bellboys (Australian native speakers) and used them as a linguistic resource. Similarly, her positioning of herself as someone with better career prospects than her colleagues helped maintain her self-respect and enabled her to engage in social interaction with them. Therefore, Yoko’s choice of work and her interactions at work have to be understood with reference not only to linguistic incentives, but also to her desire for identity transformation (as a form of revenge on her philandering husband) and negotiation of linguistic, occupational and racial identity.

Furthermore, despite their exposure to the discourse of learning authentic English through work, few other participants felt able to, or wanted to fully embrace the opportunity to, pursue career-oriented work experience during their ryugaku. Yuka and Ichi had very little financial need to work and chose non-job oriented means of improving their English (e.g., socialising with university friends). Eika, conscious of her self-perceived limited English, felt she would not be able to find a job that matched her previous career identity. Rather than experiencing a sense of status loss, she chose not to pursue employment as a means of improving her English. For Chizuko, ELL through work was a secondary concern and instead she chose the
option of working in a Japanese-speaking environment for which offered better financial rewards. Furthermore, in some participants’ accounts, the racial discrimination and the linguistic discrimination that they experienced in Australia emerged as closely linked, if not identical, phenomena. This led them to increasingly believe that Australian society did not welcome Asian non-English-speaking workers, a view which greatly discouraged their dream of working with local Australians.

What their experiences demonstrate is that agency cannot be seen as a given or unchanging quality exercised by an individual. Rather, as Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) argue, agency is “a relationship that is constantly constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large” (p. 148). In this light, it is possible to construct a different understanding of my participants’ choices not to live or work in an English-speaking environment. As mentioned throughout this thesis, they were full of desire to use and learn English at home or work with local Australians, but their choices in this regard were made and altered through negotiation of their financial status, their identity, their non-linguistic desires and needs and also by the power relations experienced in particular contexts. As such, the notion of agency together with language desire offers complex and nuanced understandings of their decisions to use or not to use English in social contexts.
Chapter 9: Going Home?

Behind the ideal of living in two worlds is a parallel danger of being able to live fully in neither. Women may find themselves trapped in the space betwixt and between Japan and the foreign, outsiders both in Japan and abroad, belonging nowhere (Kelsky, 2001, p. 202).

9.1 Introduction

In Chapters 5 and 6, I discussed the construction of language desire and the decision-making process, which led to my participants embarking on ryugaku. In Chapters 7 and 8, I accounted participants’ experiences as they attempted to improve their English and create a desirable lifestyle in Sydney’s multicultural society. This chapter traces my participants’ narratives about “going home.” It is demonstrated that returning to Japan was not an obvious choice. Rather, during their ryugaku they were constantly imagining and negotiating a wider range of future options in light of their emergent identities. Examination of this phenomenon firstly involves introducing the notions of hybridity and the “cultural supermarket” to analyse my participants’ narratives about going home. Secondly, an analysis of media discourse about Japanese women returning home from ryugaku is presented. Thirdly, common concerns about returning home, including: negotiation of their bilingual/international identity, social networking and work opportunities using English in Japan, are discussed. Fourthly, the “going home” narratives of Yoko, Chizuko and Eika are analysed in relation to their hybridity and global mobility. Finally, Ichi and Yuka’s cases of intercultural relationship and its link to their hybridity and future options are discussed.
9.2 Hybridity and the “cultural supermarket”

To explore my participants’ narratives of going home, this chapter draws on the concepts of hybridity and the “cultural supermarket.” Block (2002a) points out that when individuals cross borders geographically and linguistically, their taken-for-granted ideas are destabilised and therefore their identities become highly contested. He explains that the result of such on-going destabilisation is:

not a question of adding the new to the old. Nor is it a half-and-half proposition whereby the individual becomes half of what he/she was and half of what he/she has been exposed to. Rather, the result is hybridity (p. 3).

Hybridity, in Papastergiadis’s (2000, p. 170) words, is “constructed through a negotiation of difference,” but it is “not confined to a cataloguing of differences.”

Its “unity” is not found in the sum of its parts, but emerges from the process of opening what Homi Bhabha has called, a “third space,” within which other elements transform each other. Hybridity is both the assemblage that occurs whenever two or more elements meet and the initiation of a process of change (p. 170).

Following these perspectives, hybridity is understood to mean the intricate and complex ways my participants represent and position themselves within and across multiple discursive categories, such as race, gender, age, occupation, marital status, multilingualism and cosmopolitanism. In the following sections, I illustrate the ways in which my participants’ hybridity played an important role in constructing their future options and vice versa.

Mathews’ (2000) notion of the “cultural supermarket” is useful for examining the relationship between my participants’ hybrid identities and their future options. Mathews (2000) argues that identities are shaped at three levels: (1) the taken-for-granted level, (2) the shikata ga nai (it can’t be helped) level, and (3) at what he calls, the “cultural supermarket” level. At the taken-for-granted level, the shaping of self
occurs in language and social practices “that condition us as to how we comprehend self and world” and is largely subconscious (Mathews, 2000, p. 12). The *shikata ga nai* level indicates that while people are aware, when growing up, of various choices of identities and lifestyles open to them. These choices include to societal, familial and institutional pressures, so they feel obliged to choose certain options rather than others. The last level, situated as the most shallow and fully conscious level of one’s cultural shaping, depends on exposure to “the cultural supermarket.” Unlike the material supermarket, what the cultural supermarket offers is an almost unlimited range of information and potential identities through various channels such as the Internet, mass media, books, foods and the huge variety of advertisements. Mathews (2000) argues that because “the cultural supermarket and the identities it offers are global” (p. 15), it enables individuals to construct identities and choices drawn from beyond national and physical boundaries. Therefore, the underlying assumption of the cultural supermarket is freedom of choice: that its “customers” can pick and choose any of the “products” displayed on the shelves. In other words, individuals are apparently free to choose what they want to be or what they call “home.” However, as Mathews (2000) repeatedly acknowledges, and as was alluded to Chapter 8, the idea of being free to choose is problematic because:

> [P]eople pick and choose themselves in accordance with their class, gender, religious belief, ethnicity and citizenship, as well as all the exigencies of their own personal molding, from a cultural supermarket that heavily advertises some choices and suppresses others; they pick and choose themselves in negotiation with and performance for others (p. 15)

Indeed, the problems posed by the notions of nation-state and citizenship is evident from my investigation of the participants’ desire for continued residence in Australia but also for further international border crossings. The celebratory discourse of globalisation creates an illusion of a “global village” or “borderless world.”
Although this idea works well as far as capital flows are concerned, it fails to account for the powerful restrictions placed on the movements of people imposed by nation-states, which dictate who may enter their territories, where they can be and for how long. Every encounter with questioning officers at the immigration office in Sydney and the Australian embassy in Tokyo reminded my participants of their powerlessness in this regard. My participants expressed great frustration at being caught between contradictory discourses of the nation-state and freedom of choice in the global cultural supermarket. However, it would be a mistake to underestimate their agency to bypass the state gate keeping practices. As Mathews (2000) writes:

We are not slaves to the world around us, but have a certain degree of freedom in choosing who we are. This freedom may be highly limited, but it cannot be altogether denied (p. 23).

In fact, my participants possessed and used significant legitimate resources (such as a Japanese passport and financial support) to pass through some of the barriers erected by national gate-keeping practices. In their search for desirable homes, romance and occupations, they persevered with their struggles to pursue their akogare and claim various parts of the world as “home.” The next section deals with the media discourse of Japanese women returning from ryugaku.

9.3 Media images of Japanese women retuning from ryugaku

Since the 1980s, there has been growing societal and academic interest in the issue of Japanese kikokushijo, or “returnees” (White, 1988; Yoshida, Matsumoto, Akiyama, Moriyoshi, Furuie & Ishii, 2003). In general, the term kikokushijo is used to refer to “students who return to Japan after a prolonged sojourn abroad” (Kanno, 2000, p. 362), and much of previous intercultural research focuses on returnee children in
elementary, junior and senior high schools (Goodman, 1990; Kanno, 2000, 2003b; Kidder, 1992; Yoshida et al., 2003). As Yoshida (1999, p. 495) points out, this child focus results from and continues to reproduce “the misleading assumption that being a returnee is no longer an issue once one is beyond high school age.”

This assumption may explain why, despite the great amount of care and attention ryugaku guidebooks and magazines place on entry into a host society, problems surrounding returning home for adults are hardly dealt with. When they are mentioned, they appear to be trivialised. Indeed, in the media, young Japanese women returning to Japan are often represented as successful internationalists, well able to capitalise on their newly acquired language skills and overseas experiences. A special feature on long overseas stays published in Nikkei Woman (2004), a magazine which targets career oriented, internationalist women in Japan, provides a good example.

Out of 36 pages discussing various aspects of long overseas stay, 27 coloured and 7 black and white pages were devoted glorifying ryugaku. For instance, one sub-header from the special feature proclaims:

行ってよかった！自信がついた！海外で暮らしてモット大きな私になる：仕事を捨てて、家族とも別れて、大きな決断になる海外ロングステイ。実際に勇気を出して渡航して彼女達は、皆「自信」を手にして帰ってくる。海外で暮らすことで得られる充実感とは何だろう？

Glad that I went! I gained confidence! Becoming a bigger me by living overseas: Long overseas stay involves throwing away one’s job and leaving one’s family... Every woman who summoned the courage to go overseas comes home with “confidence.” What is this sense of satisfaction that they can gain through living overseas? (p. 18)

The supplement featured women who returned to Japan after having carefully prepared their ryugaku and having overcome the “trivialised” problems in the host country. They were finally depicted as championing their overseas experiences after their triumphant homecoming. In contrast, only 1 of these 36 pages discussed the negative impacts of ryugaku experienced by women on their return to Japan. This

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page gave the results of a survey which detailed the losses that women reported they had incurred as a result of a long overseas stay. These include loss of savings (64.4%) at the top of the list, followed by the stable job (30.4%), of time (8.9%), of a romantic partner (8.9%) and of a career built prior to departure (8.1%).

The adjacent page, however, reported positive gains recorded in the same survey. These overshadowed if they did not altogether obliterate the costs of ryugaku, as previously discussed. Their claims of gains, including such highly desired qualities and valued commodities as confidence (77.8%), language skills (75.6%), toughness (65.2), international friends (64.4%) and internationalism (59.3%), powerfully romanticised the end-product of the women’s overseas experiences.

It is clear that time spent in a foreign country can be a tremendous learning experience. However, what such media discourse of ryugaku may not show is the complex ways in which young Japanese women weigh their ryugaku experiences and construct their future possibilities in the light of their perceived accomplishments, failures and new subjectivities. Furthermore, in media and popular images, ryugaku is portrayed as a clearly defined act of going to a host country temporarily as an adult learner and then returning to Japan. Underlying such media discourse may be the assumption that Japan is the only legitimate physical space for a Japanese person and that it is their one and only “home.” Thus returning to the homeland of childhood, biological family and lifelong friends is presumed to be only natural.

This alleged natural bond between the Japanese people and Japan emerged as a problematic issue in my participants’ narratives. In fact, for most of them, return to Japan was no longer a given, but chosen with great reluctance, or more often than not, agonised over and sometimes altogether rejected. The decision provoked an on-going internal dialogue about whether they should return to Japan or remain in the overseas
social and global world. As their participation in Australian, or other, societies exposed them to an ever-widening range of information, identities, opportunities and options, their internal debate further intensified, often without them ever coming to a full sense of conviction about their final choice.

The following sections provide some insights into these complex experiences and negotiation among my participants. There is, first, a report on their narratives of their ambivalent feelings towards the idea of returning to Japan and, secondly, an account of their experiences after returning to Japan.

9.4 Ambivalence about going home

"Going home" or "leaving Australia" was an inescapable reality for each of my participants, whose status was always that of a temporary resident. That status made it inevitable that they were each constantly engaged in considering, debating, and finally, deciding the timing and the conditions of returning to Japan. After nearly five years of fieldwork with my participants, I noticed that their stories of return to Japan were increasingly characterised by a sense of uncertainty, confusion, anxiety and even fear. In short, none unreservedly wanted to go home.

Nevertheless, their options for staying in Australia were limited. Unless they somehow obtained either permanent residency or a work permit, both of which were perceived as hard or impossible to secure, they were required to leave Australia at some point. Moreover, a lack of finance meant that none could continue as international students. The savings of Eika, Yoko and Chizuko were dwindling and Ichi and Yuka’s parents had announced that their financial support would cease at the end of their tertiary education (which was May 2005 for both). These material and
legal realities limited their choice of residence in Sydney, making return to Japan an inevitable option.

Towards the end of my research, an interesting coincidence took place. From mid 2004, all of my participants began speaking of going home or leaving Australia more concretely, not just in passing. Yuka and Ichi indicated that they were planning to return to Japan in July 2005 after the completion of their university degrees and Chizuko indicated a departure of March 2005 after completing her diploma course in natural therapy. Yoko returned in September 2004 while Eika returned in May 2005. In each case, there was an increasing sense of anxiety as their days of departure approached. There were several common issues underlying their narratives about their return home. These involved an interplay between their changing subjective positions in Sydney and their image of Japan. Three related issues emerged from their narratives: negotiation and maintenance of an English speaking identity; hybridity and social networks in Japan; and, finding a career in which they could use English.

9.4.1 Negotiation and maintenance of an English speaking identity

As pointed out in Chapter 6, gaining English proficiency was one of the most influential factors in my participants’ decision to study in Australia. Unsurprisingly, the difficulties of maintaining their bilingual identity (and by association, international/cosmopolitan identity) was the most common issue that caused dispirits in my participants as they contemplated their eventual return to Japan. During their long-term stay in Sydney, each had made tremendous efforts to use and learn English. As discussed in Chapter 7, that endeavour often involved coping with subordination to a range of individuals and a sense of humiliation, which resulted from being unable to assert their self-positioning as worthy individuals linguistically. Having paid such
a heavy emotional and psychological price, a loss of their ability to speak English had for them, become “unthinkable.”

Despite these issues, they placed a high value on the English proficiency that they had gained and all participants expressed a fear that maintenance of the identity, which they felt this conferred on them, would not be possible in Japan. For instance, two days before her departure, Yoko told me, with an expression of great urgency and concern, that her deepest fear was that she would lose her ability to speak English.

ヨウコ：英語を忘れるのが一番こわいです。こんなに苦労してやっとここまで喋れるようになったのに、今帰ったら、すぐ忘れちゃうんじゃないかって心配です。

Yoko: what I am afraid of most is forgetting English. it took me so much effort to become able to speak this will, if I return to Japan now, I am worried that I might forget it quickly. (f22sept04yoko)

Her comment suggests that underlying my participants’ fears in this regard was their view of Japan as a largely a monolingual society, which would afford them little regular access to an English-speaking space or cross-cultural resources (i.e., English speaking gaijins). This concern seemed to derive from their holiday visits to Japan during which they struggled to gain exposure to English. That caused such a sense of anxiety that Ichi even thought of cutting her holiday short.

イチ：もうなんか、英語忘れちゃうんじゃないって心配で早く帰ってきちゃおうかと思ったぐらい。うち、田舎だから、英語使う機会全然無いかね。

Ichi: well, I even thought about coming back earlier because I was worried about forgetting English. there is no chance to use English in my country town. (t1nov04ichi)

Similarly, for Yuka, not being unable to use English in her daily life during her holiday visit caused a sense of loss of her identity as “Yuka Takano.”

ユカ：だって、英語を使わないと、高野ゆかじゃない。英語を話したくっていつもむずむずしてました。

Yuka: because, it’s not Yuka Takano if I can’t use English. I was always itching to speak English (t1nov04yuka)
She was so desperate that she even spoke to her dog in English (see Piller, 2002, for self-talk on pets).

Yuka, Chizuko, Ichi and Yoko (all of whom had been back to Japan on holiday) came from country areas where contact with gaijins, (i.e., Western native speakers of English) was a rarity or practically non-existent according to Chizuko. The image of monoculturality and the implied backwardness of their home towns posed an enormous threat to their international, cosmopolitan identities which they had grown to cherish.

They reported that they actively tried to create opportunities to use English during their holiday visits, for instance, by writing emails in English (five of them), interacting with English speakers in online chat rooms (Ichi), watching foreign mostly American programs on television (five of them), visiting “international” pubs in Tokyo (Chizuko), telephoning English-speaking friends overseas (Yuka) and self-talk with a pet (Yuka).

Yet despite their image of Japan as a monolingual society, it was evident that advanced technologies, telecommunications, bilingual TV programs, an influx of gaijin visitors/residents, and the creation of personal English speaking opportunities did expose them to an English-speaking space within Japan. However, this did not feel that this exposure would be sufficient because their more immediate social and cultural spaces comprised of family, friends and public life, and there were still largely felt to be stiflingly monolingual and excruciatingly “Japanese.”

9.4.2 English, hybridity and social networks in Japan

As discussed in Chapter 8, communications at home in Sydney was felt by some participants to constitute a performance space for their bilingual and international
identity. While their host families were aware of their English skills, none of my participants thought that their actual families appreciated their valued identity as educated, cosmopolitan and bilingual speakers of English. Particularly the younger participants, Yuka and Ichi, who had left Japan at a relatively early age (Yuka at 17, Ichi at 21) and had been back on several occasions, reported increasing tensions and discomfort as they shared their social space with their families and, in particular, with their parents. When they finally returned permanently, they were both 25 years old and, having enjoyed freedom away from their parents for many years, found the thought of the inevitable parental interference enormously daunting. Yuka’s struggle with her parents was painfully narrated in an email.

