

Constructing a multivocal self: A critical autoethnography

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date:

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Bakhtin's work around inner dialogues also reminds me that it isn't only the visible that counts in the construction of new selves. I have had countless silent, imaginary dialogues with professors whose important works inspired me when I couldn't find a way out. They laid down a track for me to not only be able to do this kind of work but also to help me find different ways of living and becoming in the world. In particular, these silent mentors were Professors Jan Blommaert, Allan Luke, Suresh Canagarajah, David Block, Benjamin Bailey, Kathryn Woolard, Claire Kramsch, Aneta Pavlenko, Bonnie Norton, Angel Lin, Ryuko Kubota, Marco Jacquemet, Koichi Iwabuchi, Phan Le Ha and many feminist poststructuralist writers in other areas of study.

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On that note, I am also aware that in work that deals with the construction of multilingual narratives, there is a tendency for the writing to exude a kind of "multilingual pride", a pride that sometimes positions multilingual experiences or identities as superior to their so-called monolingual counterparts. The close interactions I have had with those I have mentioned here, listening to their stories, and thinking about their own multilingualism, have forced me to think much more cautiously about the ways I present my ideas and the tone of my writing. This is an ongoing process for me and the highly introspective nature of the kind of work I am involved in sometimes makes it very difficult to put aside or pull back from the benefits that I have received living a multilingual life. I have, to the best of my ability, tried to avoid such romanticizing. However, depending on the reader, this may not always appear to be the case throughout the thesis. The message I wish to convey here is my recognition of this issue and my continuing commitment to work towards writing productive narratives that focus on the important aspects of multilingual and monolingual, or in the case of my thesis, "multivocal" lives.

Scott (1985) pointed out that people often don't realize how "millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef" (p. xvii). Similarly, it is every single minute these individuals have so generously shared with me or lingered in my mind that this work became possible. I hope I have used the experiences, insights and dialogues well in the finished product.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the possibilities of critical autoethnographic study in helping multilinguals become more aware of the larger politics underlying the relationship between language and identity, examine their own roles and vulnerabilities in social situations, and work towards the transformation of an ethical subject.

Although there is literature to show how mobility and the large-scale, global flows of people in the current era are increasingly dissolving essentialist ideas of race, nationality, cultural practices, linguistic identities and so on, twenty-first century multilingual accounts still exemplify a deep level of anxiety, confusion and frustration on issues of authenticity and legitimacy in relation to language and identity. Critical reflexive multilingual accounts can play an important role in transforming these vulnerabilities into knowledge, capital, and necessary vulnerabilities. This study adds to this growing body of work.

Using my own multilingual experiences as data in the form of diary entries, photographs, correspondences with others, media clips, and memories, I demonstrate not so much how individuals are able to take an active role in self-interpreting and constructing their own lives, which is self-evident, but rather, the process of how individuals can learn to think differently and re-frame or re-signify their understanding in order to open up multiple future possibilities. Starting with my own critical incidents of feeling dispossession in one of my languages (Korean) in my linguistic repertoire, I draw on a wide range of scholarly literature to critically self-analyze and interpret past and present experiences, desires, intentions, complicities, and performances using a narrative structure.

By placing my experiences within a scholarly framework, this study attempts to demonstrate the importance of questioning what lies behind everyday utterances and life events, and to think about the political and ethical implications of the utterances, thoughts, actions, and stories of the self and others. As a result of this work, I argue that troubling one's own epistemological understanding of language and identity enables one to re-imagine and re-fashion one's identity. In the case of this work, the study has enabled me to re-signify my identity from a "multilingual" to a "multivocal" identity.

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Prelude

What's in a Name?



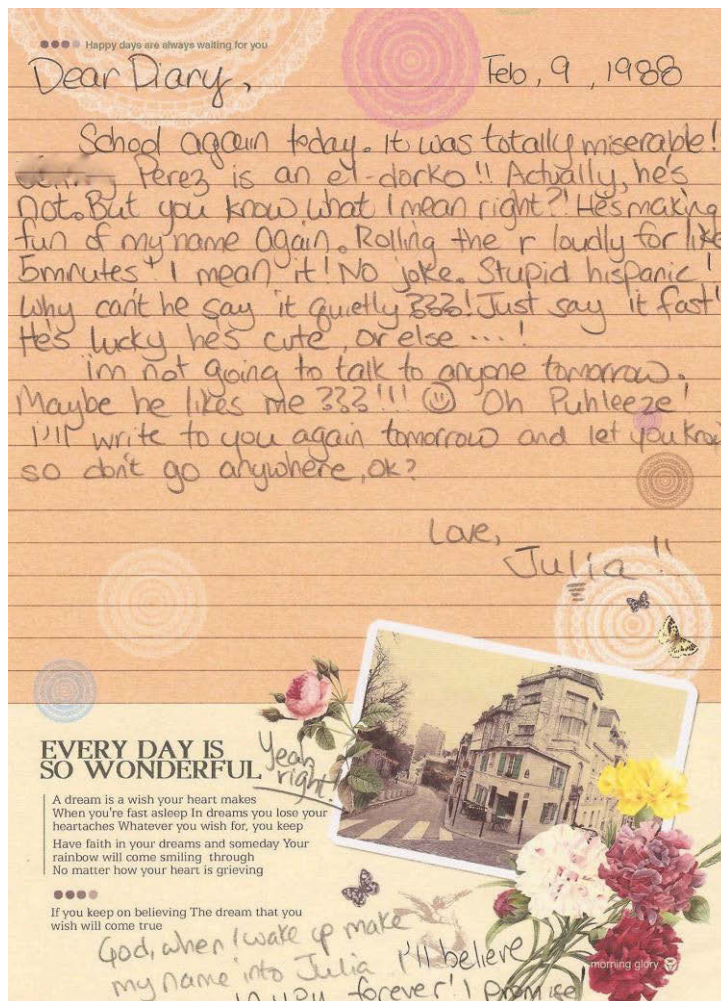
Pic. 0.1. Reconstructing “r” to “l” from “Juria” to “Julia”. New York (date unknown).

My mother often tells me stories from the year I was born, 1978 – the year after she immigrated to New York barely speaking any English. The African-American nurse who delivered me asked my mother what she would name me. She said she replied “Julia” with an “l” but even to my own ears, it doesn’t sound like Julia. I have finally helped her to hear the difference (which she says is pretty much the same) but now that

she knows, she laughs as she tells me, “Julia is such a pretty name. I wondered why the nurse kept asking me ‘are you sure you want to name her Juria?’” That is how the name Juria got written down on my wristband and found its way onto my birth certificate.

I remember at the beginning of every school year, teachers would apologize to me for the typo in my name. “Sorry about the typo, we’ll change it back to Julia soon”, they would say. For a while, I tried to white out, uncurl, scratch out, and extend the “r” as much as possible so that it would become an “l” on permanent documents such as my passport and health certificates (as shown in pic. 0.1). What remains today on the documents are obvious clumps of white out, different color pens and faint traces of the original “r” that is visible only to the discerning eye. This small deviation from the “norm” was embarrassing for me. It was my parents who were the “r” - Korean citizens, working-class immigrants, non-native speakers of English, the “Other”¹. I recognized myself differently. I was born in the United States of America (US), a native speaker of English and someone who could produce the sound “l” [l/]. I wasn’t supposed to stand out like those kids who went to ESL classes but my name kept ruining it for me. Whenever I could, especially in my diaries, I secretly signed off using the name Julia (see pic. 0.2, in particular, the multiple underlining of the “l”).

¹ Other studies on migrant dialects also demonstrate how migrant children from different ethnic backgrounds use different linguistic strategies to distance themselves from their parents because they do not want to be typecast as working class and migrant (see Horvath, 1985; Cox and Palethorpe, 2006).



Pic. 0.2. Signing off in personal diary entries as “Julia”. New York (1988).

[Transcript]
 Dear Diary, School again today. It was totally miserable!! Tony Perez is an el-dorko!! Actually, he's not. But you know what I mean right? He's making fun of my name again. Rolling the r loudly for like 5 minutes! I mean it! No joke. Stupid hispanic! Why can't he say it quietly??? Just say it fast! He's lucky he's cute, or else...! I'm not going to talk to anyone tomorrow. Maybe he likes me???!!! ☺ Oh Puhleeze! I'll write to you again tomorrow and let you know so don't go anywhere, ok? Love, Julia!!
 [Bottom of the page]
 God, when I wake up make my name into Julia I'll believe in you forever! I promise!

As I got older, people who knew me used the more convenient two-syllabic name “Julie” which I openly welcomed because of its commonness and neutrality. For many years now I have been able to distance myself from my birth name while living in different countries using local pronunciations of my name in Korean 주리 (Juri) [/dʒuw/ /rɪ/], in Japanese ジュリー (Jyuri with an extended “ri”) [/dʒu/ /rɪ/], and in Chinese 珠丽 (zhū lì) [/tʃ/ /li/]. Generally speaking, in both Korean and Japanese, the liquid “r” sound is positioned in the in-between area between the alveolar “l” /l/ and palatal “r” /r/

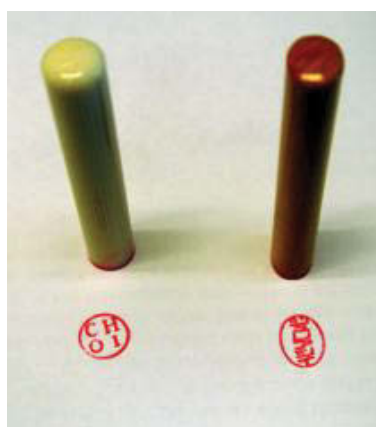
sound in North American English. The tongue flaps down to the blade position (near the tip of the lower dental) resulting in a light and quick “ri” sound². This light “ri” sound in Korean or Japanese does not bother me since there is nothing “abnormal” about these names for speakers of Korean or Japanese. As far as I know, it is a desirable name. It is only when I have to hear my birth name spoken by someone whose mother tongue is English that I feel oddly misshaped. Throughout most of my life, I have always made a conscious effort to ask for the name “Julie” to be printed on all my student and business cards (see pic. 0.3).



Pic. 0.3. Insisting on the name “Julie”. Beijing and Tokyo (1996-2003).
 [Clockwise]: Beijing University (1996). Beijing AEA International Clinic (1999). AEON Net Communications, Tokyo (2003). HAO Chinese Academy, Tokyo (2006). Anaheim University (2003).

² These phonetic keys comply with the consonant and vowel sounds of North American English (see Celce-Murcia et al., 1996) with the exception of the key /r/ for “r” in Korean and Japanese. The Korean character ㄹ (ri eul) varies in its sound from [l] to [r] depending on its prevocalic position. The phonetic key /tʃ/ complies with the Chinese (Mandarin) IPA sound system for the “zh” sound.

In Mandarin, there is no “r” sound in the second syllable of my name; it is a clear “l” sound (i.e. li [兩]). However, in a different way, the sound of the first character zhū [珠] which stands for “pearls” was no better as it has the same pronunciation and tone as the character for zhū [豬] meaning “pig”. It was a relief to leave that name behind when I moved from Beijing to Tokyo, only to find that when I arrived in Japan and was given my dormitory room keys (along with some other items such as a stamp, used for legal and financial documents), my last name “Choi” was written in katakana as “tsu i” [ツイ] which derives from the sounds of my last name in Mandarin cuī [崔] pronounced as /tsh^h/uei/. I was required to use the Chinese character of my surname in the visa application forms to Japan rather than my passport name in English, which would have been “cho i” [チ ヨ イ] in katakana. I wondered for a long time why the Korean women at the dormitory where we had a communal cafeteria, TV room and bathing area never spoke to me. A few months later, I became friends with a Korean woman who told me that no one knew which language they should speak to me in, since I couldn't speak Japanese at the time. I looked (possibly) Korean but the last name “tsu i” sounded Chinese, and the nationality on my key, which was usually hung up in the communal key area, read: bei [米] in Japanese, meaning America. Changing my stamp from “tsu i” [ツイ] to CHOI (see pic. 0.4) was a change I could make but one I quickly regretted. Because it was carved in the Roman alphabet, it always caused a surprised reaction from the Japanese clerks because this is somewhat uncommon in Japan. I would have to



Pic. 0.4. Changing stamps from “Juri Tsui” [right] to Choi [left]. Tokyo (2001).

explain the whole story of how I became “tsu i” because of my Chinese surname cuī [崔] but that I was American, not Chinese, which would raise further eyebrows since I look Asian. With my limited proficiency in Japanese, I would explain that I was Korean-American with a Chinese last name that should be pronounced in English as “choi”.

How my name was spelled was not so much of an issue, but I came to dread the slight broadening of the eyes and lift of the head to take another look at my face, and the quick and sharp

pitch of the え? (e? /ε/ commonly used in Japanese to ask for clarification) from shop attendants, delivery men, restaurant reservation staff, students and so on. As innocent as the response might have been, I was suspicious of this one-syllable exclamation. In those fleeting moments of looking at each other or seeing my reflection in their eyes, I saw myself perceived as “second-class”, as in the Japanese “3K expression” which was often used to denote work done by migrant workers - *kitanai* [dirty], *kitsui* [difficult], and *kiken* [dangerous]. Discussing the historical and political construction of discourses of “Japaneseness”, Iwabuchi (1994) states that in resisting western hegemony, Japan changed “the dichotomy of “the West” and “the rest” into the trichotomy of “Japan”, “the West” and “the rest” without changing the binary logic. “The rest” has changed from the “marked” inferior to the “unmarked” inferior. Furthermore, theories of “Japaneseness” hardly deal with relations between Japan and other non-western countries because, “Japan does not have to mark its position in relation to the non-West, because it is absolutely certain about its superiority” (p. 54). In those moments, I saw myself as included in “the rest”.

In transactional encounters such as these, I used the power and advantage of being able to speak English or my American citizenship. The popular discourse during those years (2000-2007), which still lingers today, reflected English and American citizenship as a powerful commodity. In casual or intimate encounters, particularly once I began to sustain conversations solely in Japanese, I learned that it was the culturally hybrid background of being born and raised in New York, having Korean heritage, and being educated in Beijing that would win me the extended and high pitched “eh” [/ε/] [え ～] sound in Japanese usually used in expressing unbelievable surprise and/or what I think about as “delightful envy”. Particularly during the period I resided in Tokyo, as Maher’s (2005) work on “metroethnicity” points out, young urban Japanese, both mainstream and minority, eagerly began to embrace multiculturalism, cultural/ethnic tolerance, multicultural lifestyles, and a bricolage of blurred identities, especially when it came to friendships, the arts, eating, and fashion. I was clearly aware of the ways in which I could use my hybrid background as an interesting topic, as a result of which conversations could start to take shape. I positioned myself as exotic and different, even though I knew the sound was partially spoken out of courtesy to make me feel, perhaps, welcomed and special.

Although my difference was used as a way of creating an interest in developing relationships with Japanese individuals, I tried to perform certain cultural discourses, behaviors, and mannerisms in Japanese when I desired to cultivate certain relationships. It was necessary for me to exclude myself to enable me to feel included which could not work unless people included me through exclusion. In any case, the performances were never solely about “doing my own thing”, that is, doing or saying whatever I wanted. To develop a real connection or become close, I felt I needed to perform familiarity and from there, bring in my difference. It is this “in-between” position of working out how to attain the right balance of “enoughness”, to feel simultaneously similar but different, that I increasingly found myself in.

Rummaging through boxes of old mundane artifacts in my current location, Sydney, I discover more surprises with things related to my name, particularly in the discovery of the use of my Japanese boyfriend’s surname “Miwa” (see pic. 0.5) on a membership card at a day spa in Tokyo. I used his name rarely, but for casual and brief interactions where very little speaking was involved, using his name saved me the irritation of awaiting the gaze of surprise from my Japanese interlocutors and the sudden carefulness of speaking to me, the “foreigner”. I was familiar with, and to a certain extent able to emulate, the style of clothing and colors of make-up worn by young middle-class “OLs” (office ladies) who visit this type of venue. Knowing

the particular discourse and behavior that is performed in this particular context, I knew I would gain smooth transition into the rooms. However, I felt that the use of my name in the Roman alphabet was necessary in case someone detected and quizzed me on my foreign accent or grammatical and lexical fluency. If questioned, I planned to say I was Japanese-American. Beyond giving myself such a label, I am not sure how I intended to get away with such an identity if pressed.



Pic. 0.5. Using the Japanese surname “Miwa”. Tokyo (2001).

Fortunately, this particular strategy had a very short life. Once the actress Choi Ji Woo [pronounced as Che Ji U in Japan and Korea] became immensely popular in Japan through the hit Korean drama series *Winter Sonata* (2002) in 2004, the signifier “choi” to a certain degree became less demeaning. I came to associate the sound with the word 天使 [ten shi, angel] in Japanese, an image and description given to Choi Ji Woo in Japan because of the pure and virtuous roles she plays in Korean dramas. It was “cool” to be Choi again.

Twenty years have passed since I have had to use the name Juria. The moment I have to use this birth name for legal documentation, especially as I settle back in an English medium country such as Australia, I feel “oddly misshaped”. It is not the feeling of loss, pain, or anger that seems to be commonly found in, for instance, immigrant narratives when the names of individuals are voluntarily or involuntarily changed as a form of assimilating into the new country. Rather, it is more akin to what Said (1999) experiences in relation to his identity as feeling “always out of place” (p. 3). More precisely in relation to his name, he states:

It took me about fifty years to become accustomed to, or more exactly, to feel less uncomfortable with, “Edward,” a foolishly English name yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arabic family name Said ... For years, and depending on the exact circumstances, I would rush past “Edward” and emphasize “Said”; at other times I would do the reverse, or connect these two to each other so quickly that neither would be clear. The one thing I could not tolerate, but very often would have to endure, was the disbelieving, and hence undermining, reaction: Edward? Said? (pp. 3-4).

There is no “one” reason or clear answer for this feeling of “being out of place”. He tries to become more accustomed to, learns to feel less uncomfortable with, grows irascible at the questioning tone, and develops everyday strategies staking out the “exact circumstances”. Looking back at my own attempts to change my name, i.e. reconstructing the “r” to “l”, insisting on “Julie” on business cards and “choi” on stamps, and wishing in pic. 0.2, for instance, that Tony Perez would “say [my name] quietly???! Just say it fast!” (and particularly not with a Hispanic “r”), there seems to be a similarity between Said’s reaction and my own to certain ideas that are invoked in relation to our

names. We employ all kinds of strategies to avoid certain reactions that make us feel “out of place”.

From a different situation as a Polish immigrant in the US and enrolling into an American school with her sister for the first time, Eva Hoffman also describes the sensation of becoming a stranger to oneself through the foreign sounds of her birth name “Wydra” by her non-Polish teacher. She describes that first day of school, stating that,

We make our way to a bench at the back of the room; nothing much has happened except a small seismic mental shift. The twist in our names takes them a tiny distance from us - but it's a gap into which the infinite hobgoblin of abstraction enters. Our Polish names didn't refer to us; they were as surely us as our eyes and hands. These new appellations which we ourselves can't yet pronounce are not us. They are identification tags, disembodied signs pointing to objects that happen to be my sister and myself. We walk to our seats, into a room of unknown faces; with names that make us strangers to ourselves (Hoffman, 1989, p. 105).

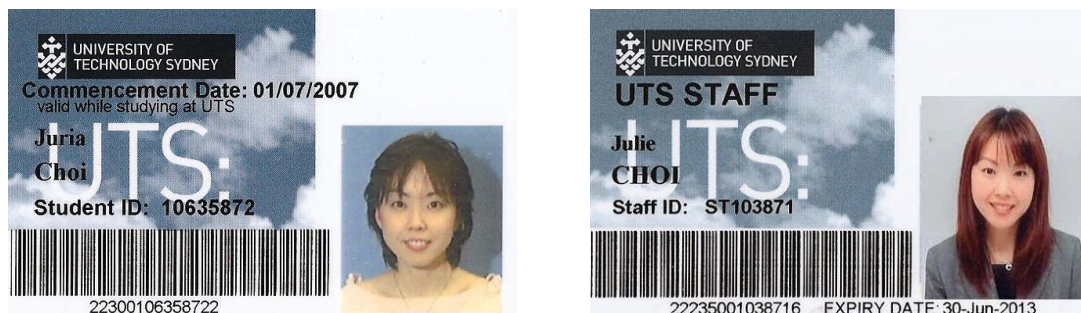
Here, it seems that once a new name comes to be the label that identifies us, a “distance” is created between the old and new. I am Juri and Julie but not Juria. The tag is mine but it is not really me; there is a distance between these labels. I've grown too far apart from Juria. At different times, I have tried to see it from my friends' points of view who will either say: “it's rather nice” or “kind of cute”, “it's unique”, or “you should be proud of what your parents gave you”, but the distance that has been created is irrevocable. It is not a loss, not something that needs mending. It is a condition that warrants moments of silence in which I am trying to understand this powerful hold language has on my sense of identity, how and why I became subjected to and a subject of certain discourses, reminding me of Bendix-Peterson's (2008) questions on subjects of desire. She asks:

How do discursive constructions take hold – take hold of the body, take hold of desire? ... How do we become passionately attached to particular ideas about who we are; about right and wrong; about good and bad;

competent and incompetent? ... And how is it that some of these passionate attachments become stubborn attachments, persistent, enduring, rigidly colonizing the flesh, while others can be more easily exceeded or turned down? (pp. 55-56)

The underbelly of speaking, thinking and behaving, the process of how things happen, the particularity of experiences, interlocutors, places and histories are broadly what now interest me. More specifically, I am interested in how these acts are experienced for multilingual individuals, i.e. how they recognize, realize and can re-realize their multilingual identities at the intersection of multiple forces. How do they draw on or negotiate multiple linguistic and cultural resources when they are speaking and/or performing? What understanding do multilinguals have about the relationship between language, culture and their linguistic identity and how do they come to these understandings? How might they learn to critically reflect on and analyze those understandings and by doing so, open up the possibility for multiple identity becomings for and by themselves?

By the question “what’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name, would smell as sweet” (Pearce, 2011, p. 45) in *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare is telling us that what we call something is irrelevant, because the essence of the thing does not change even if it were called something else. By contrast, as I show here, the slightest deviation in the name, can come to define a sense of ourselves and others, and provoke individuals to behave in certain ways. Language has powerful effects and strong material consequences for all individuals who operate with language in their day-to-day lives. As powerful as language might be, human life is equally powerful, bursting with agency, potential, contradictions, simultaneity, endless capacities to change and mutate situations and practices, full of laughter and surprise. Changing a few measly letters and sounds may not seem like much, but that one does it and feels it makes a world of difference is not something insignificant to language and identity studies.



Pic. 0.6. Ongoing uses of both names [left] Student card, Sydney (2007); [right] Staff card, Sydney (2008). Sydney (2007-2013).

As I notice my ongoing quest to change the label that identifies me officially, as well as my reluctance to officially change the name “Juria”, I am reminded of Pennycook’s (2012) statement, that in doing “critical work” we need to be able to “be of three minds, to hold [different] ideas simultaneously” (p. 130). Such a notion has made me think about the three minds I hold simultaneously in thinking about this straddling between signifiers: the deep internalization of language, ideas and habits, the capacity of humans to change, shift and mutate, and the unknowability, uncertainty, unpredictability and unexpectedness of human behavior. Holding onto these “three minds” in my everyday life will, to be sure, be a challenge but developing skills to think differently and simultaneously, with an openness towards multiple possibilities is what I believe is useful for individuals living in increasingly complicated modern times.

The critical, autoethnographic study that follows is one example of how I suggest we (and by “we” I am not only suggesting multilinguals) can put into use the many resources such as linguistic and cultural knowledge, personal experiences, artifacts, emotions, desires and so on that we have available to us as vehicles for progressive change. In short, this study is one demonstration of how we can critically self-examine our lives to open up new ways of thinking and becoming, and illustrates the importance of thinking twice about what we hold onto and give up. The feeling of being “oddly misshaped” when I hear the name “Juria” perhaps can also be thought about differently, not as something “cute” or something to be “proud” of, but as something that is vital to my ambivalent way of living, because the mere sound of this name has the power to

suspend a moment in time for me, making me reflect and question the discourses that constitute me. The discomfort is a necessary condition in remaining human.

Introduction-Conclusion

Introductions are more like conclusions since they can only really come together at the end, once the author has written the body of the work and knows what the book is about. However they are also “introductions” in that they come before the story to explain, justify, set the tone, and/or create certain expectations about the story to follow. More precisely, they are writings “in between” since the space writers inhabit is the space between endings and beginnings. In autoethnographic work such as I intend to present here, such an “in-between” notion aptly fits the “work in progress” nature of writing about a life currently in process. As Butler (2005) suggested in giving an account of herself, the account starts *in media res* (p. 39), in the middle of things, where we do not and cannot know what has come before us, nor can we know how it will all end. It is for this reason that I have conjoined the introduction and conclusion with a hyphen, signifying this study on one level as a work or life in progress, and in the bigger picture, signifying the importance of holding onto this in-betweenness as a necessary condition in speaking about a multilingual life.

About this study

This study explores the deep effects of how certain understandings of language shape possibilities and impossibilities of language usage, identity performances and the potential for new identity formations. Using my own multilingual experiences from data in the form of diary entries, photographs, correspondences with others, media clips, and memories, I demonstrate not so much how individuals are able to take an active role in self-interpreting and constructing their own lives, because this is self-evident; rather, I consider the process of how individuals can learn to think differently and open up multiple possibilities through a critical autoethnographic analysis that works across time and space. The development of such a mindset and skill is necessary and helpful for individuals in a world where as Kramsch (2012) states, “mobility and global flows are slowly erasing cultural and national origins and multiplying the centres of authority” (p. 483).

Like most qualitative research processes, getting “here” to the study’s final stage was a messy and unpredictable journey, a messiness that was necessary but nonetheless full of uncertainties and happenings that cannot always be fully explained detail by

detail. While trying to figure out a focus for my study using over twenty years of personal diary entries that spoke about various aspects of multilingual experiences, I experienced a condition I hadn't experienced before – I was becoming increasingly silent in Korean. After moving to Sydney in 2007 from Tokyo, I became increasingly aware of my repeated acts of hiding my ability to speak Korean, of deciding not to reveal my Korean background in everyday encounters with Koreans, starting with my Korean cleaners, and of consciously making an effort to avoid Koreans whenever possible. At the moment of a spontaneous encounter with a Korean either at my workplace or when engaging with everyday services (i.e., at the Korean supermarket, hairdressers, etc.) in Sydney, my immediate reaction is to hide my Korean heritage and/or language ability (see Choi (2010a) for further details).

Around the same time, I began to notice my surprised reactions towards certain changes in discourses of Korean female heroines in Korean dramas. After many years of not engaging in Korean spaces and practices or consuming Korean cultural products such as Korean dramas (which I used to do routinely throughout most of my younger years), the images and language performed by Korean actresses were strange to me. For instance, while watching a Korean drama called *Star's Lover* (2008-2009), I noticed the female heroine switching in and out of using honorifics to the male protagonist (which even the male protagonist questions in the drama). This tiny act of “deviating from the norm” was not only intriguing but bewildering, since my lifelong understanding of Korean language and culture does not permit such fluid and agentic ways of using the language (i.e. Korean) unless the interlocutors have already established a relationship that allows casual speech, which clearly was not the case in that episode. The subsequent series of dramas I watched were equally surprising to me, such as in *World's Within* (2008), where a young female alternates between calling an older male *sunbae* [senior colleague] to *ne* [you] or *Jeong Ji Ho* [his full name] depending on her mood and the context. The scripted lines of females consisted of more informal and derogatory language such as *jiral* [to bitch], *chemekuh* [shove it down] or *nom* [bastard]. Other females in the show also use words such as *shang* [fuck], which even other characters in the drama are surprised to hear. Women initiate marriage proposals and scenes of intimacy are more pronounced than the slight kissing scenes portrayed in dramas produced in the 1990s and early 2000s. In the very first scene in *Cain & Abel* (2009), the female tour guide, after being patted on her bottom by a sleazy old man,

smiles in front of him and then, using an American gesture, sticks out her middle finger when he turns away. It was not only the words these women uttered but also the facial expressions and bodily movements that attracted my interest.

It was clear that I had an “imagined” fictionalized image of Korean women. As much as I have resisted narrow and limiting ways of thinking about language and identity, I was at the same time also reproducing traditional dominant norms in my own way, an act Bourdieu calls “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167). This is an invisible and silent form of violence, expressed through injunctions, intimidations, warnings, and threats, which is often unintentional and may be unnoticeable because it sits below the level of consciousness and is exerted through “suggestions inscribed in the most apparently insignificant aspects of the things, situations and practices of everyday life” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 51). Reading stories about diaspora and the identity of heritage speakers, some of which resonated strongly with my own moments of distancing myself from speakers of Korean and speaking Korean, there seemed to be some underlying form of symbolic violence in the ways in which they wrote about their experiences, feelings and identities. These accounts reminded me of Kramsch’s (2006) statement that

many heritage speakers...tend to either idealise or demonise their country of origin ... Over the years, they have developed in their diasporic minds a much more homogeneous memory or fantasy of the “homeland” than the multicultural reality these countries have become. Many live in a mythical past that reduces rather than enhances the potential meanings afforded by the language (p.116).

The tendency to “idealize and demonize” was clearly evident in many of the stories I read. Interest in questions of becoming, or how we become subjects of certain discursive practices, came to the fore. How do they happen and how might individuals themselves learn to detach themselves from certain rigid, misunderstood, idealized, and harmful ideas that are stubbornly attached to their bodies? How might certain understandings be re-signified into productive ways of thinking that open up new or different possibilities without the intervention of confessional or psychotherapeutic approaches but through ethnographic analysis?

Using my own discursively constructed rigid attachments as a starting point for exploring these questions, I began this study by tracing my history, locating certain experiences related to Korea, Korean discourses and cultural practices from different times and spaces in my life. It became quickly apparent to me that those experiences could not be explained without bringing in my experiences and knowledge from the other languages in my linguistic repertoire.

How I went about the study

In Chapter 2, *A Critical Reflexive Narrative Account* and Chapter 6, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, I discuss the framework, ideas and interests that drove the study. In Chapter 4, *Troubling Data*, I describe the procedures I followed in investigating my experiences, the setup of my narratives, the issues involved and the importance of “troubling” data in my study. Here, I will concentrate on describing some of the background details of the data and the overall process of conducting this study.

Several years ago when my father passed away while I lived in Tokyo (from 2000-2007), my siblings sent me my childhood diaries, letterboxes, school notebooks and photo albums from New York. My mother also sent me similar items I had left in Beijing during my seven years (1993-2000) of schooling there. Adding more artifacts from my years of living in Tokyo, I brought them to Sydney in 2007 where I now live, and where I began my doctoral studies. The artifacts have moved across different times and spaces, and been held in different people’s care; some were thrown out along the way for various reasons, and some I realized went missing as they got tossed around here and there. These were important factors to take into consideration in thinking about the partialness of the life I have constructed here. Nevertheless, with about 52 volumes of diaries, boxes full of letters, photos and other personal items, there was an overwhelmingly large amount of data I could work with, not to mention the memories I carry within me.

Literature acted as a framework for analysis and interpretation. In beginning to reflect on and analyze each of the incidents, I used a narrative structure to weave the artifacts/memories, literature, analysis and interpretation to make sense of a particular incident. In this process of writing, I aimed to stay as flexible as possible in allowing the literature, writing and potential for memory triggers to help me seek other incidents that

might bring different or more complex understanding to the issues under examination. However, in more than a few cases, this flexibility to “go with the flow” also led me to certain end points that were not necessarily insightful and productive, at which point I needed to start again, often by reanalyzing the incidents with different literature and reassembling the connection between the incidents. This process of being led astray in the initial attempt, or even in several subsequent attempts, was part of the process of coming to discover a theme around which the incidents could be centered, and the act of re-writing, reassembling and reconnecting in itself was a deep way of understanding that experiences and stories, and our comprehension of those experiences and stories, are re-imaginable and re-writable. It was also in the many attempts to locate a theme or to make sense of my experiences that I came to seek and listen more carefully to others’ experiences and the ways in which they made sense of their lives.

As shown in the Prelude, the structure of my writing resembles a narrative but is also constituted by elements that are usually present in academic research texts. In part, I chose this style of writing because I wanted to be able to give my account in a more relatable and reader-friendly way. I wanted to speak about my story with an authoritative researcher’s voice without excluding my everyday “feeling” voice. Most importantly, through this blend, I wanted to demonstrate the capacity for personal stories to come under “critical and theoretical scrutiny that allows for rigorous discussion” (Pennycook, 2012, p. 34). However, as Kamler (2001) notes, in bringing the personal into academic writing, there is a delicate balance in demonstrating an authoritative voice while being careful not to overstep one’s position as a student writer. There were, of course, other ways to integrate the everyday literary writing and academic writing, such as separating the narrative from the analysis and interpretation, or writing the story without the artifacts, which are perhaps styles more commonly taken up by researchers in studies that deal with narratives. However, from the early stages of this study, I recognized that choosing the data, asking questions, thinking through the literature, and writing up the data were all happening simultaneously. The small fragments of understanding that were built from engaging simultaneously in all of those acts helped me to appreciate the complexity that lies within every single life event, from the dynamics of how certain events come to pass to the very complex ways in which individuals analyze and make sense of their worlds.

Over thirty years ago, Dingwall (1982) stated that more work could be done to explore how, in general, research products tend to be produced, and what relationships tend to exist between the product and the research process. Amongst various other benefits, first-person narrative accounts can be very useful in this regard. As Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, p. 157) point out, “in the human sciences first-person accounts in the form of personal narratives provide a much richer source of data than do third-person distal observations”. The fields of Education, Social Sciences and Applied Linguistics have made great strides since Dingwall’s statement but there is, and I think always will be, at any “qualitative moment” (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 2-4) a need to re-think what we mean by “what it means to do research” (see Eisner, 1997). For scholars who are interested in relocating the personal in academic forms of writing, the push today is to bring the “body”, with all its politics and emotions, back into academic texts (see Smith, 1999; Kamler, 2001; Ellis, 2004; Kramsch, 2009; Pennycook, 2012). While there can be no research that fully captures the complete picture of human life, these efforts to bring back the personal offer us one more missing part of the mosaic in the challenges of undertaking research on language and identity. Autoethnographic studies are particularly useful in this regard because they can contribute a documentation of deeper insights into certain phenomena that other research projects may not be able to tap into.

Academic texts are being written differently and the focus of investigation is also shifting. Not only do Applied Linguists see the need to place importance in studies of language use in context but as Pavlenko and Lantolf (2005) state, we need to cross the borders from focusing too heavily on the phonological/morphosyntactical forms of language and into “the domain where selves and worlds are reconstructed” (p. 157). In my own journey, engaging in this domain of re-inventing my past and present worlds has forced me to rethink certain views and bring to light other views that were hidden to me. In particular, the term “multilingual” was most problematic to what I was discovering in my data. Coming to see multilingualism differently also made me think about the need for studies on the development of productive and critical first-person narrative accounts that illustrate the lives of multilingual selves.

What I learned from my study

When I use the term “multilingual” in this study, following Kramsch (2009) I am generally referring to “people who use more than one language in everyday life, whether they are learning a foreign or second language in school, or speaking two or more languages in daily transactions, or writing and publishing in a language that is not the one they grew up with” (p. 17). To what degree one needs to be able to speak to be considered a “user” or “speaker” of a language, or what is meant by “speaking” (i.e. silence may also be a form of speaking), also need to be carefully scrutinized. The bigger cautionary issues in using the term multilingual/multilingualism lies in the idea of languages as co-existing linguistic systems that, as Makoni and Pennycook (2007) note, “all too often start with the enumerative strategy of counting languages and romanticizing a plurality based on these putative language counts” (p. 16). Such strategies of approaching multilingualism to talk, for instance, about diversity, in their view, only “[reproduce] the tropes of colonial invention, overlooking the contested history of language inventions, and ignoring the ‘collateral damage’ (Grace, 2005) that their embedded notions of language may be perpetrating” (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p.16).

The idea of languages as co-existing linguistic systems can be seen in studies of code-switching, for example, which has long been a prominent lens in exploring bi/multilingual talk. Code-switching is understood as the alternation of codes in a single speech exchange. In general, studies on code-switching focus on the conduct of groups of people who use two or more languages routinely, either as a result of growing up with a multilingual inheritance or because they have moved into areas or institutions where the use of additional languages is an unremarked necessity. Bailey (2007) posits that

the driving question of much anthropological code-switching research, ‘Why do they do that?’ is not put with equal force to the myriad other things speakers do in talk that are not bilingual. By casting bilingual speech as a marked form that calls for explanation of a type that monolingual speech does not, such research implicitly reproduces the folk and linguistic beliefs of monolingual speech as the natural form (p. 262).

Through his studies of Dominican American peer group interactions in the US. Bailey (2012), following Bakhtin, sees language as a medium that is alive and moving with the consciousness and practices of people, calling for a heteroglossic way of “interpret[ing] the meanings of talk in terms of the social worlds, past and present, of which words are part-and-parcel, rather than in terms of formal systems, such as “languages,” that can veil actual speakers, uses, and contexts” (p. 506). Woolard’s (1999) examination of “bivalency”, what she refers to as bilinguals’ usage of “words or segments that could ‘belong’ equally, descriptively and even prescriptively, to both codes” (p. 7) also points out the importance of recognizing simultaneity in language utterances. Through her study of Catalan and Castilian as spoken by professional comedians’ in their performances in Barcelona, Woolard demonstrates that we do not have to insist on the naturalness of rigid boundaries between languages to look at where and how speakers erect and transgress these. Moreover,

the lessons about simultaneity that can be learned from bilingual phenomena might suggest productive revisions to (socio)linguistic thinking more generally, wherever we tend to assume that paradigmatic opposition and contrast can only be articulated virtually, through mutual exclusion (p. 23).

Far from viewing language in terms of mutual exclusions, Rampton’s (1995) study of young adolescent groups from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in London demonstrates the playfulness and fluidity of “crossing” into different languages. “Language crossing”, a notion that looks at speakers’ movement across social and ethnic boundaries using a language that is generally not thought to “belong” to the speaker, is also a way for speakers to “explor[e] other people’s ethnicities, embracing them and/or creating new ones” (Rampton, 1997/98, p. 8). Speakers broaden their repertoire of identities by transgressing rigid boundaries between languages according to particular practices and contexts that are meaningful to them.

Studies on or related to multilingualism since the beginning of the twenty-first century (see for instance Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2003; Blommaert, 2005; Block, 2006; Kramsch, 2009; Blackledge and Creese, 2010) have indeed moved beyond “the co-existence of multiple linguistic systems [as] discrete, ahistorical, and relatively self-contained” (Bailey, 2012, p. 500), shifting the focus to a polyphonic lens that captures the simultaneity of multiple language usage, the inclusion of various semiotic resources,

and the sociopolitical/historical and negotiation processes that shape utterances in a certain point in time and space. “Polycentricity”, the crisscrossing of multiple centering forces that not only create a simultaneity of multiple meanings but also multiple belongings (Blommaert, 2005, p. 75) is inherently present in today’s studies. While the focus on “essentialist” or fixed ideas of language has become less intense, these studies do not downplay the real effects language has on our society. There is invariably struggle in language; as Bakhtin alludes, “[e]very concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance” (1981, p. 272).

It is for these reasons that my interest in this study and my understanding of multilingual identities has shifted from speaking about a “multilingual” self to a “multivocal” self. The notion of “multivocality” broadly captures the simultaneity, complex entanglements and transgressive nature of multiple languages complicatedly and harmoniously entangled. More precisely, in this work, I do not view the entanglement of languages as producing “a” voice but many particular voices. Each voice has its own history located in certain times and spaces which are shaped by particular practices, positionings, social and political forces, desires and so on. In any given utterance, speakers may utter a multiplicity of entangled voices. Although my focus of multivocality in this study is centered on individuals who live their lives in more than one language, a notion of multivocality can apply to any individual who holds and carries out several different roles simultaneously in their daily life. We are all shifting in and out of, entangled in, and influenced by our many different voices.

Multivocality is an increasingly familiar notion in Applied Linguistics literature (particularly in studies of language and identity) that is often accredited to Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of “heteroglossia”, “polyphony”, and “double-voicedness”. All of these terms reflect the notion of simultaneity of multiple meanings, intentions, personalities and consciousness and the traces of a speaker’s past, the present context and future desires that are embedded within utterances. As such, multivocality does not start out with languages but with people, their desires, interests, experiences and emotions, and elucidates the complexity of how each of the particular voices we inhabit in different languages push and pull us in different directions, taking us into unexpected, unpredictable and uncertain identity terrains.

By stating a “shift” from multilingual to multivocal understandings, I do not regard the term “multilingual” as being obsolete and no longer useful. The existence of multiple languages is inherently a part of what makes up multiple voices. However, in using the term multivocality in the context of multilingual identity development, I am signaling a break away from the enumerative strategy of counting languages and fixed ideas of language as formal systems or undifferentiated wholes with rigid boundaries.

Organization of the chapters

The chapters are mainly organized around the different spaces I lived in for extended periods of time, which also happen to reflect the major stages of my life from childhood, to teenager, young adult, and adult years. Each of the places I have lived in – New York, Seoul, Beijing, Tokyo and Sydney – is deeply entangled in my growth, identity development and construction of ideas of myself and of others. In gradually picking at my multilingual experiences and the growth of my voices within these spatial and temporal divisions, I came to increasingly recognize that acquiring a new or different language is, as Kramsch (2011) points out on multilingual minds, to

learn to experience language in another relation to time—the time of the child intersecting with the time of the adolescent and the adult. They also learn to have a different relation to place—not only places on the map, but a third place between grammars, styles and categories of thought. The world they engage with is not a world of functional instrumentalities or cost-benefit analyses, but voyages of self-discovery and explorations into the very boundaries of meaning (p. 5).

The body of literature on “time and space” is vast and broad. While I have been able to include some elements of the literature in this study, I am also aware that there are potentially huge contributions that a much deeper analysis and reflection could bring to studies of the relationship between language and identity. In future research endeavors, I hope to further explore and draw out some of these understandings.

Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 7

Chapter 1 *The Necessity of Feeling “Out of Place”*, focuses on childhood incidents in New York and Korea while growing up in a Korean/Korean-American

family and community, and in various school contexts. Here, I came to see the deep-rootedness of my sense of feeling “out of place”, not fitting in, not belonging in relation to certain groups and how I gradually withdrew or retreated into myself by writing and being in silence. In my analysis, I learned how actively engaged I was in performing in my own phantasmal world, practiced how to “talk back” by observing others, and found ways to re-adjust my position and certain circumstances. I draw on Said’s (1999) stories of feeling or being out of place and on Kramsch’s (2012) understandings of “imposture”, a late modern notion in poststructuralist Second Language Acquisition research, to point out how we might begin to understand notions such as being out of place and conditions such as imposture more productively and as something necessary in increasingly diverse times.

In Chapter 3 *The Ordinariness of Polyphony*, I discuss my experiences in Beijing of engaging daily in spaces where South Korean students were abundant. Here, I show my immersion in listening to and participating in particular discourses that reinforced an enumerative, discrete and monologic view of language, culture and identity, how I came to see them as unproductive and harmful, and why I feel it is necessary for me to shift my focus from the term “multilingual” to “multivocal” to enable me to think about the relationship between language and identity differently. Drawing on Bakhtin’s (1984a) notion of polyphony, the intermingling of voices that occupy different roles and have a history of their own, I tease out the entangled voices reflected in my own texts, both linguistic and visual, to illustrate the ordinariness of the polyphonic self/life.

Chapter 5 *Heteroglossic Becomings* takes place in Tokyo where I was immersed for several years in non-Korean environments and interacted mainly in Japanese and English. In Tokyo, the Korean-American identity label dissolves or is transformed into something different, multiple, simultaneous, and is recombined through certain practices. Feelings of imposture disappear almost entirely; playfulness and flexibility in my language use in Japanese comes to the fore. This is a period of using my “outsider” position, all of my language abilities, cultural knowledge, and appearance as resources to complete certain tasks, sustain certain friendships and create certain connections with my Japanese interlocutors. My analysis here shows that the position of the foreigner is, or can be, an advantageous one in a space where one has no pre-given racial, familial, cultural or linguistic affiliation. However, a great deal of knowledge and willingness to embrace uncertain and unexpected positionings are necessary to open the vast

possibilities that notions of simultaneity such as heteroglossia can offer. Here I take up several different but related works by scholars who theorize the intersection of language, culture and identity as complicatedly entangled.

In the final chapter, Chapter 7 *The Possibilities in Silence*, I return to what triggered this study, what I saw several years ago as “losing” my voice in Korean in interaction with Koreans in Sydney. By examining other incidents related to silence that have happened during the six years of living in Sydney, I explore what might constitute the silence I have been experiencing more recently and how that silence ties into multivocal identity performances. Here, Pennycook’s (2012) insights on questioning why the unexpected is unexpected gave me an opportunity to re-think my silence as something deficient and odd to re-framing it as something “normal”, strategic and critical.

A recurring practice that comes to the fore in every chapter is my engagement in watching Korean dramas in a variety of geographical locations outside of South Korea (see Choi, 2010b for a compact version of my engagement in watching Korean dramas in different spaces). Any long-term engagement in watching cultural media products, as Ang (1985) shows, is never a simple or “innocent” act of watching. Probing into these moments located in different stages of my life and the local circumstances of the places I resided in was no exception. I have lived in close proximity to local Korean communities for most of my life and have had easy access to engagement in linguistic and cultural practices related to Korea. However, tuning in to watch Korean dramas was the most convenient and ongoing practice that I now understand was not only pleasurable but also resourceful in helping me to identify how I perceived myself in relation to the idealized images of Korean women portrayed in these dramas, as I watched from afar. Engaging in an analysis of these moments of watching and of past pleasures has helped me in two distinct ways to think or feel differently about ‘Koreanness’ and my linguistic identity. Firstly, it has dismantled certain habitual and convenient ways of seeing and thinking about Korean cultural practices and identity performances. Secondly, in reflecting on personal documents that contain moments of watching and fantasizing through Korean dramas, I have also come to realize the ways in which certain languages, in particular Korean and English throughout my early years of life, were intertwined and crossed over from one realm to another for me. Similar to Said’s (1999) description of both Arabic and English living together in his life, “one

resonat[es] in the other, sometimes ironically, sometimes nostalgically, most often each correcting, and commenting on, the other” (p. 4). Either both English and Korean are my first language or neither is.

Chapters 2, 4 and 6

The chapters that come between the narratives focus on the frameworks, research practices and intentions of the work that underlies and shapes the study. All of the chapters are “fragments” in the sense that they can be read in any order. In positioning Chapters 2, 4 and 6 between the narratives, my intention is to create a sense of movement for the reader to realize my engagement with the story and the backstory at the same time.

In Chapter 2, *A Critical Reflexive Narrative Account*, I discuss what autoethnography is, its aims, and main methodology, as well as how I began to see my study developing its own shape when I brought in my own story, concerns, skills, desires, and particular aims. It took the shape of a ‘critical’ ‘reflexive’ ‘narrative’ ‘account’, each of which I describe in detail. In Chapter 4, *Troubling Data*, I illustrate how I came to understand data in my study in relation to the design, aims and interests underlying my study and end with the importance of questioning pre-established or pre-given notions in research practices. Chapter 6, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, focuses on thinking cautiously about the kinds of storylines that underlie multilingual writers’ accounts of their linguistic identities. Following Kramsch (2012), I suggest it is important to reflect on the kinds of questions we, as researchers, ask in our analysis and interpretation of how individuals speak about multilingual perspectives and lives in our effort to open up multiple possibilities in understanding multilingual experiences, realities and selves. I also wish to draw to the attention of readers and multilingual writers the need to read closely between the lines and to think about the politics and ethics that are embedded in or underlie the accounts given by multilinguals/themselves. Here, I also offer a description of the kinds of account I feel could be more productive in representing multilingual perspectives.

These chapters point out both the benefits and dangers in doing this type of work, keeping in mind Letherby’s (2000) statement that the “dangers involved can contribute

to greater academic insight (both substantive and methodological) rather than just being obstacles to avoid and overcome” (p. 91).

The purpose of this work

Over the past decade, studies on language and identity in the field of Applied Linguistics using ethnographic and narrative methods have increasingly used terms such as ‘critical experiences’ (Block, 2002) as “a way of explaining changes to an individual’s sense of self” (p. 4); ‘critical moments’ (Pennycook, 2004) to describe “a point of significance, an instant when things change...where someone gets it...where someone throws out a comment that shifts the discourse” (p. 330); and ‘critical incidents’ (Nunan & Choi, 2010), that is, incidents that may range from the significant to the trivial that provoke a shift in perspective, perception or attitude relating to one’s personal or professional life. While slightly different in its usage, ‘critical’ in all three concepts carries the core idea of something important and suggests a “change” from one state to another. Each concept resonates with what Bruner (1991) calls “turning points”: points in individuals’ lives where there is “a crucial change or stance in the protagonist’s story to a belief, a conviction, a thought” (p. 73). They are important points of departure or ways into life history texts because “they represent a way in which people free themselves in their self-consciousness from their history, their banal destiny, their conventionality” (p. 74). Such a starting point, following Foucault’s (1991) use of the term “eventualization”, can act as a way of making visible what we see as self-evident or, in his words, “to show that things weren’t as necessary as all that” (p. 76).

In my work, moments of falling silent, of feeling the dispossession of my voice in Korean and my attempts to hide my Korean background (to my Korean cleaners, for instance) acted as my critical experience/incident/moment in starting this work. Where my explorations have led me shows me that the purpose of autoethnographic works is not necessarily to be liberated, empowered or enlightened (depending of course on what one means by such terms). Following Kamler (2001), what transforms the personal in writing are both the “writer’s subjectivity and the text produced” (p. 36). In her view, a writer’s voice is not a mechanism for therapy, empowerment or changing a person and the world. She calls for a more modest transformation whereby writers can create distance and a “theorised space to analyse texts of personal experience as discursively

produced and therefore changeable” (p. 36). Transformation, in this sense, is not about the overturning and remaking of dominant sociocultural structures but about personal and individual self-realization and emancipation.

As part of my engagement with this work, I now understand on a much deeper level what Kramsch (2012) alludes to in pointing out that “multilingual subjects have a particular role to play to transform imposture into the multilingual art of interrogating and imagining various forms of discourse” (p. 483). In interrogating and imagining various forms of discourse in this study, I did not seek to erase binary categories, focus on the number of voices I could discover in myself, start from notions of alienation leading to redemption, blame the system, the institutional powers, uncover the artificiality of language practices or measure some notion against some idealized idea. Rather, I sought to explore the very categories with which I was confronted, questioning the social and political conditions that make certain ideas/feelings possible at certain historical junctures. Common poststructuralist questions such as “whose/what discourses or interests are evident in the text” were helpful, but questions of possibilities roughly similar to one that Kramsch states in her article, “what will make it possible for this English learner to feel entitled to position herself as a ‘multicultural citizen’?” (p. 495) were constantly held throughout the writing process.

A psychological approach was also possible in conducting this study, particularly in reference to Layder’s (2006) work on ‘psychobiographies’ and Wetherell’s (2007) work using a Freudian-inspired approach to dig deeper into psychological factors such as feelings, perceptions, beliefs, agency and so on, drawing out the development of an inner self over time and space. I recognize such approaches and insights as being equally important for identity studies. However, focusing on these psychological dimensions was not what I set out to do in this study. The point of engaging in self-reflexive ethnographic work, starting with critical incidents, is to explore and describe the experiences of people like me (i.e. people whose lives have been heavily conditioned by a certain kind of mobility and education, and by learning, speaking or performing their identities through various textual resources) with the purpose of revisiting and reworking certain notions of multilingualism that limit or are harmful to one’s identity development. The purpose is to develop awareness of the multiple forces that crisscross particular events, explore what lies at the intersections, and find ways of broadening possibilities for identity development. Thus, without committing to any one

approach, and utilizing my training on ethnographic practices, I tried to allow for a mixture of ideas and approaches to enter my writing and thinking process as the study progressed.

Over the years of talking about my experiences with those who are familiar with my work, I have received countless different interpretations of what my study means to each listener. Some have understood it as an autoethnography about ‘class and mobility’, ‘becoming heteroglossic’, ‘what it means to live on the hyphen’ or ‘silence as a form of art’. I welcome and am often swayed by each of these interpretations when they are given to me, but finding one defining theme for the life experiences I present here, as I have explained above, is not my aim. As such, there will be certain notions I could have delved into more deeply, but I took into account that not everything can be done in a thesis and accepted that there will be other opportunities to mold this work further for future publication.

Ethics

Confidentiality, responsible writing and reporting, are at the heart of any scholarly writing that involves the representation of *both* the self and other. The basic attempt to protect others’ identities will be evident in the narrative; for instance, the names and personal information of all others and of the institutions that appear in my stories have been changed to pseudonyms or blurred where necessary on the images/artifacts I have included, to protect the identities of the individuals and organizations. These requirements were approved by the university’s ethics panel. In cases where I was involved in schools or with students, I did not leave any obvious traces that could be located back to the particular events I wrote about. In some autoethnographic work, researchers perceive the usefulness of “member checking”, in which a draft of one’s work is sent to a particular individual who appears in one’s story as a way of validating one’s memory, negotiating the interpretation, enriching the story by adding the other’s voice, or simply to fulfill the research requirement to obtain another’s permission to include them in the story. Other people are, of course, a part of my story, and respect for their rights, values, interpretations and lives are also important in how I shape my own growth. However, in this study, the stories are centered on my positions, assumptions and practices in which I am the main character and others are explored only in auxiliary relationship to myself. Acts such as member checking or obtaining the approval of

others have almost no practical value. As in any other type of ethnographic study, autoethnographic researchers need to be mindful of ethical standards where others are being represented in one's narrative, paying special attention to the attitudes and tones in how the self as researcher represents one's memories, experiences and feelings. I have, to the best of my ability, kept these reminders at the forefront throughout the six years of working on this study.

In closing, following Said's (1999) statement in writing his memoir, "I, and only I, am responsible for what I recall and see ... I hope it is also clear that, both as narrator and as character, I have consciously not spared myself the same ironies or embarrassing recitals" (p. xiii).

Chapter 1

The Necessity of Feeling “Out of Place”

New York – Seoul – New York (1978-1992)

Section 1: Half siblings



Pic. 1.1. Before my siblings arrived in New York (from left to right: me, my mother, and my father (1980).

My parents immigrated to the United States in 1977 during the third wave of Korean migration to the US that began in 1965³. I was born the year after in 1978 in New York as the only child to my parents. When I was six, my half-siblings who were ten, six and four years older than me (born to a different mother), arrived from Korea to our home in New York. Before then the use of Korean, which I learned at home by speaking to my parents was, according to my mother, predominantly used for requesting things I wanted – food, toys, attention and so

on, which my mother would give me unhesitatingly to prevent me from having tantrums. With the arrival of my half-siblings and to sustain a family of six, my parents both worked throughout the day and I was looked after by my half-siblings. I quickly learned that my tantrums didn't have the same effect on them as they did on my parents. Getting what I wanted or more importantly, being provided with things that I needed, such as meals, would require me to ask them nicely *in Korean*. I was anything but nice to them, however, because I resented having to ask in the first place when it was “my” house.

³ see Noland (2003) on the three distinct phases of Korean migration to the US

Such feelings of ownership are clearly reflected in certain artifacts from my past, as in for example pic. 1.2 where I state, “this is my home and my remote control and my parents and my country!!!!!!!!!! ... my house ... I want them to go back to their country!” They become “them” and Korea becomes “their country” not mine. (Note: This template is also a part of another artifact in Chapter 4, pic. 4.2).

Name: JURIA Choi
 Class: 4-22/A-407
 Today's Date: Sept 1987

Start by writing about your day from the time you woke up.
 What happened today? Who did you meet? What did you eat or do? What was the weather like?

I was watching tv and stupid dorko #1 stole the remote control. This is my home and my remote control and my parents and my country!!!!!!!!!! I threw the remote control and it landed on his head. OOPS! But that was an accident!! I swear!

Write about the highlight of your day.
 What was most important event that happened today? Why was it important to you? If you were daydreaming today, you can write about that too. What were you daydreaming about?

Cut out their photos because this is my house! Puhahahahaha! This is stupid dork #1

Write about your feelings.
 What made you happy or sad? Why did it make you happy or sad? What would you do differently if you could?

Stupid dorko #2 and #3 then came and blamed me for everything. HATE them all! I want them to go back to their country! They make me feel like the ugly duckling. 3 against 1!! I'll run away and never come back and then you'll all be sorry!! Hope you cry your eyes out when I die!!



Pic. 1.2. Template for writing diaries handed out in school during 4th grade. New York (1987).

Transcript:

I was watching tv and stupid dorko #1 stole the remote control! This is my home and my remote control and my parents and my country!!!!!!!!!! I threw the remote control and it landed on his head! OOPS! But that was an accident!! I swear!

Cut out their photos because this is my house! Puhahahahaha! [Note on picture of my brother: This is stupid dork #1]

Stupid dorko #2 and #3 [my two sisters] then came and blamed me for everything. HATE them all! I want them to go back to their country! They make me feel like the ugly duckling. 3 against 1! I'll run away and never come back and then you'll all be sorry!! Hope you cry your eyes out when I die!!

I saw myself as a member of the dominant society (as American), but the home was becoming a place where Koreans were the dominant group. Even to win a verbal battle, I needed to win it in Korean, which was impossible for me. I can only speculate now that cutting out everything else in pic. 1.3 might have been my way of seeing my parents and me as the “legitimate family”.

In looking more carefully at these silent acts of cutting, removing and self-writing, which Lemke (1995) might call having an “inner dialogue” (p.89), what strikes me most is my sense of perceiving English as a form of power. It is not only that English was the only language I could fluently write, but in it, I could “talk back” (in this case, “write back”). Here, we need to take into consideration a nine-year-old child, fuming (i.e. “Hate them all”, “I want them to go back to their own country”), feeling that everyone is against her (i.e. “3 against 1!!”), feeling she is being treated badly (i.e. “They make me feel like the ugly duckling”) and seeking to gain attention (i.e. “I’ll run away and never come back and then you’ll all be sorry!!!”). She retreats to her room trying to find an outlet to speak. The diary and English were powerful tools that allowed me to speak. English was my secret code, since my siblings were unable read it. However, by carefully cutting around and pasting my brother’s picture, I may have also wanted them to know I was saying something about them. In reflecting on her story of her childhood, Jeannette Winterson (2011) describes what it felt like for her when her parents locked her in the coal-hole. She states,

I made up stories and forgot about the cold and the dark. I know these are ways of surviving, but maybe a refusal, any refusal, to be broken lets in enough light and air to keep believing in the world – the dream of escape (p. 21).



Pic. 1.3. Pictures of only mom, dad and me. Notice the cut out [circled in red] of my brother’s face behind me. The missing part is the picture in pic. 1.2. New York (1987).

Writing about “them” and how they positioned me was a way of survival, a way of maintaining my difference from them and sustaining my position as the “rightful”, legitimate owner (i.e. “This is my home and my remote control and my parents and my country!!!!!!!!”).

It is not uncommon for children of immigrant parents born in the US either to be the only members of the family who speak English or for children and parents to converse by mixing English with another language, but because of the dynamics of my family during those years, i.e. my half-siblings not being able to speak English, this ordinary ability of speaking English became a special feature in our house. I became of value to my half-siblings, and my ability to speak English with what they called a *bonto bareum* [native pronunciation] was something useful to them. Activities that involved speaking English, such as speaking to someone over the phone, receiving deliveries, writing letters to boys and looking over their homework were tasks they reserved for me. English was my specialty: what defined me as different from them while at the same time what brought me closer to them. From another angle, it is also not uncommon for children born to Korean immigrant parents to speak Korean with varying degrees of fluency without much desire or anxiety to speak like a “native Korean speaker”, but while desiring to maintain my difference, I also wanted to fit in, to speak like they did, to speak Korean in a way that didn't set me apart. These centripetal and centrifugal collisions of forces, the push and pull, the contradictory desires and acts, were always present in my relationship with them, in the spaces we had to occupy together. Even though it is now many years that we have been apart and I have been on my own, these feelings of wanting to be closer to them while also enjoying the physical and emotional distance between us persists.

When they began to communicate in English and no longer needed my help, we spoke regularly in what was popularly known at the time amongst Koreans in our community as “Konglish”, a mixture of Korean and English that created a specific way of speaking and communicating within and amongst members of the Korean or Korean-American community that we became a part of. Even then, when there didn't seem to be any struggle for language, I secretly perceived myself to be the “real” speaker of English. These secret perceptions also extended to how I thought about my relationship with my father. One of the evening rituals my father and I would engage in was a thirty-minute back massage I would give him, for which he would give me a dollar. This is

what might be considered as “quality time” in my family. I never thought much about what he used to say whilst giving him these massages because I thought he would say anything so that I wouldn't stop, but apart from making exclamations of how refreshing my massages felt, he would often tell me I was “different” from my siblings. When I showed no interest in his comments, he would sing me the Korean foxtrot song *Mr. Choi's Third Daughter* by the Korean singer Na Hoon A. The song was about a man named Mr. Choi who had three daughters, how there was a rumor in town that the third daughter was the prettiest, how all the men in the village wanted to marry her and how Mr. Choi wouldn't let anyone near her until a courageous man asked for her hand one day and Mr. Choi finally gave her away. The exaggerated extensions of certain words one must make in singing foxtrot songs, the smooth rising and falling stress that has to be made by moving the head to achieve the right effect, made it difficult to give him his massage but I knew he liked that they made me laugh, and even though he never used the words “favorite” or “special”, I always took these predictable efforts by my dad as ways of communicating that he and I both knew that my “difference” from his other children was something special. After his death, my sisters and I shared childhood stories and I came to see that he had special songs for each one of us.

Having to share the space at home, receiving only partial attention from our parents, suddenly having to wear only hand-me-down clothes, were less than desirable experiences while I was growing up, but my siblings' unexpected arrival in my life, our “3 against 1” dynamic and the tensions between us also gave me the opportunity to find my own way of dreaming of my escape through language and writing. It is still through language and writing, as I am doing here, that I reinvent my connections with them.

Outside of home and towards the beginning of my teenage years I began to feel a disinclination to speak in any language.



Pic. 1.4. My half-siblings (from top to bottom and eldest to youngest); Karry, Amy, Kay and me in front of the junior high school we all attended. New York (1984).

Even twenty-two years after the experience, I find myself tracing my silence back to a particular relationship I had during my life in New York. In critically reflecting on those times now, I realize there are different dimensions to those experiences I can learn from in relation to the tensions of feeling “out of place”.

Section 2: Gina Kang

Once I became a junior high school student, I became friends with Gina Kang, a trendy Korean girl who had emigrated to New York at the age of four. Gina took me to pool halls, clubs, and gang houses, taught me how to smoke, how to put on makeup, cut my hair and lent me her clothes. She would often remind me that if I were ever in trouble, she’d “have my back”, meaning she’d get into a fight with others for me. We slept over at each other’s homes frequently and soon people thought we were like twin sisters. Gina, to me, was different from other Koreans/Korean-Americans/Americans that I knew at the time and the feelings, behavior and utterances that were produced in my relationship with her and her world were equally new to me. Being with her made me realize the degree of my desire to break free from certain norms and the extent of my capacity to do so, but also how strange it felt when I did speak, dress, behave and live the way she did. To me, Gina symbolized disruption and her uninhibited sense of fear drew me to her. We hardly ever spoke Korean but when she did, it was as if she was translating expressions in English using derogatory language that I understood but couldn’t imagine saying to anyone in Korean. In English, her sentences didn’t necessarily consist of many swear words but she had a way of combining words that conjured a more graphic image of certain derogatory statements’ such as ‘I’ll rip her ass apart’ or ‘pull out her eyelashes one by one’. Even at the age of twelve, Gina had various experience with boys, and she cut class most of the time to go to pool halls in Astoria, Queens to meet up with Chinese gangs she hung out with. She took me to these places and introduced me to these people. The guys would often be dressed in black, their hair dyed orange, layered, usually standing tall with hairspray, and they wore yellow gold chains and round jade necklaces that hung on red strings around their necks. Hanging out with them made me feel “cool”.

In the dark, smoke-filled pool halls in basements where we gathered every morning, drinking and flirting with older guys, I was free from any sense of pressure that had to do with school, family or life goals that my friends seemed to be worried

about. I thought I was engaged in something deeper and more philosophical in life than other kids my age were involved in, i.e. school tests, what high school would be like and what to wear to school every day. I was part of matters more important, such as thinking about money, having what I thought of as mature relationships, and not being controlled by society's rules. I wanted to believe that I had outgrown my former peers at school but entering that dark pool hall every morning, I couldn't shake off the lurking sense that something was wrong, that this wasn't where I should be ten o'clock every morning, that I could never get comfortable with this kind of lifestyle. I knew I didn't belong there, with Gina, in that space, with her friends, speaking their language. Fear and nervousness that trouble was waiting for me around the corner weighed on my mind constantly.