ユカ：二週間しか日本にいないのにもう息が詰まってきたからねです・・・。こんな事親に言ったら悪いけど、やっぱりもう両親とは生活出来ないなぁと改めて感じました。生活習慣が違うし、私の場合離れているほうが優しく出来るし・・・。

Yuka: I started to feel suffocated after being in Japan only for two weeks...I feel bad about saying this to my parents, but I once again realised that I can’t live with my parents any more. Our lifestyle is different and I can be nicer when I am away from them...(11dec03yuka)

In addition, all participants, other than Eika, reported being unable to relate to their friends in Japan. Yoko’s story well illustrates this issue. Having returned to Japan in September 2004, she tried to re-establish her social networks with her old friends and ex-colleagues. She was, however, enormously frustrated by the inability of her friends and, in fact, the entire community (most of whom had never left their home town), to understand or appreciate her experiences in Sydney. Eventually she lost interest in reconnecting with them.

ヨウコ：まあ、期待した私が馬鹿だったんですけどね。どんなに、私がシドニーで英語を苦労しながらがんばって覚えたとか、どんなにホテルでの仕事がつらかったとか、オージーと一緒に住んでどう言う思いをしたとか、そういうの全然分かってもらえてなくてだから、結局会わなくててもいいかなって思ってきました。

Yoko: well, I was stupid to have expected it. they weren’t able to understand how hard I tried to learn English in Sydney, how tough the job at the hotel was and what I experienced through living with Aussies at all. so in the end, I started to think I didn’t have to hang out with them. (t2nov04yoko)
These examples support Mathews’ (2000) view that although the global cultural supermarket offers an ever-widening variety of identities, in fact, choices are socially restricted. He writes:

One’s social world – outside one’s mind and more, as resident within one’s mind – acts as a censor and gatekeeper, selecting from the range of possible cultural ideas one might appropriate only those that seem plausible and acceptable within it (p. 22).

In contrast, Eika expressed little concern about reuniting with her family and friends in Japan. Even prior to her departure, her extensive social network was already highly “international” in that most of her friends were long time residents of Tokyo and/or had been overseas. Her main concern was the relationship between English and her occupational identity in Japan, which is dealt with in the next section.

9.4.3 English and work

For Eika, two main purposes of coming to Australia were to attempt once again to master English and also to try to discover what she wanted to do with her life and her English skills. When asked again on her return in October 2004, her answer was rather unexpected. Having studied English and human resource management in Sydney, Eika found using English for work in Japan to be out of the question (see Chapter 5 for more details). She was not alone in this conviction. English proficiency, by itself, was not seen as a useful qualification for finding useful work among my participants. As discussed earlier, although according to the dominant discourse in Japan, English proficiency is sold as an advantage to woman (Tsuda, 2000), Yuka and some secondary participants were ambivalent about being able to use their English skills in any future job. Others saw English primarily as a language for maintaining
international friendships or even as a “hobby” (Chizuko and Eika). Chizuko, too, saw very few links between her English skills and occupational choices either in Sydney or in Japan.

チズコ：あたしの場合は、仕事で絶対英語使わないっては思わないのでね。そこまで英語力無いし、仕事では、好きな事をして、プライベートで英語とぶれていたいと思っているんだよね。英語とは離れてたくないからね

Chizuko: in my case, I don’t feel that I have to use English for work. I don’t have enough competence in English and I want to do what I want to do for work and I want to use English in my private time. I don’t want to lose English (i3oct04chizuko)

This ambivalence towards English as occupational capital seemed to be linked with the perceived “oversupply” of Japanese-English bilinguals in Japan (Matsubara, 1989). All of the participants believed that, unlike a few decades previously, there are currently “too many” English speaking Japanese people and they felt that they needed additional qualifications or them to find employment, even though many did have such qualifications: Eika, Chizuko and Yoko had obtained diplomas or certificates from private colleges (human resource management, natural therapy and hospitality respectively), while Yuka and Ichi were about to graduate from university with arts degrees in gender studies and sociology respectively. However, the first three regarded their qualification as “useless” in Japan while the other two considered their degrees to be of very little value as a career-building tool.

In addition, very few participants saw themselves as competitive enough in terms of their English skills, particularly against kikokushijo, young returnees. The kikokushijo were considered by my participants as “true bilinguals” since they had grown up overseas. Despite their long-term residence in Sydney and their functional competence in English, the majority of my participants, who had arrived in Australia in their twenties (Eika, Yoko, Chizuko, Ichi and most of the secondary participants), did not position themselves as being of equal worth to the kikokushijo in this
sociolinguistic hierarchy of Japanese-English speakers. In fact there is no Japanese descriptive word for an adult woman and they felt at a loss to explain “what they were” in linguistic terms. Without the kikokushijo identity or any other recognised status, many believed that their chances of accessing the competitive international job market were slight. This, in turn, could have well meant that there was one less social space in Japan where they could perform and maintain their cherished English-speaking cosmopolitan identity.

Even if they entertained the possibility of using their English for work, their choice seemed to be confined to the highly feminised job market. For instance, Yuka talked about working at a ryugaku agency as a coordinator, while Chizuko and Eika briefly toyed with the idea of becoming English teachers of small children (many of my secondary informants who have since returned to Japan are also teaching English for adults). Ichi was considering the option of becoming a wedding coordinator for Japanese couples in the United States (see more details in Section 9.6). However, at the time of finalising this thesis, none of my main participants had a job in which they were using their English skills.

My participants’ narratives provide a rather different picture to the media image of returnees as empowered English-speaking women with a promising international career. Even with their attainment of qualifications and further English skills, my participants revealed a sense of powerlessness in the face of the authoritarian nature of Japanese companies which openly discriminated against women on the basis of age and gender. Thus, it is clear that, over the years, my participants’ reaction to the discourse of English as an instrument of empowerment for women had enormously shifted to a point where almost none of them wholeheartedly endorsed that discourse any longer.
9.5 Hybridity and global mobility

My participants’ aversion to returning to Japan needs to be understood with reference to their feelings that they no longer fully belonged to their home towns, their friends, or even their families. They also often rejected the mainstream Japanese characteristics such as monolingualism, communication styles (e.g., excessive politeness, stiff body language, lack of eye contact) and even physical appearance.

However, their rejection of Japan was never complete or static. In fact, Japan not only remained as a constant reference point for them, but many also expressed a new nationalistic pride in Japanese efficiency, intellectual achievement and their country’s global economic and technological successes. Moreover, their akogare for the West and the English language did not remain unchallenged. This was consistent with what Kelsky (2001) found.

...many women returning home, by choice or not, come to reject blanket affiliations with the West, enunciating in some cases a renewed nationalist identification with the Japanese state and in other cases a vision of hybrid identity (p. 22).

Indeed, I believe that the notion of hybridity holds the key to understanding my participants’ ambivalence about the idea of return to Japan. This notion can also be used to analyse the multiple options my participants considered for their futures. considered, in which Japan occupied a significant, but transitory, space. Hall (1993, p. 362) points out that individuals, however hybrid they may be, tend to “retain strong links to and identifications with the traditions and places of their ‘origins’” (p. 362). At the same time, as part of a diaspora, they were often in a state of “belonging at the same time to several ‘homes’, and thus to no one particular home.” In the case of my participants, Japan was no longer felt like their only home. Sydney, too, had become a
home; when for instance, Chizuko, Yuka, Yoko and Ichi, said that when they returned from holidays in Japan to Sydney, they felt completely “at home.”

Chizuko: 本当に不思議なんだよね。一ヶ月日本にいて、シドニーに帰ってきた時、「あ、家に帰ってきただ」って思っちゃったんだよね。ここが家になってきているんだなんて思った。うん。

Chizuko: it was amazing, when I came back to Sydney after one month in Japan, I felt, “wow, I’ve returned home.” I thought that it’s become my home here. yeah (i3oct04chizuko)

As the word, “amazing” suggests, the acknowledgement of Sydney as an additional home often evoked mixed feelings and underlying this pleasant amazement was that they were no longer purely Japanese, but had become Japanese who felt at home in what they initially considered as a foreign country, Australia. In spite of the hardships they experienced in Australia, a new sense of “Japaneseeness” and new identities had emerged.

Furthermore, based on their short stays (Yuka and Eika) or even without their physically being in a place (Yoko, Ichi, Yuka and Eika), many of my participants had also begun to feel that other parts of the world could be a potential home. As is described in the following section, their imagination of future possibilities as to where they wanted to live, work or study, and with whom they wanted to share their lives with seemed boundless and borderless. This supports Mathews’ (2000) notion that the lifestyles and identities that the global cultural supermarket offers, are not always bounded by material realities but circulate at the global level.

Next, the narratives of each of the main participants about their future movement are explored in terms of the ways in which their options were imagined, constructed and debated in negotiation with their hybrid identity.
9.5.1 Yoko: Bora Bora Island and beyond

After two-and-a-half years of living in Sydney as an international student and working as a hotel receptionist, Yoko decided to move to Bora Bora Island to work. This was surprising news to me and her friends in Sydney for two reasons. Firstly, Yoko was perhaps the most expressive and unchanging in her akogare for the West among my participants. She spoke enthusiastically of her plans to move to the United States or the United Kingdom in her quest to find a White boyfriend/husband and in so doing finally becoming a truly fluent speaker of English and even physically developing a more Western look. Secondly, no one, not even Yoko, knew the geographical location of the island: it did not exist on our mental maps as a possible residential, or even tourist, destination. It turned out that the island was not even an English-speaking society but was one of the French Polynesian islands (its main island being Tahiti). None of this fitted Yoko’s identity project described above. Her decision to move to Bora Bora seems to have been made as a result of the interplay of several factors.

According to Yoko, she had increasingly entertained the idea of leaving Australia since around mid-2004. This had been motivated by her painful break-up with her Chinese Australian boyfriend, her increasing frustration with her financial situation, the stress of her workplace and the low possibility of gaining permanent residency in Australia, without which she would have to continue to pay for school fees in order to obtain a student visa. However, as discussed in section 9.4, she did not want to return to Japan. Thus, she “jumped at” an offer of a job as a sales assistant by the owner of an opal shop on Bora Bora.

24 At the time of making the decision to leave Australia, she had the possession of roughly AU$1000 in the bank in Australia.
Yoko: my relationship with John wasn’t going anywhere and I was thinking about going home. But I really didn’t want to live back in Japan, so I jumped at it. I made the decision in a short time, but I have little regret. (t2nov04yoko)

Yoko had never heard of the island before. It was far from the homes of White native speakers and Hollywood stars which she yearned for, and involved a new occupational identity as a sales assistant that excited her very little. Yet, the option of moving to the island was immensely more attractive than the ideas of remaining in Sydney without any possibility of reconciling with her boyfriend, or living back in her small country home town where the choice of identities was quite restricted. In her mind, her home town would once again transform her into a miserable 30-something divorcee and rob her of a sense of freedom to maintain and capitalise on her treasured and hard-earned bilingual and cosmopolitan identity.

Her move to Bora Bora also presented an opportunity to reinvent herself as multilingual rather than merely bilingual, because the official language was French. When she was back in Japan waiting for a work permit to be granted by the French embassy, she started to listen to self-study French CDs, imagining herself to be fluent in French. Although she had never been to Bora Bora or other French Polynesian islands, in her narrative it was already her new home. However, her adventure was still fused in her consciousness with the world of Hollywood and a desire for romance with a White English native speaker, as an email in English suggested:

i still can’t believe i left sydney...i went to french embassy in tokyo yesterday [...] im just thinking about blue sky and ocean in tahiti...im running white beach with brad pitt...(e30sep04yoko)

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In her bedroom in her parents’ house, she put up a poster of Bora Bora Island which, she said provided an emotional oasis and the hope that her life would be more satisfactory and enjoyable once she moved to the island.

It is important to note that Yoko did not see Bora Bora as her final destination. In fact, her utmost *akogare* still seemed to lie in Western English speaking countries. She was entertaining the idea of moving to the United States, Canada, or England after her contract on the island was over. The reality was, however, that in order to make the move to any of these countries, she had to negotiate her visa status and right to work. With the United States becoming more and more strict on the entry of foreigners, her narrative constructed the United Kingdom, where international students are allowed to work in the same manner as in Australia, as the most feasible option.

Having been back in Japan since September 2004, the emails she sent from her home town conveyed the emotional struggles she experienced as she tried to survive in Japan, but also growing excitement about moving to Bora Bora. She had been trying to find a regular language exchange partner in her small home town with very little success. In October 2004, after only two weeks, she resigned her temporary job as an office worker in charge of writing English letters as a result of personal conflicts with her “unnecessarily” critical supervisor. She had then worked as a kiosk shop assistant at a golf course where no one knew her degree of fluency in English or the extent of her knowledge about the West. She stated in one email that she was cleaning windows at her new workplace and this reality of her work condition in Japan
saddened me\textsuperscript{25}. However, the conclusion end of the email instantly reminded me of her strength:

\textbf{Yoko:} How are you? I am in the middle of my job. I was cleaning windows. I try not to think about it too much! I'll do my best! (e23nov04yoko)

In fact, she sent this email from her newly acquired high-tech mobile phone which enabled her to stay in close touch with her friends overseas, however virtual that connection was. The emotional connectedness with the virtual community of her international friends and the prospect of moving out of her temporary home to an unknown, yet exotic, island, seemed to continue to progress Yoko’s journey and identity.

\subsection*{9.5.2 Chizuko: returning home to Sydney}

Like Yoko, Chizuko always expressed a firm rejection of Japan as a permanent home. For her, life in Japan was filled with stifling social rules and she felt suffocated every time she went back there on a holiday. However, after the completion of her two-year diploma course in March 2005, she had no choice but to return to Japan. While other participants were planning their moves to other countries (e.g. Yoko to the Bora Bora, Ichi to the United States, and Yuka to China), she was planning to return to Sydney on a permanent basis. In June 2005, she enrolled in another two-year course at a private college in Sydney and resumed living with her Japanese family friends and working in the opal shop.

\textsuperscript{25} My immediate emotional response was that she must have felt defeated with this simple job compared to her self-positioning as a woman of international experiences and English proficiency.
As discussed earlier, she came from a rural area where a café was still a novelty. In that part of Japan, she had limited access to linguistic resources. She told me that during her holiday visits, television was the only cultural resource that helped maintain her cherished English-speaking international identity.

Chizuko: I was worried that I might forget English in two months, so I only watched English programs on NHK. I felt so relieved at the sound of English. (f3oct04chizuko)

In Japan she also had limited access to what she always idolised – gaijins.

Chizuko: when I go back to Japan, it’s a world with only Japanese. it depresses me. it’s not only a matter of whether or not I get to speak English, but when I see gaijins, I feel uplifted. (f3oct2004chizuko)

In fact, when she was back to Japan for a two-month holiday in 2003, she spent little time in her home town and largely located herself in Tokyo, actively seeking opportunities to meet foreigners. She was a regular visitor in the area called, Roppongi\textsuperscript{26}, in order to socialise with Westerners, preferably Australians\textsuperscript{27}. To her regret, most of the gaijins she met were Middle Eastern men who were fluent in Japanese but had little English proficiency and therefore they held little attraction for her.

This lack of access to Westerners in Japan posed a serious difficulty for her, not only in terms of her linguistic identity, but also in terms of her romantic future. She had always been clear about her preferred racial type for a romantic partner, an Anglo-Saxon Westerner. She repeatedly told me over the years that:

\textsuperscript{26} A metropolitan area known as a gaijin hub.  
\textsuperscript{27} She also made use of this technique in preparation for coming to Australia.
Chizuko: I can’t think of dating a non-gaijin man. I’ve always liked the idea of marriage and it is getting stronger year by year. My dream has been to marry a gaijin. (f3oct04chizuko)

This racial preference for Whiteness was intimately linked with her investment in the English language and her English-speaking identity. Although she did not see herself as a fluent speaker of English and her L2 expressions were limited, she nevertheless believed that she could be her “ideal self” when conversing with a Western man.

Chizuko: 何で外人がいいかっていうと、英語だと理想の自分になれるから。英語の表現ってとってもストレートじゃない？少ないボキャブラリーでやらなきゃいけないんだけどね。でもだからストレートに正直に自分が表現できるみたい。日本語だと囲りが違うよね。

Chizuko: The reason why I prefer gaijin men is because in English, I can become my ideal self. English expressions are more straightforward, aren’t they? I have to manage within my limited vocabulary. But that’s why I can be straight and honest in expressing myself. In Japanese, I have to beat around the bush. (f3oct04chizuko)

In this sense, her desire to return to Sydney can be seen as an active exercise of language maintenance as well as a positioning of herself in a desirable linguistic/romantic market. Her case provides a striking example of the intimate relationship between language and romance.

She said that if immediate return to Sydney proved impossible for financial reasons (being an international student can be expensive), she would plan to move to Tokyo, or more specifically, into a so-called gaijin house. Gaijin houses are residential share accommodation for long-term foreign visitors who find it hard to rent accommodation because it involves complex logistics and a considerable amount of “key money” (worth three month’s rent plus gift money to the owner of the accommodation). At gaijin houses, tenants pay only roughly five to six hundred
Australian dollars per month for their room, paid either in weekly or monthly instalments, and thus avoid the difficulties of having to deal with real estate agents or owners of accommodation who do not often trust foreign tenants. Nowadays, gaijin houses have become part of the ELT industry and the owners of such business advertise the house as “domestic ryugaku,” because they provide an opportunity for Japanese people to live with Western native speakers of English. For Chizuko, a gaijin house was the most attractive residential space financially and emotionally within her temporary home, Japan. In her narratives, she often constructed herself as a temporary resident of Tokyo and as someone who would eventually somehow go home to Sydney. In this sense, she appropriated a gaijin identity herself.