Gina was even shorter than I was at the time (about 5'2") and very thin, but there was power in her appearance that could intimidate others. The choppy layered and dyed hairstyle, the slight slit of the black liquid eyeliner that ran across her eyelids, the dark auburn nail polish and lipstick, the expensive black clothes she stole from malls, the big hoop earrings and the cigarette she usually had pinned between her fingers became my image too. Even though she was nice to me, being unable to have any sense of what she was thinking about, what made her vulnerable or how she would react to a certain comment, made me stammer while talking to her. I grew increasingly uncomfortable with her and her group of friends and sensed deep trouble as I became increasingly more involved in her world. My diaries of that period are filled with panic at the thought of being left behind at school even though I never thought of myself as a studious student. I was average, and year after year I only ever received certificates for excellent attendance.

I decided to stop meeting Gina and try going back to school. This infuriated her and we had several malicious verbal and physical arguments. From then on, there was endless gossiping and threatening phone calls. I have not been able to forget two warnings from Gina that terrified my twelve-year-old self when she uttered them: "I'll burn down your house" and "I'll scratch your eyes out if I ever see you". For whatever reason, Gina left me alone and the result was that I finished the seventh grade, but back in school, I had an unavoidable lurking feeling that someone would protest it wasn't fair to the other students, after all the school days I had missed, to allow me to pass. I felt increasingly like a fraud. My peers had worked hard. I was cheating. Coupled with this

feeling, I became fearful of the Asian youth culture in New York, particularly of those who had Korean ancestry and spoke English: in short, people who had my particular cultural background and linguistic abilities. I wanted to withdraw from people like me. I wanted to be with others completely different from me; to be with foreigners. They couldn't make me feel out of place since I didn't belong with them in the first place. This understanding that I could be "neutral" with those who are not like me provided me with some feeling of comfort.

The net result of these experiences with Gina, school and my feelings about those who resembled my cultural and linguistic characteristics was to make me deeply self-conscious. At any sighting of Asian teenage girls, I learned to instinctively turn or look the other way. I was quiet at home and at school and all I wished for was to flee from the space of New York and start over again. New York was my physical home but I didn't feel I belonged there nor to my family or the life my parents built in that city. Similar to Said's (1999) description of not feeling quite at "home" and in describing his perception of how his family was seen in Cairo, I felt New York was "a city I always liked yet in which I never felt I belonged. There was something "off" and out of place about us (me in particular), but I didn't yet quite know why" (p. 43). I thought at the time that if I could have been a full-Korean, i.e. Korean-Korean or a white American, my life would have been so much easier.

Social, political, cultural and historical dynamics are undoubtedly a part of the construction of feelings of being out of place, but in writing this reflection of my relationship and experience with Gina, the importance of locating particularities, that is, particular events, people that cross our paths, emotions that are felt that guide us to make certain decisions, are reiterated to me. Emotions, in particular, stand out in my experience with Gina and school. Feelings of discomfort, fear, nervousness, trouble, intimidation, anxiety, panic, fraudulence, foreignness and neutrality fill my memories of this period but they are also not expressed as passive states of minds that I have experienced; rather, they are denotative of how they guided me to take some form of action, i.e. to stop meeting Gina, go back to school, withdraw from speaking, join 'other' groups, and so on. In her study of gender enactments in immigrants' discursive practices, Vitanova (2004) points out that where emotional struggles are involved in participants' stories, the tone quickly changes to containing "the seeds of resistance and future action" (p. 274). Drawing on Lorde (1984) and other discourse analysts, she takes the position

that feelings and emotions are discursive phenomena and should be studied as talk that performs social actions and they can also serve as a guide to social analysis. It is through these earlier traces of feeling out of place that I am beginning to understand the larger makeup of my feelings of imposture and self-consciousness that I have carried around with me throughout my life and have more recently become aware of in the dispossessed moments of not feeling that I can speak, or want to speak, in Korean with other individuals of Korean background. Focusing on my emotions and how they have guided me moves me away from the powerful hold Gina's words have had on me to think about how our constantly developing dispositions negotiate the familiar and unfamiliar, old and new feelings and experiences in different spaces and practices.

At the end of the seventh grade, I got my wish to leave New York and move to Seoul to live with my cousins. There, I experienced a different kind of out of place-ness that made me feel I belonged back in New York.

Section 3: Moving to Seoul (1991-1992): Attending an International School

I moved to Seoul for one year and I lived with my cousins while I attended an International School. I remember my mother showing me brochures of the school and pointing out that a high percentage of high school graduates from the school were accepted into Ivy League universities, with several being accepted to Harvard. Although I understood my mother's aspirations and efforts to provide me with an "elite" education, I had never felt more like "a fish out of water", class-conscious and self-conscious about my appearance in my young life than during that year in Seoul.

The physical locality of the school, its grounds in a secluded area that could take nearly four hours on a round trip (though these days there are quicker travel options) concentrated life within the campus grounds. This private space with its cutting-edge architecture, classrooms with modern furniture, grand auditoriums, state of the art gyms, library, cafeteria, and school buses that drive around the city with the school's label in English, brings about an air of exclusivity and privilege in the space of Seoul. Stepping outside of the school grounds, being stuck in endless Seoul traffic, I would watch local Korean students in their uniforms getting off public buses or out of train stations and rushing to get to their *hakwons* [cram schools], look at old ladies walking around carrying large tubs of food on their heads, and steamy *ddukbokki* [spicy rice cakes] and *sundae* [blood sausage] being cooked and served by middle-aged women who chopped onions and carrots in their stalls. It was particularly in those moments, sitting on those plush seats in our air-conditioned bus looking out, that I felt the stark division between our worlds. Off the bus, I would enter a very different world.

At the time, I lived with my aunt and uncle in a small, modest house. When I came home in the afternoons, my uncle, who was an avid *soju* [distilled rice liquor] drinker, talked to me endlessly about life and his hometown. He would always say in Korean that he was going to *Gangwondo* [a province located in the central eastern part of the Korean peninsula], back to his hometown. Every day he would ask me the same questions about where I thought my hometown was and telling me that I should go back to America because I was not really Korean. I could never tell if he didn't like me and wanted me to leave or if he genuinely thought everyone needed to return to his or her birthplace in the end. Most of the time I ignored him by turning on the *AFKN* [American Forces Korea Network] broadcasting network, the only channel where I

could watch English speaking shows, shows he wouldn't understand and talk to me about. It was either this or I would talk to two close friends who were from Denmark and Indonesia on the phone. He would be sitting in the background singing the same foxtrot song he sang every day, tapping on the steel rice bowls with the metal chopsticks in front of his little fan that seemed to be on all hours of the day. I dreaded the combination of the froggy voice produced by singing in front of the fan and the steel chopsticks hitting steel bowls. I would talk louder when I knew the high notes were coming as I talked on the phone to my friends in English. I laugh now at the synchronicity of our bilingual duet, but at the time it was the most distinct part of my daily life that reminded me of how unsophisticated my living conditions were. My Indonesian best friend Amanda, who didn't speak Korean, thought the background noise was one of the many Korean sweet potato sellers and dry cleaners that go around neighborhoods in the winter in their cars with loud speakerphones to announce their arrival. They had similar froggy voices that we would both joke and laugh about. In any case, he was always a living reminder to me of how different my life was from the life of those I went to school with, and I feel this contributed greatly to perceptions I had at the time of Korea/Koreans being unsophisticated and inferior compared to the privileged life I led in English speaking communities. I was determined to keep school and home completely separate.

Within the school, however, I distinguished myself as Other from the students who attended the school. The majority of the bilingual/multilingual students in this school were from middle to upper class families, from different parts of the world. They were children of ambassadors, executives working in big companies and wealthy private businessmen who were frequently relocated, living in homes that were over 100 *pyeong* [approximately 3560 sq ft] (students would commonly ask each other the sizes of their homes using this measure). The students, as I viewed them, not only achieved high marks in their studies but were also talented in sports and other extracurricular activities that were offered. In this context, I saw "bilingual" speakers of Korean and English as "real" bilinguals who were fluent in speaking both languages, and even if they could "codeswitch", they seemed generally comfortable in speaking either only in Korean or English and were fluent in writing long letters in Korean or reading Korean novels. My reading speed in Korean was slow, and my writing was childish, sloppy and filled with awkward phrases. I began to see them as "elites" in many regards, that is, I

saw their “knowledge, authenticity, taste, erudition, experience, insight, access to resources, wealth, group membership [and] any other quality” (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2006, p. 4) as being superior/exclusive to mine.

I was very skinny at the time. Some of the boys called my legs chopsticks and said that my front teeth were like Bugs Bunny. I owned one pair of Guess jeans, the most popular and expensive clothing brand favored by students at the time which, when my mother finally bought me a pair, I wore practically every day. I wasn’t particularly good at anything nor were my grades as good as those of other students. I think of myself as having wanted to be invisible during that year but the fact that I auditioned and played a part in the school play, *The Curious Savage* (Patrick, 2002), makes me wonder whether I was as self-conscious as I have come to think of myself during that year. There, I met Adrian Lee, a popular ninth grader who was in charge of the lights for our play. I was enamored of him, but our fling consisted of several lies about my background and constant excuses as to why he couldn’t come over on weekends to visit me. The lies became more complex and difficult to remember. I wanted to end whatever relationship we were developing before he found out I wasn’t “one of them”, so I gradually distanced myself from him, picking fights for no apparent reason, which ended our somewhat short relationship.

This assumed pressure to conceal any information that would be different from the characteristics of the dominant group in this environment created a space loaded with tension and anxiety. I came to detest my inability to “be myself”, but as I think back to my critical reflections in Sections 1 and 2, I have some understanding of why I didn’t want to be myself. As Said (1999) writes of his self-perceptions in his formative years, “being myself meant not only never being quite right, but also never feeling at ease, always expecting to be interrupted or corrected, to have my privacy invaded and my unsure person set upon” (p. 19). Without any knowledge of what could be an alternative identity, I felt as Said did, “permanently out of place”.

I am conscious that I should not portray the sense of “out of placeness” I felt at this school as the sole problem of “class” difference or economic status. The space there was abundantly stocked with resources where subordinate agents could and would gain access to different groups by seizing and negotiating various forms of “capital”, as I

will show in the next section. First, I take a closer look at Bourdieu's various notions of "capital".

Bourdieu's four kinds of capital

In Rampton's (2003) study of a group of fourteen year old students in a disadvantaged school in inner London, the adolescents repeatedly linked the people, actions and events around them to images of class hierarchy through spontaneous stylized performances in which exaggerated elite and vernacular London accents were a salient ingredient. Drawing on these stylized performances, Rampton reminds us that class identities cannot be considered as losing their significance in late modernity (see also Block (2012a) on the prevailing importance of notions of "class" in second language acquisition research and multilingual identity studies). I do not disagree: "social class is a frame relevant to the flux of experience" (2003, p. 79), even if the phenomenon under scrutiny may not be explicitly linked to class systems. In the setting at this international school, ideas of class are relevant but rarely spoken of explicitly, in part because it is assumed that anyone who can enter this exclusive zone is from either a middle or upper class family. Class, in this particular English-speaking sub-culture, can be understood as including a wide range of dimensions including one's "property, occupation, wealth, place of residence, education, social networking, symbolic behavior, consumption patterns, and spatial relations" (Block, 2012a, p. 194). Although I didn't realize it then and felt my lack of ability to genuinely feel comfortable there was only due to issues of class, looking through the lens of Bourdieu's (1991) four capitals, there were many other ways these different dimensions could work to gain entrance into this "elite" world.

Bourdieu's notion of different forms of capital brings into sharp focus how positions can be negotiated. Though there may be some overlap, I will use "economic", "cultural/linguistic", and "social" capital to illustrate the ways in which these forms create "symbolic capital", commonly known as "prestige, reputation, fame, etc., which is the form assumed by these different kinds of capital when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 243). Economic capital is characterized as "material wealth in the form of money, stocks, shares, property, etc.", while cultural/linguistic capital denotes "knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions" (p.14) and the "capacity to produce expressions *a propos*, for a particular market" (p.18).

Finally, social capital is one's membership in "a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 246). As I will show, a mixture of these forms of capital can have significant influence on the degree of symbolic capital (i.e. prestige, honor etc.) that individuals are recognized as possessing.

At the time, I did not possess the same degree of economic capital that other students were endowed with, but what I felt I lacked in relation to economic capital, I tried to compensate for or disguise by accumulating cultural/linguistic capital. The asset I thought I would be praised for in Korea was my ability to speak English with *bonto bareum* [native speaker pronunciation], but in that context such a skill could not be translated into cultural/linguistic capital since speaking English was the most basic requirement of entering the school. I participated in additional activities such as acting (i.e. joining the drama club) in the hope of gaining praise in a different way. This initiative provided an opportunity to come into contact with and date a popular male freshman, which was also a form of symbolic capital though dating him was not done with the intention of trying to gain symbolic capital, where I became someone worthy of getting to know. Social capital flourished for a while with invitations and access to parties given by popular groups, sleepovers at their homes and lunches at their tables. However, since talking about Adrian was the linchpin of the relationships I developed in those groups, I felt great unease and exhaustion after our break-up, trying to perform an identity that would not reveal my economic situation. I still had social capital but without what I thought of as the "main ingredient" that constituted my symbolic capital (i.e. Adrian), cultural/linguistic capital wasn't enough. The feeling of being "caught out", of feeling like an "imposter" (Kramsch, 2012) was constantly present. Similar but also different to the out of place experience in my early years with my siblings and my interactions with Gina, I no longer desired to be a part of the group, always wishing I were somewhere else when I was with them.

Power is, as Foucault (1978) reminds us, vested in every individual and exercised in very particular ways in particular spaces. Similarly, different forms of capital and available resources are mixed and matched to form very particular combinations in different situations. Uncovering how each of these dynamics operates in relation to one another within certain spaces can give us a deeper idea of the struggles individuals may experience in their attempts to feel a sense of belonging, a sense that one fits in

somewhere. The particular combinations of positions and spaces in which I found myself in the space of Seoul made me realize that where I belonged was in New York, amongst the inhabitants of lower to middle class Korean immigrant neighborhoods. As a result of rising tuition fees, I returned to New York and the public school system. The school I ended up attending was the antithesis of my school in Korea. In this new school, my sense of self-consciousness could have become even more deep-seated, this time with other issues such as racial factors, but for the most part I felt invisible, and that invisibility made me feel “normal” in that environment.

Section 4: Back to New York (1992-1993): High School

Having enrolled late for ninth grade, I was only eligible to attend the nearest public high school within my neighborhood. The majority of the students were Hispanic and black from predominantly low-income families, and there were hardly any Asian students in my grade. I thought I would stand out in the crowd or at least feel forlorn and awkward but on the contrary, I was invisible and stayed invisible for the remainder of the year. I didn't wear the same kind of makeup, baggy jeans, large gold hoop earrings and thick gold necklaces that were trendy during those years amongst black and Hispanic females. I couldn't find any connections in relation to school, hobbies, lifestyles or relationships based on the conversations I overheard. More importantly, I didn't understand many of the lexical terms that were used in African-American English.

I wasn't a particularly studious type, and having no friends meant that there were many moments of silence and casual observation of others during school hours. At one point, I was committed to trying to learn some of the expressions (see pic. 1.5). The cafeteria was a rowdy space; wherever I sat, there was always a good view and easy access to others' conversations. I was accustomed to African-American English before I left for Seoul, mainly through television shows such as *In Living Color* (1990-1994) and *Saturday Night Live* (1975-present), but the exposure at this high school was on a different scale. I recognized some of the words and hand gestures, such as the bumping of the fists and the short sequence of codes using the hands when the males greeted or said goodbye to each other. I coded these as "Fresh Prince" (pic. 1.5, line 4), because in the show *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* (1990-1996) that was precisely the way actor/singer Will Smith greeted his friends. I was also familiar with a certain kind of hand-head movement performed predominantly by females: a coordinated movement of the fingers, arm, neck, eyes and mouth when they seemed to be reprimanding someone.

In line 15 I try the formula of adjectives + “ass”, “my skinny ass” copying their usage “fat black ass” (line 3). Changing only the subject, I copy the phrase “to play someone out” but I don’t seem confident about it and it seems I am confused about the rules of how to use the conjunctive form “you’re” with “all”, asking myself “if it should be “y’all all?” (line 17). Lines 17 and 18 are also renditions of line 1 which I seem to think work better after line 15 than line 16. I’ve figured out that the sharp snaps followed by the Egyptian go at the beginning of statements, which draws attention to the power of the speaker and the message she wants to make clear to her interlocutor. The circular and sideways movement that flows so naturally from her upper body finishes off the statement where her friends (or foes?) either playfully laugh in agreement or retaliate using the same bodily movements and similar utterances. This hidden space in my notebooks may have been a place for mastering the art of certain types of performance, a silent dress rehearsal of talking back, whether or not I had any intentions to conduct such performances in real life.

I enjoyed trying to emulate these ways of speaking and I also complimented myself, as shown in the Korean in line 19, “오 ~재 법 인 데!” [Wow, I’m good at this!] for being able to pick up their ways of speaking through self-study and for being able to speak it (at least, that is what I seemed to think). In reading this particular Korean phrase, I am reminded distinctly of students at the international school in Seoul who habitually used this expression when someone did something skillfully. Regardless of how I perceived myself in relation to the students in Seoul, from spending time with them, I had internalized their language and carried their traces within me. In the next line (line 20), I state in Korean “속이 다 쉬 윈 하 네!” [It feels so refreshing!]. It is possible that the package of fluid body movements and descriptive, unconventional language use was “refreshing” (line 20). To some extent, being able to use highly descriptive language (i.e. “motherfucker”, “pussy”, “fat black ass”, “bitch”, “shit”), breaking conventional rules such as leaving out final sounds (i.e. “rollin”, “playin”), combining words (i.e. “aight” for “all right”, “outta” for “out of”) and using words that I was taught were forbidden such as “nigga” (for “nigger”) may have felt liberating. The use of Korean here may also be seen as my secret or private code in case someone discovered my notebook and saw that I was practicing or complimenting myself. Such spaces in themselves are private and experimental sites where one can “try on” new voices or identities without fear, performing the new voice to whatever capacity one

feels one is able to perform. A more common example of this type of act may be when people stand in front of mirrors acting out certain lines, using certain expressions. I don't recall ever trying out these lines in front of a mirror, or a real person. As I show in lines 15-18, performing didn't have to be verbal. I preferred to perform in writing.

Thinking about the space in the cafeteria recalls Bakhtin's illustration of "carnavalesque" spaces. In *Rabelais and his World* (1984b), Bakhtin studies Rabelais' depictions of the culture of carnivals during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Carnivals were free zones, sites of uninhibited speech where commoners gathered, often indulging in excessive eating, drinking and sexual behaviors, creating an air of licentiousness. Carnavalesque spaces were spaces removed from the gaze of authority where people spoke freely using coarse language, or in Bakhtin's words, language which consisted of the "bodily lower stratum" (i.e. "genital organs, the belly, and the buttocks") as the norm. Similar to watching performances at a carnival, the animated and energetic performances were pleasurable to watch without having to be involved in any way.

I liked lunch periods sitting in that rowdy cafeteria, in my invisibility, being left alone, not being seen or expected to perform any identity but being free to experiment with new ones. However, I did involve myself with these performances in a different way though not immediately. Many years later in Beijing, I had an argument in English with a Swedish-Chinese friend at his pub where this motion of the "snap, wave and Egyptian" flowed out of my body without any conscious effort. My friend mocked me, imitating the neck movement by exaggerating it and saying we weren't in New York and I should stop acting like a black girl. I had no intention of emulating the body movements of certain racial groups but the moment he pointed it out to me, I realized how out of place this, a Korean-American girl in Beijing arguing like a black girl to a Swedish-Chinese guy could seem to him. In discussing the notion of "performativity", Pennycook (2007) points out that in language use and identity, "[p]erformativity opens up a way of thinking about language use and identity that avoids foundationalist categories, suggesting that identities are formed *in* the linguistic performance rather than pregiven" (p. 76, *my emphasis*). The textual performances I engaged in gave me a new or different voice. At that moment of arguing with my interlocutor, I wasn't emulating or merely trying on a new voice. The voice had become mine or became a part of me. As Pennycook states, "[t]his move from the performative to the

transformative is crucial for our understanding here of performativity as neither merely the playing out of public roles nor the acting out of sedimented behavior, but the refashioning of futures” (p. 77).

For most of my life I regarded these formative years at school in New York and Seoul as awkward and lonely years of being on my own, but this doesn't seem to be the case anymore. I was a foreigner in both New York and Seoul observing others simultaneously “dreaming of my own escape” (Winterson, 2011, cf. Section 1), imagining myself as something else, something new, something different. These observations or moments of escape did not necessarily consist of real-life scenarios. I increasingly relied on fantasies shaped by fictional storylines in Korean dramas blended with my relationship to a boyfriend I was dating at the time. The reader will see that Korean dramas were evocative of, and echoed, the themes, issues, and preoccupations that were foregrounded in that time and space. As I see it now, feeling a sense of displacement in my physical world, my “imaginary identity” shaped by Korean dramas supplied me with a unique pleasure that I couldn’t find anywhere in physical spaces (i.e. either in America or Korea).

Section 5: Fantasies through Korean dramas

In life outside of high school, I was heavily engaged in daily practices that involved Korean. Apart from going to a Korean church, hanging out in *noraebang* [karaoke rooms], Korean-owned pool halls, clubs and certain cafes/restaurants, the most common practice in our family involving immersion in Korean language was watching Korean dramas. For other members of my family, simply leaving the television on with Korean dramas on in the background seemed to be enough pleasure as they went about other business but, even though I might have seen the episodes before, I would watch each one again. Each serial, normally consisting of 20-30 one-hour episodes, was usually aired twice a week in South Korea. The suppliers in New York received the two episodes a few days after they were aired in Korea. While waiting for the next episodes to arrive, it was common to either re-watch or swap previous episodes for other videos from our neighbors or friends. Borrowing and watching Korean television dramas gradually became a natural part of the lives of many immigrant Koreans and Korean-Americans (see Lee & Cho, 1990; Park, 2004) particularly in cities such as New York and Los Angeles.

About Korean dramas

Korean TV dramas during the 1980s mostly consisted of historical dramas such as *500 Years of the Joseon Dynasty* (Lee et al., 1983-1990), which were popular amongst my parents' generation. The influence of the Chun Doo Hwan administration (1980-1988) where the "media came under tighter state control [and] dramas contained nothing to alarm Korea's moralistic censors" (Howard, 2002, p. 81-82) was in full effect. What I saw in the historical dramas my parents watched were the bright red and gold costumes of the kings, the empresses' braided hair rolled into a ball-shaped form set just above the nape of the neck, *yangban* [upper class] men wearing hats [called *jeongjagwan*] that resembled the sails of a full-rigged sailing ship, and big white socks [called *beoseon*] that have curved and pointy tips. The characters in the royal court spoke in archaic Korean with sharp rising and falling inflections at the beginning and ending of every sentence, which I never really understood. These images and sounds seemed exotic to me, particularly when contrasted with the contemporary and modern American TV shows (which were mostly sitcoms) that I watched at the time. Characters wore jeans, sweaters, suits, dresses, collar shirts. Teens had big, fizzy hair and bangs

that stood tall and still with hairspray, and middle class families lived in big and cozy Western-style modern homes and talked in gentle tones using loving expressions.

In the early 1990s, Roh Tae Woo's administration (1988-1993) encouraged more public discussion and "censorship rules...were by this time sufficiently relaxed" (Howard, 2002, p. 85). Korean TV dramas were shifting from historical dramas to the genre of "trendy drama" [similar to "melodrama" or "romance drama" in Western notions]. On the very basic level, what drew me into these new "trendy dramas" was the recognition of bodies, behaviors and lifestyles. Korean dramas resonated directly with the lives of Korean immigrant families (at least the families that I knew) in New York at the time. The everyday rituals in Korean dramas of cooking Korean food, for instance, or greeting elders, and the conventions of carrying out certain rituals on holidays and birthdays, events that were part of our community lives, were easily recognizable and identifiable. Although what was shown in Korean dramas became increasingly more modern, they still seemed primitive compared to popular American dramas such as *Beverly Hills 90210* (1990-2000), which portrayed wealthy teenagers dealing with issues such as drugs, sex, pregnancy, peer pressure and relationships. Howard's description of what made Korean singer Byun Jin Sub's hit pop song *The Object I Want* which was popular for half a decade during the 1990s in South Korea, can also be extended to descriptions of the images and narratives of trendy dramas that were introduced in the 1990s. According to Howard, it was the

ideology of love that is unthreatening, one that musicologist Peter Manuel would argue maintains a "depoliticized passivity" that "obscures, distracts, and anaesthetizes. Certainly, the love depicted is neither romantic or sexual ... The musical structure is simple: regular four-line stanzas set to a single melody underpinned by a basic foxtrot rhythm, reminiscent of postwar *yuhaengga* [pop song]. The instrumentation is primarily piano and bass, allowing nothing to mask the lyrics" (p. 82).

Unthreatening love, asexual relationships, and simple storylines were common in these trendy dramas. Stories about families with a comical twist as in *What is Love all about?* [English translation] (1991) and modern-day romance scenes, such as the final scene in the drama *Jealousy* [English translation] (1992) where the leading actress and actor run desperately towards each other to hug and kiss as the romantic theme music quickly

breaks out, and the camera revolves 360 degrees around the subjects, became a new way of visually experiencing Korean modernity while at the same time seeing it as lagging behind or copying American romantic comedies/dramas. As I mentioned earlier, the images and certain cultural practices within Korean dramas resonated strongly, but the issues seemed naïve and primitive. Such a phenomenon can be described as what Fabian (1983) calls a “denial of coevalness”, where one exoticizes the time of the Other while seeing one’s immediate time as cosmopolitan and linear. Even in Korea, the time and space within the confines of the bus were perceived differently from the time and space of the local sceneries I looked out on.

Perversely, it was also these naïve or primitive perceptions that made Korean dramas alluring. Unlike American dramas in which characters were portrayed as being so complex that nothing seemed startling, characters in Korean dramas reignited certain feelings that felt long lost. Discourses of selflessness were evident in both male and female characters, who repeatedly exhibited their maturity and their capacity to be patient, self-sacrificing, and in control of their desires. Feminine roles embodied more innocent, child-like images. Moral depictions of putting others first and not being corrupted by one’s own desires are what I thought of as “innocent”, “pure” or “real” love. As Ang (1985) states, “[f]iction and fantasy function by making life in the present pleasurable, or at least livable, but this does not by any means exclude radical political activity or consciousness” (p.135). I wasn’t interested in the cosmopolitan, in linearity or in ‘real life’. What I could think up or imagine through the weekly plots in each episode of the Korean dramas moved me beyond physical spaces into fantasy spaces in which I became the author of my own scripts.

Fantasies through Korean Dramas

I spent most of my time watching and fantasizing about the trendy drama *Jealousy* (1992). The pleasure that I gained through watching *Jealousy* (1992) came at a very timely period in my life when I was experiencing the reality of an impending separation from a Korean-American boyfriend. I considered this my first real relationship; I was 14 years old, and Seung Woo was three years older than me.

My aunt caught Seung Woo and me smoking in a diner one day during school hours and called my mother, who lived in China at the time. My aunt and mother

decided I had to leave New York and live with my mother in China before I became, in my aunt's words in Korean, a *nallali* [a wastrel]. When I told Seung Woo, he asked for some time to himself, saying he would call when he was ready to talk to me. While guarding the phone, I distracted myself by watching television and doodling in diaries and notebooks. Seung Woo never called in the end, but the world of fantasy I created and lived in during those last few weeks of repeatedly watching *Jealousy* not only preoccupied my mind but created and unleashed a whole set of desires and pleasures which fascinated me.

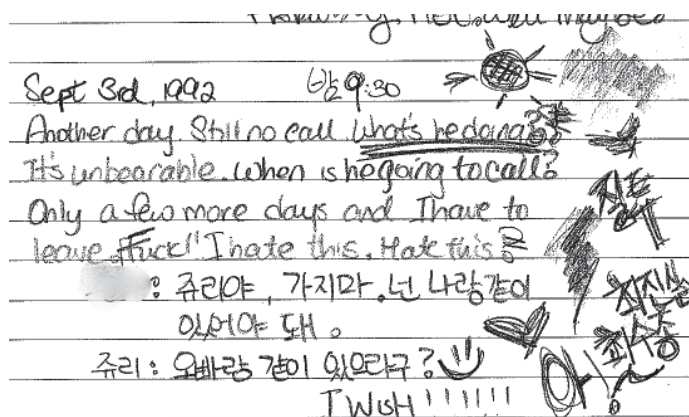
Jealousy consists of 16 episodes that revolve around six major characters (three females and three males) working as young professionals. The website describes the program (in Korean) as:

the first explosive drama in the “trendy drama” genre that started in 1992 in South Korea. It is a love story about the rapid-paced lives of young adults in that generation. They learn that heartache and patience is what is involved in a sophisticated and mature loving relationship. This drama successfully delivers the quaint beauty of life and relationships through the melodramatic genre that were highly in demand during that period (iMBC, 2013 *my translation*).

Feelings of friendship grow into feelings of intimacy between the leading actress, Ha Kyung (played by Choi Jin Shil) and leading actor, Young Ho (played by Choi Soo Jong), and these feelings are interrupted by temporary feelings for other people. After experiencing a tumultuous series of emotional events, Ha Kyung decides to move to New York for a year to study. Young Ho gives her a ring to remember him by and they decide to see how they feel for each other after some time apart. Though it pains her, Ha Kyung knows he is a good person and his happiness means more to her than her desire for him to wait for her. Young Ho desperately wants her to stay but he doesn't stop her from pursuing her dream. After a year, she returns to Seoul and though they still have strong feelings for each other, she contemplates moving back to New York for work. This infuriates Young Ho since he has been patiently waiting for her return, but more so because there is a new man who enters in the final episode, a man who Ha Kyung met abroad and has intentions of proposing to her. In the final scene, out by the river, Young Ho declares his love for her. They run towards each other saying “I love you”, hug and

then kiss. The theme music comes on, the cameras revolve around them and the scene and the series comes to an end.

In pic. 1.6, I scribble the Korean word *jil tu* [jealousy] and the names of South Korean actor Choi Soo Jong and Choi Jin Shil on the margins. The dialogue in Korean states, “Seung Woo: Julie, don’t go. You have to stay here with me. Julie: You want me to stay here with you?” In 2011, I decided to re-watch the last episode of *Jealousy* on the broadcaster’s website. In the very last scene, Young Ho says, “Ha Kyung, don’t go. You have to stay with me” to which Ha Kyung replies in a nervous and expectant tone, “you want me to stay with you?” Pic. 1.7 shows images of the scene.



Pic. 1.6. Diary entry using scripts from *Jealousy*. New York (1992).

Transcript:
 Sept 3rd, 1992 9.30 p.m.
 Another day. Still no call. What's he doing?! It's unbearable. When is he going to call? Only a few more days and I have to leave. Fuck! I hate this. Hate this!
 승우:
 주리야, 가지마. 넌 나랑 같이 있어야 돼.
 주리: 오빠랑 같이 있으라구? ☺ I WISH!!!!



Pic. 1.7. Images from the final scene in *Jealousy* (1992).

I realized then that I had blended the dialogs into my relationship with Seung Woo, with us taking the roles of the main protagonists. Watching the scene again, I was taken aback by the flood of memories that came rushing back to me of how I spent endless hours fantasizing about scenarios of how Seung Woo and I would say our goodbyes. These fantasies had a lot to do with wanting to be seen or remembered by Seung Woo in a certain way.

Ang's (1985) study of *Dallas* watchers in the Netherlands demonstrates that the recognizable events, people and situations, along with the emotional aspects of feeling they could identify with the life problems of the characters, allowed viewers to inhabit a place between a "sense of reality" and a "flight from reality". The nature of this flight

into a fictional fantasy world is not so much a denial of reality as playing with it. A game that enables one to place the limits of the fictional and the real under discussion, to make them fluid. And in that game an imaginary participation in the fictional world is experienced as pleasurable (p. 49).

“These pleasures” as Ang argues, “are never innocent” (in Brunsdon, 2000, pp. 158-159). They are “constructed and function in a specific social and historical context” (Ang, 1985, p.19). In my fantasies, there are no happy endings. I had to leave and since I could not be with Seung Woo, I would not allow his character to accept this and be happy. For this, the storyline in *Jealousy* was much too simple for my purposes. Seung Woo would become miserable in my script. The image of myself, on the other hand, was created in the child-like innocence of Ha Kyung’s and her maturity, leaving out aspects such as being positive, independent and capable. The self-sacrificing and selfless dialogues of Ha Kyung, along with the particular movements of her body, the turns, smiles, hand movements, pauses, and expressions, were all resources for the effect I wanted (see Chow, 2010 on ‘visualism’ for further discussion of viewers becoming active producers in shaping their cultural environment and engaging in subjectivity formation through their fantasies).

These fantasies were too complex, dark and self-serving to share with anyone, too shameful to even write in my own diaries, but they continued to fill my mind during moments of brief or long silence throughout the day. The lure of it was, as Ang (1985) points out, “in the play of fantasy we can adopt positions and ‘try out’ those positions, without having to worry about their ‘reality value’” (p. 134). Fantasizing allowed me to be “pessimistic, sentimental or despairing with impunity - feelings we can scarcely allow ourselves in the battlefield of actual social, political and personal struggles” (p. 134). Sometimes the story I constructed was so tragic that I would find myself shedding tears at my own plot. In some ways, the desire for Seung Woo became somewhat peripheral. As Barthes (2002) put it, “it is my desire I desire, and the loved being is no more than its tool” (p. 31). These imaginary texts became so dramatic in my mind that when Seung Woo showed up at the airport on the day of my departure, I had nothing to say to him - no dramatic running towards each other saying “I love you”, no sadistic or masochistic wishes or performances of selflessness or victimization. These were exciting in my mind but clichéd in real life. It was the creation, the production of the text that became pleasurable or more precisely, the learning of pleasure that was pleasurable. Those pleasurable moments of being left alone in my imaginary participation in a fictional world moved me beyond the various cages that made me feel out of place amongst my peers, family, school or the Korean/Korean-American community at large.

I was surprised when Seung Woo showed up at the airport when I left. We sat quietly together in front of the gates and when it was time to leave he held me and said “isn’t it funny that at a time like this I have nothing to say?” I didn't quite understand what that meant and why he then quickly left without even saying goodbye or waiting for me to board, but I thought that was very characteristic of Korean dramas, to throw out a memorable line and create a dramatic finish that leaves you longing for the next episode. I took that line, memories of his final gestures, his clothes, and his movements and inserted them into the narrative of my fantasies that I revived and revamped during the fifteen hour trip to Beijing, making up infinite possibilities of who I needed to become to keep our story alive.

Chapter Summary

The experiences I have illustrated in this chapter are some of the early experiences that I feel have played an important part in shaping my linguistic habitus. Whether it was to talk to my family in Korean and speak English outside, listen to Gina's unique way of speaking both Korean and English, make observations of students' fluency in both English and Korean in Seoul, use African-American English to try on certain roles and Korean as a secret code in school notebooks, or to blend Korean scripts into my diary entries, both Korean and English were used in my day-to-day life and were important in different ways. In this regard, similar to Said (1999) "[e]ach can be seen like my absolutely first language, but neither is" (p. 4).

I was unaware then of these realizations that Korean and English have always been together in my life, and that they were important in different ways during my formative years. I always saw English as my mother tongue or native language and Korean as a language I was forced to use to survive in the particular dynamics of my family. If I was boastful of my bilingual identity, living in Seoul changed this completely. In Korea, I began to set myself apart as not a "real/full" bilingual and my perceptions of class differences made me deeply self-conscious, anxious, timid and uncertain about speaking. The feeling of being a fraud, of being afraid that someone would find out I didn't "fit" or "belong" in their circle, grew intensively. It was a different form of feeling that I did not fit in or belong to a place or group than I felt in the pool halls with Gina and her friends. With Gina, I felt I was someone else underneath her clothes, makeup and language. Regardless of how I dressed, I always perceived myself as different. In Seoul, I knew I was different but I thought that could change if I spoke more fluently or like my "elite" peers. I was careful and anxious about speaking, always uncertain that something I said would give away my "real" identity. Kramsch (2012) calls this type of anxiety related to feelings of imposture a "linguistic vulnerability that all speaking subjects have to embrace as the very condition of their social existence" (p. 491). Linguistic vulnerabilities, I believe, exist for all individuals at various stages in life regardless of whether they are monolingual or multilingual; however, there may be additional weight on speaking for multilinguals since we are "learning and using a language that is not our own, or living across multiple languages" (p. 491).

In Kramsch's view, the feeling of imposture is largely influenced by the "internalized idealized norm repeatedly imposed by the community, the market, the publishing industry, or the media" (p. 488). In this regard, it is important to reflect on the dispositions that shape us, the practices in which we have been actively involved, the people who have crossed our path, and the desires we have built along the way within certain times and spaces. A narrow focus only on features of language and culture or the larger social setting may inhibit us from exploring and understanding the complexities of such a condition. In my own reflections of my early experiences using both Korean and English in different settings, acts of imposture, i.e. whether pretending to be someone like Gina, hiding my social status to fit in with elites, speaking like a black girl, or creating myself as Ha Kyung, had a close relationship with the feeling of being "out of place", feeling that I didn't belong, or that something was "off" or strange about me. Such a feeling is indeed largely constructed by the perceived norms circulating certain spaces, but in critically reflecting on the social settings and the emotions that operated during certain experiences, I was able to also notice the complexity of this "strangeness" and the necessity of a certain kind of vulnerability that a notion of "foreignness" can provide. As Kramsch states, "this lack of fit can be resignified as the unavoidable and necessary vulnerability of the multilingual speaker—a vulnerability that is the very condition of his/her linguistic survival" (p. 494).

The feeling of out of placeness in relation to my family is fundamentally constituted by feelings of ambivalence in wanting to be both the same and different, to fit in by speaking Korean but also to use my "native English speaker" position as a way of identifying myself as different. In more recent years of visiting family in the US, I realize I am the foreigner surprised at the ways in which their speech consists of Korean, English and Spanish words as well as African-American accents and body movements. When I am near them, I feel sure I am part of this family and yet when it is time to leave, I know I will go back to being an outsider as I miss out on all the family activities. There is no feeling of sadness about my separation from them. My ambivalent position allows me to join in family activities when I can or need to, and the time and distance away helps both my family members and me to appreciate the moments we share together.

The emotions I felt during my brief ordeal with Gina were powerful in guiding me out of situations in which I felt uncomfortable, but the feeling of fear I developed

through the experience also destabilized the feeling of comfort I took for granted in other aspects or relationships of my life. I developed a growing inclination to withdraw from Koreans or Korean-Americans in the space of New York, from people I felt I “knew” racially, culturally or linguistically. I felt a sense of comfort in being with those I saw as different from me, preferring to be a “foreigner” for whom there were no expectations to behave in a certain way. I began to feel differently about New York, feeling that I didn’t belong in this city that I called my “home”. I now see the accumulation of these feelings through my experience with Gina, as having given me the chance to experience foreignness both in physical places and within myself. I also understand the experience as helping me to develop a kind of “toughness” that allowed me to survive some difficult years as a teenager living in several working class neighborhoods of New York.

Through the efforts I made in Seoul to fit in, I learned there are various resources and different forms of capital that can be mixed, matched and taken up by individuals in particular spaces. I have never felt there was anything “authentically Korean” about my experience in Korea. Catching the school bus at 6:30 in the morning and arriving home no earlier than 5:00 in the afternoon, home felt like a temporary landing pad in which to do homework, eat and sleep. However, having that opportunity to attend school in such a privileged quarter did allow me to see how I engaged less with Korea in Korea than I did in New York. One might even say I used more English in Korea than in New York since life was centralized around the school and all its activities in English for most of the day. Experiencing that side of Korea and the language practices that circulated in certain spaces built specific perceptions of the privilege of having an English mediated background, but it also allowed me to destroy any homogeneous idea or fantasy of Korea and see for myself the multicultural and multilingual reality of Korea.

Leaving behind the class differences I felt in Korea, racial difference could have been a new issue in feeling out of place when I entered my next space, where there was a majority of black and Hispanic students, but oddly I felt very much “in place” because I was left alone to be an uncertain figure. This relates to my earlier statement of feeling comfortable amongst those who are completely different from me. My invisibility allowed me to actively participate in conversations with myself and to observe others. Adopting their voices and body movements through writing were not simple acts that were recorded and forgotten about; they became my voices also, as I saw myself

performing much later in Beijing. Such silent performances continued to fill the remainder of my days in New York where I found immense pleasure in the fantasies I imagined and enacted in my head. Writing those fantasies has also helped me to identify where I acquired particular images of Korean women (i.e. elements of Byun Jin Sub's song, and the virtues, language and behavior of female heroines in Korean dramas). Being out of place moved me beyond looking for "belonging" somewhere in physical space to realms of my own personal space where I found pleasure in observing and writing, acts which are just as important for me today as a novice researcher.

Being out of place, as I have attempted to illuminate here, is filled with centrifugal and centripetal forces, contradictions and simultaneity. A critical analysis of our experiences that involve feelings of imposture can help us to locate what those competing forces are and how we might be able to resignify our lack of fit into a "necessary vulnerability of the multilingual speaker—a vulnerability that is the very condition of his/her linguistic survival", as Kramsch alludes (p. 494). I now have a deeper appreciation of Said's preference for seeing his identity as a "cluster of flowing currents" than as a "solid self". Currents do not require reconciling or harmonizing; they are

"off" and may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion, in time, in place, in the form of all kinds of strange combinations moving about, not necessarily forward, sometimes against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme. A form of freedom, I'd like to think, even if I am far from being totally convinced that it is. That skepticism too is one of the themes I particularly want to hold on to. With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place (p. 295).

An important lesson that I take away with me on my journey of understanding my out of placeness through Said's preference for his own sense of being out of place is that it is not so much a matter of preference for being out of place or not, or of celebrating our difference, but the way in which the notion of seeing ourselves and life's events as "out of place" allows us to hold onto tensions, ambivalences, vulnerabilities, and contradictions. In short, Said asks us to embrace contradictions and celebrate complexities. In the contemporary times and spaces in which I live, increasing numbers

of individuals cross multiple borders and accumulate different cultural and linguistic resources. The notion of being out of place is increasingly becoming, if it is not already, “the norm” and if this is so, there is no such notion of being out of place. Put differently, if we are all foreigners in some way or another, then there is no foreigner. What is necessary, as Kristeva (1991) notes, is to detect foreignness in ourselves, “to discover our disturbing otherness ... By recognizing our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners” (p. 192).

Chapter 2

A Critical Reflexive Narrative Account

Beginnings

Doing autoethnography, in simple terms, means to make a cultural, or ethnographic, study of oneself. Such a study can be carried out in a wide range of fields and on a broad range of topics (see Ellis & Bochner (2000) for a comprehensive list and summary of various autoethnographic studies), and has multiple possibilities in terms of writing styles and structures, e.g. short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose, to tell one's lived story. In reading and studying others' autoethnographic studies, I came to appreciate rich documentations of the moment-to-moment concrete details of a life, the complexities of coping and living with difficulties, how people struggle to make sense of their experiences, and most of all, how people come to understand themselves in deep ways through their journey.

My main tool in embarking on such a study was my personal diary. The inclusion of a long history of personal diary entries and a range of different types of document that illustrate certain experiences, to my knowledge, is a rare one in autoethnographic studies (with the exception of Maeda-Simon's (2011) recent publication), because most studies or autobiographic writings utilize the researcher's memories, current observations and journals, and/or others' stories which researchers "write up" or rewrite as texts (see Casanave & Vandrick, 2003; Vandrick, 2009; Todeva & Cenoz, 2009; Pennycook, 2012; Canagarajah, 2012). In these more common scenarios, the voice of the "researcher self" is more immediately evident. While my "researcher voice" is prominent in this work also, by including the actual texts from my past, texts which include my diarist voice at different stages of life and the voices of others who are part of the experiences I have chosen to describe, the narratives comprise, and move in and out of, multiple voices, times and spaces. Engaging in autoethnographic spaces is to find ways to systematically deal with the presence of a flood of experiences, desires, social and political conditions and discourses located in certain times and spaces. These are highly particular spaces in which researchers utilize the foundations of

autoethnographic perspectives but also find themselves moving with their data, analysis and interpretations, guided by both their training as researchers and their own “insight, intuition, and impressions” (Creswell, 1998, p. 142). Ultimately, autoethnography is a broad term that can be useful in studying various types of research interest in different areas of study. As the study progresses, researchers will often find key elements that better illustrate the construction of their study. Being able to locate and articulate these elements can be helpful for both researchers and others in gaining a better understanding of the shape of our studies. The first part of this chapter will discuss my understanding of autoethnography, illustrating the ideas that foreground my study; then I will draw out the four key elements that make up my autoethnographic writing.

What autoethnography is

The term “autoethnography” has been around since the 1970s but only really began to gain significant currency in published form in the early twenty-first century, made popular through feminist and/or poststructuralist works in a wide range of academic fields and areas of study such as Anthropology, Social Sciences, Humanities, Psychology, Applied Communications, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Journalism and Life History Research. My own introduction to autoethnography was greatly influenced by Carolyn Ellis’ work, both through her own story of trying to understand and cope with the emotional pain of caring for a loved one with a chronic illness in *Final Negotiations* (1995), which she hoped would benefit other caregivers who might be going through similar situations, and her book on autoethnography published almost ten years later, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (2004). There, she defined autoethnography as

writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness (p. 37).

Autoethnography is the product of a confluence of two major genres, one being “autobiography” which is largely a literary genre, and the other being “ethnography”, which is mainly used in academic fields. Bruner (1990) defined autobiography as “an account of what one thinks one did in what settings in what ways for what felt reasons” (p. 119) written as a narrative. It is not of concern whether others who appear in one’s

story agree with the author, or whether the account is self-deceptive or “true”. The purposes of writing autobiographies are many; one may desire to share an interesting or important story of who one is and what one’s life looks like, to process or get closure from certain experiences, to pass on or preserve stories of one’s family history, or simply to send a message to others about something one has learned from one’s history. Ethnography, which has its roots in the larger field of Anthropology, refers to “a systematic description of a culture that is based on direct observation of a particular group. Such observation usually involves a detailed study of physical characteristics and social customs” (Lichtman, 2010, p. 71). Simply put, it is the description and interpretation of a culture or social group. Its purpose is to report on different ways of life found in particular groups of people. Collectively, the elements of autoethnography form a systematic analysis of the actions, thoughts, reasons, and situations of a particular individual operating in a particular culture that aims to understand his/her way of life. Where a researcher is studying another individual’s life history, Wolcott (2004) has called this “ethnographic autobiography”. The “auto” here is in reference to the story the individual tells the researcher about his/her life. One clear distinction to make here in terms of “life history” is that an autobiography generally looks at a person’s whole life history, whereas an autoethnography is generally focused on the lived experiences that relate to the specific issue under investigation.

Not so different to other researchers, the researcher self can also be seen as an outsider looking in on the “researched self” looking at him/herself through a specific lens, observing, discovering and reporting aspects of the researched self that s/he finds interesting. However, unlike other ethnographers, autoethnographers have the advantage of having immediate access to a larger pool of “data” particularly in terms of being able to access memories that can dig deeper into the layers of the phenomenon under study, though this can sometimes have the disadvantage of the researcher being far too close to the subject. On the use and value of “personal memory data” in autoethnographic studies, Chang (2008) states that

as an autoethnographer, you not only have a privileged access to your past experiences and personal interpretations of those experiences, but also have first-hand discernment of what is relevant to your study. What is recalled from the past forms the basis of autoethnographic data (p. 71).

Since memory is also unreliable, unpredictable, triggers intense emotions, selects, censors and distorts the past, exclusive reliance on personal memory and recollections as a data source can also raise tricky questions about validity and reliability. In this regard, Chang (2007) states that although the obsession with objectivity is not necessary for qualitative research, to avoid the challenges of unbridled subjectivity,

autoethnographers need to support their arguments with broad-based data like in any good research practice. For this reason, they can easily complement “internal” data generated from researchers’ memory with “external” data from outside sources, such as interviews, documents, and artifacts. Multiple sources of data can provide bases for triangulation that will help enhance content accuracy and validity of the autoethnographic writing (p. 217).

For other qualitative researchers (not necessarily interested in autoethnography) who are interested in bringing the personal into research, terms such as “triangulation” are generally approached warily. In discussing ethnographic studies that move outside social scientific writing and into more “creative analytic processes” [CAP], Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) state that purpose of triangulation is to validate findings under the assumption that there is a “fixed point or an object that can be triangulated ... CAP text recognizes that there are far more than ‘three sides’ by which to approach the world” (p. 963). Using the central image of a crystal, she suggests that crystallization is a better way of thinking about the infinite ways in which we can see through a crystal depending on the angle of view. Crystallization deconstructs any notion of a single truth and “provides us with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic” (p. 963). Whether using triangles or crystals, the general consensus amongst qualitative researchers is to see the partialness of all research endeavors and the demonstration of adequate self-awareness and accountability in representing the people one has studied.

So far, I have been looking at the workings of the role of “the self” in autoethnography, but the self, that is, the *auto* in autoethnography, is not a study simply of self alone. Others, both those who are personally connected to the self such as family, friends, colleagues, etc., and casual acquaintances that are linked to the self by common experiences, are invariably a part of one’s story. Whether an autoethnographer wishes to

position the self and others by placing the focus on oneself as the main character and others as supporting actors, or by including others as co-participants or co-informants of one's study, or by studying others as the primary focus yet also as an entry to one's own world (see Chang, 2008 for detailed descriptions on each of these possibilities), stories of the self are "never made in a vacuum and others are always visible or invisible participants in [our] stories" (Chang, 2008, p. 69). Furthermore, as Holman-Jones (2005) states in her definition of autoethnography, "although the inquiries come from personal stories, the narratives reach out to social, historical and philosophical contexts to gain a wider significance, academically and personally 'making the personal political'" (p. 763). In whatever structure or style, stories of the self in autoethnographic work are always embedded in or linked to the purpose of making contributions to larger social and political concerns at a historical juncture.

The aim of autoethnography

There are many purposes that autoethnography can fulfill that are, needless to say, highly dependent on the topic of one's study and the field in which one is writing. In reference to her own area of study on raising the cultural consciousness of self and others for instance, Chang (2007) lists three main benefits of autoethnography: "(1) it offers a research method friendly to researchers and readers; (2) it enhances cultural understanding of self and others; and (3) it has the potential to transform self and others toward cross-cultural coalition building" (p. 213). I have also experienced these benefits through my study. My particular journey gave me the opportunity to destabilize singular and unproductive realities, bring complexities to the fore, develop a critical eye, and enter into a stream of new possibilities by seeing the simultaneity of different interpretations or realities existing together. Autoethnography forced me to read between the lines, listen more closely to what is not being said, see what lies beneath, what has fallen through the cracks and outside of the margins of the text. It enabled me to see my everyday through a different lens, a more critical and inquisitive lens, looking for the questions that would help me to understand certain social conditions. In this sense, autoethnography has come to feel more like being in a rehearsal for the future to come than a journey that ends.

The main methodology of autoethnography

The epistemological foundation on which autoethnography sits is not built on the perspectives of “behavioural” or “social science” but leans more towards what Polkinghorne (1988) calls “human science”, a “science which approaches questions about the human realm with an openness to its special characteristics and a willingness to let the questions inform which methods are appropriate” (p. 289). Similar to any other type of ethnographic work, writing guides researchers to the methods and types of data that are appropriate for their studies. However, unlike traditional ethnographic research that investigates others’ lives, and includes verbatim records of participants’ own talk and accounts using their personal memories and the researcher’s words about what they saw and heard, the primary source of data in autoethnographic studies is one’s own memory. What is extracted from memory is written down as textual data and can be shaped and reshaped as one’s study unfolds. In contrast, the records ethnographers collect and use are not freely reshapable according to the researcher’s purpose, or in some cases, they may be reshaped but only with permission and final consent from the informant. Another way in which writing differs for autoethnographers and ethnographers is the relative freedom that autoethnographers have to choose from a variety of styles, or to bring different styles together to represent the complex and multilayered experiences of the researcher. A great deal of emphasis is placed on experimenting with a variety of writing strategies, structures and styles. As mentioned earlier, writing is a method of inquiry in all types of qualitative study, but writing is acknowledged differently, more prominently, in autoethnographic studies. (I will discuss other differences between autoethnography and conventional ethnography in terms of the position and abilities of researchers in Chapter 4 *Troubling Data*.)

Autoethnographers have made helpful suggestions for novice researchers who want to do this type of work in regard to writing (see Ellis, 2004; Richardson, 2001; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Chang, 2008), but ultimately there are not, and cannot be, set rules or models for writing one’s particular experiences. That would be the antithesis of what autoethnography seeks to achieve – “to move research in many different and, indeed, contradictory directions in the hope that more interesting and useful ways of knowing will emerge” (Lather, 1991, p. 69). In her article *Writing: A Method of Inquiry*, Richardson (2000) states, “I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I didn’t know before I wrote it ... How we

are expected to write affects what we can write about ... Writing is a method of knowing” (pp. 924-929). These statements also resonate with how I thought about writing in this study.

Richardson encourages qualitative researchers to explore, experiment and try out new writing forms. The possibilities of the ways in which we can write, the technology available for researchers to share their works and the conversations we can have across disciplines are today vast, exciting and valuable. However, it is also important to remember that these possibilities do not come without dangers, caveats and limitations. As she rightly points out,

although we are freer to present our texts in a variety of forms to diverse audiences, we have different constraints arising from self-consciousness about claims to authorship, authority, truth validity, and reliability. Self-reflexivity unmasks complex political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing. Truth claims are less easily validated now; desires to speak “for” others are suspect. The greater freedom to experiment with textual form, however, does not guarantee a better product. The opportunity for writing worthy texts – books and articles that are “good reads” – are multiple, exciting and demanding. But the work is harder. The guarantees are fewer. There is a lot more for us to think about (1994, p. 523).

A more precise description of my narratives

Engaging in autoethnographic practices opened up a world of different possibilities, but when I brought in my own story, concerns, skills, desires, and particular aims, I began to see my study taking its own shape. My autoethnographic text aligns most closely to Pratt’s (1991a) description of autoethnographic texts, a

text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them... [A]utoethnographic texts are representations that the so-defined others construct in response to or in dialogue with those text... They involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create

self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding (p. 2).

The particular elements that constituted my thinking and writing, or the elements I found most useful in guiding my thoughts in writing this type of autoethnographic text, lie in the notions of “critical”, “reflexive”, and “narrative” ways of thinking. It also became clearer that my project had not started with the intention of telling a story. Embedded in my motives was a sense of wanting to “account” for myself, that is, to give an account of myself. It is for these reasons that I came to think of my work as a “critical, reflexive, narrative account”. Each of these concepts held a specific meaning for me that helped me to dig deeper and keep my study in perspective. It was a way of readjusting the lens and refining the construction of a textual self that was coming into production. In creating such a label, my hope is not to create a new category of narratives, but to place importance on being able to better pinpoint, articulate and justify the features that make up one’s account. In the following section, I will describe what these concepts mean in my work.

1. The Critical

I have drawn on a number of basic ideas used in Critical Theory to dig deeper into my texts. The epistemological assumption in Critical Theory is that knowledge is located in social and cultural contexts and imbued with power. The philosophy or perspective focuses on disempowered or marginally positioned groups of people often interpreted in relation to their background, such as gender, social class or ethnicity. What such a focus hopes to do is to uncover, understand, eliminate and change social inequalities by questioning authority, domination and power, revealing and critiquing ideologies, examining assumptions, values and attitudes that form the basis of the social needs of individuals, groups and society itself, often with the question, “whose interests are being served?” It is attractive to my work in that it engages directly with real problems and focuses on everyday practices, and seeks not simply to explain those problems, but to provide the means of resolving them by enabling people to gain more control over their own lives. What “resolving” problems means needs careful consideration, because being critical is also often critiqued for providing no resolution. I am not seeking “emancipation” as some critical theorists might say is crucial in doing critical work. Rather, I lean towards what Pennycook (2001) states, that the “critical

seeks not so much the stable ground of an alternative truth but rather the constant questioning of all categories” (p. 8). Not only must we sustain a skepticism on everyday categories, “the problematizing stance must also be turned on itself” (p. 8) which eventually helps us to realize the limits of our self-knowledge. The purpose is to “raise a host of new and difficult questions about knowledge, politics and ethics...grounded in ethical arguments for why better alternative possibilities may be better...[and an] ethics of compassion and a model of hope and possibility” (pp. 8-9).

I wish to be careful in pointing out here that by utilizing some of the ideas embedded in Critical Theory, I am not recognizing my position as disempowered or marginally positioned. To be able to do this work in itself already reflects the privileged position from which I speak. Having said this, my life has not always been subject to this privileged position and the researched self I see in my work speaks from both positions of power and marginalization. In this sense, it was important in analyzing my data to take into consideration my position as speaking from both the dominant and dominated (e.g., marginalization in an elite school in Seoul), sometimes, both simultaneously. What was important for me was, following von Hoene (1999), to see myself

not as static but as an ongoing self-reflexive process that, in the spirit of Julia Kristeva's subject-in-process, puts itself on trial, making itself other to itself, seeing itself from the metadistance of a Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* [distancing effect] and catching itself in and working to revise its own colonialist desires and identifications (p. 27).

2. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is “an awareness of the self in the situation of action and of the role of the self in constructing that situation” (Bloor & Wood, 2006). In autoethnographic studies, it is part and parcel of the study since it is not only in certain sections that the researcher “I” is inserted and becomes visible. One does not necessarily need to use the personal “I” to demonstrate one’s reflexivity. Referring to a section of Wright’s (2001) study in which she describes the literacy and teaching pedagogy practiced in Eritrea in the full social, economic, and material context without the inclusion of a personal “I”, Canagarajah (2005) points out that, in some cases, “good thick-description can enable

the readers to make their own inferences and read behind the lines by seeing surprising connections between the context and the researcher” (p. 312-313). The hidden first person pronoun can engage readers in “even more analysis, behind the back of the author, by putting together the clues in the text” (p. 313).

It is also useful to think further about the “I” that is being presented in the study. In this regard, Pennycook’s (2005) illustration of an already textually produced researcher “I” that appears in personal statements made by the researchers themselves is an important area of reflexivity to consider. The “researcher I” that is being represented in my work is an “academic I”, an “I” that has already been shaped by academic conventions. The “I” that transforms through the study becomes an “autoethnographic I”, a textually re-produced “I”. In such circumstances, Pennycook states, “the question becomes not so much how do I write myself into my research, but rather how does my research writing produce a writing subject in a certain way?” (p. 303). Following Stanley (1993) I see the “autoethnographic I” as one that is self-aware, critically scrutinizes the self through self-examination, inquires and is analytical. She states that:

The use of ‘I’ explicitly recognizes that such knowledge is contextual, situational and specific, and that it will differ systematically according to the social location (as a gendered, raced, classed, sexualized person) of the particular knowledge-producer (pp. 49-50).

Becoming aware of this particular “I” that is coming into formation, questioning its authority, knowledge and constructing forces, can be an important way of experiencing one’s role as a knowledge producer. The production of this autoethnographic “I” in my work is highly reflective of its conscious construction because autoethnography requires that of me. In that conscious construction, I unlearn and re-conceptualize the structures of my thought through a critical lens. It is not always a comfortable space and is filled with vulnerabilities and insecurities, but as Brogden (2010) states,

accepting an invitation into instability, and dwelling there, can create altered spaces for coming to be...which may in turn alter the ways our multiple, shifting, temporal identities come to produce, and be produced, and where crisis, like life, makes different things possible (p. 375).

Reflexivity is more than taking into account one's limited and subjective position as the researcher of one's study. In doing ethnography, it is as Canagarajah (2005) points out, more than

recognizing one's own limitations and appreciating the other community's wisdom. [I]t is important to bring to bear one's professional training, values, and knowledge to negotiate the differences constructively. To pretend that we have been totally converted to the foreign approach [voicing the local community's interest] is dishonest. That can never happen. We are still ideologically positioned subjects with our own unique likes and dislikes (p. 314, *brackets my insertion*).

Researchers need to hold onto their critical thinking as they go about their reflexivity, and to be frank about what is or is not constructive, while simultaneously being open to reflexively turning the problematizing stance onto oneself. Here, it is also useful to take heed of Patai's (1994) extremely critical review of tiresome self-reflexivity, aimed largely at established feminist academics who talk excessively about their position as white, middle-class researchers in their research contexts. She states that

we are spending way too much time wading in the morass of our own positionings. It's nice to say that we need to account for ourselves, that we must not hide behind a spurious invisibility or objectivity. But just how much space should we be devoting to self-accounting and to the methodological discourse that has sprouted, like mushrooms, around it? When is enough enough? (p. 64).

In her article on the uses of "reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research", Pillow (2003) discusses the challenges of being reflexive and doing reflexivity; however, those challenges are not an excuse for us to stop talking about our positions. What she suggests is a kind of reflexivity where we need to be engaging in an "uncomfortable reflexivity - a reflexivity that seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous" (p.188). Taking such a view, it is useful to remember, following Canagarajah (2005), that "one has to always negotiate the interests of the community, genre conventions, and disciplinary knowledge effectively to be both

personal and critical. And there are no easy answers regarding how to achieve this” (p. 314).

3. Narrative

Aside from the use of narratives in this study as a way of creating a coherent sequence of events in order to make sense of my experiences, there is another element of narrative that spoke significantly to me. This relates to Bruner’s (2004) thesis in *Life as Narrative* that “stories do not happen in the real world but, rather, are constructed in people’s heads” (p. 691). In his view, there is no such thing as a “life itself” that awaits our reportage; rather, when a person tells about their life, the story is being made up as they interpret and re-interpret their experiences. The telling is always a selective and “cognitive achievement” (p. 692) that happens through memory recall; what people say are “hypotheses, versions, expected scenarios” (p. 709). At the heart of his argument is that the stories we tell are culturally structured narratives that we have learned. He states,

“the ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing that go with them become so habitual that they finally become recipes for structuring experience itself, for laying down routes into memory, for not only guiding the life narrative up to the present but directing it into the future” (p. 708).

The plot drives the story more than the motive and “in the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we “tell about” our lives” (p. 694). He is not claiming that individuals cannot deviate from structures and discourses but is making a strong case for the structures that drive the stories. Such structures can be altered by thinking about how “people put their narratives together when they tell stories from life, considering as well how they *might* have proceeded” (p. 709). (I will discuss in greater detail the structures of my own learned storylines in Chapter 6 *Giving an Account of Oneself*.) As a tool for thinking differently about my narratives, I have found Luke’s (2009) work on his ethnic narrative to be useful.

Luke points out three broad types of narratives by “postcolonial writers and by marginalised minorities that attempt to provide accounts of their life trajectories and of the intergenerational dynamics of identity, political agency and desire” (p. 486). They are: narratives of “liberation”, the recovery of voice, authenticity and power and the documentation of oppression; “displacement”, the recovery of self through a return to

homeland and origins; and “simulacrum”, narratives of blending, hybridity, pastiche and textual self-reconstruction. These works represent and describe the emergence of new cultural transformations, texts and identities (p. 487). My real interest for the purposes of my study is in this latter type of narrative, which focuses on textual self-reconstruction. Narratives of liberation and displacement are only relevant for me to point to as precisely the narratives my story attempts to move away from; the familiar storylines into which autobiographical narratives so easily fall. Ultimately, what Luke points out about narratives of liberation and displacement is that they are “based around economies of production – symbolic and at times allegorical productions of the self, whether as revolutionary agent, as matriarch, as literate subject, or...as assimilated subject” (p. 489) where the subject is “filled by lack, deficit, displacement, only to be filled up by a return to the origins myth”. Some form of self-berating and essentialism is used as a counter-hegemonic tactic. Drawing on Raphael’s (1994) work, he calls for a move away from narratives centered around nation-states, ethnicity, race, class and so on to a different kind of textual self-reproduction, called a “critical ‘economy of looking’: looking at ourselves and others through the critical lenses of multiple, overlapping and lived representation” (Luke 2009, p. 489). Through this critical economy of looking, authors shift their attention from binary oppositions of “between two cultures” or in the “finding authentic voice” arguments and work towards the production of different stories, “stories where cultural boundaries and exchanges are harder to pin down, where simulation suffices for something more solid, where separating out the good guys and the bad guys is a bit more ambiguous” (Luke, 2009, p. 497). A critical narrative of textual self-reconstruction is the type of narrative I hope to accomplish in this study.