Sydney offered more than simply the worlds of Westerners and English to her: There was also the sense of belonging to her Japanese family, the people in Sydney to whom she was most attached because, as related in Chapter 8, she had in a sense become a second mother to the children and the closest friend of the mother of the family. At the time of finalising this chapter, she was once again happily living with the family, asserting that she was more determined than ever to “make it happen” and obtain permanent residency in Australia before her student visa expired in 2007.

9.5.3 Eika: a long journey in search for a new life choice

For Yoko, Chizuko, Yuka and Ichi, return to Japan was a highly shikata ga nai (can’t be helped) choice. In contrast, Eika claimed that she had an important purpose in going back to Japan, and which was that it provided her with the opportunity to reflect on, and finally choose, a life option out of all the possibilities that had become available through her wide exposure to several countries including Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and the United States.
After finishing her TAFE course in June 2004, she had no concrete plans to live in either Sydney or Japan and she decided to switch from a student to a tourist visa. Having travelled to New Zealand to renew her tourist visa in August 2004, she spent another three months in Sydney and then went on a round trip to Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and the United States, returning to Australia in January, 2005. She planned to travel the Australian east coast for another three months, or until, as she jokingly said to her friends, her initially enormous, but now significantly reduced, savings from Japan were exhausted. After that, she said she “might” think about going back to Japan to decide whether she would remain and work there for good or leave for another country. Her future beyond the eventual return to Japan, “perhaps” some time in 2005, was an open-ended option still to be negotiated.

However, every now and then, between her descriptions of return to Japan as a “joyful” plan, I noticed an increasing sense of reluctance to do so. In fact, she was investigating other schools that she could attend after the completion of her TAFE course and she changed and extended her visas several times (from a working holiday to a student and then to a tourist visa) and increasingly expressed her interest in working in other parts of Australia. One way to interpret her ambivalence is that her feelings were in many ways symbolic of her complex relationship with English. Despite her initial self-positioning as a competent speaker of English, this position was not prominent during her stay in Sydney. As a result, by mid-2004, she became critical not only of Australia’s claimed multiculturalism and the image of “friendly Aussies,” but also her long time project of achieving a bilingual occupational identity seemed to have been severely diluted.

エイカ：オーストラリアに来て分かった事は、英語つまって仕事するなんて、とんでもないってこと。そんな英語力無いもん。
Eika: what I understood by coming to Australia is that there is no way I can use English for work! I don’t have such competence in English. (t1nov04eika)
The “defeat” of her decade-long project of attaining mastery of English added more complexity to her identity, which complicated her relationship with Japan. For instance, this change clearly led to an increased investment in a Japanese national identity, as is evident in what became a constant comment, “I am first and foremost Japanese,” which she did not ever mention at the beginning of her stay in Sydney. This increased investment in a Japanese identity, in turn, was problematic as it inevitably confined her prospects to the Japanese job market of which she became increasingly critical. At the beginning of her stay in Sydney, she remained fond of her previous workplace in Japan and was confident that she could easily return to work there after taking a working holiday in Australia. But these ideas were increasingly challenged as she learned about work conditions in Australia through her TAFE course and from her Chinese-Australian flatmate. She began re-evaluating gendered Japanese workplace practices in light of the Australian discourse about women’s employment. Thus, towards the end of her TAFE course, work in Japan had become significantly less attractive for her (t28oct04eika).

Her narratives of going home were a site of emotional struggles where her needs, wants, identities and future options were constantly reproduced, re-debated and re-contested. Just before she left Australia, she said with a great sense of uncertainty:

**Eika:** えいや、一度日本に帰ってどう感じるかだよね。ひょっとしたら、もう窮屈でままたすきヨーロッパとか行っちゃうかもしれないし、ゴールドコースといっちゃうかもしれないし、全然、また日本に慣れちゃってずっと住み着いかうかもしれないし、本当に一回帰ってみなないとわからないって感じかな。

**Eika:** well, it depends on how I feel when I get back in Japan. it may so happen that I feel suffocated and decide to go to Europe or the Gold Coast as soon as I get back. or I might get used to Japanese life again and decide to live back there, so I can’t be sure unless I go back there once. but I want to go home once and reflect on what I’ve done and what my options are now. (f17apr05eika)

She had come to Australia for the purpose of mastering English and finding a new lifestyle. During her stay in Sydney, she found a home in her multicultural and
multilingual community of friends, who as recounted in Chapter 8, trusted and respected her. She also visited multilingual friends in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Seattle and New York. With all these new experiences, her search for a meaningful life commitment seemed to be an on-going and exciting journey. At that time of finalising this chapter, she had returned to Japan and was enjoying her membership of the community of her close friends, many of whom also had the experience of studying overseas. Earlier, she had rejected a job offer from her previous workplace and at the time of finalising this thesis, she was preparing to launch a new career as a manager at a music company specialising in jazz. Music had been her passion since her teenage years and she was delighted at the prospect of working with foreign musicians, a job which might necessitate some use of English. Thus, her choice of a new profession could be considered as agency to maintain her hybridity and passion for English and music.

9.6 Hybrity and intercultural relationships

Piller (2006) points out that intercultural intimate relationships are increasingly symbolic of the new phase of globalisation. As is demonstrated in this section, the intercultural romances experienced by participants, particularly in the cases of Yuka and Ichi, seemed to be the result of an increase in international mobility (their studies in Australia, numerous trips overseas and visits to Japan), international data flows (Internet use) and cultural exchanges (language choices and maintenance). Their narratives of intercultural intimate relationships were not only a formative site of hybrid identity, but were also where their future options were jointly re-imagined and constantly re-negotiated. On these grounds, I decided to examine the future options of Ichi and Yuka within the frameworks of intercultural romance and negotiation of their
hybridity. This was because of data which suggested that their mobility seemed to be largely affected by their romantic relationships. Their stories indicate interesting connections between language desire, migration, emotional attachments and sense of home.

9.6.1 Ichi and Rod: language desire and race

Apart from her akogare for the West and English, one of the significant drives behind Ichi’s ryugaku was her hope of gaining an overseas qualification to improve her prospects in the chauvinistic Japanese job market. This meant that she initially intended to return to Japan. However, after her second year in Australia, she expressed an increasing desire to remain overseas by finding a job either in Sydney or in another English speaking country at the end of her university studies. Despite many interactional difficulties she experienced during her stay in Sydney, she maintained her akogare for, and identification with, Australians/native-speaker Australians.

“Even” Singapore was one of the options of residence in her imaginings about her future as it was a “Westernised” English speaking country.

イチ：終わっても、絶対に日本に帰りたくないからさ･･･英語圏ならどこでもいいと思ってる。シンガポールでもいいってぐらい思ってたから。

Ichi: I don’t want to go back to Japan after I finish uni...I thought any English speaking countries would do. I thought even Singapore would be okay (i16sep04ichi)

In mid 2004, new possibilities emerged. She had met Rod, a Korean-American teacher of English living in Tokyo, initially through an online chat room but later through direct encounters in Japan during her holidays there. Although these meetings were relatively brief, they developed and maintained their Tokyo-Sydney relationship through email, MSN messenger and international telephone calls. After May, 2004,
for the sake of their relationship, Ichi was increasingly committed to the idea of
moving back to Japan on completion of her university studies. At that time of writing,
their plans were that she would return to Japan in July, 2005 at the end of her
university degree and live with Rod until the end of his teaching contract in January
2006, after which they would move together to his home town in Arizona, the United
States.

Even though her return to Japan was going to be temporary (approximately six
months), Ichi expressed a great deal of anxiety, particularly with regard to
maintenance of her English proficiency. However, two factors alleviated this concern:
their decision to use English in their conversations together and the planned move to
the United States.

In fact, Ichi’s relationship with Rod was highly contingent on language they
used in their everyday dealings with each other. Rod spoke fluent Japanese and
initially wanted to communicate with Ichi in Japanese. She unequivocally rejected
that and made it clear that her temporary return to Japan depended largely on English
being used as their main communication medium.

Ichi: はじめはやっぱり中学頃からの夢で、英語で大学で勉強して、海外で働くっていうのをあきらめるのには抵抗があったよね。その一つの理由に、せんぱって勉強した英語。今までの中で一番勉強して努力して手に入れた物だから、簡単にはあきらめられない。そしたら彼が、「分かった」って、日本に帰っても英語を使ってくれるっていうんで、まあ帰ってもいいかなって、それじゃなきゃ、シドニーかどっかで半年間待ってよとかおもってんよ。

**Ichi:** I was a bit hesitant of giving up on my dream from junior high school of
studying at uni in English and working overseas. One of the reasons being was
English that I tried so hard to study. It was something that I worked hardest to
obtain and so I couldn’t easily give up. So then he said, “I understand” and he
told me that we would continue to use English after my return to Japan. So I
thought maybe it’s okay to go back. Otherwise I thought about waiting for six
months in Sydney or somewhere else. (f16sep04ichi).

In this negotiation of language choice, Ichi was able to put herself in a more
powerful position and this was accepted Rod because he was more committed to her

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romantically and emotionally than Ichi was to him. Her ability to impose her choice of English was based on their joint knowledge that through her relationship with a Korean man, even if he was an American citizen, she had “compromised” her longstanding akogare for White men. She told me:

イチ：もしロッドがアメリカ人じゃなくて、普通のただの韓国人だったら、あたし付き合っているかどうか分からないもん。ひどいかもしれないけど、やっぱり白人がいなって今でも思う、うん。彼もそれが知ってるとからさ～＠＠
**Ichi:** I am not sure if I would have gone out with him if he was not American, but just a regular Korean person. It sounds awful, but I still prefer Whites, yeah. and also he knows it ＠＠ (f16sep04ichi)

In her narrative about Rod, she gave priority to her language desire for English which meant that her akogare for Whiteness became less important. However, both she and Rod knew that it did not mean the end of the allure of Whiteness for her, or signal that she had developed akogare for Asianess. In fact, she continued to have “friendly” if not flirtatious friendships with White male friends in Sydney which was a great source of anxiety for Rod.

イチ：彼、自分が、あたしのタイプじゃ全然まって知っているから～＠＠、こっちの白人の男の子の友達の事、すっごいやキモチ焼く、うん。
**Ichi:** he knows that he is not my type at all ＠＠, so he is so jealous of my White guy friends here, yeah. (f1dec04ichi)

Thus, Rod’s inescapable racial identification as an Asian man seemed to position him in such a way that he needed to offer something as “compensation” to Ichi, access to his English native speaker and Western persona as embodied in his American citizenship.

The couple’s international mobility between Japan, Australia and the United States further alleviated Ichi’s anxiety about her six-month return to Japan. This meant that Japan became a mere transit point and as such allowed her to adopt an identity as a temporary visitor or even as a tourist rather than as a permanent resident,
who would have to make the necessary effort to fit back into the society. In this
respect, her case was similar to that of Chizuko. The proposed move to the United
States also seemed to provide a further means of nourishing the fluidity of her
hybridity. Although she laughed about the fact that she could not locate Arizona on a
map (f12nov04ichi), she already saw it as her next home. She registered herself on the
American job search website, hoping to develop a career as a wedding coordinator by
capitalising on her bilinguality and biculturality. Obviously her heart was already in
Arizona with her imagined community, comprising Rod’s family and her future
American friends and colleagues.

Ich: もう、気分はアメリカだよね～＠＠ 彼の家族もあたり達が来るの楽しみに
しているみたいだし、とにかく早く行きたいなって。
Ich: I feel like I am already in America! ＠＠ his family is looking forward to
having us and I just want to get there as soon as possible. (f11nov04ichi)

Although her emotional commitment to America was virtual, actual physical
movement required a visa. However, unlike Australia, the United States did not
provide a partner visa unless couples were married. To overcome this issue, Rod
suggested in November, 2004 that they get married. To my surprise, she did not
consider his proposal an attractive option and in fact rejected it forthrightly. She said:

Ich: まだ結婚したくないっていってきさ～．真剣に付き合ったのって、これが初めてだ
から、ただボーイフレンド、ガールフレンドのステータスを楽しみたいって。実際、自分
分のお金も無いし、結婚式とか、親に頼りたくないしね。ビザは取るの難しいけど、で
もし、そのためだけには結婚したくないから。
Ich: I told him that I didn’t want to get married yet. This is my first time to be
in a serious relationship and I want to enjoy boyfriend-girlfriend status for a
while. in reality, I don’t have money and I don’t want to rely on my parents for
the wedding. I know that it’s hard to get a visa, but I don’t want to get married
just for that. (f1dec04ichi)

She fully realised the option of marriage to an American citizen would confer
on her greater international mobility, further access to an English speaking society
and more fluidity in her hybridity. Her refusal was based on her even stronger desires
to become financially independent from her parents and also to enjoy her first serious romantic relationship without being legally bound to a man for whom she lacked a feeling of total commitment. Thus, although the attainment of her much desired language-maintenance and international mobility was obviously of great importance to her, she was not willing to achieve these things at all costs.

9.6.2 Yuka, Ali and the multilingual community

Yuka’s life story about her teenage years begs the question of whether she ever felt “at home” in Japan. As mentioned earlier, Yuka became a *hikikomori* in her junior high school years and came to Australia at the age of 17 to start a new life. Her narratives of her early years in Sydney were expressed without the slightest hint of homesickness for Japan and her feelings of gratitude for the empowering experience of learning English and making international friends were prominent. Over the years, however, she increasingly became more critical of Australians and the failure of the multicultural ideal in Sydney, and began to reject Australia which she saw as a monolingualist and White supremacist country. Her friendships at university with other Asian students, particularly those of Chinese background, provided a basis for the construction of counter discourses regarding exclusionist White Australians. Indeed, it was these connections with Chinese friends and also romance with a Chinese man, which opened further future options for her.

Encouraged by her Chinese friends, she began learning Chinese at university at the beginning of 2002. During the 2003 Christmas holiday, she visited her university Chinese friends, Kristy and her boyfriend Luca, in Guangzhou, China and was introduced to their friend, Ali. After returning to Australia, Yuka kept in touch with Ali via the Internet and gradually developed a romantic interest in him. In
September, 2004, the frequency of their communication increased, particularly through MSN messenger. The stronger her feelings grew, the more determined she became to relocate to China and seek job opportunities on completion of her university studies in July, 2005.

Her interaction with Ali, mostly online, took place within a "cyber community" of multilingual friends in which her hybridity was performed and appreciated. She would spend hours and sometimes even the whole day chatting with Ali, Kristy and Luca on MSN messenger. She predominantly conversed in Chinese with Ali, who spoke very little English, while she mainly used English, although codeswitching, with Kristy and Luka, who were multilingual in Chinese, Japanese and English. It was still difficult for her to chat in Chinese and she often had to consult a Chinese-English dictionary. Nevertheless, every opportunity to interact with Ali in Chinese gave her a great deal of enjoyment and excitement, further increasing an investment in her romance with him, in her multilinguality\(^28\) and in her future in China. In this community, she was liked and trusted by her friends who considered her as a charming, witty, university graduate and she felt "wanted" by Ali. In her understanding, he saw her as a woman with social capital comprised of being Japanese with the ability to speak English and Chinese (fl3nov04yuka).

However, Ali, known among his friends as a playboy, did not make an "official" commitment to her, which she found very frustrating because she was ready to commit herself to him. Furthermore, she had limited romantic and sexual experience compared to him and often felt at a loss, although she was at the same time excited and playful when their Chinese phone and online conversations became

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\(^{28}\) This investment in the Chinese language, in turn, led to a general romantic interest in Chinese men. Since September, 2004, Yuka had repeatedly told me that she was not interested in White men at all (she used to be in the past) and was increasingly attracted to Chinese men.
romantically and sexually flirtatious. Ali even demanded “kisses” on the phone or jokingly suggested online sex by using a web camera on MSN messenger. Yuka told me that from time to time she felt like a different woman; she felt more passionate and honest in Chinese than she could ever be in Japanese or English although they were her “better languages.”

ユカ：ましな方の言葉[日本語・英語]ではどうやっていちゃつければいいのか知らないですし、イケてないチャイニーズでやろうとしてるわけではない。信じられないです。でもどうやってきりなく出来るかわからないんで、ダイレクトに彼に気持ちを伝えられないんで。バカみたいって感じます@=@でも日本語と英語ではぜったいこんな感じじゃない。「I miss you」とかって英語で言わなくちゃいけないのってすごく気持ち悪い。いや！日本語ではどうやって言うのかかもわかりませんよ@@

Yuka: I don’t even know how to flirt in my better languages [Japanese and English] and am trying to do it in my pathetic Chinese! I can’t believe it. but because I don’t know how to be subtle, I have no choice but to be direct in telling him how I feel @@@I often feel stupid myself @@@ but I am never like this in Japanese or English. it feels disgusting to have to say “I miss you” and stuff in English. ugrh! I have no idea of how to say that in Japanese @@ (fct04yuka).

Furthermore, her romantic preferences became increasingly linked with her language desire for Chinese. Her general preference now was for a man “who speaks Chinese” and she claimed that Whiteness had lost its romantic allure for her.