4. *Account*

I will go into greater detail of what I mean by an “account” and the precautionary measures I think multilingual authors should take into consideration in Chapter 6. In broad terms, a story or narrative is different from giving an account of oneself. Primarily the difference I see, following Butler (2005), is that “accounts” (that is, acts of giving an account of oneself) are embodied by a specific addressee (even though they may only be imaginary or virtual) who requires the speaker to explain themselves in relation to some form of allegation or accusation leveled at the speaker. In my case, there was no need for another to make accusatory comments on why I *can* but *don’t*

speaking Korean or my efforts to hide my Korean ancestral affiliation; I was able to make them to myself. In trying to give an account of the reasons behind this and how these acts might have come about (to myself), it was easy to fall for the ruse of becoming my own psychiatrist trying to explain my psychological make-up in ways I didn't understand nor was qualified to speak about. At one stage, my work increasingly appeared to be turning into something "therapeutic", a place where my researched self lay on the couch confessing to the researcher self waiting to be diagnosed and cured, which was far from what I sought to do with this work. Giving an account of myself to myself is about being able to explore, understand and find new ways of becoming through acts of reading, collecting my thoughts through writing, having a dialogue with others and myself, listening to others' experiences and stories and observing as widely as possible what I can see, touch, think, feel and "know".

Conclusion

What scholarly practices have taught me in writing my own autoethnographic account resonates with what Winterson (2011) speaks of in terms of being open about different interpretations of who we are. She states that, "reading yourself as a fiction as well as a fact is the only way to keep the narrative open - the only way to stop the story running away under its own momentum, often towards an ending no one wants" (p. 119). There are things we know about our lives, but there are also empty spaces we must fill, for which we ourselves may not be able to (nor care to) clearly distinguish which bits are true and which are not. Our understandings of ourselves are like palimpsests, where layers of our accounts are overwritten but with the remains of previous traces.

MacLure (2010) states that qualitative research today seeks to bring forth a different type of research, research that has "lost its innocence and its faith in 'victory narratives', that recognizes that its truths are always partial and provisional, and that it can never fully know or rescue the other" (p. 1), or in my case, rescue myself. Researchers are trying to find strategies to write and destabilize the self simultaneously. By way of talking about the paradox of poststructuralist autoethnographic research, Gannon (2006) rightly points out that on the one hand autoethnographic work is attractive because at the heart of it, authors are encouraged to speak for themselves and

express their own ideas and beliefs. On the other hand, a poststructuralist position reminds us of the (im)possibilities of writing the self where

the writing writes the writer as a complex (im)possible subject in a world where (self) knowledge can only ever be tentative, contingent, and situated ... Authors write themselves as unreliable and contradictory narrators who speak the self—the multiple selves that each of them is and have been—in discontinuous fragments informed by memory, the body, photographs, other texts, and, most importantly, other people (p. 474).

While we must be careful not to produce selves that are all-knowing, univocal, fixed subjects, and must handle cautiously the “limits and fragilities of self-knowledge” (p. 492), we *can* and need to “get on with our scholarship” (Patai, 1994, p. 68) of writing our selves into research foregrounded in an ethics of care for the self and others working towards a politics of progressive possibilities.

All endings in autoethnographic works seem somewhat forced, but as one work ends, another begins. Autoethnography is not about “knowing yourself” but about knowing the limits and fragility of one’s knowledge, which is also the conduit to producing effective knowledge. It is about reaching deeper into the layers and transforming the structures, taking the mysticism of everyday life and being able to articulate it, learning from others and also giving back to the field. It is about heightening one’s awareness, senses and reading between the lines, and noticing what has fallen between the cracks. Simultaneity, multiplicity and possibility are at the heart of doing autoethnographic work.

Bruner (2004) states that “the fish will, indeed, be the last to discover water—unless he gets a metaphysical assist” (p. 709). While “metaphysics” may not be the right term here as it sits at odds with poststructuralism, autoethnography, for me, was that helpful assist to discovering new ways of thinking and becoming.

Chapter 3
The Ordinariness of Polyphony
Beijing (1993-2000)

While reading Higgins & Coen's (2000) book *Streets, Bedrooms & Patios: The Ordinariness of Diversity in Urban Oaxaca*, I came across the following statement: "as [h]omo sapiens, we are all the same in terms of genetic structure and cognitive potentiality ... Beyond that, we do not think that as humans we have anything in common but our differences; there is no general human nature to be found, nor will the deconstructing of social or cultural practices reveal some kind of common human core" (pp. 14-15). The notion that humans don't have anything in common but our differences seemed to resonate with some of the details I was learning from my data in Chapter 1, but it wasn't particularly significant in relation to the overall theme of the chapter. In particular I began to think more about my experience with Gina, living within a Korean community in New York and amongst Koreans of various statuses. There were people like my parents who were working class Korean immigrants and who took up American citizenship after many years, second-generation Korean-Americans such as myself who were born in America, Koreans who were born in Korea holding green cards (permanent residency), "aliens" as they are called in the US such as my siblings, and Korean-Americans who were born in Korea but became naturalized citizens at a young age. This brought to mind my experiences in Seoul of going to school with elite and mobile Korean hyphenated individuals in prestigious international schools and working class Koreans such as my cousins who are not involved in spaces outside of their local territories. Whether as family, friends, students, or casual acquaintances, other than our affiliation to the label "Korean", there seemed to be nothing similar about us. The only thing common about us is our difference which began to suggest to me the ordinariness of the diversity in being something called "Korean".

In this chapter, I seek to extend an illustration of these categories of Koreans through my experiences in Beijing and explore further what we might be able to learn from the ordinariness of difference. I will start by illustrating an incident with a wealthy, upper class Korean individual.

Section 1: “She’s a *joseonjok*?!”

On a summer holiday trip back to Korea when I was twenty years old and living in Beijing, I visited a wealthy Korean friend’s house. By wealthy, I am referring to *chaebol* status: those who own numerous international enterprises. My friend Tae-woo introduced me to his 15-year old Korean niece, and the following is my memory of the conversation that took place in Seoul, 1998:

Tae-woo: (in Korean) This is my friend visiting from China.

Na-young: (looking at my appearance from head to toe, whispers loudly to Tae-woo in Korean in complete horror) You mean... she’s a *joseonjok*?!!!!!!!

Julie: (in English) Actually, I’m Korean-American.

Na-young: (in Korean) Oh... *gyopo* [Korean living abroad, usually referencing long-term immigrants living in the US but can also refer to American born Koreans], so your Korean must be bad (dismisses me and talks about her golf lessons).

What comes to the fore here in my defensive response to Na-young is my knowledge of the use of the power of English in South Korea amongst South Koreans. I use English and my American affiliation as an asset, a prestigious identity to match her “wealthy” status. But there is misunderstanding on my part in thinking that Korean-Americans can claim a prestigious position through English when many Koreans in South Korea perceive *gyopos* as a group of struggling, working class individuals who are usually not fluent in Korean. Not only are *gyopos* perceived as incompetent speakers of Korean but a recent study shows they are also not seen as “real” native speakers of English by certain South Koreans. In Shin’s recent work (2012) interviewing middle-class South Korean *yuhaksaeng* [overseas students] in Toronto, her participants discuss who they perceive as having “global linguistic capital” today. Discussing how an immigrant boy who has lived in Canada since his childhood pronounced the term “call taxi” (a term used by Korean residents in North America which is usually pronounced by Korean speakers as k^hol.t^hæk.si (/) and not in the North American English pronunciation k^hol.t^hEk.ʃi), the Korean overseas student states:

usually among Koreans, . . . you don't usually use English, you know. Umm (.) but then, he pronounced it like a native speaker here [*neitibeu seupikeo cheoreom*], so it sounded strange to everyone. So everyone laughed and I laughed too (laugh) It's not bad, but when you suddenly hear English in native speaker-like pronunciation [*neitibeu seupikeo gateun bareum*] while speaking in Korean, [it's funny] (laugh) (p. 195).

In her interpretation of how the Korean overseas student viewed the precariousness of this boy's position, Shin states that he is "not represented as a 'native speaker' of English; he is only seen as a speaker who can pronounce a word 'like a native speaker' or 'like local people'". On the one hand, this works as a strategy of distinction, neither competent in the Korean language and cultural understandings nor does he possess proper legitimacy to claim 'native speaker' status, unlike *yuhaksaeng* who present themselves as having a firm grounding in Korean and global culture despite their insecure status in Canada" (p. 195). As Block (2012b) comments on Shin's article, these issues have to do with "having the 'right' Korean: not the kind spoken by those who have grown up as the children of immigrants in North America" (p. 278) (see also Cho, 2012 for similar examples) and these issues may be extended to the ways in which immigrant Koreans are seen as inauthentic speakers of English, or speakers of English who do not have the right kind of English to be counted as having global linguistic capital. However, it is not only *gyopos* or *iminja* [immigrants] that *yuhaksaeng* have categories for and who count as illegitimate or inauthentic speakers of English. Even within their own label as *yuhaksaeng*, there is further division of who is seen as having capital in English. One's social status, length of residency and study in an English medium environment, the type of school one is enrolled in and the particular pronunciation of the speakers contribute greatly in this shaping of speakers' positions. Shin points out that ultimately these categorizations contradict and further perpetuate the very ideologies and dichotomies about "native/non-speaker" they seek to transgress. She states that:

yuhaksaeng's construction of *iminja* [immigrants] as illegitimate speakers of 'authentic' English (and hence as illegitimate 'Canadians') also reproduces the racialized ideology of linguistic stigmatization which constructs *all* Asians/Koreans (including both *iminja* and *yuhaksaeng*) as 'poor' speakers of English. This ultimately works to undermine the very efforts of

yuhaksaeng to contest their stigmatization as FOBs [Fresh off the Boat] and poor speakers of English and to position themselves as cosmopolitans with elite legitimacy (p. 195).

Although I may not have been aware of these notions explicitly at the time, in being silent at that moment when Na-young dismissed me, I accepted the notion that *gyopos* were incompetent speakers of Korean. More troubling is my response to Na-young's shock when she perceives me to be a *joseonjok*. My reply, "Actually, I'm Korean-American", suggests my own prejudice of accepting that ethnic Koreans from China are inferior not only to South Koreans but also to Korean-Americans. Why did I reject the label *joseonjok* so emphatically? Some background information about my living conditions in Beijing will be useful here.

I lived with my mother in Beijing and attended a local Chinese school, a public school with an International Students Department. Chinese language classes were offered and all subjects were conducted in Chinese to foreign students. In 1994 when I enrolled, most of the foreign students were from South Korea. With the normalization of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China in 1992 and the Asian economic crisis of 1997 that hit South Korea, there was a tremendous surge in South Korean families migrating to China in the mid-1990s, in particular to major cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Dalian, Qingdao and Shanghai. Families sought to establish new lives and business opportunities in China rather than making the usual move to Western countries, mostly because living expenses were lower in China and families could shuttle back and forth easily to and from South Korea. For many newly arrived South Korean residents, it was common to employ *joseonjok ayis* [ethnic Korean aunties/housekeepers], tutors and sometimes drivers. Although there are some differences in terminology and expressions between the Korean spoken by South Koreans and the Korean spoken by ethnic Koreans in China that sometimes lead to misunderstandings, they do not hinder conversations to the extent that communication is not possible. This ability to communicate in Korean for South Koreans was particularly helpful in dealing with day-to-day language issues. In the larger political picture, ethnic Koreans act as "a source of foreign labor and [act] as an intermediary in South Korea's contacts with China and even North Korea" (Kim, 2003, p. 103). For South Korean students, tutors were an integral part of the academic success of Korean students who

graduated from Chinese high schools and were looking to enter university in China, but in my mind they were perceived as helpers or servants.

At the time, I was aware of the (in)visible discrimination that surrounded ethnic Korean residents in China, not only in relation to their position against the ethnic majority, the “Han Chinese” (the ethnic group native to China) who, according to Kim, viewed ethnic Koreans as useful intermediaries who were nevertheless relatively weak in establishing networks of connection in China. This is largely due to the perception that ethnic Koreans do not have the same fluency in the Chinese language, nor do they share Han culture, which the Han see as key factors for establishing connections with mainstream Chinese communities. Given these perceptions, Kim states that, “some ethnic Koreans opt to assimilate to the Chinese majority culture by identifying themselves as Chinese citizens rather than emphasizing their ethnic minority identity. But some others are attempting to learn and copy the culture of South Korea as much as possible, giving up many peculiar aspects of ethnic Koreans in China” (p. 122). Today, there are more opportunities for ethnic Koreans to travel to South Korea, but it is no easier for them to live without discrimination in their ancestral homeland. In South Korea, they work under harsh conditions in what has become widely known in the economic world as 3-D (dirty, dangerous and difficult) jobs that most South Koreans try to avoid, and they often work illegally as a result of the restrictions on their visas. Their illegal status also makes them a target for exploitation. In this sense, there is no sense of belonging or ownership in either China or South Korea.

In that moment with Na-young, being positioned as *joseonjok*, as I understood it, was to be positioned as a 3-D servant. I used my understanding of speaking English as a prestigious symbol to rectify my position, but my ignorance of how second generation Korean-Americans were seen in Korea, particularly by unusually wealthy *chaebol* status Korean elites such as Na-young, backfired. That I could be dismissed in this way by a 15-year-old made me see this label *gyopo* as something truly disabling. That brief encounter now shows me the prejudiced and deeply divided ideas I held about those who carried the label “Korean”, as well as the instantaneous ways speakers draw on whatever resources they feel might be useful to negotiate their position. These acts of negotiation, i.e. how people negotiate or attempt to negotiate, how they represent themselves, what resources or discourses they draw on, can help us to draw the focus away from ourselves, from what we feel or how we think we have been positioned, to

see how individuals simultaneously transgress yet perpetuate the very boundaries they may seek to destabilize.

Adding to the list of diverse Koreans I mentioned earlier, this section identifies additional labels such as *chaebol* [wealthy Koreans], *joseonjok* [ethnic Korean residing in China], *iminja* [immigrant], *yuhaksaeng* [overseas Koreans] who are further divided into categories according to status, linguistic proficiency, time abroad, level of education and so on. Shin's study shows how overseas Korean students now see themselves as "Asian globals", "global transnationals" or "global subjects", positioning Korean-Americans as those who are "different", "a bit *dabdab*" [old fashioned] who don't know things like "youth slang or are not trendy...not up to date" (p. 191). Although her *yuhaksaeng* participants demonstrate what Shin calls "transnational cool" by mobilizing "a mixture of English, transliterated Korean, Korean Internet shorthand, and emoticons as stylistic resources to present their transnational identities" (p. 192), ultimately Shin points out that ideologies of native speaker, legitimate English and intraethnic Othering are left uncontested. Participants repeatedly stated that they felt their English was not "good enough", that they had great anxieties about trying to achieve a certain level of competence in English and were viewed/judged by other overseas Korean university students as to whether they could be considered legitimate speakers of English.

The increasing diversity of Koreans is clear, but if we think categories and criteria are things of the past, that talking about identity is overrated in our modern world and these vulnerabilities are no longer present, Shin's (2012) study suggests quite the opposite. There are ever more categories and feelings of vulnerability that not only exist between ourselves and those we perceive as fundamentally different from us, but also intraethnically with more complex criteria and contradictory discourses. The great anxieties these students speak of in English in their quest to be considered legitimate speakers of English were precisely what I felt in my experiences in Beijing living within a heavily populated Korean community speaking Korean.

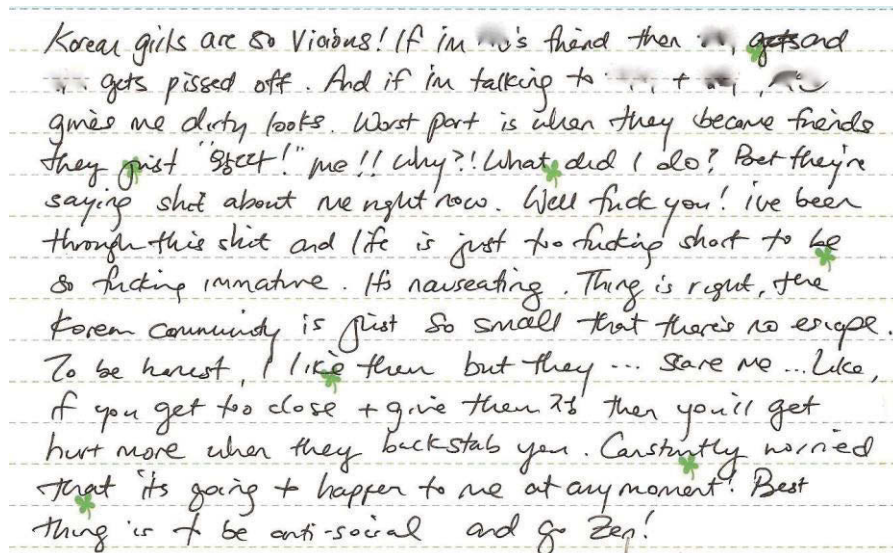
Section 2: Korean peers and high school

When I realized that the majority of the foreign students at the Chinese high school I was to attend in Beijing were from South Korea, I felt uneasy about how I would fit in as a Korean-American. While they had some knowledge of English, the Korean students in the high school generally only spoke in Korean amongst their peers, and Chinese with the teachers. It was in Beijing and at that school, amongst those students, that I became known as the girl who speaks *samgae gug-eo* [3 languages]; the fact that one of them was English was probably what transformed my linguistic identity into something prestigious. The label “multilingual” was praised. I began to see it as something exotic and a label that carried “symbolic capital”. I wanted to hold onto it. As long as I could converse in culturally appropriate and trendy ways without struggling, I felt my position could be something special in that space. However, the pleasure in that label also became a burden that often left me feeling extremely nervous.

When I spoke Korean, I was worried that my Korean peers would catch my grammatical mistakes, correct my usage of words and laugh at me. Mostly, I was frustrated that I couldn't accurately articulate my opinions on issues outside of everyday conversational topics, often because I didn't know the words or how to express them, how to get the tone right, what facial expression should accompany the words and what the “right” conventions were in speaking. I became overly consumed by questioning myself silently in interactions or pre-interactions with questions such as, “how should I address the Korean females in my class who are one year older than me? Do I use honorifics or is this strange in a high school setting? Would it be too direct and impolite to start suddenly in casual form?” Will they say, “she doesn't know the conventions because she's a *gyopo*?” “Is it too soon to call them *unni* [older sister, used by a younger female to an older female]? Are the formal linguistic rules in South Korea still relevant in this context in Beijing?” I thought constantly about how I could use my existing linguistic and cultural knowledge in a way that would cover up the knowledge I didn't have. I didn't want to get “caught-out”.

Around this time, my mother agreed to look after some of her Korean clients' daughters who were moving to Beijing, hosting them for several months at our house, and enrolling them into the same high school. Yoon-hee, Hye-rin, Yoo-ri and I were all the same age. I felt comfortable living with them and speaking daily in Korean about

life, relationships and our future goals. However once they began to fall out with each other, I found myself having to choose sides and then being chastised for trying to be friends with everyone. In pic. 3.1, I describe feelings of anger, fear and anxiety in that space at home we had to share.

A photograph of a handwritten diary entry on lined paper. The handwriting is in cursive and somewhat messy, with some words crossed out or corrected. The text expresses frustration and fear towards Korean friends, mentioning specific names like Yoon-hee, Hye-rin, and Yoo-ri. The entry ends with a suggestion to be anti-social and go Zen.

Korean girls are so vicious! If I'm Yoon-hee's friend then Hye-rin gets pissed off. And if I'm talking to Hye-rin + Yoo-ri, Yoon-hee gives me dirty looks. Worst part is when they become friends they just "wang dda!" me!! Why?! What did I do? Bet they're saying shit about me right now. Well fuck you! I've been through this shit and life is just too fucking short to be so fucking immature. It's nauseating. Thing is right, the Korean community is just so small that there's no escape. To be honest, I like them but they ... scare me ... Like, if you get too close + give them *jeong* then you'll get hurt more when they backstab you. Constantly worried that it's going to happen to me at any moment! Best thing is to be anti-social and go Zen!

Pic. 3.1. Diary entry releasing frustration of trying to live with and be friends with Yoon-hee, Hye-rin, Yoo-ri, Beijing (1994).

Transcript: Korean girls are so vicious! If I'm Yoon-hee's friend then Hye-rin and Yoo-ri gets pissed off. And if I'm talking to Hye-rin and Yoo-ri, Yoon-hee gives me dirty looks. Worst part is when they become friends they just "wang dda!" [ignore] me!! Why? What did I do? Bet they're saying shit about me right now. Well fuck you! I've been through this shit and life is just too fucking short to be so fucking immature. It's nauseating. Thing is right, the Korean community is just so small that there's no escape. To be honest, I like them but they ... scare me ... Like, if you get too close and give them *jeong* [to get emotionally attached] then you'll get hurt more when they backstab you. Constantly worried that it's going to happen to me at any moment! Best thing is to be anti-social and go Zen!

Here, my comments are directly in reference to Korean females, viewing them as "vicious", "immature", and "backstab[bers]". I did not *not* like Korean students but the spatial aspect of the "community being so small" made me feel that their proximity was suffocating, i.e. "there is no escape". There also seems to be the factor of being afraid and worried of getting hurt if I "get too close and give them "정" [*jeong*]. The Korean word *jeong* is one of the most common cultural sentiments that draws Koreans together

and carries a deep and unique meaning in individual and social relationships. *Jeong* is not a state of mind but more a feeling of deep affection and attachment, which is embodied by emotions such as sympathy, empathy, loyalty, responsibility, attachment and/or love. These are strong sentiments about Koreans and my perceptions of what it means to live in small, tightly knit Korean communities. I mentioned in Chapter 1 that I had perhaps spoken more English in Korea than I did in New York and vice versa. In the space of Beijing, other than with teachers and during daily transactional interactions such as taking taxis or going shopping, I had very little use for Chinese, particularly since the *joseonjok ayis* would take care of most of the everyday chores, and there were few opportunities to develop friendships with local Chinese students. I had never before spent so much time with Koreans from South Korea in one space for so many years. In Korea, the spaces I occupied were filled with more people from around the world than were found in the Korean/Korean-American communities in which I lived in New York. There was nothing strange about not speaking Chinese in China and nothing unusual about subscribing to dominant ideals shaped by South Koreans who settled in certain spaces in Beijing and created Korean communities. In pointing out the unexpected language practices in spaces such as New York, Seoul and Beijing, I am suggesting these are neither exceptional nor unexpected, but it is precisely this unexpectedness which raises questions about what we think is “normal” that Pennycook asks us to question, that is, “why is something unexpected in this or that place?” (Pennycook, 2012, p. 19). As he states,

The idea of languages turning up in unexpected places is not a study in exotic strangeness, of the surprising and the extraordinary ... Particular modes of thought have constructed sets of expectations about language and place, about things being in their right place” (p. 20).

What he is suggesting is the need to critically scrutinize how our expectations have been formed, and how boundaries are made and unmade. Expecting English to be something prestigious in non-English speaking spaces, thinking it is obvious that a multilingual identity can be something exotic and praiseworthy within homogeneous speech communities, or that people should speak or learn to speak the official language of their country of residence are the kinds of expectations that require critical scrutiny. Daring to critically question and explore how we came to expect the expected, the normal,

ordinary or standard, can actually lead us to break through and transgress the boundaries of the expected.

I particularly came to see the importance of questioning “expectedness” or “unexpectedness” while looking at other artifacts from a different medium, my photo albums. In perusing pictures of those high school years in Beijing, I was surprised to find a full page of photos with my Korean friends (pic. 3.2), a page of Japanese friends (pic. 3.3), a page of non-Korean friends (pic. 3.4) and then a page full of photos with only my best friend Jenny, who was an American of Chinese descent (pic. 3.5). I didn't register anything peculiar about this organization according to race and nationality in the beginning, but I wondered why I hadn't organized them according to the event, which would seem to make more sense. This reminded me that the photos were not arranged by me. My sister, who was visiting me in Beijing in 1999 for a few months, assembled these photos for me while I was in school. I do not know how she knew these individuals were Korean or Japanese just by their appearance, and while I remember their nationalities, I can barely remember their names nor recall any moments spent talking to them.

Photographs are often thought of as representations of certain times and events but in this case, they are oddly unrepresentative of the years I attended this school. Looking more carefully at the photos, I can see by the clothes I am wearing that many of the photos were taken on the last day of school, at a sporting event and at a school party. These are some of those “friendly” events throughout the school year where it is not strange for peers who may only know each other by name to take pictures together. If a camera is handy and people are willing, pictures are sometimes taken in ways that suggest the individuals have been very close. Each individual knows how to move, smile, and pose to achieve the desired effect. Texts, as Dimitriadis (2001) puts it, “contain no essential or inherent meaning but are always given meaning by people, in particular times and in particular places” (p. 11). Taking these photos was a way of keeping memories of the diversity and multiple activities of the school. However, according to my sister's organization, one can draw the conclusion that I had many friends from different groups which I moved in and out of. This is not how I remember those times but it would be easy to construct that kind of story with these sometimes unrepresentative historical artifacts.



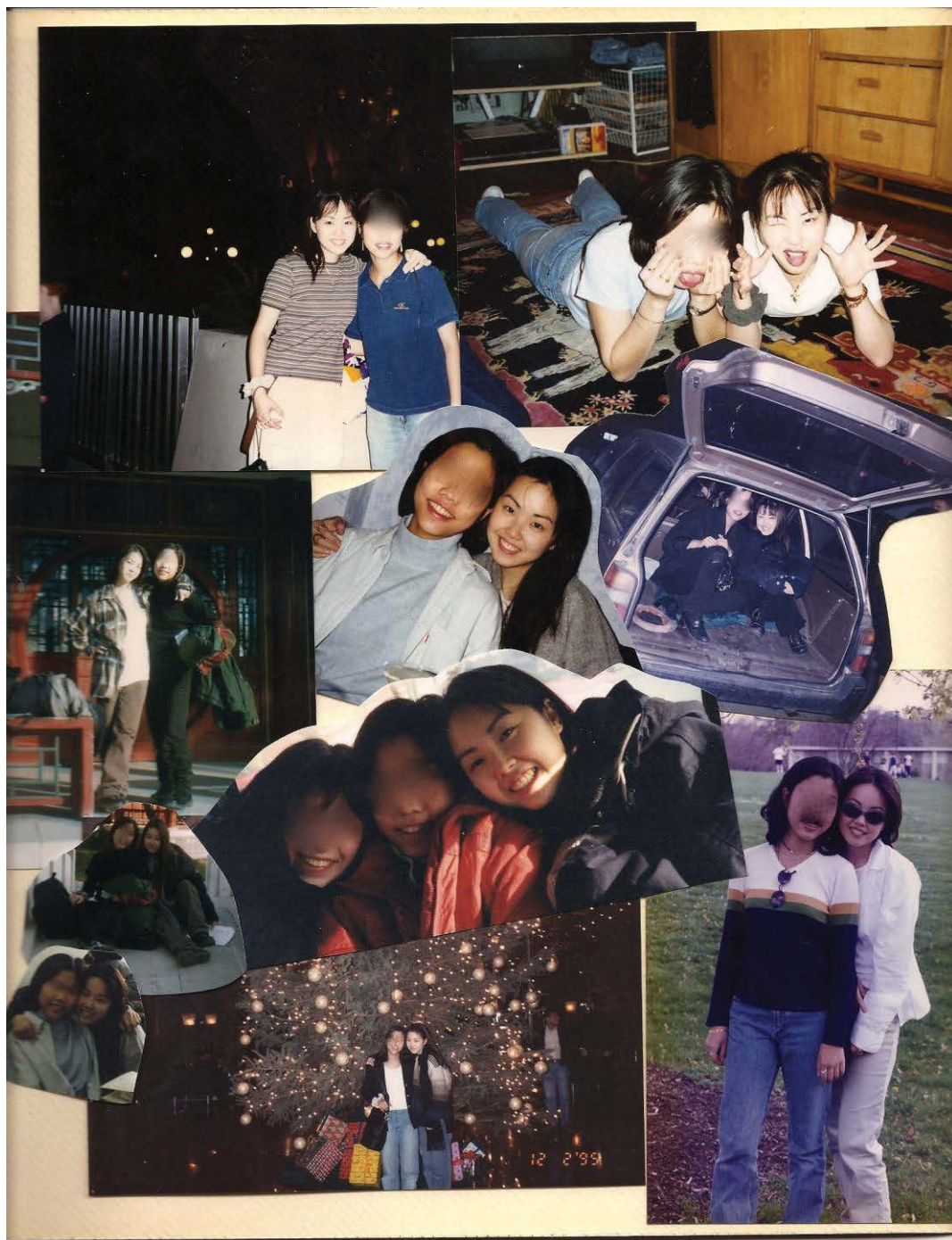
Pic. 3.2. Photos taken with Korean students at school, a school dance, bar, pool hall and sporting event, Beijing [taken at random times throughout 1995-1996].



Pic. 3.3. Photos taken with Japanese students at school, a school concert, and a sporting event, Beijing [taken at random times throughout 1995-1996].



Pic. 3.4. Photos taken with non-Korean students at school, a restaurant, bars, and a sporting event, Beijing [taken at random times throughout 1995-1996].



Pic. 3.5. Photos taken with Jenny at school, in a taxi, a friend's car, Disney World, her house, at a temple, a mall, and at Cornell University where she ultimately went to university. Beijing [taken at random times throughout 1995-1996].

I mostly kept to myself at school (despite what these pictures may suggest), often noticing that non-Korean students from either Southeast Asia or Japan were eager to learn a few trendy words and expressions in Korean from the Korean students. These non-Korean students seemed to like the attention they received when the Koreans expressed shock at how many words/expressions they knew, or how good their pronunciation was. Watching them, I sometimes envied these non-Koreans who could be attached or detached as they pleased. My Korean background, and being able to speak Korean, began to feel like a hindrance. As I show in my diary entry in pic. 3.1, I particularly disliked what I saw as Korean girls “backstabbing” me (i.e. “Bet they’re saying shit about me right now”). I did “like them” and even though I knew they were good-natured, just the sight of Koreans was sometimes enough to “scare me”, or make me feel intimidated. “Intimidation”, as Bourdieu (1991) points out, can be “exerted in a person predisposed (in his habitus) to feel it” and “one of them has only to appear in order to impose on the other, without even having to want to” (p. 52).

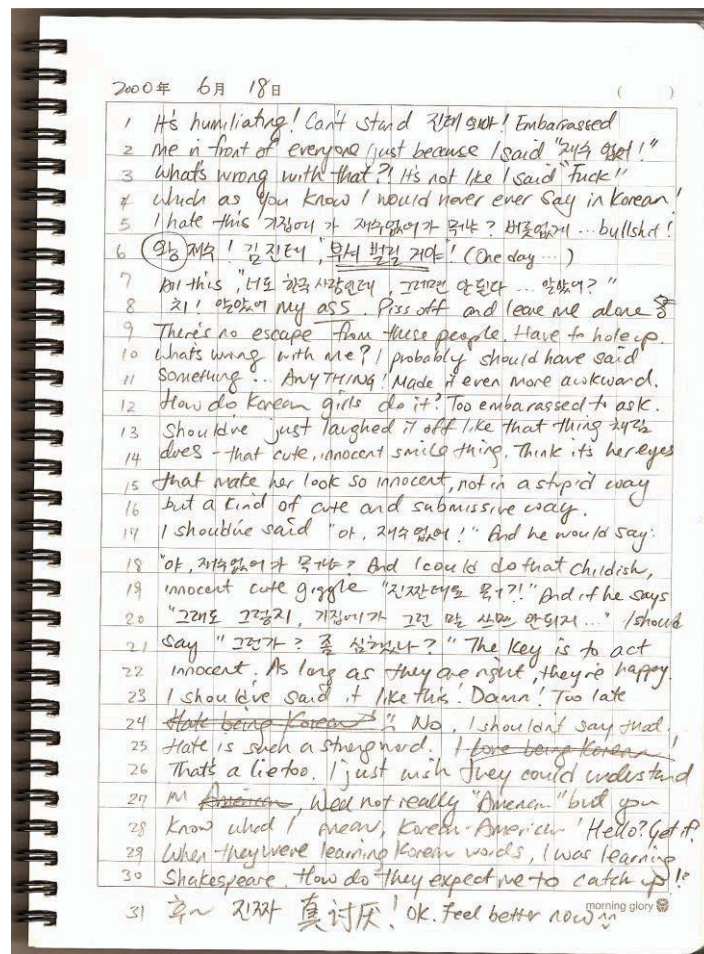
What lies in large part at the root of the intense feelings of self-consciousness and bodily reactions that I see in this period in relation to language performance is a view of “nations, languages and cultures all conceived as coherent entities” (Pennycook, 2012, p. 18). What defined me as a multilingual and the value I saw in it was “premised on the pluralization of discrete mono-languages” (p. 19). Language was commonly seen as a system, an undifferentiated whole, with discrete, and countable codes to be mastered and spoken correctly, focusing on form, accuracy and formal competence. Such views can result in an endless and pointless quest to strive for a certain way of speaking without any guidelines as to what we mean by speaking a language, what the criteria are for considering oneself able to speak a language, what counts as fluency, according to whom and for what interests. Ultimately, such views of language can do a great deal of harm by limiting the possibilities for speakers to perform in new and different ways, setting strict or fixed boundaries to prevent becoming something new or different. Without any alternative discourses to draw on, as I state in the end of the entry, the “best thing was to be anti-social” and that was exactly what I did. As a form of escape, I went back to my old pleasures of keeping to myself and watching Korean dramas; thus, I occupied my time at university. It is in the analysis of the next section that I learned how language and my multilingual identity could have been thought about differently during those years in Beijing.

Section 3: University life in Beijing (1996-2000)

Many of the Korean students applied to different universities in Beijing. Dormitories for foreign students were segregated and located in a particular place on campus. There were opportunities to mingle with different groups of students but I found myself hanging around with groups of Koreans again. Mostly, this was because I became interested in a Korean male, Min-woo. Min-woo was an active participant in Korean sporting clubs, hung out with Korean *sunbaes* [seniors] in his department and lived with Korean roommates in his dormitory. As a freshman he was also a part of various Korean initiation processes that involved many drinking events. To be his girlfriend, I felt I needed to follow the rules and rituals unquestioningly. At the time, my biggest fear was that someone would tell him in a sympathetic tone that I lacked knowledge of the Korean language and culture because I wasn't raised in Korea (even if this was true).

I was cautious and increasingly uncomfortable with the rituals that had to be conducted, i.e. pouring drinks for the *sunbaes*, using both hands to pour and receive drinks, and using different levels of honorifics, which I never learned explicitly. Although I learned by watching other females my age, these movements were still awkward on my body. I could never be sure that I was performing correctly. How much do I pour into a *soju* shot glass – all the way up to the top or just three quarters full? What will happen if I pour too much and the alcohol drips on the *sunbae's* hand? Do I have to look away from the *sunbae* while drinking? I tried not to sit next to someone who was older than me so that I would never have to pour, but when I didn't pour, I also felt I might be seen as incapable or disrespectful. I was always aware of my oversensitivity in the details of my thoughts and behaviors when it came to performing in Korean and in interaction with Koreans but I simply could not shake off these insecurities. I wanted to do everything not to stand out.

For a brief moment while writing about these insecurities, I began to wonder whether I was making too much of those feelings back then, but in reading the diary entry that follows (pic. 3.6), I realize that is not the case.



Transcript: Words in [brackets] denote Korean words

1 It's humiliating! Can't stand [!] Embarrassed
 2 me in front of everyone just because I said "[she's bad luck]"!
 3 What's wrong with that? It's not like I said "Fuck"
 4 which as you know I would never say in Korean!
 5 I hate this [girls shouldn't say these inappropriate things...] bullshit!
 6 [What an asshole! Kim Tae Hyun, I'll destroy you!] (One day...)
 7 All this, "You're Korean too so you shouldn't do this... okay?"
 8 Ugh! [Okay] my ass. Piss off and leave me alone!
 9 There's no escape from these people. Have to hole up.
 10 What's wrong with me? I probably should have said
 11 something... ANYTHING! Made it even more awkward.
 12 How do Korean girls do it? Too embarrassed to ask.
 13 Should've just laughed it off like that thing [Chae Rim]
 14 does - that cute, innocent smile thing. Think it's her eyes
 15 that make her look so innocent, not in a stupid way
 16 but a kind of cute and submissive way.
 17 I should've said ["oh, she's bad luck!"] And he would say:
 18 ["Hey you shouldn't say that".] And I could do that childish,
 19 innocent, cute giggle ["but it's true!"] And if he says
 20 [Still, girls shouldn't use that kind of language...] I should
 21 say ["Mm... Maybe you're right, that was too harsh."] The key is
 22 to act
 23 innocent. As long as they are right, they're happy.
 24 I should've said it like this! Damn! Too late.
 25 ~~Hate being Korean!~~ ☹ No, I shouldn't say that.
 26 Hate is such a strong word. ~~I love being Korean!~~
 27 That's a lie too. I just wish they could understand
 28 I'm ~~American~~. Well not really "American" but you
 29 know what I mean, Korean-American! Hello? Get it?
 30 When they were learning Korean words, I was learning
 31 Shakespeare. How do they expect me to catch up!?

31 [Ugh! Really] [(in Chinese) Really Annoyed!] Ok. Feel better now
 ☺

Pic. 3.6. Diary entry on being scolded by Tae-hyun and mentioning All about Eve. Beijing (2000).

In general, the *sunbaes* were kind to me although they were also very quick to point out any mistakes I made with language and behaviors unsuitable for young Korean girls. In this entry (pic. 3.6), although there is talking back, searching for tactics, rehearsals and ambivalence towards the labels I feel I must choose, I never question the roles of women nor the linguistic and cultural ideologies that I am being told to follow. What may seem like anodyne statements or suggestions such as Tae-hyun's (a Korean *sunbae*) statement "You're Korean too so you shouldn't do this", are for me deeply inscribed, "impalpably inculcated" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 51) discourses. As I saw it then, there were no solutions, i.e. "There's no escape from these people. Have to hole up" (line 9), and problems are redirected back to seeing myself as the problem, i.e. "what's wrong with me?" (line 10).

I did not talk back to Tae-hyun but I do not see myself as being "silenced". The repeated use of derogatory words in English such as "bullshit," "ass," and "piss off" not only appear continuously (cf. Chapter 1), but they appear as ways of "talking back" (or in my case "writing back") to Koreans or to upsetting experiences experienced in Korean. Perhaps it was assumed it was "refreshing" to use derogatory language in English, as I pointed out in Chapter 1 pic. 1.5 in Korean, "속이 다 시원하네!" [It feels so refreshing!]. In this entry (pic. 3.6), I also point out that I would never use swear words (line 4) in Korean. Such a statement demonstrates my own acceptance of following ideological understandings that such words are inappropriate for young women even though I vehemently reject those exact ideologies, e.g. "I hate this [girls shouldn't say these inappropriate things...] bullshit!" (line 5). In place of swear words, I use the expression "I'll destroy you" (line 6), which may be puzzling to the reader because it is a line from an old Korean drama called *Trap of Youth* (Ho, 1999) (see pic 3.7), the first Korean drama I viewed in which the female heroine used forceful language. It became a popular line jokingly used amongst my Korean friends. It is not so much that I know this phrase but that behind these verbal expressions, I also see particular facial expressions. I visualize the stern expression on the face of the actress. In this statement, a very particular voice is being produced.



Pic. 3.7. Images from Trap of Youth (1999).

Korean dramas were a useful tool that provided easy and non-threatening access to learning about Korean cultural rituals, practicing listening to different Korean discourses, and keeping up with the fashion trends and trendy terms being spoken in Korea. This was also the period in the country when Korean dramas and boy bands became highly popular, creating the start of the “Korean Wave” [*hanliu* in Chinese] (see Shim, 2006). Korean dramas during this period of the mid and late 1990s, as mentioned in Chapter 1, largely consisted of strong traditional Confucianist ideologies, chauvinistic male characters and submissive, angelic, or evil female characters. Because of my own personal conflicts, I read much more into the imageries and language (as I will soon show) of the “good” female protagonists. It wasn’t practical to memorize scripted dialogs, but observing other signs that were part and parcel of the meanings produced through language, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, types of smile, attire, and so on, became useful as tactics when language might fail me. These nonlinguistic signs or resources are what Blommaert (2005, p. 231) calls “packages of identity”. They play an equally powerful part in linguistically negotiating one’s position under the circumstances in which one finds oneself. As Blommaert states, “[t]he performance of identity is not a matter of articulating one identity, but the mobilisation

of a whole repertoire of identity features converted into complex and subtle moment-to-moment speaking positions” (p. 232).

In my diary entry (pic 3.6), I refer to a Korean actress, Chae Rim, in a drama called *All about Eve* (Lee & Han, 2000) and a scene I was watching at the time. In the scene, the female protagonist makes a derogatory and unfair remark about someone and is criticized by the male protagonist. She pouts about it in response but then gracefully admits she is wrong. In my diary I do a similar rendition of their conversation, tweaking it to fit the argument I had with Tae Hyun after I said *jaesu obso* in Korean [direct translation: to be in/have bad luck, in this context it is used to call him “an asshole”].

Chae Rim’s overall character in the drama is that of a warm, cheerful and fair young woman. From the light color of her makeup and clothing to the fringes of her bobbed haircut, she portrays a sense of child-like innocence. She personifies “cute” rather than sexy. These characteristics are made more apparent in the juxtaposition of her rival, performed by actress Kim So Young. She is portrayed as jealous, ambitious and seductive often wearing dark red lipstick and clothing with slightly more exposure of the skin. Every smile, gaze and body movement by Chae Rim is full of powerful injunctions that make it hard to perceive her as anything other than kind and innocent. For the reader’s reference I include a snapshot of the images I am referring to in my diary (see pic. 3.8). In this scene, Chae Rim (the leading actress) does not simply accept the male’s suggestion not to use derogatory terms. She has her say (line 19) in a quiet and gentle manner that fits the codes of what she knows is expected of her in heeding the advice from someone older.



Pic. 3.8. Images from All about Eve (2000).

Looking away in pictures (C, D and E) while she is being gently scolded, the slight pouting in pictures (D) and (E) (at least this is how I see it), the tiny giggle in picture (F) and the bright smile in picture (G) where she looks directly at him, were micro-facial tactics I felt I could achieve also in interactions with Koreans where younger individuals shouldn't talk back to their seniors. Her child-like mannerisms turn the harsh male gaze (B) into a gentler one (H). She then light-heartedly admits through her own choice that she was wrong (I). These facial movements and the language were useful in performing in situations with Koreans where I could never be the “knower” without feeling scolded and having to simply accept others' suggestion to speak or not to speak in certain ways.

In my entry in pic. 3.6, I want to take up this gentle and angelic image Korean producers have created, but behind this desire to perform “that cute innocent smile thing” (line 14), paying attention to her eyes “that make her look so innocent, not in a stupid way but a kind of cute and submissive way” (line 15-16), as well as her “childish,

innocent cute giggle[s]” (lines 18-19), there is “double-voicedness,” (Bakhtin, 1984) that is, multiple meanings created by multiple intentions and previous experiences. My intentions in performing these acts are embodied with intentions of also tricking my interlocutors into thinking they can control me, for example, “I should say Mm... Maybe you’re right, that was too harsh. The key is to act innocent. As long as they are right, they’re happy. I should’ve said it like this! Damn! Too late.” (lines 21–23). Playing innocent is not a passive choice but is negotiated actively into “tactics”. In de Certeau’s (1998) view, while *strategies* “seek to create places in conformity with abstract models,” *tactics* can “use, manipulate and divert [certain] spaces” (p. 29). Facial gestures become my secret codes. Bourdieu viewed “secret codes” as more powerful in human interaction than the act of speaking out loud. He states,

the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking (‘reproachful looks’ or ‘tones’, ‘disapproving glances’ and so on) are full of injunctions that are powerful and hard to resist precisely because they are silent and insidious, insistent and insinuating (1991, p. 51).

When one does not have knowledge of various discourses, often some form of silent and deceptive behavior can be the only way to regain composure. A different incident in Chapter 5 will discuss this issue further using Scott’s (1985) study of peasant farmers who engage in various forms of resistance to protect and defend their interests as best as they can. What Scott points out is the importance of recognizing how subordinate groups or individuals do not simply succumb or submit to dominant ideals but carefully find ways of negotiating their positions in very particular ways while avoiding direct confrontation with dominant groups.

I will come back to lines 24-28 (“~~Hate being Korean!~~ ☹ No, I shouldn’t say that. Hate is such a strong word. ~~I Love being Korean!~~ That’s a lie too. I just wish they could understand I’m ~~American~~. Well not really “American” but you know what I mean, Korean-American! Hello? Get it?”) in a moment. For now, I will turn my attention to one of the main themes of this chapter, “polyphony”, in the section that follows. Encountering the notion of polyphony was also the point where I began thinking about “multivocality”, the main theme of this study.

Polyphony

The aspect I find most interesting about this entry is the play of “voices” that emerges quite distinctively and the dialogical manner in which these voices seem to be talking to one another. By “voice” I am referring to Bakhtin’s (1981) usage of the term “the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness. A voice always has a will or desire behind it, its own timbre and overtones” (p. 434). By “timbre and overtones” I understand Bakhtin to mean voices have a distinct character that is shaped by particular histories, practices, desires and so on. The notion of polyphony in Bakhtin’s terms refers to the entanglement of several different “voices”. Writing in Korean, hearing my voice in Korean, does not refer to some idea that I speak like Koreans in Korea but that my voice in Korean has a distinctive history that is unique to me, e.g., “Kim Tae Hyun, I’ll destroy you!” (line 6) and has been shaped by particular practices, times, spaces, interlocutors and so on. I can also hear the distinct character of my voice in English. In line 28 the stressed second syllable on “lo” and the sharp rising intonation on that second syllable in “Hello?” are clearly audible to me in how I wish to denote sarcasm or anger towards Koreans who don’t “get it” (line 28). The desire is for it to be understood that I have a different history, i.e. “when they were learning Korean words, I was learning Shakespeare. How do they expect me to catch up!?” (lines 29-30). What are portrayed here are traces of my history living in America, my engagement with US popular culture and conversing with other Americans. Similarly, the Chinese expression “真讨厌!” [zhēn táoyàn!] (in English, Really annoyed! or How annoying!), also reflects the popular usage of this phrase by many foreign students in my cohort in high school and university, which made us laugh.

Polyphony, the concept of multiple independent voices working together in a given text in which each voice in each language exists in its own right, illuminates contradicting voices and desires to portray an emotional landscape of a particular world that individuals experience. One can detect a distinct feel or “taste” of each of the words. As Bakhtin (1981) states “each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions” (p. 293). In reference to Dostoevsky’s characters, Bakhtin claims that for Dostoevsky

in every voice he could hear two contending voices, in every expression a crack, and the readiness to go over immediately to another contradictory expression; in every gesture he detected confidence and lack of confidence simultaneously; he perceived the profound ambiguity, even multiple ambiguity, of every phenomenon” (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 92).

Contentions, cracks, contradictions, confidence and lack of confidence, multiple ambiguities can also be heard in my extract (lines 25-28): “~~Hate being Korean!~~ No, I shouldn’t say that. Hate is such a strong word. ~~I Love being Korean!~~ That’s a lie too. I just wish they could understand I’m ~~American~~. Well not really “American” but you know what I mean, Korean-American!” Like a palimpsest, texts and meanings are expunged but still visible, constantly evolving and in flux, where there are limits but also possibilities. Identities are kept “under erasure” (Derrida, 1976), written and rewritten continuously.

Here, I also wish to point out that it is not only voices that we can hear through utterances or language that may be polyphonic but other visual semiotics that can also be considered in thinking about identity.

The polyphony of makeup

Several years ago while living in Tokyo I received an email from a Korean friend during my years at university. Jung-hee was my closest female friend then. Perhaps the fact that she spoke English (she had lived in the United States during her childhood), at a university where we were the only two people who spoke both Korean and English, drew us together. We were both reflecting on old times and I asked her if she would tell me what she thought about me then. I used this extract for my Master’s thesis I was writing then which also used my personal artifacts as data. The email was a long one but the parts on how she and what she says others (other Korean students) thought about me intrigued me. I have decided to add a small extract of those comments here (pic. 3.9). The comments were related to intricate details of certain aspects of my appearance that made me appear “girly” (e.g., “you wore makeup and dressed up to go to school, which was a bit foreign to the Koreans, most Asians in Beijing”, “ you were the only girl who actually did her nails at that time”).

Julie Choi during those Beijing University years

One, you were the American in Beijing in our point of view. You wore makeup and dressed up to go to school, which was a bit foreign to the Koreans, most Asians in Beijing. Especially during high school. I guess I just perceived you as a quiet person who liked her privacy very much, unlike the Koreans who butt into everyone's business. At the same time, people kind of distanced you because they weren't sure who you were. Truthfully, I didn't think we'd get along at all when you entered college in the same department. I was kind of happy riding my bike so I wouldn't have to talk to you walking to and from classes to our dorms. (hehehe...this was a secret...I am spilling the beans). I guess I thought you were just a pretty girl who was very girly (i.e. you were the only girl who actually did her nails at that time), very private and truthfully, no fun. I didn't think I could relate to you as a Korean, but neither with the American side of me either.

Pic.3.9. Jung-hee's e-mail. April 19, 2006.

Transcript: Julie Choi during those Beijing University years

One, you were the American in Beijing in our point of view. You wore makeup and dressed up to go to school, which was a bit foreign to the Koreans, most Asians in Beijing. Especially during high school. I guess I just perceived you as a quiet person who liked her privacy very much, unlike the Koreans who butt into everyone's business. At the same time, people kind of distanced you because they weren't sure who you were. Truthfully, I didn't think we'd get along at all when you entered college in the same department. I was kind of happy riding my bike so I wouldn't have to talk to you walking to and from classes to our dorms. (hehehe...this was a secret...I am spilling the beans). I guess I thought you were just a pretty girl who was very girly (i.e. you were the only girl who did her nails at that time), very private and truthfully, no fun. I didn't think I could relate to you as a Korean, but neither with the American side of me either.

Pointing out makeup and certain ways of dressing were understandable but I was intrigued about the small detail of her noticing my nails. Had I done my nails and was I really *that* dressed up? I re-visited some of the old photographs from those years. One picture, a photo that was taken by a Chinese newspaper journalist while I was taking my university entrance exam (see pic 3.10) brought back memories. I remember the midnight purple lip liner from Lancôme and the frosted purple lipstick, the Les 4 Ombres series of metallic purple eye shadow, the satin purple nail polish from Chanel, the white-eye liner and the colored mascara that was in fashion that summer of 1996 in New York where I went for my summer vacation. These were objects my Korean-American friend Elaine living in New York recommended to me. I have a wedding band

on the middle of my right hand that my best friend gave me and a diamond ring given to me by a friend in New York on the other middle finger.



Pic. 3.10. Taking the university entrance exam. Beijing (1996).

In another photo (pic. 3.11), I have curls, artificial nails painted in Chanel's Rouge Noir 18 that my Korean-American friend Elaine, who was visiting from New York painted on me, and am wearing a Movado watch I borrowed from my sister who was also visiting from New York, as well as Elaine's red sweater. Looking at Elaine, I remembered what the trendy look for Korean-American teenagers and young adults was in New York during those years - lightly dyed reddish orange long straight hair with highlights, no fringe, full makeup, salon finished nails, tight black clothing and designer brand wallets and bags. She shared with me a little part of New York, several trends, a style, and objects from a different time and space when she visited. Thinking about this importation of trends and moving objects from one time and space to another made me think about the intersecting



Pic. 3.11. Others' artifacts visible on my body. Beijing (1996).

semiotic resources from different times and spaces on my body that made me look out of place, familiar but unfamiliar, one reason why others may have seen me as “the American”. I now notice the strangeness others saw in me then and feel a strangeness about it myself at how I didn’t think it was at all strange at the time, and am also realizing that that ordinariness to me then was how normal polyphonic texts are. We accumulate and carry fragments from our travels, movements, and our past on our bodies. Our bodies are a mosaic of colors, styles and accessories from different times and spaces that we can design and re-design. Those designs are also in turn what continuously create us anew, keeping us from static notions of “being” to more flexible and open-ended notions of “becoming”. Jung-hee’s statement that “people kind of distanced [me] because they weren’t sure who [I was]” or that I was “unlike the Koreans who butt into everyone’s business”, and that she “could not relate to [me] as a Korean but neither with the American side of [her] either”, makes perfect sense to me now. Having lived in multiple linguistic, cultural and geographical contexts for extended periods of time, constantly moving in and out of different times, spaces and practices, could I have been anything but different, somewhat “off”, or “out of place”?

Engaging with concepts of polyphony (not only in terms of language but also in relation to other visual semiotics) requires a deep and careful understanding of the layers that constitute what is visible on the surface and the relationships between things that are connected. Approaching the text with genuine and honest intentions to seek to learn from the text can surprise us by showing that things are not necessarily as we thought they were or had to be, and that what we now see as rather complex performances and identities of ourselves are actually very “ordinary”. Polyphony and polyphonic texts are not new or strange. Our thoughts, utterances and bodies are and have always been constituted by the intermingling of various strands of life. They are what make us different and diverse. “Difference and diversity”, as Higgins and Coen (2000) state, “are not problems to be solved or avoided. They are “the “ordinary” reality of the postmodern condition ... it is already there. We do not need programs of inclusion per se to increase diversity; we need to understand that diversity is already present in our existing social contexts” (p. 15). At the same time, however, we need to be careful that we do not position things as ordinary in a way that ignores everyday struggles and the ways in which cultural and linguistic diversity are experienced and negotiated on the ground in everyday situations.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I continued in large part to look at some of my schooling experiences within the space of newly developing South Korean communities in Beijing during the 1990s. Despite popular and age-old ideas such as the “single race theory” which posits that all Koreans are descended from a single bloodline, that Korea stands for a cultural community that shares the same language, history, lifestyle and that Korea’s national strength lies in its ethnic homogeneity, my experiences living in and outside of Korea in various Korean communities, as I showed in Section 1, demonstrates the deep inter-/intra-racial divisions and increasing number of categories that Koreans create to differentiate themselves linguistically, historically and politically. Their lifestyles are anything but similar. The difference between them is nothing new, but the new categories they construct to position themselves as “cosmopolitans with elite legitimacy”, “Asian globals”, “global transnationals”, or “global subjects” only work to reproduce old bounded ideas of legitimacy and authenticity that produce intense feelings of anxiety and vulnerability. In Section 2, I looked at my experiences in high school, living within a heavily populated South Korean community, and came to think about the importance of critically questioning what we come to see as expected, normal, ordinary or standard and how those ideas take shape. By uncovering the notion of language that lies behind the label I was given as multilingual, I came to understand the harmful and limiting ways that thinking of ‘language as a system’ can impact on the individual in thinking about linguistic identity performances. In Section 3, with the help of Bakhtin’s literature, I saw the complexity of different voices that are shaped by specific practices, discourses and spaces entangled in one piece of text. Not only did I come to see how ordinary or expectable this is in my texts, but this realization was also a major step forward for me in this study in opening up possibilities for linguistic identity not necessarily based on languages but on voices.

Exploring my own data and coming to see them as polyphonic texts move me away from bounded and limiting ways of thinking about the relationship between language and identity that are often found in the term “multilingual”, which concerns the “coexistence of multiple linguistic systems that are discrete, ahistorical, and relatively self-contained” (Bailey, 2012, p. 500). I now seek to use the term “multivocal” speakers as a way of shifting the focus from formal linguistic distinctions among languages to placing the emphasis on the multiplicity of voices that tactfully and

melodically play together, unceasingly complementing, quarrelling, interacting and mutating themselves as they are tossed into changing times and spaces. In taking this move, I am not dismissing the concept of multilingualism but using multivocality as a way of approaching multilingual perspectives. Putting the emphasis on multivocality takes the attention away from voices being shaped by expected uniformity in codes or conventions and allows us to concentrate on the particular ideas, histories, practices, understandings and the unique mixture of capital, resources, and power that are available to us, and which we can utilize at will. Such a shift of focus, following Iwabuchi (1994), can, I believe,

release us from any abstracting categorisation of “lived reality” and takes the specificity of heterogeneous voices all over the globe seriously. Differences are always within “us” and “them”. Similarities are always between “us” and “them”. Any identity is always becoming, not fixed. We have to start authorising such diversity to transgress rigid national cultural boundaries, in favour of people-to-people rather than nation-to-nation, speaking and listening to each other rather than speaking exclusively about the self and the other (p. 78).

In favoring a “people-to-people” approach, we are able to tap into a “rich array of interpretive possibility for understanding how it is we live with difference and how the mundane is experienced and is mediated by commercial, aesthetic, discursive and ideational threads big and small” (Wise & Selvaraj, 2009, p. 2). To de-emphasize our differences can be a way, as Calhoun (1994) states, of “fail[ing] to grapple with the real, present-day political and other reasons why essentialist identities continue to be invoked and often deeply felt (p. 14). Simply by talking to people and sharing our experiences in mundane cross-cultural encounters can contribute to “incremental and dialogic construction of lived identities which slowly dissolve the boundaries between the past and the future, between ‘where we come from’ and ‘what we might become’, between being and becoming” (p. 159). Our efforts should work towards finding ways for subjects from multiple backgrounds to “negotiate their social co-existence and their mutual entanglement, the contradictory necessity and impossibility of identities played out in the messiness of everyday life” (p. 159) in meaningful and lasting ways. If we want to create productive and progressive spaces that allow people “space for their own pleasure and hopes and that would also engender new expressions of civility and

tolerance” (Higgins & Coen, 2000, p. 17-18), we need to listen, think and speak with much more open, flexible, playful and compassionate attitudes. Furthermore “if we continue to build our cultural practices around only the theme of oppression and alienation, [we] will never learn to speak with the radical accent of the popular language of our times, which is “the language of pleasure, adventure, liberation, gratification and novelty” (p. 16). This is what my explorations on the ordinariness of difference or the “ordinariness of polyphony” have taught me in this chapter.

There are myriad stories to tell about the intermingling of voices, histories, practices, desires, emotions, politics and so on from what may seem like the mundane - the ordinary. The realizations we may find in the ordinary may force us not only to find different ways of thinking about our lives but also to explore new ways of becoming and describing ourselves differently.

Chapter 4

Troubling Data

Early in this journey, while telling a colleague about my ideas for this study, I was asked the question “what counts as data in your study?” It seemed like a simple question. Why of course, what counts as data are “records or descriptions or memories of events or objects” (Bateson, 1972, p. xviii) found in diary entries, letters, e-mails, cards, notebooks, photos, and any other visual record. Somehow, my colleague’s silence suggested that I had answered too quickly. Had I missed something? Why was “data” questionable in my study? As I excavated this whole process more deeply, I came to see that the traditional notion of data as records of events was highly problematic, because in the kind of narrative work I am involved in, as one interrogates data, one is also creating new records of events. In autoethnography, data, analysis and interpretation are interlayered, overlaid and, in many cases, happen simultaneously. In this chapter, I will take a closer look at how data operates in this study as a way of exploring what we can learn about data from autoethnographic ways of writing.

My aim here is not to create new terms or to add new items to a list of sources or descriptions of data, but following Bourdieu (1992), to raise questions and issues that I accepted at the beginning of my intellectual journey but which became problematic the further I travelled into my particular inquiry. I will first briefly outline how I understand data and the two major data sources that feature heavily in this study. I will then use an extract from one of my chapters to tease out how data are situated, interlaced and meshed with other acts of research to illuminate the insights we can gain from writing differently.

Section 1: Notions of data to establish beforehand

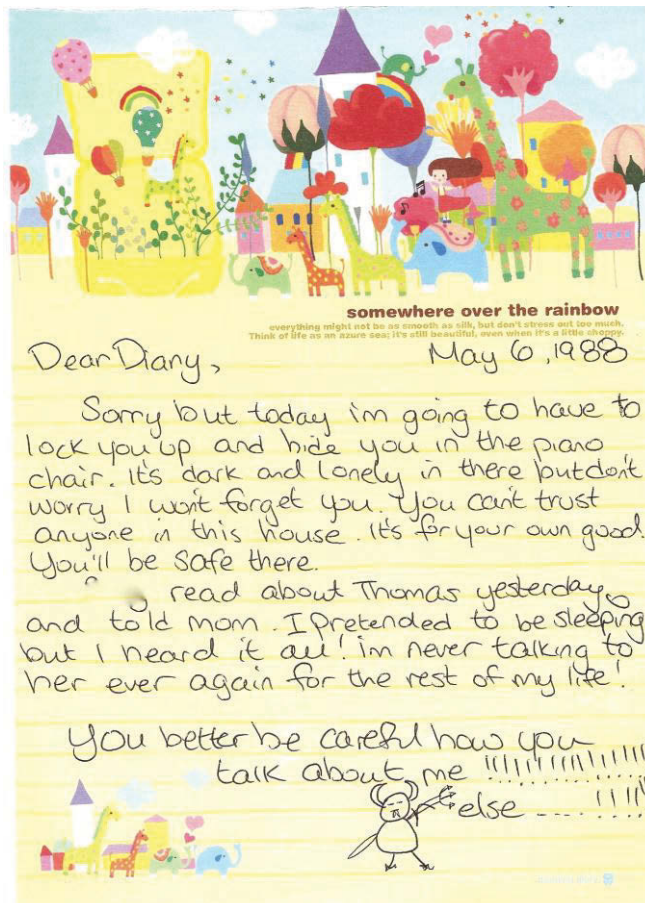
A list of descriptions that count as data in this study

A general list of descriptions of what counts as data, as given in Holliday’s (2007) book *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*, states that qualitative data is descriptions of “what happens in a particular social setting - in a particular place or amongst a particular group of people” (pp. 60-61). These descriptions include “descriptions of behaviour, event, institution, appearance, research event, personal narrative, account,

talk, behaviour in setting, and document” (pp. 62-63). Autoethnographic data includes these types of data, except that as I mentioned in Chapter 2, the collection of these types of data in autoethnographic work rely heavily on the researcher’s personal memory. Various idea-gathering strategies are used to draw out personal memories (see Chang, 2008) and depending on one’s project, a researcher may also include data from interviews and textual artifacts that may or may not involve the self. These textual artifacts may be any physical representations of one’s life “that occupy [one’s] space, telling stories about [one’s] past and present [such as] photographs, trinkets in [one’s] memory box, memorabilia, family heirlooms, souvenirs, video tapes, [and] CD collections...” (Chang, 2008, p. 109). “Self-observational” and “self-reflective” data are also encouraged by autoethnographers to capture a variety of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional data about the self at the time of the study. Self-observational data “capture [the researcher’s] actual behaviours, thoughts, and emotions at the time of data collection and self-reflective data record outcomes of [the researcher’s] self-reflection, self-evaluation, and self-analysis” (p. 102). Data from the present are useful to autoethnographic studies because, unlike personal memory data (which is generally seen as data from a more distant past), they enable the researcher to preserve vivid details and fresh perspectives. Regardless of whether one’s study is autoethnographic, feminist poststructuralists advocate the collection by researchers of more self-observational and reflective data. Putting her own subjectivity as a researcher to work in her study, St. Pierre (1997) noted four types of data, which she calls, “transgressive data”. These are “emotional”, “sensual”, “dream”, and “response” data, which she generated throughout the research process in her journals and which helped her to think differently about the construction of subjectivity. Simply put, in more recent years, researchers have been calling for more data to be generated in the process of doing research on experiences that are often neglected, overlooked or considered unimportant. There are and will continue to be a growing number of items to add to what can count as data in qualitative research. Whatever these may be and regardless of whether one is engaged in an autobiographical/ethnographic study, a few foundational understandings of what constitutes qualitative data need to be established.

Data as “discursive constructions”

While it may potentially lie everywhere, data does not become data until it is used for scholarship or research. In collecting data from language memoirs, linguistic autobiographies, and learners’ journals and diaries, as Pavlenko (2007) suggests, we should not treat data as facts but as “discursive constructions, and as such [they need to] be subject to analysis that considers their linguistic, rhetorical, and interactional properties, as well as the cultural, historic, political, and social contexts in which they were produced and that shape both the tellings and the omissions” (p. 181). Although she is specifically talking about observation notes and transcripts in linguistic autobiographies, I believe texts as discursive constructions can be relevant in any form of qualitative data.



Pic. 4.1. Diary entry on my sister reading my diary. New York (May 6, 1988).