Regardless of race, she often expressed a strong aversion to what she jokingly called, “monos” or monolingual men. She said she had always been attracted to men with “differences” and that excluded Japanese men (f21oct04yuka). While telling me how most of her friends in Sydney were at least bilingual, she started to check her mobile phone and concluded that all the saved numbers were those of bilingual/multilingual friends.

Although Ali was narrated to be the main reason for her move to Guangzhou in 2005, their romantic prospects were not the only force prompting her move. Yuka told me:
Her comment indicates that her move to China may also have been for the purpose of maximising her social and cultural capital in the job market rather than simply the pursuit of romance with Ali. It seems that her self-esteem arose from her identity not just as an ordinary bilingual, but a rare multilingual with proficiency in of three of the most valuable languages in the world, Japanese, English and Chinese.

Having learnt that her father’s friend could help her get a high paying job in China, she professed to be happy to live anywhere in China and not simply in Guangzhou.

Her comment suggests that although her pursuit of romance was important, she was not willing to experience downward social mobility for it. Her years of investment in education, where she often felt inadequate and marginalised by mainstream Australian students, could not be wasted on “an assembly line.” Having championed multilinguality and educationally elite consciousness, Yuka was very serious about her future career and achieving financial independence from her parents.

Furthermore, although China had the most prominent presence in her narrative of the future, there was also the sense of “exciting” uncertainty in relation to future
romantic possibilities and further international mobility. When I asked Yuka if she was going to return temporarily to Japan at the end of her university studies, she was uncertain.

ユーザ：帰るかもしれないし、帰らないかもしれない。家族もいるし友達もいるし。それとオーストラリアにもたまに帰って来たいです。でも正直言えば、将来自分がどこにいくかってわからない。（大きな微笑）。でもあの突然どっかの国で誰かと出会っちゃって、「きみえさん、私彼とヨーロッパに行きます！' とかになっちゃったりして。中国に行くのは楽しみですけど、何をしてるかとか、その後どうするかとかまだわかりません。

Yuka: I might go back, but may not either. I have my family there and a few friends... and I would like to come back to Australia to visit sometimes. but to be perfectly honest, I don’t know where I am going to be in the future (big smile). but, like, suddenly I might meet someone in some country and say, “Kimie-san, I am going to Europe with him!” I am excited about moving to China, but I am not sure what I will be doing or where I am going to be after that. (21oct04yuka)

Although her lack of certainty was apparent in this comment, she evidenced little sense of anxiety or insecurity. Rather, she struck me as having appropriated Japan, Sydney and China as her homes and possibly even the rest of the world.

9.7 Summary

Firstly, my participants' narratives of going home have been analysed in this chapter with the aim of exploring the ways in which their newly constructed subject positions, or more specifically, their hybridity, were a site of construction and negotiation of future options. It was demonstrated that their growing resistance to the idea of returning to Japan was closely linked to their reconstructed views of life in Japan in the light of their desires for language choice, maintenance and career opportunities and also negotiation with families and friendships. Ichi, Chizuko, Yoko and Yuka saw their home towns as being devoid of opportunities for cultivating their experiences in Sydney and for maintaining their cosmopolitan, English-speaking
identities. At the same time, their growing pessimism about English as a career-building tool in chauvinist and sexist Japan created fears that their linguistic and social investment could be wasted.

Secondly, I illustrated the ways in which my participants constructed future options in negotiation with their hybridity at the global and local levels. Regardless of the actual level of their participation, not only Sydney, but also other parts of the world had become “homes” of great personal significance to, Yoko, Chizuko and Eika. Through Ichi and Yuka’s stories of intercultural relationships, it was shown that their choices of home and their romances were formed and reformed in relation to their language desire (Ichi for English and Yuka for Chinese and multilingualism) and to their increasingly complex hybridity.

Overall, this globalised movement of my participants sharply contradicts the discourse of ryugaku, which embeds in a “return ticket” between host country and Japan. The final chapter theorises on the link between language desire, hybridity and international movement through my participants’ experiences.
Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

The thesis has explored the notion of language desire of young Japanese women and their experiences in the Japanese and Australian contexts. This concluding chapter firstly draws together the main findings presented in Chapters 5 to 9 through the use of the four research questions presented in Chapter 4. Secondly, based on these findings, I conceptualise the notion of language desire following the poststructuralist framework of identity, language and desire. Finally, I offer the implications of these findings for the fields of SLA and ELL in Japan and also for the Japanese nation-state.

10.2 Research questions revisited

This section provides some insights into the four main questions that were investigated in this research (Chapter 4).

10.2.1 Question one: construction of language desire in Japan

First of all, it was argued on the basis of my initial analysis of Japanese women's *akogare* for English, that it was crucial to demonstrate how *akogare* was constructed in the Japanese context. As reported in Chapter 5, all of my primary participants and many of my secondary participants reported having developed their *akogare* for the idea of the West during their teens as a result of listening to foreign (mostly American) music, watching Hollywood movies and/or their adulation of Western male celebrities. Such gendered *akogare* was talked about as a key driver for
them to foster positive attitudes towards learning English and in many cases, led to the immediate and/or increased use of the language in their lives. Direct exposure to Western men and boys in their teenage years also seemed to foster their _akogare_ for English in the cases of Chizuko, Ichiro and Yuka. What these findings suggest is that my participants' _akogare_ for English was conflated with their desire for the West and Western men at early stage in their lives. In addition, it was found that media had a strong impact on the early construction of their language desire, in that the English language was constructed in Japanese media as a means for appropriating what was "desirable," that is, Hollywood stars and singers, all of them White Western men.

Although English was often a school subject, it was evident that outside the educational context, ELL was given romantic connotations in social spaces because of its association with Western male celebrities. It was thus used by my participants to perform heterosexual identities and to deal with their discontents about their lives in Japanese society.

This romanticised link between English and Western men was evidenced in the discourse analyses of women's magazines, of ELL promotional materials and of _renai_ English materials (see Chapter 5). In female-oriented popular media spaces, White Western men were often represented as desirable teachers of English who were likable and gentlemanly. _Eikaiwa_ schools in Japan often used gendered advertising to attract customers, framing closeness to White Western men as an effective means for ELL. Furthermore, the media discourse of _renai_ English was found to constitute and draw extensively on this romanticised link. For instance, English was notably represented as a means of developing/maintaining romance with Western men. Examples of romantic English phrases were used as legitimate sources of ELL and, in this way, the allegedly Western style of heterosexual romance was presented as
desirable and ideal. The *renai* English discourse was found to endorse particular subject positions of sexy, provocative but also demure femininity for young Japanese women together with good-looking, chivalrous and powerful masculinity for Western men. As such this media constructed discourses of English and romance with Western men as objects of consumption. This aspect of language desire is further discussed in Section 10.3.

10.2.2 Question two: the meaning of *ryugaku* in Australia

The second research question was concerned with what it meant for my participants to undertake *ryugaku* to Australia. Firstly, to situate my participants’ decision to come to Australia in a wider social context, media representation of *ryugaku* were analysed. It emerged that Inner Circle countries (Kachru, 1992), i.e., the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, were presented as ideal language *ryugaku* destinations while there was little mention of Outer Circle countries. Furthermore, Japanese media commonly painted *ryugaku* as a glamorous means of identity transformation and of finding/starting a new lifestyle.

Consistent with the media discourse of *ryugaku*, my participants all narrated their decisions on *ryugaku* as a means of changing their lives through ELL, further education and/or work experience in Sydney. As discussed in Chapter 6, their idea of *ryugaku* seemed significantly motivated by my participants desires to reinvent their problematic identities in their home towns (Yuka, Chizuko and Yoko), while they saw *ryugaku* as effective not only for realising their teenage *akogare* of mastering English (all participants), but also as for bolstering their future careers after their return to Japan (Ichi and Eika). As the cases of Yoko and Chizuko revealed, the language desire which emerged in their teenage years was resurrected and used as a means of
changing unfavourable life circumstances that they faced in their late twenties and thirties in Japan.

My participants’ narratives further revealed that although mastery of English was important to them, factors involved in their choice of Australia seemed to be also closely concerned with lifestyle choices rather than just with conditions for learning English. Australia was favoured because of its relatively low cost of living/studying, its relative safety, good climate and work conditions and of course also because of its Western English speaking identity. It was also found that apart from the younger women (Yuka and Ichi), my participants’ age played a crucial role in their decision-making processes in that they saw ryugaku as their last opportunity to realise their aspirations in relation to language learning and the possibility of lifestyle change.

Moreover, their prior images of Australia as a White Western nation and of Australians as friendly people, were influential in the decisions to choose Australia. For all my participants, their life in Australia was often imagined as involving extensive socialisation with (White) Australians through whom they expected to improve their English and knowledge of the West. In sum, for my participants, coming to Australia was a financial, emotional and educational investment in the identity transformation that they believed would result from ELL and their experiences in Australia. Their personally and socially constructed meaning of ryugaku had a strong bearing on their social, linguistic and romantic practices in Sydney, which was the focus of the third question.

10.2.3 Question three: language desire, identity and ELL in Sydney

The third research question concerned how young Japanese women’s language desire and their identities might have impacted upon the processes, practices and
outcomes of learning English in Sydney and how these, in turn, impacted upon their identities. To provide insights into this question, the notion of desirable interlocutors (Chapter 7) and agency (Chapter 8) were investigated.

It was found that although the majority of my participants considered access to the White Australian society as crucial to ELL and their overall ryugaku project, they believed that their temporary resident status, Asian identity and limited English made this access difficult. Their discourse of native speaker men as special learning aids emerged against this background as one area on which they could capitalise. Having a native speaker boyfriend was considered to be conducive to their ELL due to the amount and quality of time spent in L2 interaction in romantic and sexual contexts. In those situations, my participants were able to gain English language practice relatively easily. Native speaker boyfriends also functioned to provide a discursive and emotional path into the Western world through, for example, the use of terms of endearment such as “darling” and “sweetie,” which fulfilled their desires for romantic attachment, intimacy and being appreciated and valued.

Further analysis of my participants’ narratives of social participation in Sydney revealed, however, that their concept of desirable male interlocutors was much more complex than just a matter of linguistic (i.e., native speaker of English) or racial identity (White). Rather than welcoming all types of male native speakers, all my participants were highly selective as to who they “allowed” to speak to them. Factors such as race, native speaker identity, bilingualism in Japanese and English and physical appearances influenced my participants’ identity construction of “desirable interlocutors” in complex ways. Most actively avoided was interaction with men who they considered to be “losers” even if they were native speaker Australians. These findings suggest that although improvement in English was important for my
participants, social interaction in Sydney was not solely about ELL. Socialisation with male speakers of English was often a site of identity construction and negotiation where my participants' consciousness of themselves as worthy, single women was foregrounded.

In addition to this gendered notion of ELL and language desire (Chapter 7), a wider range of my participants' agency in the social spaces of home and work was investigated in Chapter 8. Analysis of the media discourse of ryugaku revealed that living with Australian native speakers of English was portrayed as an ideal situation, in which Japanese students of English were often positioned as guests in need of care by their host family/share mates, who, in turn, were portrayed as caring individuals capable of looking after their young Japanese house guests/share mate.

Although my participants also considered living with Australian English native speakers as conducive to ELL and learning Australian culture, their actual choice of home was shaped and reshaped by a host of both existing and newly emerging needs and desires. As the cases of Eika, Chizuko and Yuka showed, home was considered as more than just an ELL opportunity, but also as a secure environment where they did not have to struggle with cross cultural differences in some cases, or a place in which they felt affirmed or close to others in other cases. Compared to her Australian native English speaker flatmate, Eika's non-native speaker flatmate contributed not only to increased L2 interactions, but also to a sense of being a worthy individual and a member of a multilingual community. For her part, Chizuko was able to find her place as a worthy family member in Japanese-speaking home environment. In the case of Yuka, having reached a relatively high level of English proficiency, it became important to have a living space to herself and learn to be responsible for herself. This in turn contributed to her sense of identity transformation from the status of a
dependent hikikomori to that of an independent, educated woman in her twenties. What these findings suggest is that for long-term stayers like my participants, desire to improve English was sometimes overridden by the emerging importance of creating a home environment where their worth as individuals could be acknowledged (Chizuko and Eika) or where they were able to nourish their new identity (Yuka).

Similar to the media discourse of ryugaku and the home environment, working with native speakers of English was often framed in the media discourse as an opportunity to learn and use “authentic” English. Such discourse was found to create opportunities for exploitation of those desperate to find work with local people for the sake of improving their English. In fact, I observed that due to their perceived limited command of English and local knowledge, finding a job with local people during their ryugaku was considered to be daunting, if not impossible, by many Japanese students and working holiday makers. The result was that they often opted instead to find jobs in Japanese-speaking workplaces such as souvenir shops and restaurants or as tour guides for Japanese visitors, where of course, they heard and spoke very little English.

My participants’ abilities to find job in English speaking workplaces varied considerably. The case of Yoko’s work experience in Sydney highlighted that finding and maintaining employment in the L2 medium workplace required a great deal of effort and perseverance. In fact, even though my other participants admired Yoko and generally believed that work with and for Australians would contribute to improvement in English and create opportunities to make friends with locals, many in fact chose not to pursue this option for various reasons. For some, there was no financial need to work (Ichi, Yuka and Eika), while for Chizuko there were more financial incentives in Japanese-speaking workplaces. For Eika, the difficulties of finding an L2 workplace that matched her previous professional identity discouraged
her job search. These findings point to the conclusion that agency was not a pre-given or unchanging entity, but rather that it was co-constructed and renegotiated by the other desires and needs of my participants, and also by people around them at the micro-level and at the macro-level, in Sydney's multicultural society.

10.2.4 Question four: consequences of ryugaku

The final research question was concerned with the consequences of ryugaku. As discussed in Chapter 9, Japanese media tended to focus mainly on the positive consequences of ryugaku for women who return to their home country. They were mostly presented as being more mature, more professionally-qualified and more linguistically-advanced than they were before their ryugaku. It was also found that ryugaku was represented as a “return ticket” scenario which involved going overseas and then coming back to Japan. However, analysis of my participants’ narratives about “going home” revealed a different picture to these media discourses.

In the beginning of their ryugaku, all my participants thought it would be natural for them to return to Japan. However, that taken-for-granted option (Mathews, 2000) became problematic as their hybridity became more fluid during their stay in Sydney. As reported in Chapter 9, all my participants expressed increasingly ambivalent feelings about the idea of returning to Japan and several factors were found commonly to underlie their ambivalence. They feared that they would not be able to maintain their English proficiency in seemingly monolingual Japan; they were concerned that they would not be able to negotiate their new subjectivities with their families and/or friends and they were pessimistic about their chances of finding a job in Japan that would allow them to capitalise on their English speaking skills and

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international identity. As a result of these reservations, all of my main participants were engaged in imagining and negotiating a wider range of future options, including a move to another foreign country (Yoko, Ichi, Eika and Yuka), further extending their stay in Sydney (Eika, Chizuko and Yoko), or gaining permanent residency in Sydney (Chizuko)\(^9\). Furthermore, international romance was found to be linked with their (new) language desire, resulting from and leading to, more fluidity in their hybridity (Yuka and Ichi). In sum, although their material conditions, such as their temporary residence status or limited funds, imposed restrictions on their ability to stay in Sydney and other parts of the world, they also had the resources, such as their English proficiency, multilinguality, Japanese passports, work experience and parental support, that allowed them to negotiate and explore their future moves. These findings suggest that one of the most significant consequences of their long-term ryugaku was their increased hybridity that, in turn, had a strong impact on the imagination and construction of their future options of residence, occupation and romance.

### 10.3 Language desire revisited

The previous section provided some responses to the four research questions. This section advances a conceptualisation of language desire, the main theme of the research. Based on the reviews of the literature (Chapters 2 – 3) and the findings revisited above, language desire can be conceptualised at two levels (see Figure 13):

\(^{9}\) All my participants entertained the idea of gaining a permanent residency in Australia at one stage or another during their stay. Although most gave up due to the perceived difficulty in obtaining the visa, Chizuko showed continuing interest.
1. construction (historical contexts, discourses of women's life course and media);
   and
2. possible effects (approaches to SLL, migratory desire and gendered life choices).
Figure 13. Model of language desire in the case of young Japanese women
10.3.1 Construction of language desire for English

Language desire among young Japanese women can be considered as a construction linking three discursive spaces: ELL, Western masculinity and identity transformation. Firstly, it is important to understand that language desire is not a private, individual construction in the minds of female language learners (Cameron & Kulick, 2003b). As demonstrated throughout the thesis, it is constructed in and by the macro-discourses of the West and foreign men and of Japanese women’s life-courses in terms of education, occupation and heterosexuality.

As discussed in Chapter 3 and modelled in Figure 13, construction of language desire has to be understood with reference to historical discourses of the West as modern (A-1) and Western men (A-2). Particularly since the end of WWII, discourses about romance with Westerners have been increasingly fantasised in conjunction with the intensification of the national discourse of internationalisation since the 1980s. (Kelsky, 2001b; Miyazaki, 1997; Ozawa & Shirakawa, 2004). Furthermore, language desire is closely embedded in a widely circulating discourse of English-related occupations (B-1) and education (B-2) for women in Japan (Kelsky, 2001b; Kobayashi, 2002; Matsubara, 1989; Tsuda, 2000). Such discourses are often age/stage-conscious in terms of timing of study, work and marriage, hence affecting Japanese women’s decisions about whether to pursue their dream of learning English and/or going overseas (Chapter 6). In addition, language desire is exclusively based on the ideal of heterosexuality (B-3). In the popular literature (e.g Ashima, 2002; Ieda, 1991; Igata, 2001; Oguri, 2002, 2004; Ozawa & Shirakawa, 2004), including the genre of rei English (Ootomo, 2004; Ozeki, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Toda, 1999), discussion of intercultural romance almost always assumes and thus reproduces the ideal of heterosexuality. As discussed earlier, subject positions available in such
media spaces were found to endorse sexy, provocative but also demure femininity for Japanese women and good-looking, chivalrous but also powerful masculinity for their intercultural partners. My participants’ narratives suggested that their exposure to such macro-discourses was crucial for each in developing their language desire. Thus, it can be claimed that one’s language desire emerges with exposure to the historical, social and cultural contexts in which language learners have been situated.

Another crucial aspect of construction of language desire in the Japanese context is the role of media (C). As discussed in Chapter 5, for commercial purposes Japanese media oriented to women (C-3) and also to the ELL industry (C-2) draw on and, in effect, promote connections between ELL and romance with Hollywood stars/singers (C-1) and Western men in general. The ELL industry functions with media to construct ELL and Western masculinity as, not only mutually constitutive, but also objects of consumption for the purpose of identity transformation. As such, young Japanese women develop language desire for English not simply as students, but also as consumers of such media discourses and commercialised products of ELL and ryugaku. Considering young Japanese women’s power of consumption of goods and services, such as English lessons, textbooks, Hollywood movies and overseas trips/ryugaku, it is not overstating the case to assert that the ELL industry, and media to a lesser extent, is largely dependent on their ability to sell the dream of English proficiency, the West and Western men and identity formation, as a package.

Although my participants were susceptible to the allure of this dream, this does not mean that they were social dupes. On the contrary, they were selective consumers of media discourses. That they evaluated and selected information provided in media was evidenced by their decision-making processes in choosing Australia as their ryugaku destination (Chapter 6). Moreover, they become ever more critical
consumers/observers of media as a result of their contact with the reality of life in Sydney (Chapter 7). Some of my participants, Yuka and Eika in particular, even showed antipathy towards the notion of *akogare* and media representations of Japanese women in love with English and the West. Thus, although media may provide a platform for the encouragement or even construction of language desire, it should not be viewed as a determining agent.

In fact, although language desire, which emerges an early stage in some Japanese women’s lives, had a lasting effect, this does not mean that its construction was or is permanently fixed. As noted above, my participants’ desire often shifted as a result of their direct experiences of interacting with various people in Sydney. That led to changes in their thinking about those with whom they chose to socialise, hence impacting their processes of SLL and use in Sydney. For instance, Yuka and Eika expressed a reduced desire to associate with White Australians as a result of being negatively positioned as deficient English speakers or submissive Japanese women, neither of which identities fitted their own subjectivities. Over time, they both found pleasure in becoming respected members of their respective multilingual communities in which there were few White native speakers of English. In my view, both were losing interest in gaining approval from White Australians as they increasingly found emotional security in the sense of belonging to and appreciation by their community of multicultural/multilingual friends. This suggests that language desire needs to be understood as something that is continually shaped and reshaped in relation to experiences of negotiation of identity in the communities in which language learners are located.
10.3.2 Possible effects of language desire

Possible effects of language desire in the case of young Japanese women include their processes of SLL: migratory desire and gendered life choices. These are discussed in turn below.

10.3.2.1 Processes of SLL

Based on my findings, language desire seems to linked closely with four aspects of SLL processes: the nature of use of English (D-1); desirability of interlocutors (D-2); language choice and maintenance (D-3); and, power relations (D-4).

Firstly, my participants' language desire seemed to encourage their use of English for communication purposes (D-1). In Japan, English is widely taught as a school subject. It is probably fair to say that even though the communicative approach has been a "buzz word" for some time now, school level students who seek out an opportunity to actually use English are still a minority. However, it appears that my participants who developed language desire early on tended to use English as a means of communicating their desire and performing their heterosexual and international identities (see Chapter 5). For instance, despite their limited proficiency in English, Eika and Chizuko attempted to write fan letters to their Hollywood hero in their secondary school years. Ichi and her classmates asked their classroom teacher to organise a special English conversation class with a native speaker of English for whom Ichi developed romantic feelings. Furthermore, in their early adulthood in Japan, many actively sought to practice English by socialising with foreigners (Yoko, Chizuko and Eika) and enrolling in English conversation schools (Eika, Yoko and Ichi). What these findings suggest is that language desire often acted as a catalyst that encouraged them to find more opportunities to practice and to use English beyond the
social contexts available through formal language learning. Furthermore, their actual experience of (romantic) intercultural communication seemed to further intensify their existing *akogare*. Thus, it can be claimed that there is a reciprocal relationship between language desire and actual use of English.

Secondly, in the gendered interactional context, it was observed that language desire may have functioned to mediate the ways in which my participants evaluated the desirability of their interlocutors (D-2), hence affecting their choice of engagement and dis-engagement in interactions. In the case of Ichi, whose *akogare* for Western society and White men was strong and long-lasting, the racial and linguistic identity of interlocutors were important markers of their desirability. Throughout her stay, Ichi continually placed importance on seeking interactional opportunities with White Western men as friends and romantic partners, while at the same time she reported avoiding socialisation with Asian non-native speakers. Similarly, despite her ambivalent feelings about her White Western male friend mentioned earlier, Yoko considered him desirable as a friend on the basis of his racial and linguistic identity and continued to socialise with him.

As time went by, however, many participants came to see White men, represented in media and other discourse as romantic, courteous and chivalrous, as not necessarily all that they had imagined. Thus, they responded to the racial attributes of male interlocutors in various ways: some continued to pursue the ideal White man, others gave up on the stereotype and yet others settled for the best available. As pointed out in Chapter 7, the racial identity of male interlocutors did not determine their value and hence did not always lead my participants to engage in interaction. For instance, despite their constantly claimed passion for White men, both Yoko and Ichi had serious relationships with Asian partners during their stay in Sydney. What
became more important for Yoko, who was increasingly frustrated by her slow rate of improvement in English, was to have a native speaker partner who cared about her as a woman as well supporting her linguistic needs. In fact, this romantic choice was made after she rejected the romantic approaches of a 41-year-old White Australian man and later the approaches of a White British man as she did not find either of them physically and sexually attractive. Similarly, Ichi decided to have a largely online relationship with the Korean-American man living in Japan because of the way he constantly showed strong commitment to her. Although he was not physically or racially attractive (she often complained about his short stature and his Asian looks), he was still an American native speaker of English and it made her feel good to be “wanted.” Obviously this sense of being desired seemed to outweigh her akogare for White masculinity. Furthermore, although Chizuko, whose fantasy was to marry a White man, had been genuinely wanted by a White Australian man, his lack of sexual attraction for her meant she did not consider him even as a desirable friend and linguistic resource, let alone as a romantic partner. Hence she chose not to continue her association with him.

What their contradictory choices may suggest is that the language desire of my participants was not static, but exhibited fluidity over time and across different contexts. This akogare was negotiated and occasionally compromised, as a range of other priorities moved to the foreground of their lives. Thus, the effects of language desire on their process of SLL have to be understood in relation to existing as well as new social, linguistic and romantic desires.

Thirdly, language desire seems to affect language choice and maintenance (D-3). In my study, the issue of language choice was particularly pronounced in the contexts in which my participants were engaged in interactions with speakers of
English who also spoke Japanese. Eika’s dilemma over her bilingual Australian boyfriend with regard to language choice provided an interesting example (see Chapter 6). She clearly expressed her desire to use English as she relied on her boyfriend as a language-learning aid. However, despite her protests and expressions of disappointment, Eika’s boyfriend increasingly used Japanese during their personal interactions. It was observed that towards the end of their three-month relationship, she not only seemed to have given up on the struggle over language choice, but began to enthusiastically help him improve his Japanese.

What Eika’s example suggests is that language choice is a site of on-going negotiation of desire, identity and power (D-4). Although both she and her boyfriend desired to use the other’s language, she seed to have less bargaining power on this issue due to both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Among these was that she was a recent arrival in Australia without much local knowledge and that her initial confidence in English was rapidly diminishing. She was also self-conscious about the age difference of ten years between this man and herself and did not feel able to perform her cherished identity as a mature woman in her first romantic relationship in English. On the other hand, her boyfriend was a Sydney local with an extensive social network and he had had several romantic experiences with older Japanese women. In their relationship, therefore, Eika had to compromise her desire for English as in this way she was able to avoid the embarrassment of sounding linguistically immature and also to establish herself as a mature adult woman and a capable helper in Japanese.

This negotiation of desire was also evident in Ichi’s relationship with her bilingual American boyfriend (Chapter 9). In her case, however, she was in a position of power that allowed her to negotiate the choice of language the couple used together. His identity as the “chaser” of Ichi’s heart enabled her to exercise her power
over language choice. Thus it can be claimed that language desire that seems to be conducive to the choice of a particular language does not always lead to the result desired, but needs to be negotiated in relation to the multiple identities that emerge in a relationship.

Furthermore, language desire seems to have had an effect on language maintenance. As discussed in Chapter 9, all of my participants expressed their anxiety about not being able to maintain their English proficiency after they went back to Japan. As part of language desire is the yearn for identity transformation, the wish for maintenance of their increased English proficiency can be understood as desire for maintaining their hybridity, particularly their hard-earned bilingual/international identities that they had acquired during their ryugaku or working holiday years in Sydney. To avoid loss of this maintenance during their holiday visits or after their eventual return to Japan, all of my participants used whatever English resources they could find and sought out chances to perform and maintain their bilingual/international identities. However, as was the case with their language choice, desire for maintaining their English and hybrid identities was often compromised by the impact of factors in their immediate environment (e.g., family, friends and monolingualism) that were believed to offer only limited, and undesirable, identity options. Frustration, anxiety and a sense of loss due to their perceived inability to maintain their English proficiency in Japan were common to all participants. Moreover, as is discussed in the next section, such negative emotions also underlaid their emergent desire to leave Japan altogether and migrate elsewhere.
10.3.2.2 Migratory desire

My findings suggest that language desire is likely to be linked with migratory desire (E-1 and E-2). My participants' language desire was a significant factor in their initial decision to go overseas (Chapter 6) as well as their emergent aspiration to stay there rather than return to Japan (Chapter 9). Prior to their ryugaku and working holiday in Australia, all of my participants apart from Yuka, had already been overseas. In their secondary school years, Eika (the United States) and Ichi (Australia) had been on a short-term language ryugaku to an English speaking country. They reported that their teenage ryugaku experiences not only intensified their akogare for English and the West, but also formed the basis of their long-lasting dream of returning to the overseas country for tertiary education. In their early adulthood, my participants also travelled to the United States (Chizuko, Yoko and many secondary participants) and Australia (Yoko and Eika) with the explicit purpose of gaining exposure to "authentic English" and Western culture. As reported in Chapter 6, my participants' emergent aspiration either to continue their stay in Sydney or to move to other countries was linked to their desire to maintain their English proficiency and increased hybridity, which they considered would be impossible in Japan. In this light, language desire functioned as a basis of their agency to situate themselves in a country where they could continue to perform and maintain their cherished linguistic and gender identities and fulfil their occupational aspirations.

However, such aspiration for migration is not without cost. Staying either in Sydney or moving to another country imposed serious financial burdens on themselves (Eika, Yoko and Chizuko) or their parents (Ichi and Yuka). Unlike the elite international Japanese women depicted in Kelsky's (2001b) study, my participants were unemployed (Ichi, Yuka and Eika) or had to survive on minimum
wages (Chizuko and Yoko) in Sydney. And in contrast to the glamorous media image of English speaking Japanese career women, many participants came to believe that their limited English skills would not secure high paying English-speaking jobs in either Sydney or Japan. Yet maintaining English through living overseas had become one of their priorities. What this does not suggest is that their desire for migration is not primarily economically based, but rather that they attached great importance to maintaining their newly-emerged identities. Their belief that this was possible only outside Japan, is the key to understanding the relationship between language desire and migratory desire. As such, it can be claimed that language desire had a deeply significant and long-lasting impact on their life choices, an issue which is explored in the next section.

10.3.2.3 Gendered life choices

Language desire impacted on several important choices that my participants made as single young women. Such choices included, but were not limited to, education (F-1), occupation (F-2), relationships (F-3) and residence (as discussed in the previous section). Although English is a compulsory subject in schools in Japan, all of the participants also studied English outside the formal educational context in English conversation schools, with language exchange partners and through teenage ryugaku. Eika and Yuka, determined to go overseas for tertiary education, majored in English in a college in Japan. Based on my literature review, their choice of English education was probably made easier by the existing discourses that English education was indispensable for women and also by the availability of large varieties of ELL education in the commercialised sector. On this basis, it can be argued that the commodification of the process of language learning means that language desire
among young women is both ideologically and commercially promoted within Japanese society.

As discussed in Chapter 8, some media represent English as a path leading to career success and independence (Bailey, 2002; Kelsky, 2001b; Tsuda, 2000). In fact, all my participants fantasised about gaining a job using English at one stage or another. They considered that an L2 job in Australia would constitute a golden opportunity to improve their English, learn Australian business culture and would also be their entry into the wider Australian society. However, their ability to gain employment in an English-speaking medium workplace varied considerably (Chapter 8). Often other priorities deterred them from working in English-language jobs in Sydney. Some participants were preoccupied by university studies or other educational courses (Yuka and Ichi). Japanese speaking jobs in Sydney (which attracts many Japanese tourists) provided more financial rewards (Chizuko) and there was also a fear of being positioned as an incompetent worker due to their perceived limited English proficiency or local knowledge (Eika, Chizuko and many secondary participants). Thus, although language desire logically pointed to particular occupational choices in English speaking local companies or organisations, such choices had to be negotiated and sometimes compromised due to financial, social, linguistic and emotional factors. As shown through the case of Yoko, the dream of working in English with local Australians was only possible due to a strong and, indeed extraordinary language desire and also due to a dire financial necessity to find employment.

Furthermore, as reported in Chapters 7 and 9, their language desire affected their perception of desirable partners differently. As evidenced in the narratives of Ichi, Yoko, Chizuko and many secondary participants, their racial and cultural
preference was for White Western men. As such, White men were not only enthusiastically sought after, but interactions with them also had linguistic effects (Chapter 7). At the same time, it was evident that other factors played a role in constructing their romantic choices. For instance, physical appearances significantly mediated their selection processes in this regard. Chizuko, Yoko, Eika and many secondary participants unhesitatingly rejected romantic approaches from less physically and sexually attractive White native speaker males. In other words, linguistic identity was only one of a wide range of desirable qualities in a male romantic partner. Therefore, in the gendered context, understanding engagement or dis-engagement in communication requires paying close attention to the context and a wide range of attributes that my participants considered as desirable in a man.

Moreover, White native speaker men who spoke Japanese were also often rejected as romantic possibilities as they were considered, in Yoko’s words, to be “Japanese lady killers” (Chapter 7). It was also found that native speaker identity, particularly that of monolingual English speakers, was found to be an attractive quality in potential and actual romantic partners by all my participants and sometimes outweighed their akogare for White masculinity (Yoko and Ichi). As such their partner’s native speaker identity worked as a decisive factor in some of my participants’ romantic engagement, although the non-White identity of their partners was continuously phrased as a “problem” (Yoko and Ichi). Few participants expressed the same romantic interest in non-native speakers (particularly Asian non-native speakers of English) and some who had romantic experiences with such men considered their partners’ linguistic identity as “problematic” and openly admitted that it was one of the major reasons for their ending these relationships.
In examining the relationship between language desire and romance, the case of Yuka and her Chinese partner provided an interesting insight (see Section 7.4.3). As with the rest of the participants, she initially had *akogare* for White men after her arrival in Sydney. The first four individuals for whom she developed romantic feelings were all White (monolingual) native speaker men, although none of these liaisons led to a long-term relationship. As her interest in the Chinese language developed at university, her preference for men also began to shift to Chinese natives or men who at least spoke Chinese and Japanese. Her romantic preference for such men obviously matched what she valued as part of her hybrid identity (a fluent speaker of Japanese, English and Chinese). Furthermore, her newly emergent desire for Chinese speaking men can be seen as her personal counter discourse to White monolingual men or the English/Japanese bilingual men who she grew to despise.

In sum, my participants’ concern with improving their English and their *akogare* for White men affected their choice of romantic partners in Sydney tremendously. White males were constructed as desirable in many media discourses and were preferred by many participants. This is consistent with the findings by Bailey (2002) and Kelsky (2001b). However, as exemplified above, their evaluations of potential romantic partners were highly complex. In many contexts, my participants’ language desire for English frequently prioritised selecting a native speaker partner regardless of race although non-White males were often rejected because of their racial identity or non-native speaker identity. Furthermore, although most participants seemed to be aware of the circulating discourse that positioned White native speaker men as symbols of upper social mobility, they did not necessarily agree with this positioning. Those who were relatively secure financially had little economic incentive to associate with White men. This provides a different
picture to Gal's (1978), who found that young women in the Austrian-Hungarian bilingual town of Oberwart were motivated to find German-speaking partners to escape the hard life in the Hungarian-speaking villages. This difference could have been due to my participants' access to a wider range of means to achieve financial stability and upper social mobility, if desired. In addition, many were aware of their "problematic" popularity among foreign men (Chapter 3) and many of them reported frequent approaches from a wide range of men in Sydney. These socioeconomic factors as well as local sexual politics often put my participants in a powerful position when it came to selecting who they wanted to interact with in a social context. Thus, the effect of language desire on romantic choices was fluid and, therefore, neither uniform nor static. This point needs to be understood in relation to both local and global discourses to which my participants had access.