Transcript:

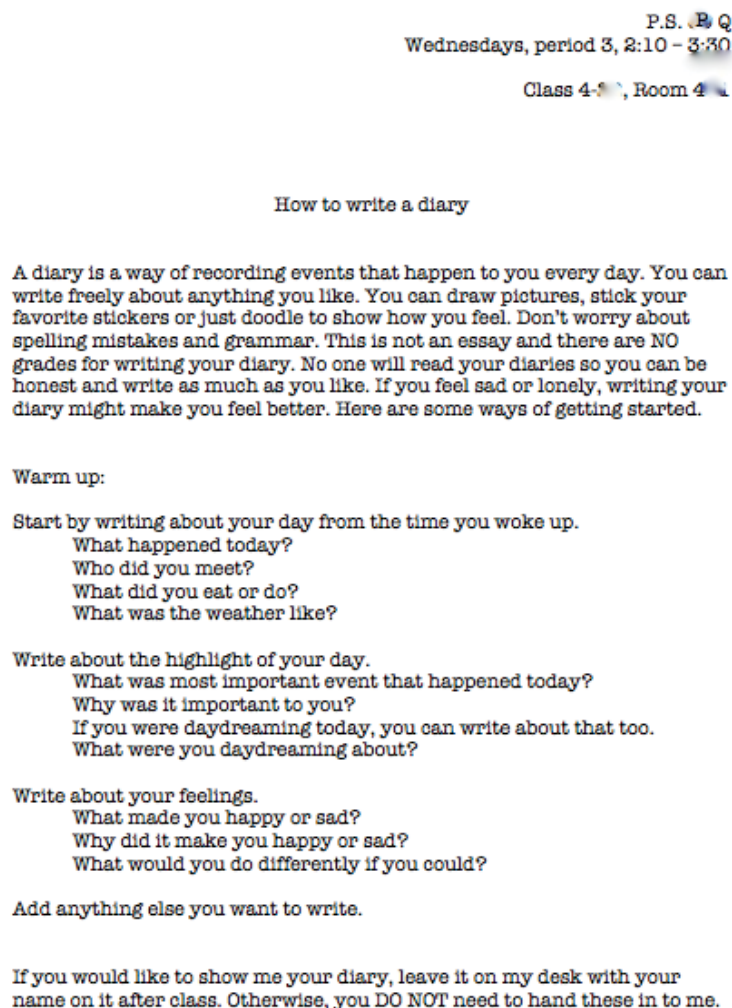
Dear Diary,
Sorry but today I'm going to have to lock you up and hide you in the piano chair. It's dark and lonely in there but don't worry I won't forget you. You can't trust anyone in this house. It's for your own good. You'll be safe there.

[My sister's name] read about Thomas yesterday and told mom. I pretended to be sleeping but I heard it all! I'm never talking to her ever again for the rest of my life!

You better be careful how you talk about me!!!!!!!!!!!!Or else!!!!!!!!

I became particularly aware of this point about data as a discursive construction and have cast a cautious eye on the texts I chose to include in my study after finding an entry written when I was ten years old (see pic. 4.1).

Diaries are commonly thought of as private and secret spaces in which individuals tell their “true” feelings. My own formal learning of how to write a diary was in elementary school during English class, while living in New York. I remember at the time there was growing concern about reports on domestic child abuse and teachers began to encourage students to write diaries as a way of giving them an opportunity to speak up and notify a teacher. Students were provided with a brief note from the teacher (see pic. 4.2), a template and several sheets of paper that encouraged us to start writing (as shown in Chapter 1, pic. 1.2). The notes and suggestions from my teacher, Mrs Evans, demonstrate that diaries are private, possibly therapeutic, a platform on which to talk about one’s true feelings and reflect on alternative strategies.



Pic. 4.2. Learning how to write a diary. Handout given in class. New York (1987).

The artifact in pic 4.2 shows, at least to some degree, how my diary writing and my way of describing how I experienced my world, the sequence in which I should talk about my day, what kinds of information are deemed valuable in diaries (i.e. writing about something “important”, daydreams, feelings, thinking up alternative scenarios) were shaped by Mrs. Evans, the particular concerns of the school, and the common ideas circulating in the US of what should go into a diary. Such a practice, structure or style of writing may have been very different had I learned to write a diary in other cultural spaces, discourses and times. In considering the linguistic, rhetorical and interactional properties in the diary entry (pic. 4.1), I speak to the diary in a protective manner, vowing to keep it safely hidden from my sister’s eyes, as if I knew she would read it again. Who am I addressing here? I may be warning my sister not to talk behind my back and to let her know that I knew she was reading my diary. Alternatively, the diary can be seen as an autonomous figure to whom I report, or as a warning to myself not to put certain things in the diary. This construction of a different version of myself talking *to* myself may be a way of validating to myself that I’m no longer so naïve. These are not simple rants that “make me feel better” (pic. 4.2); there is power *in* the act of writing itself that allows me to construct and see myself differently. The space of writing a diary in this case can be seen as a necessity in taking care of myself in a household where I was the youngest and perceived myself as “different” from my half-siblings (cf. Chapter 1). On a different level, the diary itself was not simply regarded as an object, space or a technique for carrying out certain acts. References to the diary treat it as a feeling person who might be afraid, lonely and worried about entering spaces of darkness (i.e. the piano chair) and who needs the assurance of safety and protection from untrustworthy people. Thinking about the text in my diary entry as discursively constructed helped me to gain a deeper understanding of diaries as complex, “real” and necessary spaces in which a whole world of interactions (different from my public life) can be created under my control.

In the context of prison guards and the use of the panopticon to constantly observe prisoners without their knowing, Foucault (1995) states that individuals internalize the habits of surveillance, of being watched and closely monitored, which translate into a kind of self-surveillance. Of the many diary entries I wrote during that period, I remember and notice as I read them now how I became careful about writing the diary, more self-aware of the consequences of what I wrote and how I would be seen. This

self-surveillance asks us to consider the partially deliberate construction individuals have created for themselves under the conditions in which they are performing. In any case, Pavlenko's (2007) statement of the considerations we must take into account in looking at a piece of text is fundamental to how we think about and approach data.

Two major types of data that feature in this study

There are various ways in which autoethnographic data can be collected and I have discussed my own process in the Introduction-Conclusion. I will illustrate how that process worked in Section 2, but first, I will clarify here the two major types of data, "external data", and "personal memory data", that are interspersed in my narratives. In discussing these types of data, I will continue to draw out the foundational notions that constitute qualitative data.

External data include textual artifacts such as official documents, e.g., passport images, immunization booklets, student identification cards (as shown in the Prelude), artifacts that concern me or are authored by me such as photographs, advertisements, diary entries, and letters or cards written to me by others. However, as Chang (2008) points out, "written texts concerning [the self] are limited in telling the full truth about a person, place, or context because they are simply incomplete, lost, or partial. Therefore, other artifacts can be sought out to fill the gaps left by insufficient textual data" (p. 109). These other textual artifacts may include artifacts that do not concern me directly but say something about the period in which I was living, or who I perceived myself to be at a certain point in time and space. In my case, these were texts such as media clips of what I was watching, lyrics of songs I used to sing, paintings in a museum and so on. While Chang's argument of why other artifacts can be useful seems reasonable to me, she seems to be implying that these other textual artifacts can tell the "full truth" about a person or experience. Following a poststructuralist framework, I understand truth to be multiple, partial, and open to a variety of interpretations. I do not view research endeavors, particularly in the case of autoethnographic work that involves the construction of life histories, as ever being able nor needing to seek to build a "full truth". As Geertz (1973) states, "anthropological writings are themselves interpretations, and second and third order ones to boot ... They are, thus, fictions: fictions in the sense that they are 'something made,' 'something fashioned' ... the original meaning of *fictio* – not that they are false, unfactual, or merely, 'as if' thought experiments" (p. 15).

Autoethnographic types of work have access to and can generate a large pool of data but even with more access to data, studies are ultimately always partial, with information missing, omitted, ignored, and/or concealed in the telling. What is not visible may be as important as what we choose to show as data. Taking on Geertz's (1973) statement that, "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (p. 9), we can see that data is always perspectival and partial.

The second type of data involves personal memories written down as data. Memories are selective, shaped, limited, and often seen as unreliable and unpredictable. Seyhan (2000) states that, "memory marks a loss. It is always a re-presentation, making present that which once was and no longer is" (p. 16). Taking into careful consideration the problematic nature of how memories operate, authors or researchers involved in autobiographic/ethnographic work focus their attention on how to shape and represent their memories to create certain stories or draw out certain themes. Discussing the creation of his memoir, Carson says that,

Ninety per cent of my childhood is a mystery to me. It's a fog. I don't know what I remember. No, I didn't set out to write truth because I don't know what truth is. And I don't believe there is such a thing as truth and I just wanted to write really. And I just wanted to tell a story as best as I could. I wanted it to be loving. I didn't want it to be a misery memory (in Craith, 2012, p. 34).

Similarly, in writing his memoir, Hamilton states how certain memories needed to be shaped and represented according to the theme she wanted to draw out. She states,

Every story is a dramatization of the facts. The events in my memoirs are true and my memories are true but they have to be presented so I am presenting my past, my childhood, myself as the child I once was. It is important for me to acknowledge that, for instance, to acknowledge that my parents were devoted Catholics. ... But I chose to de-emphasize the Catholic areas of my upbringing in order to highlight the basic themes of language and homesickness and cultural alienation (in Craith 2012, p. 37).

In autoethnographic work, memories are shaped and reshaped according to the kind of story one seeks to tell, e.g., a “loving” story, or to “highlight the basic themes of language and homesickness and cultural alienation”. The shaping and reshaping of texts also applies to other types of research, since the larger purpose of what research seeks to do inevitably selects, sets limits, reads and “writes up” the world in certain ways. In linguistic autobiographies, as Pavlenko (2007) observes, “narrators do not necessarily consciously ‘distort the truth’, rather they use the act of narration to impose meaning on experience, so that for instance in a diary entry the ‘written text constructs, narrows down, clarifies, and focuses the truth of the event in quite a different manner than it was lived at the time’” (p. 168). Narrators/narrative researchers are not oblivious to these constructions. In considering issues that deal with the temporal distance between an event and the recording of the event, for instance, researchers who write about introspective data stress the importance of making a written record as close as possible to the event itself. When it comes to “facts”, e.g., “Sally was wearing her pink wig”, this is true. However, when it comes to “deeper truth”, i.e. “Looking back, I realize that Sally was going through a period of deep depression”, temporal distance may bring us closer to the truth. For writers and researchers, the capacity to create multiple versions of an event through different textual practices and linguistic strategies is an opportunity to see the fragility, slipperiness, partiality and temporariness in all attempts to construct meaning.

In my work, memories are sometimes represented as dialogues (e.g., the incident with Na Young and Tae Hyun in Seoul) and at other times they appear within the commentaries, interlaced or blended with the analysis, literature or interpretation. Keeping these sections separate may help in sorting through the messy act of thinking where analysis, speculation, remembering others’ words/ideas, questioning, and reliving certain memories that are triggered in the process of thinking all happen simultaneously. However, the limits and boundaries set by these categories overshadow the complexities of how people experience and make sense of their worlds, and carry the risk of missing out on insights that we might gain from different ways of writing. As mentioned earlier, data is everywhere, but it is how we find data, what we do with data, and how we engage with different types of data, that count.

In Section 2, I use an extract from Chapter 5 as an example to demonstrate the interwoven nature of my writing, how data emerges and not only links up with other

acts, such as analysis and literature, but the ways in which data, analysis, and interpretation blend. Here, I draw on only one short extract to illustrate the aim of this chapter.

Section 2: Blurry boundaries

The extract I will examine here appears in Chapter 5 and consists of a transcript from a diary entry (pic. 5.9) written in Tokyo while I was living in a dormitory and watching an episode from a Japanese drama featuring a Korean woman named Sora. The succeeding paragraph is a short extract that begins the explication process where I focus on the clash of Sora's cultural understandings and my own about the degree of what is considered "open" in Korean and Japanese television dramas. The analysis that follows this extract is my attempt to tease out how data are strung together and blended with the analysis and literature.

Transcript: brackets indicate Korean words, italics indicate Japanese words, bold indicates Chinese words

1. First X-mas in Tokyo! [Sora] brought over a drama called Kami-sama
2. mou so ko shi dake – said even if I don't understand it all yet I can just
3. Guess. Well it's not rocket science... Also brought some wine some [dried octopus] and [fish] but
4. The cork just broke half way which she then shoved into the bottle
5. Which I didn't think was such a bright idea but we drank it anyway! ☺
6. Today *teacher* Kazuka taught us *adj+na+noun* like in Korean
7. [adj+han+noun] so like *famous+na+building* [famous+han+building] **building**, *quiet+na+room* [quiet+han+room] so when Fukada Kyoko
8. said *I had sex with a man I like* I totally got it ... except ...(!) I couldn't
9. believe it was possible to say such a thing to her mother so I thought
10. I misheard it! And they say *do sex* – so like [do sex] - do sex
11. not "have" sex ... I asked [Sora] if I heard it right and she said
12. their dramas are a bit more open than Korean dramas. Bit!! Goodnesss
13. if I said that to my mom she'd faint and how come the dad doesn't
14. say anything? (And the mom- how can she smile saying *which man*?! UNBELIEVABLE! Really didn't get that part. Strange also how [Sora]
15. never says [Japanese dramas] but [their drama] and makes me feel a bit
16. strange when she says [our drama]. Is this [our] something that
17. includes me like "our" or [our] as in "my" (her) country? Whatever
18. who gives a shit right?
19. That wine was seriously deplorable – note to self "never have
20. wine that has floating bits of cork in it!"
21. Tomorrow: Must ask *teacher* Kazuka about *did* why *do* + *did* why not
22. *did*? Huh??

For a romantic drama that airs on primetime TV and on local Japanese channels, I was amazed at some of the kissing scenes, scenes of high school students earning money by sleeping with *otaku* [geek] type men, and was particularly shocked at the scene where the daughter defiantly tells her mother “I was having sex with the man I love”. In lines 8-10, I state, “I couldn’t believe it was possible to say such a thing to her mother so I thought I misheard it! ... [I]f I said that to my mom she’d faint and how come the dad doesn’t say anything. And the mom – how can she smile saying “what kind of man?! UNBELIEVABLE! Really didn’t get that part” (lines 13-15). Sora’s understanding that Japanese dramas were “a bit more open than Korean dramas” (line 12) seemed odd since to my knowledge, even kissing slightly on the lips was a big deal in Korean dramas. At that point, I never even heard the word “sex” uttered in Korean dramas. At times like these, she would sometimes point out to me that although I was part of Generation X and born in America, there were aspects of me that seemed more conservative than Korean women in Korea from her generation.

She also frequently used the first person plural and possessive pronoun *uri* [we, our, us] (line 16). Whether it was comparing Japanese *miso* paste [bean paste] to Korean *denjang* [Korean bean paste] or Japanese dramas to Korean dramas, she identified things related to Korea as *uri* and things related to Japan as *yaenaedeul* [they, them, theirs]. The most basic usage of *uri* as Kim and Choi (1994, p. 246) state, is to “denote an inclusive group: we or us. It is a word used to denote a group of people (such as “our family”), an entity (such as “our nation”), and even possessions (such as “our house”)”.

The details in lines 1-4, 8-14, 16-17 of my commentary are not descriptions that are offered in the diary entry, the external data. Here, this additional data generated in the present moment appears as a way of explaining the data in the diary entry by giving more contextual information about the event. At first, I thought about these details as “corroborative data”, data that assist the analysis by providing additional descriptions that elaborate on certain incidents, but on closer look, they are no different from “thick descriptions” since their function is to provide detailed descriptions of a setting, situation or event, or as Denzin (1994) notes, they elaborate on the “context of an experience, state the intentions and meanings that organised the experience, and reveal the experience as a process” (p. 505). Sometimes, my memories are not clearly separated from the details in the diary entry, as in lines 1-4 and lines 5-8. Providing these additional details or thick descriptions is part of the process of doing an analysis. By “analysis”, I am referring to Wolcott’s (1994) notion of “the identification of essential features” (p. 12) of data. Elements of the diary entry that I select are identified and explained with more background detail. More explicit details such as kissing on the lips and not ever hearing the word sex in Korean dramas are claimed in lines 9-10 and intertwined with my writings of what Sora said, i.e. “Sora’s understanding that Japanese dramas were ‘a bit more open than Korean dramas’ (line 12) seemed odd since to my knowledge, even kissing slightly on the lips was a big deal in Korean dramas”. While

data is inextricably intertwined with the analysis in any interpretive study, not all interpretive studies have additional information to contribute, and in this case (lines 9-10), we can see how a part of the external data and the act of doing an analysis triggers very particular memories to come to the fore.

A slightly more penetrating interrogation of this interweaving of data and memories, and the intermeshing of analysis, also suggests another layer of fuzzy boundaries. From the very moment of looking at part of an artifact such as this diary entry, I impose meaning on the event to some extent by selecting the parts that seem important or valuable, making judgments about what they mean to me and what kind of literature I will need to look for to help explain and support my views. In the actual process of writing, ideas can take a dramatic and unexpected turn (which was often the case in my writing). For instance, when I read this diary entry, I felt this was an opportunity to illustrate the naïvety and bias of this past self who watched these images and listened to Sora's comments. In writing my explication, I started by adding more contextual details (lines 1-4) to portray my recognition of my highly particular ways of making certain judgments, my naïvety, and the conservativeness of my past self (e.g., that images of children talking to their parents in certain ways were more shocking than sexually intimate images on local television, lines 5-8). In weaving Sora's words into the memories that were triggered at that moment of reflection (i.e. "Sora's understanding that Japanese dramas were 'a bit more open than Korean dramas' (line 12) seemed odd since to my knowledge, even kissing slightly on the lips was a big deal in Korean dramas", lines 8-14), I began to notice how this was also an opportunity to highlight the ways I was positioned by Sora (i.e. "she would sometimes point out to me that although I was part of Generation X and born in America, there were aspects of me that seemed more conservative than Korean women in Korea from her generation", lines 12-14). The inclusion of this detail allowed me to see that it was more important to interrogate the Korean terms Sora often used, such as *uri* [we, our, us] and *yaenaedeul* [they, them, theirs] (lines 15-19). As I begin to show in the extract I have included above, the focus then becomes these two terms, which I begin to interrogate using relevant literature (lines 19-22).

In the full explication in Chapter 5, through several twists and turns of thinking about these terms, analysis with the addition of more data (memories, external and secondary data), linking certain literature together, and preliminary speculations, or

“interpretations”, I come to see my own complicit ideas of how I understood Korea. This unpredictable process of writing, where data, analysis and interpretation are interlayered, overlaid and, in many cases, occur simultaneously, demonstrates the inseparability of the research process and the writing process. More importantly, it is in each twist and turn, i.e. the selection from our external data, the literature we use, the memories that are triggered, the researcher’s writing skill and so on, that there is potential for learning something new. Our accounts, stories about our lives, who we are and what we think or seek to do are unknowable even to ourselves as we write about our experiences. This interwoven way of writing widens our potential to end up in unexpected places.

Although I recognize the difference between doing an analysis and making an interpretation, which is to say that an interpretation involves moving beyond the data to address “processual questions of meanings and context” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 12), I do not see these two acts as independent from each other. To interrogate and explain certain features of a text is to simultaneously interpret them. The weaving of literature is a key element in driving studies to unexpected destinations. Literature can be a way of supporting, arguing and questioning ideas or statements, but in some cases it can trigger, nudge or encourage certain memories to come to the fore that lead us to look for certain artifacts as well as other researchers’ data which we can take up as “secondary data”. Simultaneously working with data, analysis, interpretation and literature in my work has helped me to realize the careful movements that need to be critically reflected on in making connections between the assumptions, ideas and experiences of the self and others. As Chang (2008) states, researchers must bring their “holistic insight, a creative mixing of multiple approaches, and patience with uncertainty ... [A] careful and skillful interweaving of data collection, analysis, and interpretation will ultimately lead to the production of narratively engaging and culturally meaningful autoethnography” (p. 126).

Not only is the careful and skillful interweaving of these elements important, it is also necessary to develop skill in balancing how much data, analysis, literature and interpretation are needed and how factors of times and space need to be considered in that process. This interweaving and balancing is artful, and when it is achieved, the result is art (not that I am making claims that my work constitutes art). In the Sydney chapter, thick descriptions woven with external data and analysis feature more prominently than external data since the experiences are more recent, are vivid in my

memory, and have been experienced and carefully observed with the knowledge that my experiences could become data for my study. Centering my exploration speaking “in the present” helped me to become aware of the many resources in our everyday lives, such as our memories, feelings, senses, behaviors, and reactions, that can enter the research space. In reference to linguistic autobiographies, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, p. 157) point out that “first-person accounts in the form of personal narratives provide a much richer source of data than do third-person distal observations”. Carefully constructed and critically reflexive and reflective autoethnographic narratives, I believe, can provide an even richer source of data to researchers in the future.

To this end, and coming back to my focus on “data”, I now see data as something “processual” and “flexible”; in Shotter’s (1993) term, “a developed and still developing event” laden with all its own politics and ideologies. Such a processual way of thinking about data also relates to Freeman’s (2004) comment that in narrative work on human actions and events, data is more like “episodes in the making” – that is, “events that will become episodes, retroactively, by virtue of their interrelationship with other events, both antecedent and subsequent, as well as with those “endings” that will ultimately serve to transfigure them into the stuff of narrative” (p. 64). Placing data, or more generally “texts”, and subjecting them to analysis in our work turns data into a “spectacle”, as Hodge and McHoul (1992) see it, or as I would like to call it, a “performance”, texts that “dance” (Ronai & Cross, 1998), which are sketched and wrestled with on the page, performing for an audience. We can think further about their performance by thinking about the structure in which they are presented in our studies. How chunks of data are placed in qualitative studies, often in a range of fonts, colors, and italics, sometimes with technical codes attached, are all ways in which researchers put data onto the stage to “perform” a certain message to their audience. For studies that involve journals or diaries, such a format where past utterances are quickly followed by the researcher’s present analysis presents a kind of cogency between the past and present. While such a layout can be beneficial in allowing researchers to concentrate on searching for understandings or meanings that may have fallen through the cracks, escaped the researcher’s consciousness or been impossible to grasp at the time, the layout also fixes the times and spaces of the past and present, in which utterances run the risk of being seen as an “idealized, static state rather than an analytical construct created from one moment in an ongoing process” (Bailey, 2012, p. 501). Looking

particularly at, for instance, lines 1-2 of my own text: “For a romantic drama that airs on primetime TV and on local Japanese channels, I was amazed at some of the kissing scenes”, it is clear that this “I” does not refer to my present self but to a past “I” who seems to know what I was amazed at and what “particularly shocked” me (line 3). Such blending of the past and present (and to some extent future, since the “I” here is also performing for a future audience) is not uncommon in the ways people recall their experiences; however, reflecting on these everyday ways of speaking can illuminate the instinctive assumptions of our utterances and the simultaneity of positions and acts that constitute spaces, events and performances.

In self-reflexive studies, researchers (who are also the researched) probably find themselves struggling with categories provided by the grid of traditional qualitative methodology, such as data, method, or findings. As St. Pierre (1997) states on struggling to write a traditional description of her ethnographic practices,

the categories, the words, simply did not work; and I knew that, in order to continue writing and producing knowledge, I had to find a different strategy of sense-making, one that might elude humanism’s attempts to order what can never be contained (p. 178).

While all research is selective, partial and sets boundaries, a neatly bound structure and categorical ways of thinking can place unproductive restrictions on the powerful agency of the researcher in the reconstruction of his/her text. Recognizing the agency of the researcher to create and recreate texts is a crucial part of engaging in self-reflexive narrative studies. In the final section, I will discuss the kinds of transformation that can take place in textual self-reconstructions and how troubling data can help us to open up research spaces or practices to produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently.

Section 3: Conclusion

Agency of the Researcher

‘[D]ata’ is not something lying independently out there waiting to be ‘gathered’ or ‘collected’, but rather, it is material, ‘text’, generated and used by researchers who are, perhaps not consciously or reflexively, but nevertheless, (theoretically) informed and positioned in various ways ... [C]ommon phrases such as ‘data suggests’ or ‘as evident in the data’ deny the agency of the researcher and create illusions of universal facts (Bendix-Peterson, 2004, p. 71).

As I have shown in this chapter through illustrations of how my own cautious self-surveillance pervaded the deliberate construction of writing events in my diary in various ways (pic. 4.1), the pre-established structure and discourse I was taught about writing diaries (pic. 4.2) and my own ways of piecing together parts of past and present data, “texts” do not have an unproblematic existence. No data can speak for themselves. It is the researcher who “categorizes, arranges, probes, selects, deselects, and sometimes simply gazes at collected data in order to comprehend how ideas, behaviors, material objects, and experiences from the data interrelate and what they really mean to actors and their environments” (Chang, 2008, p. 127). In self-reflexive/reflective work that utilizes narrative methods, it is in these acts of mixing and matching to create a representation of life experiences that the important work of allowing transformations to take place occurs. As I show in Section 2, setting up the scene to portray my past self as someone who was conservative may reflect a desire to show that I am no longer that person. In pic. 4.1, I may be constructing a different version of myself to myself as a way of validating that I am no longer naïve. Various transformations are and can become possible in acts of writing. Transformations can be about “voices [that] get transformed and incorporated in the new textual selves” (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 170) or as Kramsch (2012) points out, feelings and understandings that happen through the realization of the “artificial and constructed nature of the categories imposed on [subjects]” (p. 498). Recognizing the power we as writers/researchers have in making our texts “work” for us opens up a number of possibilities that we can adopt for our

changing subjectivities. Here, it is important to take note of St. Pierre's (1997) comment that we need to learn to "find agency within rather than assuming it in advance" (p. 176).

In making the notion of researchers' agency more prominent in thinking about data, some feminist poststructuralists suggest a new term. Bendix-Peterson (2004) talking about Stainton-Rogers' work, mentions the term "creata" to replace "data". She states:

[s]peaking of data as saying something in itself, as 'speaking the truth whether we like it or not', relieves the researcher of interpretive and moral responsibility. Using the word *creata*, she suggests, is a way of making the denial of agency impossible, that is, the 'agency' involved in, for example, choosing who to ask, how to ask them, what to make of what they say, what is recognised as 'interesting' and 'relevant' and what goes unnoticed and so on (p. 71).

Although I can appreciate the effort to create new language that may help us to think of data differently, I do not wish to expunge the term "data" from the current and future work I aim to do. Gannon (2006) calls for researchers not to abandon the frames available for thinking and being in the world but to "invert binary categories" by "circl[ing] 'the truth' with all kinds of signs, quotation marks, and brackets, to protect it from any form of fixation or conceptualisation" (p. 477). However, these strategies can also be distracting and confusing for readers and may sometimes be perceived as "cop-outs" on the writer's part in not doing the hard work of explaining and demonstrating an understanding of complex terms or concepts. Without expunging the term but destabilizing its boundaries, keeping data *under erasure* as St. Pierre (1997) has done is appealing, since it allows us to work with "data" even as the meaning escapes (cf. Chapter 3). In Section 1, I have shown the possibilities of delineating certain artifacts or descriptions as what counts as data. However, as I pointed out in the analysis in Section 2, when pieces of data turn into autoethnographic writing, trying to draw lines between where data starts and stops is a moot, unproductive and limiting activity. Even as we recognize that pre-given labels may be limiting for our studies, they can also be a catalyst for researchers to think harder about their ways of producing knowledge and what they count as knowledge.

Troubling data

We can continue to add items or descriptions to an ever-growing body of literature on “what counts as data” in qualitative research, but it is more urgent that we take such a question to trouble the foundations of what constitutes our understanding of these pre-given labels and how we assume they operate in doing research. Troubling data is a stepping stone into dismantling absolute concepts, discovering complex relationships between phenomena, raising one’s awareness, and providing an opportunity to find alternative ways of thinking and living. Thinking about what imaginary benchmarks might be applicable to one’s study can help with structuring the organization of one’s work, building one’s own standards and forcing the researcher to reflect more critically on how the unique configurations of their study works to produce knowledge. Questioning what counts as “truth” or what counts as “legitimate ways of knowing” are ways of rethinking one’s own epistemology and destabilizing certainty that may then open up a space for different and more complicated sets of questions to be posed. Troubling data is about the importance of leaning into spaces of discomfort, and of questioning and struggling with pre-given constructions to understand the limitations of certain structures as well as self-reflexive knowledge. It is also to learn about what we can do with those limitations, or how we can make them work for further knowledge production. We might then be ready to shift from the question about what counts as data to ask the follow-up question: What do these data count as in qualitative research?

Ultimately, all research is partial and is, as Lee (2009) states, “acts of selecting, setting limits and boundaries, reading and re-writing, parts of the world” (p. 46). As Lather (1991) suggests, breaking hygienic and tidy notions of how research is constructed and produced is not only a matter of making us “[look] harder or more closely but of asking what frames our way of seeing when we do research – what are those spaces where visibility is constructed and from which we are incited to see” (p. 22). The act of “troubling” and finding ourselves sometimes in “big trouble” is “critical to a skillful reflexive scholarship of textual [*sic*] capable of working within social, cultural, economic and environmental complexity and uncertainty” (Lee, 2009, p. 46). Finding ourselves in spaces of uncertainty and confusion, becoming adept at working with messiness, and learning to take our vulnerabilities by turning them into possibilities, are what troubling data has taught me.

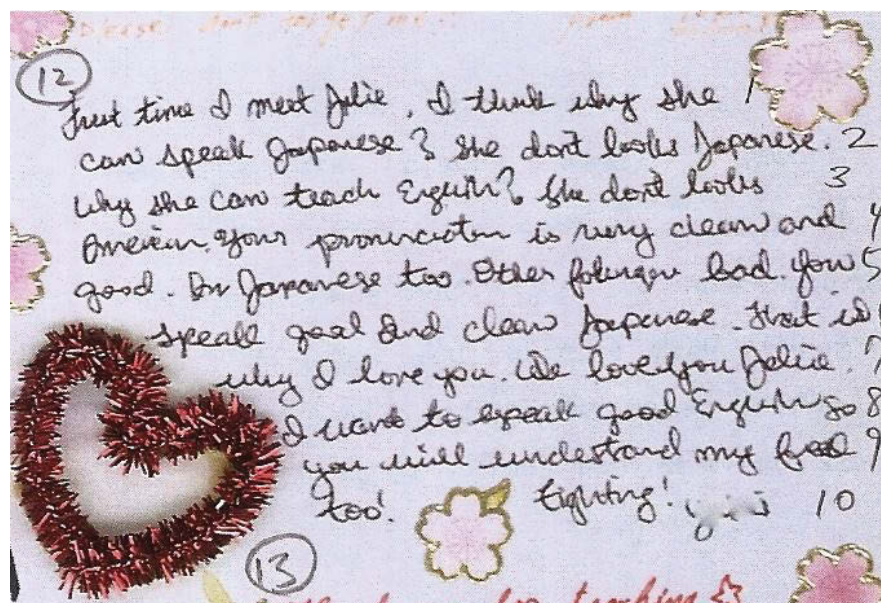
Chapter 5
Heteroglossic Becomings
Tokyo (2000-2007)

Section 1: Passing

“Passing” is a notion Piller (2002) uses to describe a type of act performed by “expert L2 speakers” (advanced speakers of a language outside of their mother tongue) who feel they can match the default speaking styles of “native speakers” in their current speaking contexts. Piller suggests that we still know very little about “whether L2 speakers consider themselves high-level achievers, what high-level proficiency means to them, and how and why it has been achieved, or whether they can and do pass for native speakers” (p. 184). Performing in several languages in my own linguistic repertoire (English, Korean, Japanese and Chinese), I have observed that being praised as having native-like pronunciation and/or fluency often seems to translate as being “smart” which may also be seen as a form of “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1991). Such cultural capital can help individuals who might be considered “outsiders” to gain “social capital”, with access and membership to “insider” communities. However, the conditions and implications of what this “native-like” fluency means in specific situations needs to be carefully considered.

By drawing on examples from teaching English to two-year college students in Tokyo, I will focus on terms of praise that Japanese students used in positioning me to explore a deeper understanding of the features and conditions that allowed me to gain access into their worlds *without* the notion that I was trying to “pass” as a native speaker. As I see it now, even though, the act of passing can usually only be sustained for a limited period of time, as Piller points out, how speakers understand these passing moments play a major role in shaping who they think they can be, feel they are, need to be or can become in their newly acquired languages.