10.4 Implications

This section reflects on implications of the findings. Firstly, a more nuanced approach to understanding the processes of language learning for young women is proposed. Secondly some suggestions for English language teaching in the Japanese context are made. Lastly, a case for a more inclusive approaches to nation building in Japan is argued.

10.4.1 Implications for the field of SLA

In the beginning of my research, I was both troubled and fascinated by the differences between Japanese female students and their male counterparts in their views on and approaches to ELL (see Chapter 1). Having completed my analyses, I
am convinced that SLL cannot be fully understood without due emphasis on gender-related factors. Two areas of study in SLA to which the concept of language desire may contribute are the notions of motivation and of power relations. Furthermore, it is argued that SLA theory needs to be expanded to include the link between language desire and international mobility.

10.4.1.1 Motivation and power revisited

Existing SLA theories pay little attention to the role of romantic desire in understanding experiences in the process of learning L2. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a tendency to portray language learners as a-gendered or a-sexual beings, wanting to study and use L2 for either instrumental and/or integrative reasons, which in turn are presented as fixed entities (see Block, 2003). Norton’s (2000) study on immigrant women drew attention to the importance of gender and identity in SLL and L2 use and so she proposed the influential notion of investment in emphasising the fluid nature of and the relationship between, identity and L2 motivation. However, the link between romantic/sexual desire and SLL was largely absent from her theorising. Thus it is suggested that the notion of language desire can offer another dimension to understanding the ways in which individuals become motivated to learn L2 and why they do or why they do not engage in L2 interactions and with whom they choose to do so.

First, the concept of language desire emphasises that motivation to learn L2 is not a private construction of language learners. Rather, it is socially and historically constructed and reshaped by individuals in relation to macro-discourses. As demonstrated in this thesis, Japanese media and the ELL industry capitalise on Japanese women’s akogare for foreign men and thus function to promote a gendered,
and sometimes sexualised, incentive for Japanese women to learn English. Of course, not all media have the same impact on all consumers. Nevertheless, this understanding indicates that future theorising about SLL motivations needs to take into account the role of media and the language industry in promoting gendered desire in a given country. Equally important is for SLA theory to take into account the ways in which language learners interpret, valorise or reject macro discourses of language learning in a given context.

Second, the concept of language desire promotes a better understanding of why language learners may or may not decide to interact in L2. My participants, in line with the findings of several other studies (e.g., Blackledge, 2001; Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000), often felt marginalised and could not fully participate in the L2 interactions. However, as demonstrated in this thesis, that was not always primarily because of their limited English, language anxiety (Horwitz & Young, 1991; Lucas, 1984; MacIntyre, 1999; Young, 1992), fear of making mistakes (Lucas, 1984), or cultural differences in communication and learning styles (Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Anderson, 1995). In fact, they often did not want to talk to their interlocutors because they did not find them socially, romantically and/or sexually attractive even when they were Australian native speakers or even English teachers. This means that interaction in L2 was not always about SLL and their decisions to interact or not to do so in certain situations has to be understood in relation to negotiation of identity, gendered needs and desires (e.g., romance, marriage, sexual urges, male approval) and the life stages at which language learners were located.

This understanding of my participants’ decisions about interacting with and using English throws new light on the relations between power and identity in SLL.
This issue has, of course, been investigated by many critical SLA researchers (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton Peirce, 1995a; Pennycook, 2001). There is no doubt that power imbalances between my participants and their interlocutors was a crucial factor influencing their access to linguistic resources and the nature of their interactions. My findings suggest, however, a need to go beyond the essentialist dichotomies of native speakers vs. non-native speakers, Western vs. Asian, teachers vs. students, men vs. women and hosts vs. guests. Language learners are not just non-native speakers or Asians or women, in the same way that their interlocutors are not simply native speakers, or teachers, or men. Individuals position themselves and their interlocutors, and both are positioned by others, in relation to multiple identity categories. Some categories are visible (gender, race, attractiveness) or audible (accent) while others are less visible (socioeconomic status, educational background, marital status) (Zimmerman, 1998). Each identity is given different weight depending on a given context and time (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001; Piller, 2002a; Weedon, 1997). Thus, examination of power relations has to be context-sensitive.

For my participants, who were singles in their 20s and 30s, self-assured about their physical appearance and had relatively secure economic status, male interlocutors were positioned not only in terms of their linguistic or racial identity, but also in terms of their physical, romantic and sexual attractiveness. My participants carefully assessed whether these men deserved their efforts to speak. Furthermore, in many contexts, their exposure to the widely circulating discourse of Western men targeting Japanese women, empowered, rather than disempowered, my participants in a sense that the discourse also implied their “popularity” in the romantic market. Indeed, in the social space in which romantic and sexual politics were at work, it was often my participants who decided whether or not a L2 interaction took place and for
how long. Such decisions were often based on their assessment of their interlocutors' worthiness as men. Other than Whiteness and native speaker status, their assessments categories were influenced by factors such as socioeconomic status (e.g., type of occupation, assets), education, age, body size and shape (e.g., fat, thin, masculine), clothing, teeth, hairstyle, facial attributes (e.g., eye color and nose size), skin quality, jewellery and sexiness. Each of these attributes was assessed in combination and given differential values in different contexts. For instance, many of my participants often fantasised about making friends with “good-looking young Australian men.” Yet “good-looking” and “young” are very relative values as the following event exemplifies.

On one night in October, 2004, two of my participants, Eika and Tokiko (a secondary participant) both in their early thirties and I went to a nightclub/pub in downtown Sydney which was widely known in colloquial terms, as “a pick-up joint.” As soon as we sat down at a table, a group of White Australian men approached us and started to talk to the participants. The men were in their early twenties and had moved to this pub after a friend’s wedding. Knowing my participants’ taste in Western men (they both highly valued “youth,” that is, men in their early twenties), I thought the attentions of these men would be welcomed, particularly as several of them could be considered as “good-looking” and “youthful.” However, the two women showed little interest in the men and were reluctant to interact with them because, they told me in Japanese, they were too young and they were not interested in “country boys” (f2oct04eika). Soon, both got up from the table and left for the dance floor, saying to them, this time in English, “Kimie speaks better English” (f2oct04eika). These men were seen as “country boys” because although they lived in Sutherland, a suburb a mere 30km south of Central Sydney, they were considered by
my participants to be far from Sydney. This regional identity (reinforced by the type of “uncool” clothing they were wearing), along with their immaturity in terms of age and interactional manners, was scorned by my two participants who were very fashion conscious and came from metropolitan Tokyo. Obviously discouraged by the women’s leaving, the men nevertheless, tried to restore their self-esteem by saying to me, “these Japanese girls are shy, aren’t they? It’s hard for them to understand me in English. It’s kind of noisy in here” (f2oct04eika).

The men’s interpretation of my participants’ disengagement as shyness probably reflected a widely circulating discourse about Japanese women and moreover saved their male pride. The same can be said of SLA researchers who, when they observe behaviour such as that displayed by silent Japanese women, tend to resort to stereotypes constructed in and by SLA, as well as popular literature.

In the academic field of SLA and in the minds of many ELT authorities as well as teachers and students themselves, the dichotomised view of the native speaker as powerful and the non-native speaker as powerless, seems to prevail. As the example above shows, however, it is not necessarily always White native speakers who decide about who can talk. Furthermore, although the majority of SLA researchers fail to treat language learners as romantic and sexual beings, close examination of social interactions in various contexts indicates a different picture of the negotiation of power. At night clubs, parties, in cafes and many other social spaces where the purpose of social interaction was linked with romantic or sexual possibilities, many participants demonstrated their agency in deciding who could and could not talk to them, how they could talk, for how long and on what conditions. These observations signal that it is no longer feasible to equate any of Asian identity, non-native speaker status, and womanhood or even migrant status with static powerlessness.
10.4.1.2 Language desire and migration

In Chapter 9, a yearning for more international mobility among my participants was highlighted. However, existing theories of SLL basically do not address the link between language learning and desire for international mobility or migration patterns. This may be due to the fact that SLA researchers tend to see language learners as bounded in their countries. That is to say, language learners are conceptualised to be students in their own countries (e.g., Japanese students in Japan), or short-time overseas sojourners in a host country (e.g., Japanese students in America), or immigrants who are already living in the host country permanently. These groups of language learners probably present very little of their needs, desires, or plans for future international mobility on a long-term or permanent basis to researchers, while their future options for cross-border movements remain absent from the main part of SLA research agendas.

Similarly, the current international migration theories, particularly those relating to international student migration and gender, are identified as under-researched (Ono & Piper, 2004). Although the increasing feminisation of migration in recent years is often cited “a key development” (Castles, 2000, p. 105), the research focus seems to be concentrated on either migrant women of low socioeconomic status such as domestic servants or sex workers, or on the “brain drain” of skilled women migrating from developing countries to the first world. Thus, it fails to explain the international migration patterns of female international students whose purpose of movement is not primarily economic advancement (Habu, 2000), but is socially, linguistically, romantically and ideologically based, as is evident in the case of my participants, who may be identified as “post-materialists” (Inglehart, 1982).
The few studies that have exclusively investigated middle-class Japanese international students with a gender perspective pay little attention to international students or working holiday makers per se (Kelsky, 2001b) and often do not have an international migration perspective (Andressen & Kumagai, 1996; Habu, 2000; Matsui, 1995). Most existing research on international Japanese female students concentrates on analysis of social issues in Japan such as gender inequalities in career opportunities, pressures for marriage and childrearing and the gendered division of labour, as primary incentives for study overseas. They fail, however, to incorporate equally crucial factors: language desire and its constructed nature in prevalent media discourses, as part of their analysis. Therefore, current international migration theory offers only limited understandings of the impact of language ideologies on differential types of study abroad and the future migration patterns of young Japanese women.

Nevertheless, research on this issue suggests that time spent overseas leads to a strong reluctance to return to Japan and a desire for prolonged residence overseas (Habu, 2000; Kelsky, 2001b; Matsui, 1995; Ono & Piper, 2004). Matsui reports that the Japanese women involved in higher education in the United States were not keen to return to Japan “because they don’t want to conform to the social norm of femininity imposed by their families, workplaces and society” (p. 375) and “they see very limited career prospects” (p. 376). These studies, however, tend to conceptualise Japanese women’s nyugaku as a “return ticket” movement between the home (producing pushing factors) and the host country (producing pull factors) while the impact of the long-term overseas residence on their further movement is left unclear. Ono and Piper (p. 116) conclude that further research is needed to investigate such questions as:

- Does their experience of study abroad lead to renewed migration?
• Do they prefer to return to the country in which they have studied?
• Are they also open to migration to other destinations?
• How are other aspects of their lives affected by the ‘study abroad experience’
  (marriage, family, parental relations)

By making language desire its analytical focus, this study has provided some answers to these questions.

I have argued that for many Japanese women, language desire functions as a strong impetus for their decision to travel to Australia and is also an influential factor in their socialisation patterns in Sydney. Discursive interactions with people of different backgrounds across various social contexts, lead to constant questioning of their national roots, gender, occupational, sexual and linguistic identity and construct a sense of belonging to multiple communities and also to global social networks. This creates even more fluidity in their sense of identity and leads to an emerging sense of being internationally-minded hybrids. Their perceived inability to maintain their English-speaking cosmopolitan identity and fear of having once again to conform to the traditional social, gendered and occupational expectations in Japan, powerfully encourages further international mobility, either short-term or long-term. This, in turn, is made possible by their economic background, global occupational opportunities, cross-cultural romantic affiliations and ease of international transportation, all of which are hallmarks of globalisation.

These findings suggest that SLL theory can no longer ignore the question of migration in relation to ELL. More SLA research is needed to theorise the ways in which historically and commercially promoted language desire impacts on language learners’ migratory intentions and how such desires may shape their access and approaches to language learning in a given country. As my study and those of others
(Habu, 2000; Kelsky, 2001b; Matsui, 1995) have shown, language desire and overseas experiences are intimately linked with identity transformation and further international mobility. Many Japanese women who return to Japan do not do so because they see themselves nationally, socially, politically, culturally, linguistically and "exclusively" belonging to Japan. It is more often than not a compromised choice determined largely by their citizenship of Japan and lack of access to other migratory options. This aspect is further discussed in relations to implications for Japan in the final section of this chapter.

10.4.2 Implications for ELL in Japan

Kobayashi (2002) criticises the seemingly uninformed manner in which many young Japanese women make decisions about learning English simply on the grounds that it is considered as gender-appropriate area of study. Kubota (1998) points out that not only Japanese women, but also the Japanese public in general, are uncritical consumers of the media discourses that glamorise Inner Circle English (that of America and Britain, in particular) as an international language. As reported in this thesis, language desire, which was argued to be strategically promoted for commercial purposes, can influence Japanese women's life choices in terms of education, occupation, residence and even relationships. In this light, it becomes important that measures are taken to help Japanese women become more informed about ELL.

In this sense, I follow the advocates of critical pedagogy in this field. Researchers such as Kubota (1998), Matsuda (2003) and Tsuda (1995; 2000) promoted the introduction of a critical pedagogy in Japan to raise an awareness of English domination and its problematic legacy. Kubota writes that:
in order to effect change, the most powerful strategy in ELT seems to be to foster critical awareness with regard to English domination, construction of identities and social, linguistic, racial and ethnic inequality. (p. 302)

Kubota (1998) reports on efforts being made in Japan to achieve these aims, such as a variety of proposals to introduce a number of other foreign or the use of English textbooks that promote a multicultural perspective. However, my literature review reveals that although race and the political economy of English and other languages are being addressed, critiques of the role of media and the ELT industry in constructing gendered and sexualised images of ELL are limited. Based on my findings, I argue that for such a strategy to be effective, introduction of media discourse analysis as to how gender and sexual identities are constructed in relation to ELL, is vital.

For instance, the general media commodification of White Western men as being sophisticated, good-looking and gentlemanly needs to be challenged. There are ample examples of advertising by companies that try to sell food, clothing, electronics, cosmetics and English language programs by exploiting images not only of famous Hollywood stars (e.g., Japander.com), also of unknown White actors (Tsuda, 2000). Such peddling of images for commercial gain needs to be examined more closely. Furthermore, the pedagogy should include an analysis of media stereotypes of relationships between Japanese women and foreign men. Research evidence, such as that of Russell (1998), is a useful reference in this regard. He reports that the Japanese media tend to construct an identity of Japanese women who develop romantic interests in black men as “randy, rebellious teens, naïve, trend-conscious office ladies” (p. 152). In contrast, the media stereotype of those Japanese women who seek White Western male company is that of “career women whose preference for White men is thought to be indicative of their cosmopolitan
sensibilities, their relationships motivated not so much by sexual passion as by a 
yearning for stable, long-term relationships with equally sophisticated, highly 
educated White men” (p. 152-53). Contrasting macro-discourses of Japanese women 
with White partners, such as the “yellow cab discourse” discussed in Chapter 2, also 
highlights the constructed nature of Japanese women’s identities. In addition, 
introduction of renai English learning materials and advertisements in this research 
may help highlight the commercially produced link between language learning and 
cross-cultural/racial romance.

Equally importantly, critical pedagogy that challenges the dominant akogare 
view on English and Westerners in media should be part of English teacher training. 
Teachers have a significant impact on how students’ image of English is constructed. 
For instance, a comment by one of Habu’s informants (2000) illustrates how her 
English teacher’s views on English were influential in making her decide to learn 
English and study abroad at great expense.

I wanted to get a job after I finished my degree, but I couldn’t find one. One of 
my teachers told me, ‘Rather than doing an unsatisfactory job, if you improve 
your English, a much better job might turn up for you’. I had been thinking 
about whether to study abroad anyway, so I thought this might be the time to go 
(p. 55).

However, my own findings and other research evidence (Kelsky, 2001b; 
Matsubara, 1989; Matsui, 1995) suggest that English fluency can be a “double bind” 
(Critchfield, 2003) and, therefore, English teachers should be trained to evaluate the 
discourses which construct English as being advantageous to women. Of course, 
changes in the perception of English are by no means easy to achieve, particularly 
when so many vested interests are heavily involved in the ELL industry. However, 
what is being proposed here is not to train teachers to discourage students from 
studying English altogether, but rather to equip students with the skills of assessing
the various discourses of English and to develop a more nuanced approach to the teaching of English.

10.4.3 Implications for Japan

Above all, my participants’ enhanced hybridity, together with their acquired alternative perspectives and their capacity to communicate cross-culturally in English, has probably been one of the best outcomes of the Japanese internationalisation project. Nevertheless, many of the hybrid, internationally minded Japanese women feel excluded and discriminated against in various social and occupational contexts within Japan itself. As demonstrated in Chapters 6 and 9, this was also true for my participants.

One possible way of understanding this gap between intentions and outcomes is to view the encouragement given by the Japanese government, its media and society in general to Japanese women to go overseas for cross-cultural experiences and mastering English, as conditional. There seems to be a tendency to reward those women who assimilate back into the Japanese value system and to ostracise those who do not, stigmatising them as sociocultural misfits, tainted by the Western ideologies of feminism and individualism. An article in an-an magazine (2002) provides an example of this tendency by featuring three male celebrities (two comedians and one artist) who are highly critical of certain types of Japanese women who are proficient in English. One of the comedians comments, “I don’t like women who have Americanised manners and speak Japanese mixed with English” (p. 55). The artist says as with the “juggling” of a street entertainer, a woman’s ability to speak English should be hidden and be used subtly and only when absolutely necessary (p. 55). Of course, this type of misogynist and anti-Westernisation
discourse of Japanese women is nothing new. The *pan pan* discourse of the 1940s, the
"Yellow cab" discourse of the 1980s and the reported difficulties of returnees, are
reminders of Japan’s resilient nationalistic project to maintain its racial and cultural
purity and its intolerance of heterogeneity in language choice and (gender) identities.

Another source of dissatisfaction for Japanese women who return from overseas
lies in the persistent gender discrimination present in Japanese society. This was part
of the reason why some of my participants (Eika, Yoko and Ichi) left Japan in the first
place, and this discrimination became more and more salient for them from afar,
particularly during their return visits. In response to the emergent tendency for late
marriage or rejection of marriage altogether, as well as the rising rate of divorce and a
serious decrease in the birth rate, criticism of Japanese women, particularly those in
their late twenties and thirties, has become ever more relentless (e.g., Misago, 2004).
Reluctance to live in Japan and further migratory desires expressed by many
participants (Chapter 9) can be understood as deeply embedded reactions to these
traditionalistic and nationalistic discourses about Japanese women.

Increased international mobility is encouraged by the Japanese discourse of
internationalisation, and is enabled by the globalisation of transportation and the
wider migratory options made available by receiving countries such as Australia. In
response, a growing number of Japanese women are moving overseas as tourists,
students and workers. As this thesis has shown, the Japanese women who come to
Australia on temporary visas as students and working holiday makers are exposed to
alternative discourses of language, work, gender and romance as a result of
participating in multiple communities, not only in Australia, but across the world. One
of the consequences of such experiences is a strong desire to reside in countries other
than Japan.
The implication of such a phenomenon for Japan is that the country stands in need of an unprecedented social transformation to enable the country to become an attractive, inclusive society, which is something more than a shikata ga nai ("can't be helped") choice for tens of thousands of its young people. Unless a serious commitment for more inclusive nation building is made, the Japanese women of today and of the future, particularly those who are distinguished by their memberships of multiple linguistic, cultural and racial communities, are likely to remain discontented citizens. The country cannot expect these dissatisfied individuals to wholeheartedly invest in the future of national welfare.

Furthermore, two studies point to the need for Japan to construct occupational mechanisms that are more flexible in accommodating returning international students. Balaz and Williams (2004) report that a substantial number of Slovakian international students who went back to Slovakia from the United Kingdom, viewed their return positively, reporting that their overseas experience and their new language skills in English were instrumental in improving their jobs and incomes, even after relatively short stays overseas. Such positive views were absent from the narratives of my participants. In her study on Japanese female students in the United States, Matsui (1995) also notes their great reluctance to return to Japan. Based on her findings, Matsui (1995) argues that "Unless the Japanese occupational structure becomes more flexible and open to women, particularly foreign-educated women, American education will continue to provide Japanese women with nothing more than an opportunity for psychological liberation or for becoming expatriates" (p. 376).

To conclude, the success, or otherwise, of Japan's project of internationalisation seems to lie not so much in individuals gaining proficiency in English, but rather in building an inclusive multicultural society which can capitalise on and cultivate those
who can bring to it global viewpoints. Through such a transformation, Japan might begin to be seen as a more attractive choice of residence for many of its young women, including my participants, who have gained alternative perspectives in international contexts.
Bibliography


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Tada eigo ga hanaseru dake dewa dame! [It is no good just to be able to speak English!]. (2002). *an an*, 54-55.

Takahashi, F. (1989). *Gaikoku jin dansei to tsukiau hoo [How to date a foreign man]*. Tokyo, Japan: Shufutoseseikatsusha.


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Appendix 1: Participant information

The University of Sydney

Participant Information

Social Interaction and Second Language Learning

You are invited to take part in a case study concerning learning English as a second language (ESL).

The study will be conducted by Kimie Takahashi, a research student from the Faculty of Education, University of Sydney. I am doing this study in order to find out how social interaction outside your classroom impacts on your second language learning. The main purpose of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of your everyday experiences in Sydney and how your perspective on these experiences relates to your second language learning. From this study, I hope to help improve the current learning environment and teaching practices associated with ESL education in Australia.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty or prejudice. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in informal interviews regarding your day-to-day experiences living in Sydney. The interviews can take place where and when it is convenient for you. You can invite another person (e.g., a friend, homestay family member or school mate) to be with you should the interviews take place at home. Depending on the topic and your availability, the duration of each interview is expected to be from ten minutes to one hour.

I am also interested in observing your after-school activities. This is to gain an understanding of your perspective on social interaction in English outside school you will always have the right to accept or reject my request for spending time with you in your spare time. Please note that this it not an evaluation of your English performance; it is simply an attempt to widen our knowledge of the way in which you as students of English interact with people in Australia and how this may relate to your second language learning. If you agree, some of our conversations may be audio-taped or videotaped so that I have an accurate record of your ideas.
The personal information you give in this study is strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone in the future. To ensure confidentiality your real name will not be used in any research reports and contact details will be kept with maximum security in my office in the Education Building at the University of Sydney.

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the consent form attached. If you answer ‘yes’ to questions 1-3 of the consent form you will be included in the study.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

**Kimie Takahashi**  
Email: kimonky29@hotmail.com  
Room: A35/630  
Faculty of Education  
University of Sydney  
Ph: 02 9351 7505

Or  
**Associate Professor Gerard Sullivan**  
Email: g.sullivan@edfac.usyd.edu.au  
Faculty of Education  
University of Sydney  
Ph: 02 9351 2304

Or  
**Dr. Ingrid Piller**  
Email: ingrid.piller@linguistics.usyd.edu.au  
Room: 247  
Department of Linguistics,  
Faculty of Arts  
University of Sydney  
Ph: 02 9351 7518

If you have any complaints regarding the research, please contact the Manager, Sydney human Research Ethics committee.

Yours truly,

Kimie Takahashi
Appendix 2: Participant consent form

The University of Sydney

Participant Consent Form

Social interaction and second language learning

I have read the participant information regarding the above research study. I understand that the personal details of the study are strictly confidential and that I can withdraw at anytime.

1. I agree to take part in a series of interviews related to this research.
   Yes / No

2. I give the researcher my permission to observe social interaction that I engage in.
   Yes / No

3. I agree to be contacted to arrange meetings with the researcher.
   Yes / No

4. I agree to allow audio or video recordings to be made by Ms. Takahashi of either social interactions or interviews.
   Yes / No

5. I understand that I can request a third person to be present at any interviews conducted in my home.
   Yes / No

I understand that my real name and any identifying information will not be used in any reports of this research. I hereby agree to participate.

Signature of student: .................................................................

Name:.............................. Date:.................................

Signature of witness.........................

Name of witness:.................................Date:.........................

Signature of investigator:.................................

Kime Takahashi
Appendix 3: Description of primary participants

The description of primary participants contains:

- Biography
- Recruitment and collection of data

The order of the description is in the order of their joining the study:

1. Ichi
2. Yuka
3. Yoko
4. Eika
5. Chizuko

Ichi

Biography

Ichi was born in 1978 and brought up in a small country town in Mie Prefecture. She said that her initial akogare for the West and English emerged while attending a local Christian secondary school. In particular, Ichi experienced romantic feelings for an Australian teacher of English at the school, with whom her mother still keeps in touch. Impressed with Ichi’s enthusiasm for learning English, teachers at her school organised a special conversation class with the Australian teacher for Ichi and her like-minded school friends. A short-term study abroad program to Australia was also arranged for them during one summer holiday in their second year, and this trip convinced her that she wanted to study at university in Sydney one day. After Ichi graduated from a women’s college with a diploma in American history, she had difficulty finding a job that satisfied her ideals (that is a workplace with equal
opportunities for men and women). Ichi believed that an overseas qualification as a teacher would boost her chances of empowering herself, and she convinced her parents to fund her study in Australia.

Recruitment and data collection

I met Ichi in July 2001. She was one of the first Japanese students I met at SCoE during the exploratory stage of my research. One female Japanese student (one of the secondary informants) contacted Ichi for me and we arranged a meeting. When I told her about the nature of my research, she started to talk passionately about what motivated her to study English and to come to Australia. She also told me about a wide range of issues such as her socialising patterns in Sydney, problems with her then host family, and her romantic feelings for one of the male friends of her host sister. Her life in Sydney seemed to be full of stories that had much direct relevance to the topic of the current research. When I invited her to participate in the current research, she agreed to take part in my study, stating that participating in research would be an interesting experience for her.

During data collection, we had five recorded interview appointments (July, 2001; November, 2001; March, 2003; October, 2003; and November, 2003). However, much of information about Ichi comes from fieldnotes that I took while socialising with her in various social settings in 2001-2005. After she enrolled in a university degree course (2002), she began visiting me in my university office as often as once every two weeks during semester time, over a period of three and a half years. We also went out for dinner, often with other friends, several times a semester. Towards the end of the data collection (2004-2005), she started to invite me to parties with her where I was introduced to some of her university and dormitory friends. I

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was not able to conduct fieldwork with her during the semester breaks, as Ichi usually
returned to Japan for holidays.

In addition, email correspondence from her was frequent, particularly when she
met a new potential boyfriend or had romantic encounters. The content of these
emails was usually lengthy and intimate, with detailed descriptions of her behaviour
and emotions. Interestingly, most of her emails to me were written in English, as she
considered writing emails as one of the best ways to improve English. Another
characteristic of her email practice was that she often forwarded emails from her
romantic male partners and boyfriends to me. Permission was sought for the inclusion
of emails with intimate contents.

Yuka

Biography

Yuka was born in 1978 in a country town in Gifu Prefecture. She led an
ordinary childhood until she fell victim to group bullying in her first year at junior
high school. Not knowing what caused her to become so unpopular among her
classmates, and unable to gain help from other students or teachers, it became
extremely painful for her to attend school. Finally she stopped going to school in the
middle of the second year, becoming a hikikomori, or a social withdrawn. An old
family friend, who was a ryugaku consultant, knew the problem and suggested that
going overseas might give her a chance to start afresh. This suggestion was attractive
to Yuka: She always admired foreign countries, and the idea of moving away from all
her domestic troubles and relocating to a foreign country where no one knew her past
appealed tremendously. Yuka’s parents were strict regarding her education and
English was one of her favourite subjects until she stopped going to school. Although her ability to speak English was highly limited, she said that her excitement in moving to a foreign country outweighed this linguistic concern. Yuka’s parents were also happy to take any opportunity to help their teenage hikikomori daughter restart her life.

**Recruitment and data collection**

I met Yuka in the middle of 2001 through a mutual Japanese friend. When she began a university course in early 2002, Yuka started to visit my office occasionally. In February 2002, I invited her to participate in my study as Yuka had different qualities from the other participants: She had been in Australia longer than most of the participants in my study, and the circumstances under which she came to Australia were somewhat unique, although people in her kind of situation were beginning to enter public awareness in Japan. Yuka accepted my request and signed the consent form.

Yuka and I had four interviews during the data collection period (March and September, 2003, and two meetings in October, 2003). However, the majority of the data on Yuka comes from field notes that I took while socialising with her and her friends. As Yuka resided near my university between 2002 and 2005, I was often invited to her residence for lunch and dinner. During the semester, she came to visit me in my office as often as once a week. Due to the sensitive issues of her hikikomori, and the sometimes sexually explicit information about her past romantic relationships, I always asked her for permission to include this information about her as part of my data.
Yoko

Biography

Yoko was born in 1972 in a small town in Shizuoka Prefecture. In her final year at high school, she followed her parents' suggestion to study nutrition in a women's college, as she did not have any specific goal at that point in her life. Upon graduation from the women's college, she became a public servant at the town council; an occupation that her parents thought was stable and respectable. She met her husband at work and they married in 1998.

After joining the town council, Yoko began to take English lessons together with a friend at a small English conversation school where she met a variety of people. At that time, her husband was having extramarital affairs with one of their colleagues. She was investing more and more time into learning English and watching Hollywood movies due to the break-down of their marriage. In hindsight, she said that she was finding refuge in the world of Hollywood movies. Yoko's marriage finally broke down in October 2001. In her small town, many people knew about his affair and their divorce, and she felt that there was no privacy in her life. She was frustrated about the fact that she was considered to be a miserable divorcée, and after much consideration, she chose the option of English ryugaku to Australia to restart her life.

Recruitment and collection of data

I met Yoko in April 2002 a few months after her arrival in Sydney. I had known her Japanese host family, the Tanakas, who introduced Yoko to me as a potential informant. During our first meeting in a café, Yoko told me about her experiences during the divorce and I was interested in her particular background, as none of my other participants had been married. When I explained the nature of the study, Yoko
agreed to participate, stating that it was going to be an exciting experience for her to be part of a university research project.

During the data collection period between 2002 and 2004, we had seven interview appointments (April, 2002; May, 2002, December, 2002, January, 2003, March, 2003, October, 2003, and November, 2003). Like Ichi and Yuka, much of the data about Yoko was also based on field notes that I took while socialising with her and her friends in various social settings, such as her residence, my place, cafes, and school canteens in Sydney. In the beginning, I often made appointments for meeting by phone. After she became comfortable with me, she began to invite me for social gatherings. Yoko and I met as often as twice a week, varying in terms of location and duration. Since we lived nearby between 2002 and 2003, we visited each other's homes occasionally for chats. During the fieldwork, I was introduced to most of the significant people in her life in Sydney. Our email correspondence was infrequent (as compared to telephone calls), but became frequent while she was back in Japan between September 2004 and February 2005, preparing to move overseas for work.

Data from Yoko were generally concerned with her akogare for becoming fluent in English, getting accepted into Australian society, and finding a (white) boyfriend. Since the early 2004, her focus had increasingly been on developing a career in the international hospitality industry, as such a job would allow her to live overseas. Throughout her stay, data based on her everyday narratives showed her unceasing passion for identity transformation into an international career woman proficient in English.
Eika

Biography

Eika was born in 1971 in Tokyo. During her secondary school years, she became interested in American culture and in learning English. Her first exposure to a foreign country was through a short-term English study ryugaku to Arizona during one summer holiday. Since then, Eika said that she had been ‘hooked’ on both the U.S. and English, and had always imagined herself going back there for tertiary education. Thus, it was natural for her to study English in a college after finishing high school. However, after graduating from college in Tokyo, her parents refused to let her study in the U.S. for the concern of safety. Without her parents’ financial support, she had no choice but postpone her studies in the U.S. until she had become financially capable herself.

For the next nine years, she worked for a major corporation in Tokyo. Eika considered herself to be a ‘career woman’, with an extensive social network and financial freedom. Her earnings were relatively high, and living with her parents also helped her save money towards her plan to go overseas one day. In her final year at work, her job became increasingly international, creating the need to communicate with her colleagues from several Asian countries such as Korea and China in English. According to Eika, this increased her access to English at work, and resurrected her desire for English and for living and working overseas.

Although her passion for English remained while she was working, her interest in attending university faded. Thus, when choosing where to study English, the United States, which had been the country of her akogare, was no longer attractive, as she would not be able to work while studying. She was not impressed by the weather in England and Canada was, in her view, too cold for her liking. The main
reason why Eika eventually decided on Australia was the fact that it offered a one-year working holiday visa on which she could study and work, and also because of its reputation for having a warm climate all year round. At the time when she decided on which country to travel to, she was already twenty-nine, and the age limit for the working holiday visa was thirty. She used this time limit as an incentive to finally take action regarding her decade long *akogare* for mastering English and living overseas.

**Recruitment and data collection**

Eika and I attended the same college in the late 1980s. In 2001, she informed me that she intended to resign from her job and come to Australia to improve her English. When she arrived in Sydney on a one-year working holiday visa in March 2003, I offered accommodation for her until she became familiar with Sydney and found her own place. Initially, I did not consider her as potential participant. However, living together for one month gave me an opportunity to learn a great deal about her as a Japanese woman who was trying to establish her life in a new country. When I asked her to take part in my study, she responded positively, suggesting that it would provide her with a good opportunity to reflect on progress or lack of progress in her English, and how her identity would change over time.

During her stay between 2003 and 2005, I had five interview appointments with Eika (June, September, October, and twice in November 2003). Much of the data on Eika was also based on field notes that I took while socialising with her and her friends between 2003 and 2005. After Eika moved out of my residence into her own place in the central part of Sydney, we met as often as three times a week, either at public places or at each other’s residences.
I was particularly careful in terms of ethical consideration with Eika, as I did not wish to use our friendship for the purposes of data collection. Each time we spent time together and I wanted to take notes, I asked her for permission. One advantage to having her as a research participant was the fact that because of our close friendship, she was often able to express her disagreement more explicitly than other participants. This was helpful at all stages of my data analysis.

**Chizuko**

**Biography and exposure to English in Japan**

Chizuko was born and grew up in a highly remote rural area in Gifu Prefecture. When she was a young child, there were no shops or cafes in neighbourhood, and she spent her entire childhood running around, playing and picking fruit and vegetables with her friends on a small mountain behind her house. Chizuko recalls that while growing up in this remote country area, she was mesmerised by the television images of Western countries and their sophisticated cultures. In her childhood, it became her dream to one day move out of the rural area to the outside world.

Chizuko said that she developed a great deal of *akogare* for Westerners and learning English during her teenage years. For instance, when she heard the rumour that the high school in the next town had an American exchange student, she jumped on the train and went to the school just to see and take photos of the American student. While Chizuko was studying at a two-year college, she often spent time with foreign teachers of English who resided within the college. She said that she enjoyed socialising with the Western teachers even thought she could hardly speak or understand English at that time.
In her early twenties, Chizuko decided to move to Tokyo to experience an exciting metropolitan lifestyle. She became an aerobics instructor, which was her dream job at that time. Through her extensive social network of drinking friends, she met an Australian man and they began seeing each other. According to Chizuko, he was the man of her dreams, and he showered her with romantic presents and sweet words. Although they were planning to get married, they decided to end their relationship due, from her point of view, to her limited English, that made it impossible for the two of them to discuss important issues.

Some years later, Chizuko found out that he had married someone else. Devastated about the news, and unable to forget about him, she decided to go overseas. Chizuko’s choice of ryugaku destination was Australia, as she had nothing but positive images of the country, because of her ex-boyfriend and her Australian friends. On the day she decided to move overseas, Chizuko signed on for a three-month English study program, and immediately began preparing for her first ryugaku.

**Recruitment and data collection**

In mid 2003, Chizuko moved in with Yoko’s former Japanese host family, the Tanaka’s. I was introduced to her by the family. At that time, she was studying to be a natural therapist at a private college, and working in an opal shop to help pay her school fees and daily expenses. In October 2003, I met Chizuko in the City after she finished working, and we had our first interview. During the interview, which lasted for over an hour and half, she was keen to tell me about how she developed her akogare for the West, English, and white men (and in particular about her Australian ex-boyfriend). My interest in her as a participant was because of her age: Chizuko (39 years old at that the of joining the study) was the oldest of all the participants. By the
end of our first interview, she expressed interest in taking part as a primary participant in my study, and signed the consent form.

Between 2003 and 2005, I had two official interview appointments (October, 2003; November, 2003). Like the majority of the participants above, most of my data on Chizuko come from fieldnotes that were taken during this period of time. Because she studied in a college and worked many hours in the evening, my interaction with Chizuko was over lunch or dinner near school or work. On the weekends, she often went out for drinks with her friends, and she invited me on several occasions. I was sometimes invited by the Tanakas’ for dinner (once every few months), and each time Chizuko was present. Due to the fact that she lived relatively far from both the university and my residence, Chizuko and I regularly interacted through phone calls. Chizuko was very clear in indicating to me which information she was happy for me to include in my data and which she was not. Chizuko’s narratives often centred on her akogare for improving her English, obtaining permanent residency in Australia, and finding a boyfriend or a possible marriage partner. Having no wish to return to Japan permanently, she expressed an urgent need to find a way to gain a permanent resident visa.
### Appendix 4. Description of secondary participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Visa status</th>
<th>First contact</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bon</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Jul-01</td>
<td>I met Bon at SCoE at the exploratory stage. I asked him the basic questions with regard to his attitude towards studying English and his social interaction in Sydney.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haru</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Partner visa</td>
<td>Mar-04</td>
<td>I met Haru through the main participant Yoko once. Haru just arrived from Japan and was in a de facto relationship with her Australian boyfriend. Questions were asked as to her reasons for studying English and her experiences in using English with her Australian boyfriend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikuko</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Working holiday</td>
<td>Apr-04</td>
<td>I met Ikuko through a personal contact in Sydney. She was studying English and working as a masseuse. I saw her several times during April, 2004 and questions were asked as to her motivation to come to Australia and her attitudes towards learning English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Australian citizen</td>
<td>Jan-04</td>
<td>Jackie was Eika's share mate. I often had a conversation with her when I visited Eika at home in 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>English teacher in Japan</td>
<td>Mar-04</td>
<td>I was introduced to James through my personal contact in Japan. I met him in a café in Tokyo once and our conversation lasted for one hour. Questions were asked as to his views on English education and Japanese students in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaori</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Aug-01</td>
<td>I met Kaori at SCoE at the exploratory stage. At that time, she was studying English to gain entry into a master's course at a university and our conversations often centered on her struggles to improve English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mie</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
<td>Jan-03</td>
<td>Mie was a long-term permanent resident in Australia and a university lecturer. At the time of contact, she was in a relationship with an Australian man and considering marriage. Our conversations often centered on her attitudes towards English and her relationships with Western men in Sydney.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miri</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Aug-02</td>
<td>I met Miri once through a personal contact at Sydney University. Prior to ryugaku, she was teaching English at a private English school and decided to undertake a master's degree in English teaching in order to boost her career. At the meeting, our conversation centered on her akogare for Hollywood stars and her experiences in learning and teaching English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsuo</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
<td>Mar-04</td>
<td>I met Mitsuo through a personal contact on the Gold Coast. He was running a tour company for Japanese tourists and questions were asked as to his view on Japanese female workers at his company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natsu</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Working holiday</td>
<td>Jul-04</td>
<td>I was introduced to Natsu by Yuka. Natsu was studying English in a private college and looking for a job at that time. I met her twice with Yuka and questions were asked as to her motivation to come to Australia and study English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>English teacher in</td>
<td>Mar-03</td>
<td>I met Philip through a personal contact in Japan. He has been teaching English in Japan for more than ten years and questions were asked as to his views on English education and Japanese students of English in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Visa Type</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rina</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Dec-03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sato</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Feb-04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sen</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Aug-02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzu</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Partner visa</td>
<td>May-04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokiko</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Apr-04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomo</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Sep-02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoshi</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
<td>Jul-02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Jul-01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukari</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Working holiday</td>
<td>Apr-04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I met Rina once through Eika. She was studying English in Sydney for one year and soon due back to Japan at the time of contact. Our conversation centred on the topic of akogare for English and her previous and current romantic relationships in Sydney.

I met Sato through a personal contact at Sydney University. She was studying psychology and was in a rather difficult relationship with an Australian man. I had conversations with her several times and the main topics discussed included her akogare for Western singers, her attitudes towards learning English and her relationship problems.

I met Sen at SCoE at the exploratory stage. I had several brief conversations with him during this stage and questions were asked as to his motivation to come to Australia and study English.

I was introduced to Suzu by Ichi. She arrived as an international student in Australia in 2000. At that time of data collection, she was studying at a university and living with her Australian partner in Sydney. I met Suzu once for approximately two hours.

I met Tokiko through Eika. They were studying together at TAFE in Sydney. I was often invited to socialise with Tokiko and Eika and thus my fieldwork with Tokiko was continuous until she returned to Japan in early 2005. The main topics discussed with Tokiko centered on her attitudes towards learning English, socialisation in Sydney, and future options in Japan.

I was introduced to Tomo by Yoko. Tomo was studying English in a private college and was working in a Japanese restaurant. I met her once and questions were asked as to her motivation to come to Australia and experiences of learning and using English in Sydney.

I contacted Yoshi through his website. He was running a ryugaku agency in his own home and at the time of the meeting, questions were asked as to his views on Japanese students coming to Australia to study English.

I met Yu at SCoE at the exploratory stage. Questions were asked with regard to her attitudes towards learning and using English in Sydney, while Yu was particularly interested in discussing her romantic issues with her Korean boyfriend.

I was introduced to Yukari by Eika. Yukari was studying English and was considering applying for a permanent residency. I met Yukari several times through Eika and notes were taken on their conversations related to the issue of learning and using English in Sydney.
## Appendix 5: Tables of interview details

### Ichi

**Total number of interviews: 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>July 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 2 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Reasons for and experiences with studying English in Japan  
Reasons for wanting to come to Australia (e.g., life in Japan as a woman)  
Family background  
Living arrangement in Sydney  
Relationship with her host family  
Issues of socialising with Australians in English  
Desire for foreign boyfriends  
Personal assessment of improvements in English  
Plans for education in Sydney  
Racial attitudes (i.e., dislike against Asians and their English and positive views on white Australians) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>November 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 2 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Concerns with English and academic performance in a university foundation course  
Personal assessment of progress in English  
Effort in improving English  
Socialisation with friends and host family in Sydney  
Romantic experience with several Australian men  
Racial preference for friends and romantic partners |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>March 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Academic performance at university  
New living arrangement and socialisation at her university dormitory  
Romantic and sexual experiences  
Personal assessment of improvements in English |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>October 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 1 hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Socialisation at her university dormitory  
Socialisation with male and female friends  
Identity and sexual/romantic experiences  
Effort in improving English  
Personal goal for fluency in English  
Relationship with her parents in Japan |
### Interview 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>November 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 90 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics| Academic performance at university  
                                      Relationship with her first British boyfriend and other male acquaintances  
                                      Personal assessment of fluency in English  
                                      Effort in improving English  
                                      Socialisation in Sydney  
                                      Making friends with Australians |

#### Yuka

Total number of interviews: 4

### Interview 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>March 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics| Racial preference for romantic partners  
                                      Romantic experiences  
                                      Past and present experiences with learning and using English  
                                      Decision to leave Australia once  
                                      Concerns with improving English  
                                      Social identity and its link with learning and using English  
                                      Relationship with previous home stay family  
                                      Gender identity and its link with social interaction |

### Interview 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>September, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 30 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics| Ambivalent friendship with a male friend and his help with university work  
                                      Plans for the coming year in terms of job hunting and romance  
                                      Experiences at university (A lecturer’s negative remark on her English proficiency and negative view on communities of Asians in Sydney)  
                                      Friendship with Japanese and other Asian friends  
                                      Effort to further improve English |

### Interview 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>October 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics| Social and racial identity at university  
                                      Australian students’ racial prejudice  
                                      Her education and its use for future in Japan  
                                      Fear of group interaction in English  
                                      Bilingual identity  
                                      Learning Chinese at university  
                                      Desire for romantic and sexual experiences  
                                      Racial and linguistic preference for romantic partners  
                                      Socialisation in Sydney |
### Interview 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>October, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main topics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative interactional experience with an Australian office worker at university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racial discrimination in Sydney and increasing frustration at (White) Australians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A negative view on multiculturalism in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural romance and importance of language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Yoko

**Total number of interview: 7**

### Interview 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main topics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Background information on education, work, family, marriage and divorce in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reasons for learning English and going overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passion for Hollywood movies, particularly Brad Pitt’s movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Akogare for the West and romantic relationships with a white Western person in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concern for future direction in terms of marriage, education and career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to use English at work, home and the “visa” college in Sydney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Interview 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>May, 2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 1 hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main topics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gap between her expectation and the reality of social life in Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views on racial issues in Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiences at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender identity and its effect on social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racial issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romance, gender/linguistic identity, and learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to and fear of living and working with native speakers of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future prospect on romance and career, and its relation to English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 3</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics |      | House hunting in Sydney  
|             |      | Personal assessment of improvement in English  
|             |      | Personal methods of learning English  
|             |      | Timing and conditions for returning to Japan  
|             |      | Experiences at school  
|             |      | Ideal intercultural romance  
|             |      | Intercultural romance as an incentive for ELL  
|             |      | Lack of opportunity to meet native speaker males  
|             |      | Experiences as a married woman and divorcee in Japan  
|             |      | L2 interactional experiences in Sydney  
|             |      | Concerns and hopes for future in terms of ELL, money, and residence  
|             |      | Happiness as a woman |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 4</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>January, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td></td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics |      | Personal assessment of progress in English  
|             |      | Relationship with a British male friend  
|             |      | Desire to give up and go back to Japan because of slow progress in English  
|             |      | House hunting and new Australian male flatmates  
|             |      | Cross-cultural romance and language  
|             |      | Ambivalent feelings about having left Japan and uncertainty about future  
|             |      | Future plan for career, education, and a place of residence  
|             |      | Racial identity |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 5</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>March, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td></td>
<td>Approx. 1 hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics |      | Cross-cultural romantic issues  
|             |      | Desire to move out of Australia and go to other countries  
|             |      | Socialisation and difficulties at school  
|             |      | Personal assessment of improvement in English  
|             |      | Gender and racial identity and social acceptance in Sydney  
|             |      | Use of internet as a means of meeting foreign men |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 6</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>October, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td></td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics |      | Efforts in and struggles with improving English  
|             |      | Difficulty in making friends in English  
|             |      | Racial and linguistic identity in relationship with two male Australian flatmates  
|             |      | Racial prejudice against Asians by white Australians  
|             |      | Work as a receptionist at a hotel  
|             |      | A language exchange partner and an Australian personal tutor  
<p>|             |      | Gender identity in English |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 7</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>November, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Personal assessment of fluency in English  
|   | Effort in and struggles with using and learning English at work, home, and school  
|   | Desire to go back to Japan  
|   | One week enrolment at an English school  
|   | Changing identities at work and home |

**Eika**

Total number of interviews: 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>June, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 2 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Reasons for wanting to learn English and going overseas  
|   | Previous romance in Japan  
|   | Racial, linguistic, and career preference for romantic partners  
|   | Identity as a Japanese woman  
|   | Relationship with her first Australian boyfriend and his young Australian friends  
|   | Reflection on her first three months in Sydney and her overall life experiences  
|   | Desire to find a life path in terms of career  
|   | Personal assessment of fluency now and ten years ago  
|   | Strategies in gaining opportunities to use English |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>September, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 30 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Job hunting and ideal occupation in Sydney  
|   | Limited English as an obstacle for finding a office work  
|   | Lack of financial incentive for finding a job in Sydney  
|   | Self-study at home and a local library  
|   | Lack of opportunity to use English  
|   | Lack of membership to a community  
|   | Reluctance to attend an English school in Sydney |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>October, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>Approx. 30 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Main topics** | Difficulties in making English speaking friends in Sydney  
|   | Cross-cultural romance and language learning  
|   | Participation in Irish dance lessons and language learning |
Interview 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>November, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics| Experiences in learning English at a free conversation school  
              Struggles in keeping motivated to study English  
              Frustration at being unable to fully participate in a conversation in English  
              Personal assessment of fluency in English  
              Choosing and attending an English school in Sydney  
              Use of Japanese ryugaku agents in Sydney  
              Financial support from her family for school fees in Sydney  
              The link between English fluency and occupational aspirations  
              The meaning of gaining a job in Sydney  
              Reassessment of goals in coming to Australia  
              Australian language exchange partner and power issues in exchange lessons  
              Easiness in making Japanese friends in Sydney  
              Resources for self-studying English  
              Ambivalence to further invest financially and emotionally in ELL |

Interview 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>November, 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 1 hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics| Experiences at an English school  
              Reassessment of goals of ELL and ryugaku  
              Future direction in terms of education in Sydney  
              Frustration at slow progress in English  
              The issue of age in relation to returning to Japan  
              The issue of visas and extending her stay in Sydney  
              Options to live and work overseas  
              Romantic experiences with her Australian ex-boyfriend  
              Lack of interactional opportunities after the break up with her boyfriend  
              Negative reputations of Japanese ryugaku agents in Sydney  
              Sharing with an Australian flatmate  
              Racial discrimination in private and public spaces in Sydney |

Chizuko

Total number of interviews: 3

Interview 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Approx. 2 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main topics| Family and hometown in Japan  
              Educational background and work experience in Japan  
              Social network in Japan  
              Exposure to English and Western music at home  
              English education at secondary school in Japan  
              Akogare for Westerners and Hollywood movies  
              Romance with an Australian man and linguistic issues in the relationship |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for going overseas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for choosing Australia as a destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for going on English ryugaku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for types of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian host family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to extend the stay in Australia and issues with visas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network in Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of living arrangements and its relation to progress in learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggles in participating in conversation in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic experiences with Western men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing identities and age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Japanese host family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance and language learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with associating with Japanese community and language learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns with the degree of improvement in English relative to the number of years spent in Sydney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main topics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6. Transcription conventions

The large amount of data for this study come from interviews and fieldnotes which were conducted mainly in Japanese. These data were transcribed in Japanese first and translated in English by the researcher. In order to preserve the authenticity of interactional exchanges, the original Japanese data are presented first, followed by my English translation in most of the quotes in this thesis. Transcription conventions used in this study are modified from Piller {., 2002 #635} as follows:

**Japanese transcription:**

. clause final
\, short pause
\~ extended ending typical of Japanese
\ldots long pause
! sentence level emphasis
? tag question or question intonation
シドニー original emphatic stress for particular words
@ laughter
@シドニー@ the statement between the two @s is made laughingly
[...] analyst's omission
「幸せ」 change in voice quality when another voice is imitated or quoted
((sitting down)) non-verbal activity noticed by the researcher
[ beginning of overlap
] overlap ends

**English transcription:**

. short pause
... long pause
! sentence level emphasis
? tag question or question intonation
CAPS original emphatic stress
@ laughter
@laughter@ the statement between the two @s is made laughingly
[...] analyst's omission
"happy" change in voice quality when another voice is imitated or quoted
((sitting down)) non-verbal activity noticed by the researcher
[ beginning of overlap
] overlap ends

**Type of data**

Type of data and date of data collection can be found in the brackets at the end of each English quote. For instance, (f17april04chizuko) indicates that the specific quote is drawn from the field note written on 17 April 2004, about Chizuko. Other types of data are represented as follows:
e, e-mails
i, interview
m, MSN messenger
t, telephone conversation

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Appendix 7. Macro data

Advertisements and promotional materials

Gaba’s advertisements and promotional materials were collected from:

- [http://www.gaba.co.jp](http://www.gaba.co.jp)

Other advertisements and promotional materials were gathered from women’s magazines, English study magazines and *ryugaku* magazines described below.

English textbooks

Women's magazines


English study magazines


Ryugaku magazines


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Comics