Speaking “good” and “clean”



Pic. 5.1. Speaking “good” and “clean” Japanese, Tokyo (2006).

Transcript: First time I meet Julie, I think why she can speak Japanese? She don't looks Japanese. Why she can teach English? She don't looks American. Your pronunciation is very clean and good. In Japanese too. Other folener bad. You speak good and clean Japanese. That is why I love you. We love you Julie. I want to speak good English so you will understand my feel too! Fighting! Yuri

In a farewell card written by Yuri, one of my previous two-year college students, she uses the terms “good” and “clean” to describe my pronunciation and fluency in speaking Japanese (see pic. 5.1) which she distinctly differentiates from other foreigners: “Other folener [foreigner] bad” (line 5). Although it is not clear what Yuri means by the terms “good” and “clean” in English, the adjective *kirei* [beautiful/clean] in Japanese is commonly used, usually towards females, to describe someone who speaks with clearly understandable pronunciation, avoids slang or swear words, speaks appropriately and politely (often using honorifics, preferably correctly) usually in a soft-spoken and non-aggressive tone, i.e. *kirei na nihongo* [beautiful/clean Japanese], *kirei ni hanasu* [speak beautifully/cleanly].

In some contexts, the sense of good or clean can also be tied up in concepts such as speaking respectfully, which is the way my Japanese teachers used it, i.e. *kirei ni hanashite kudasai* [please speak respectfully] when I learned Japanese intensively during my first year in Japan. From a personal viewpoint, there is a great sense of

achievement and satisfaction that derives from such adjectives because while technical skills can be learned and refined with hard work, it is not always the case that one's way of speaking will be "likable", "agreeable" or be seen as showing "respect" towards others' languages and cultures, let alone become something inspirational for someone else, i.e. "I want to speak good English so you will understand my feel too" (lines 8-10). What is it that is really being complimented here? Reflecting on Yuki's comment in line 2 that I don't look Japanese but speak "good and clean" Japanese (line 6) points to the possibility that the "I" that is being complimented is viewed first and foremost as someone who is an outsider, a foreigner, an L2 speaker, but that she is also someone who not only has linguistic knowledge but also knowledge of the insider's world (i.e. how to speak, what to say, how certain words feel, etc.) and knows how to perform that knowledge successfully. We might then say that it is one's outside status, talent, knowledge and respectful attitude that is attractive in such situations, not some idealized pronunciation that matches some native speakers' ways of speaking. These are speaking contexts in which a notion of passing would be irrelevant and even undesirable.

OnegaishimasuYO



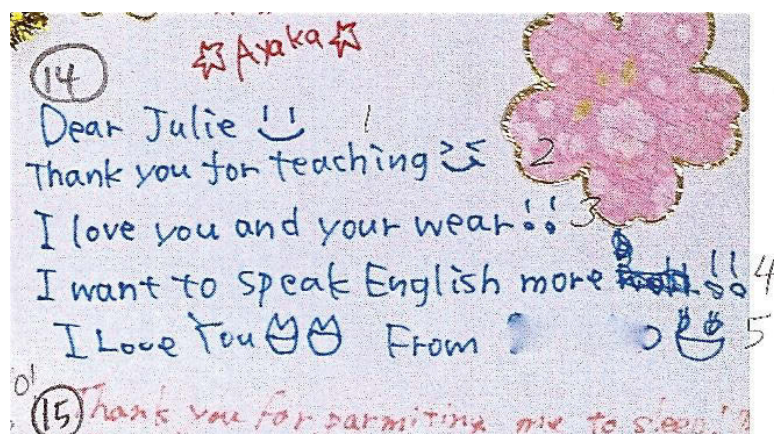
Pic. 5.2. Getting the right pitch on "YO". Tokyo (2006).

Transcript: Julie, Before in my life, I never hear folener use Japanese + English mixing together. SO nice Julie! I am surprised! Before I HATE English but now I LOVE English (DAISUKI desu!) [I love English] Thank you! Please love Japan ippai ~ onegaishimasuYO [a lot - please]! We love cool folener. You are my cool folener forever! Arigato! [Thanks!] Yukiko

The background to Yukiko's comment is my use of a familiar expression that is usually shared between L1 speakers and/or only with advanced level L2 speakers. In this example, it is not so much how I mixed "Japanese + English" together as Yukiko comments in line 2, which she begins to mix also in line 8: "Please love Japan ippai [a lot] ~ onegaishimasuYO [please]!", but the fact that "YO!" has been capitalized at the end of the sentence. This is a phrase I playfully used with the students when they didn't do their homework or weren't doing their work in class. This sentence ending particle "yo" in Japanese is normally used to emphasize a command but put together with "onegaishimasu" [please] in a playful tone often with some form of a smile, it can be translated as something playful like "please, give me a break/I'm begging you to do your work". I originally picked up this phrase while watching Japanese variety shows on television where I noticed its use created laughter amongst the characters. With my students, I did it as a way of telling them that they need to do the work without putting myself in the authoritarian role or making them feel they were being scolded. In my observations of students' reactions, this type of expression created laughter and a light apology, at which point students took the cue and went quietly back to work. This is the intended effect, but to achieve this, one needs to be quite adept at getting the right balance in terms of the playful rhythm and tone. The final flowing pitch on the "yo" needs to be exerted in tandem with a non-serious facial expression that is partially smiling and partially stern, sending the implicit message "I'm not angry at you". One wrong pitch or look is potentially threatening to students, which might sound something like "I am sick and tired of dealing with you". For an L2 speaker of Japanese to be able to get this balance right can be that one active ingredient that indicates to the other that the speaker is "in the know" or perhaps the way Yukiko sees it, a "cool" foreigner (lines 9-10). Getting the dynamics wrong, on the other hand, can create the opposite effect of cool, and signify an outcast or a "wannabe", which as Blommaert and Varis (2011) state, "[b]eing qualified by others as a 'wannabe', a 'fake' or some other dismissive category is one of many people's greatest anxieties" (p. 5).

Achieving this type of cool is not about how well a native speaker is imitated but how well one's position of difference can be used to show L1 speakers that one does understand and can perform certain styles. The sense of achievement here is not about a

convincing performance to fool the native speaker but a feeling of being part of the local scene and being able to shift into a certain style of speaking. Piller also points out that, “in passing as a performance no deceit is involved ... [thus], no one is deliberately misled” (p. 198).



Pic. 5.3. “OL style” of clothing as part of my “identity package”. Tokyo (2006).

Transcript: Dear Julie ☺ Thank you for teaching ☺ I love you and your wear!! I want to speak English more!! I love you [two unidentifiable drawings] From Satoko ☺

Reading some of the other entries (pic. 5.3) and statements such as “I love you and your wear!!” (line 3) reminds me of the way I wore makeup and my style of clothing, what was then popularly called the “office lady” or “OL fashion”. This is a professional and sophisticated look that usually consists of pretty skirts, elegant blouses, semi-high-heel shoes, natural tones of makeup and attention to details such as nails, hair, accessories, stockings, bags, and so on, as worn by female office workers in their twenties to forties. There is a whole gendered take up possible in spaces such as these of what one’s passing entails in terms of inscription into a particular social order. Semiotic resources such as one’s choice or style of attire are identity features that co-occur with linguistic utterances. These semiotic resources may be features that “are infinitely small in the eyes of the analyst but may be very important to the participants in the interaction” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 232). To get a better sense of these intricate details, as Block (2010) drawing on Geertz notes, we need both the “experience near (i.e. the story as lived by participants), as opposed to experience far (the story as lived by researchers)” in order to move towards “the multi-levelled world of plurilingual communication practices in new and different ways” (p. 29). More generally in

autoethnographic work, the notion of the “near” and “far” is a particular one since the story that gets told is a medley of the story as lived by me and the story I as researcher re-write for my audience. In this particular case, however, reflecting on my students’ views, their views as insiders, helped me to remember my active engagements, as an outsider, in plurilingual communication practices.

Amongst many other elements, notions such as passing require a whole set of knowledge about language, discourses, cultural trends, mannerisms, ways of life and so on, as well as a certain degree of comfort and/or confidence in using one’s resources tactfully and skillfully. Seen in a more general light, most situations in which speaking is the main method of getting things done successfully will require a wide range of knowledge, skills and an ability to negotiate one’s position. However, framed within a notion of passing, speakers are likely to be seen as insecure or devious in interacting with L1 speakers. As I show in my examples, any attempt to fool or trick someone is hardly the case; it is the blending and balancing that an outsider can produce that entices, not the degree of emulation one can produce. If we look beyond the notion of passing, we may also be able to see that even within the relatively confined area of a language-teaching classroom where foreign teachers’ identities are relatively fixed as “foreigners”, what being a foreigner means is also a complicated notion that is not only about being an outsider or “different”. I am a foreigner who can speak Japanese without looking Japanese, teach English without looking American (pic. 5.1), mix Japanese and English together (pic. 5.2), and fashion my body as a foreigner with a certain local style that young Japanese females find desirable (pic. 5.3). I passed, or rather “crossed over” a different line, a line that is made up of simultaneities of being able to do things while being someone without a clear defining cultural or national affiliation. What my identity represented was perhaps something new for the students and probably for myself also. This type of highly particular crossing into uncharted territories, where my identity became “something else”, continually arose in different spaces of my life in Japan, as I will show in the next section.

Section 2: Crossing into Heteroglossia

Although I originally planned to live in Tokyo for only a year to study Japanese, the opportunities for employment and the range of activities I was asked to engage in were vast, not all of which included teaching English or had any direct relationship with my status as a foreigner. My ability to speak English was a stepping-stone into gaining access to new opportunities, but I was not always recognized for that ability.

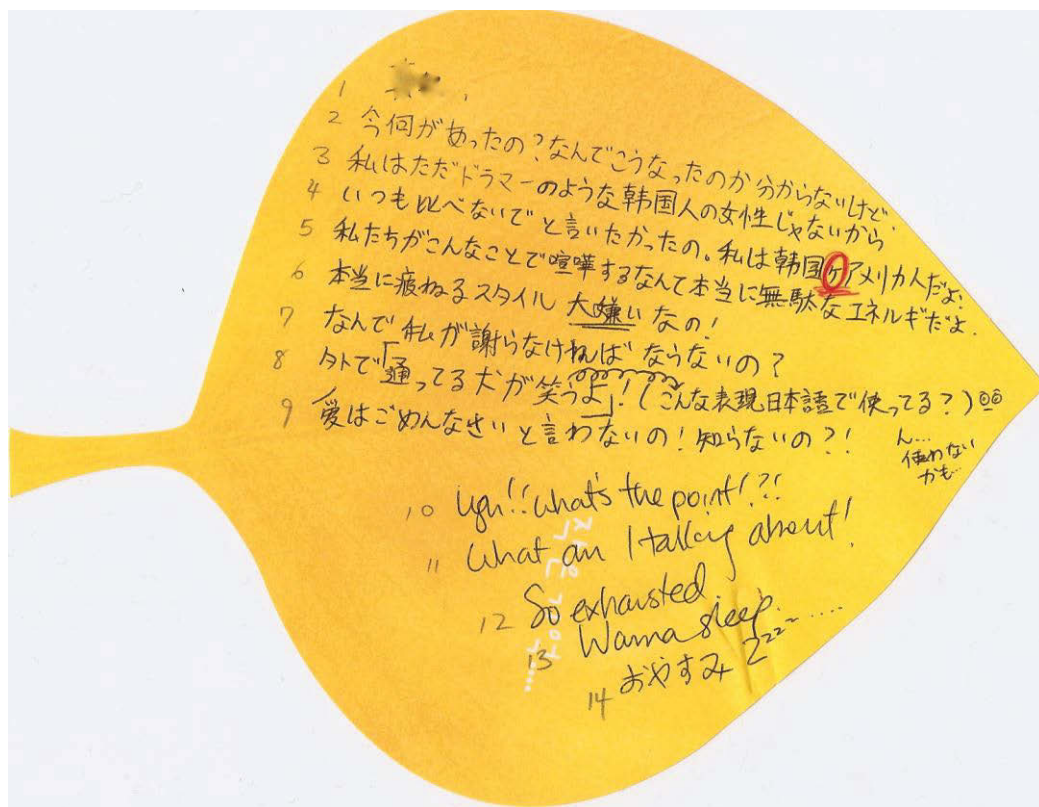
Over approximately five years of working in a Japanese-owned English conversation school, I was given various roles, starting with teaching English over the telephone at home. At the time, *NTT Docomo*, Japan's premier provider of mobile voice, data and multimedia services, began introducing new ways of using technology to learn English. One such trend was to use docomo's mobile phones for video lessons where students could interact with teachers outside of the classroom. To promote these new services in magazines, I was asked to pose as a Japanese student learning English using the docomo mobile phone while staying at a hotel (see Figure 5.4 and Appendix 1 for a copy of the published article). In the magazine article, there is a photo of a white teacher (a colleague of mine) who I am speaking to on the phone (even though when students signed up, I would be their teacher). I understood that I looked too young for the typical businessman who is the target audience of this service to take me seriously as a teacher, and the archetypal image of the Asian student/white teacher was what the company wanted. Similar to the case in which my difference, my foreign body, could become something admirable to Yuri (in pic. 5.1), here my body as a young Asian woman fitted the context and became a useful resource to the company. I didn't know it then but I realize now that this was the first inkling of how, in that space, my identity could become neither Korean nor



Pic. 5.4. Posing as an everyday Japanese student learning English using docomo's mobile phone while staying at a hotel for a bi-weekly Japanese magazine, Tokyo (2003).

American. There were enough physical features of my body that would pass as Japanese and this knowledge that I had enough bodily features to pass as Japanese was used as a resource in my everyday transactions in Japan. As I included in the Prelude, I used my then Japanese partner's surname "Miwa" on a spa membership card (pic. 0.5) to avoid the inconvenience of explaining my background and the exotic gaze and utterances of Japanese interlocutors, and the act illuminated my self-perception of having enough linguistic and bodily features to pass as Japanese. While I may have thought I had enough of the right features, however, Yuri's comment in pic. 5.1 reminds me that from an insider's perspective (i.e. a Japanese person's perspective), there was something about my features that was immediately recognizable as non-Japanese. In acts of "imposture" or passing, each person brings to the interaction and performs according to their own set of constructed images of what something should look like, and their understanding of the norms in particular spaces. Differences of images and understandings may not clash verbally in interactions with others but we cannot assume the particular images and perceptions we hold are therefore valid and "true".

Certain portrayals of idealized images in or promoted by the media provide an example of the many ways in which individuals receive and shape certain ideas, though not passively. These idealized images can also be a catalyst for drawing out certain feelings and perceptions that do not correspond with how one sees oneself. In the following letter (pic 5.5), which was never delivered but remained in my diary, I wrote to Kenji, my then Japanese partner with the surname Miwa, following an argument we had. References to Korean dramas once again appear in the data. Here, I express my frustration about how Kenji compares me to the images of Korean women in Korean dramas (see the heroines in *Autumn in my Heart* (2000) and *Summer Scent* (2003) that we would sometimes watch together on local Japanese television channels, and how I refuse to apologize for something which I can no longer remember.



Pic. 5.5. Heteroglossic utterances, Tokyo (2004).

Transcript:

Line 1: Kenji,

Line 2: What just happened? I don't understand what just happened but

Line 3: I just wanted to say that I'm not like those kinds of Korean women in the Korean dramas so

Line 4: I don't want you to always compare me to them. I'm Korean-American [emphasis shown in the original in red and through the circling and underlining of the symbol for the hyphen].

Line 5: It is such a waste of energy for us to be fighting about such things.

Line 6: I really hate the 'tiring style of people' [high maintenance kind of people]!

Line 7: Why should I have to apologize?

Line 8: A dog passing by outside would laugh! (Do you use this phrase in Japanese? Hmm... probably not...)

Line 9: Love is never having to say you are sorry. Don't you know this?

Line 10: Ugh!! What's the point!?!

Line 11: What am I talking about!

Line 12: So exhausted.

Line 13: Wanna sleep.

Line 14: Good night. Zzzz...

In line 6, I write 疲れるスタイル [tiring style] in Japanese, but this is clearly a direct translation from the Korean phrase 피곤한 스타일 [tiring style, which is better understood in English as "high maintenance"]. Because the grammatical system and certain nuances of expressions of Japanese and Korean are similar, I found it easy to plug in words and phrases in this way. I could also have easily used the common phrase

in Japanese おかしいよ ! [It's ridiculous!] but the Korean expression 지나가는 개가 웃겠다 [even a dog passing by would laugh] (line 8) expresses more clearly the message I wanted to deliver, that everyone, even a dog, would agree with me that it was ridiculous for him to ask me to apologize. The important sentence here is in the parenthesis: “(Do you use this phrase in Japanese? [emotive drawing of a thinking expression] Hmm... probably not...)”. Here I demonstrate awareness that such a phrase in Japanese is odd, and this effort to point it out renders it a “marked choice”, carrying with it certain intentions of how I want to be heard, as an experienced multilingual speaker. By drawing on the multiple linguistic resources I inhabit, my utterances demonstrate a sense of independence or freedom and power in *deliberately* moving away from the default styles of speaking. The desire here is not to pass as a native speaker but to be seen as a proficient and thinking foreign speaker.

Writing in Japanese may be a way of making sure he will receive and understand my message but most of all, it is a way to show that I am capable of participating effectively in Japanese. By suggesting oddity in my own choice to use Korean expressions in Japanese, I show him that this was deliberate and stop him from correcting or controlling what I want to say, which he often did by saying “in Japanese, we say it like this”. I demonstrate that I have the right to debate, discuss, resist, define and shape the “third place” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 233) between us, which in this case, is the space of the letter I create for us. By asking him if a certain type of phrase is used in Japanese, I am not asking for approval but perhaps suggesting that Japanese might lack certain expressions that express what I am feeling; I am also trying to include him in negotiating the language practices that can become possible in our particular relationship. The drawing of the face may not be a minor point here if we think of it as a strategy, a way of creating and balancing the mood (the tone of the letter) to show that I can negotiate in a calm and practical manner. Although the possibilities of my identity needs to be seen in relation to the ways in which I was being positioned as Korean, in my relationship with a Japanese man in the space of Japan, no one could tell me to be Korean, what it meant to be Korean or whether I was using Korean (in)correctly. These dynamics enabled a freer sense of being able to experiment with my existing knowledge of Korea(n) and became much more visible/audible in my interactions with my Japanese interlocutors. It was in Tokyo and in my interactions with Japanese acquaintances that I wanted to speak Korean.

It is not only Korean that is hidden underneath the layers but also English. The expression “love is never having to say you are sorry” (line 9) from the American movie *Love Story* (1970) has often been used amongst speakers of English in the Western world to convey that it isn’t necessary to apologize because love is unconditional. However in the context of our argument, it is more likely that I am portraying my unwillingness to apologize, the absurdity of being expected to do so, and possibly also asserting a different cultural frame. Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of “heteroglossia”, states “at any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions...that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions” (p. 428). Through Japanese, it is possible to see how my “internally persuasive discourse”, utterances that are “half-ours and half someone else’s” (p. 345-346), is formed by my history of experiences in Korean and English and how this growing complexity of entangled polyphony of voices, intentions, scripts and meanings can bring about new or different meanings, identities and ways of speaking.

A heteroglossic understanding of utterances turns our attention to not only “expert” L2 speakers but speakers who have different types of knowledge in multiple languages at varying levels of proficiency and experience. In my correspondences with Yoko, a student I had previously taught in Tokyo, who had been learning Korean for three months at the time of writing me this e-mail (see Figure 5.6), she writes in Korean without using *hangeul*, the Korean writing system, but *katakana* [often used for foreign words in Japanese].

to you. Some day I want to speak with you in English! I have a lot of things to speak to you. . . .
I missed so much you have gone so far but I feel you are always so near by me...
アジク ハングゴド ベウゴイツソヨ。ノムオリョウチマン ヨルシメ コンブハゴ イツソヨ。
オンジェ ナ ハゴ タル ロッポンギヒルズエ カッソヨ。
ソジソフィ インサンハロ イルボンヘ ワッソヨ。
ノム モッチンエヨ ^^
イヤギ マニ ハゴ シップンデ チョグム ピロヘッソヨ 。 アンニヨニ チュムセヨ。 サランヘ ジュリー

Pic. 5.6. E-mail from Yoko. Tokyo (2009).

Translation:

I am still learning Korean. It’s very difficult but I am studying hard. I went to Roppongi Hills with my friend. So Ji-Sub [Korean actor] came to Japan to greet his fans. He is really attractive/fashionable/handsome. I want to say a lot of things to you but I’m a bit tired today. Good night. I love you Julie

With little opportunity to use Korean in her everyday life, I am one of the few people with whom Yoko can practice her Korean, but having to learn the Korean keyboard is much too time consuming for her. However, her desire to write Korean in *katakana* is, I believe, more than just practicing language. This persistence and insistence in using Korean originated from her strong desire to understand the lines of her favorite actors in Korean dramas, not through subtitles translated in Japanese but directly from their utterances in Korean. In particular, she wanted to understand these actors when they visited Japan to greet their fans. This desire is linked to the nostalgia many older Japanese women have for life and relationships in their younger years (see Iwabuchi, 2008). In the Cinderella stories in Korean dramas, many of these viewers enjoy pleasurable fantasies through the images of “soft masculinity” seen in the Korean male characters (see Jung, 2011). Also, like my own experience of learning Japanese, the similarities in the grammatical structure, certain vocabulary and expressions in Japanese and Korean may enable Yoko to “feel” the words on a deeper level where she can express herself better than she can in English, a language she has learned for much longer but only enjoys for the purposes of travel and conversing with foreigners.

The reason I include her message as part of my data here is to draw out the importance of thinking about the dynamics of particular relationships that not only produce multivocal texts but are also the “normal” language practices in certain relationships. For Yoko, speaking or writing Korean may be a way out of her conventional or routine ways of operating in Japanese. It is unconventional (in both Korean and Japanese) to use the term “*saranghae* Julie” [I love you Julie] to a casual friend. For my part, the unexpectedness of the utterance surprises me especially since no one besides my mother says this to me, and even then only in e-mails and never on the phone or in person. The bulk of her message in Korean is written using honorifics and what often looks like the standard textbook style of language developed for language learners to speak politely. However the content of the message in reference to a Korean movie star, particularly in line 4 “he is really attractive/fashionable/handsome”, evokes the discourse of pop culture. She then uses a highly polite form of a “good night” greeting in the end *ahnnyunghee joomoosaeyo*, often used in spoken contexts between young individuals who bid their elders a restful sleep, which evokes a strange kind of dynamic between us, particularly since I am 30 years younger than her. Of course this may be nothing more than her attempt to translate the casual good night greeting in

Japanese *oyasuminasai*, which is used in both spoken and written mediums in Japanese. After such a degree of politeness, the intimacy of *saranghae* [I love you] evokes a different kind of relationship that to me, as I mentioned earlier, feels motherly. In the end, the way in which I understand her message is not only through the words she communicates but her choice of form (*katakana* Korean) and her multivocal Self that is built by her multiple positions as a language learner, a fan of Korean actors, a mother, and a caring friend. The combination of utterances that normally belong in different genres and discourses “works” for me/us. What Yoko demonstrates to me is her ability to show me, however fragmented her understanding may be, that she has some comprehension of the conventions but is bringing her own strategies to communicate and is “do[ing] [her] own thing” (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 927). This leads me to question whether we can recognize the multivocality of speakers such as Yoko when we receive their messages? Some may easily dismiss her message as being typical of the knowledge demonstrated by beginner level language learners, or simply as errors. The recognition of how successful and legitimate these texts are depends greatly on the knowledge, history and attitude of the receiver.

Yoko often talks about how her family members think it is silly of her to be so mesmerized by the Korean dramas. Although thousands of women find pleasure in these fictional worlds, those who aren’t interested in Korean dramas view this phenomenon as the domain of housewives who have too much time on their hands. She feels silenced in front of her family and only watches Korean dramas privately. She has built a strong phantasmal world, probably much like the one I experienced in New York watching *Jealousy*, and sees herself as different from certain individuals in the Japanese society with which she is familiar. I relate to her desires not only on the level of the power of phantasmal worlds (particularly produced by Korean dramas) but in my own desire to not be positioned as “those kinds of Korean women in Korean dramas” (pic. 5.5, line 3). By “those” I am referring to exactly the kind of women I wanted for my character in my fantasies in New York, the self-sacrificing, selfless, patient, innocent, child-like character that recurrently appeared as the embodiment of female virtues in Korean drama heroines. We both desire something “different” from what is available. Yoko doesn’t try to integrate these two worlds (i.e. her Korean drama world and who she feels she needs to be in Japanese society). She organizes this by finding different niches, such as schools, fan clubs, and correspondences with me, where she can discuss

the thoughts and memories that are evoked by consuming Korean culture or Korean cultural products in both Korean and Japanese, but she only does this with those who share her excitement. Speaking Korean is another resource for her to use to widen that space in which she can be heard.

These heteroglossic utterances do not necessarily have to be about creating new meanings, but they reflect a conglomeration of shuttling between attitudes, desires, one's shifting sense of identity and life trajectories that are encapsulated between and behind the lines of visibility. Yoko's usage of language resonates with my example of drawing on fragmented and available linguistic resources, even though we do it in somewhat different ways. A single code doesn't quite do the work of expressing the many desires and histories we feel and want to express through our words even if we appear to be using a single code. The fragments of resources we put together are preferable and seem to do that work best. Who qualifies as an "expert" or "multilingual", what we mean by such terms, and why we think they are important, need to be considered with great care when we think about what identity possibilities our judgments might dismiss for others and ourselves. Seeing through the lens of multivocality can help us to see that these acts are not only moment-to-moment ways of performing in the Other's language but representations of the changing ways in which we understand and seek to portray who we are becoming. My trajectory in Japan as a teacher teaching English to Japanese college students, mixing Japanese to create certain effects, as an employee working in an English language institute where I could flexibly fit different roles, and as a friend who can use Japanese and Korean to talk about Korean dramas, shows that "resourceful speakers" (Pennycook, 2012) carry their resources everywhere and find ways of organizing, negotiating and maximizing their resources to the best of their abilities in different environments. It is a way of life in which relationships and everyday practices are fundamentally built on recombinations of multiple languages and cultural signs. Thinking along the lines of "recombinations", which I will turn to in the next section, moves us away from such notions as passing, which ultimately limit the possibilities of language performances and linguistic identities along the binaries of native and non-native ideologies. Without careful reflection, such notions can easily lead to feelings of inauthenticity and illegitimacy.

Section 3: Transidiomatic Practices

“Transidiomatic practices”, as Jacquemet (2005) defines them, are “the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant” (p. 265). As an example, he points to practices that take place in call centers in India, where local Indian operators interact with overseas callers according to a customer’s time zone and make small talk about the local weather, sports scores and traffic reports, while at the same time they “interact with co-workers in the next cubicle, take a break to eat local food, and may occasionally check local news and personal email. The result of this combination of multiple languages and simultaneous local (with co-workers) and distant (with clients) interactions, is thus the production of a transidiomatic environment” (p. 265).

At the start of my teaching career in Tokyo in 2001, I worked part-time teaching English over the telephone at home for a Japanese company for several months. Classes were held mostly from late morning to late afternoon for housewives who wanted to practice speaking in English for 15-30 minutes a day while they did their housework. I had four to five students a day with a one-hour break in between. During most of the breaks, I would cook simple Korean dishes and watch short episodes of old *seinen/shonen* animations [animations for young boys or older men] such as *Mezon Ikkoku* (1986-1988) and *Touch* (1985-1987) on DVDs. What I remember most about those days was sitting on the tatami mats [straw mats that cover the floor] and eating *bibimbap* [Korean style mixed rice], or *Shin ramyun* [Korean ramen] on the *kotatsu* [a low table frame covered by a heavy blanket upon which a table top sits], sitting in what I think of as a Korean way of sitting which is commonly seen in Korean dramas (see pic. 5.7).



Pic. 5.7. An eating scene portraying a Korean way of sitting from the Korean drama My Lovely Sam-Soon (Kim, 2005) Episode 11.

This sitting position is one that involves sitting with one leg bent lying flat on the ground and an arm resting on the other leg that is bent upright, a sitting position I learned by observing family and friends throughout my life both in real-time and through media representations. It is a movement that only comes into visibility when I am either alone at home or in the vicinity of close acquaintances that are “in the know” as I implicitly learned from others and in the dramas that it can appear rude, or like an *ajumma* (a Korean term used to address an adult female individual of married age. The stereotypical *ajumma* image is that of a short, stocky, tough old woman with permed hair, who races to get a seat on the subway.). The simultaneity of replicating this type of Korean scene while watching Japanese animations as I prepare to teach English over the phone in my house in Tokyo fit Jacquemet’s notion of transidiomatic practices, where there occurs “the dissolution of the supposedly ‘natural’ link between place/territory and cultural practices, experiences, and identities” (Jacquemet, 2005, p. 262). This space and everyday practice are shaped by the time available during the breaks, individual interests, the availability of certain resources or ingredients, the traces of memories and experience that settle on our bodies from our life histories, and a feeling of comfort as well as the Others who are or are not present. Everyday practices are made up of a combination of culturally different elements and “inauthentic” bodies. As Kramsch (2012) states, “[i]n a world where mobility and global flows are slowly erasing cultural and national origins” (p. 483), relationships and everyday practices are, as mentioned

earlier, fundamentally built on recombinations of multiple languages and cultural signs for an increasing number of individuals moving in and out of different spaces.

Training teachers of Chinese to teach Chinese to Japanese students in Tokyo

In the following figures, I include photographs that were taken for inclusion in brochures and on the website of a Chinese conversation school I worked for in Tokyo. My background as a Korean-American who spoke Japanese and Chinese in this matrix of teaching Chinese teachers how to teach Chinese to Japanese learners by borrowing techniques from TESOL opened me up for increasingly flexible positionings and not easily identifiable identity categories. In Iwabuchi's (2002) term in Japanese, this might be seen as a *mukokuseki* position, literally meaning "something or someone lacking any nationality, but also implying the erasure of racial or ethnic characteristics or a context, which does not imprint a particular culture or country with these features" (p. 28). In other words, one's body can become "culturally odorless" (p.29).

In pic 5.8 (1), I am asked to pose as a Chinese teacher teaching a Japanese businessman. While I could pass as a Chinese female, many staff members joked that they weren't sure who was the teacher and who was the student. In (2) I am posing as a Chinese teacher while Fei, one of the "real" Chinese teachers, poses as a Japanese student even though she is a Chinese citizen of Korean descent. In the bottom left image in (3) I pose as a Japanese businesswoman seeking to learn Chinese. On the same webpage, in the bottom left corner, I take the role of a Japanese staff member drawing attention to the government rebate scheme. In (4) I play the role of a Japanese beginner level student making the typical pronunciation of difficult sounds in Chinese and the facial expressions students make when they don't understand an explanation given by their teachers in role-playing scenarios.

These multiple positions become possible because certain aspects of my body appear to be "neutral" enough to fit images of a Japanese or Chinese (and Korean if necessary) female in these spaces. A change of hair color can perhaps also make me different enough to simultaneously take on different roles in the same space (pic. 3). Here, my body is used as a resource for the company, and at the same time I use my features as a resource to create and open up more identity possibilities.



Pic. 5.8. Multiple roles as English-speaker background trainer, Japanese student, Chinese teacher, and Japanese staff member used in school brochures, train advertisements and on the website. Tokyo (2005-2006).

(1) School brochure (2) Train advertisement (see copy of the advertisement in Appendix 2) (3) School website. (4) Teacher training session

“Being a resourceful speaker” as Pennycook states is about “both having available language resources and being good at shifting between styles, discourses and genres” (2012, p. 99). As I have mentioned earlier in relation to Japanese college students taking note of one’s facial features (pic. 5.1 and 5.3) as well as the pointing out of intricate details of for instance my attire, makeup and nail polish by Jung Hee in Beijing (Chapter 2, pic 3.8), I wish to add to this notion of “speaking”, our “bodies” also as resources. They play an equally powerful role in our linguistic repertoire. By the “body”, I am not only talking about how we look racially but the style of clothing, makeup techniques, hairstyle, how we smile, walk, stand, gaze, the tone of our voice and so on. It is not so much that individuals have those physical features that are stereotypically identifiable as “local” (although these may contribute greatly in being seen as “local”)

that makes our bodies resourceful but that we do things to/with our bodies that make them become resources for particular practices in particular spaces.

Although I was able to draw on all of my resources, my skills were very much reliant on the help of others. Maintaining good relationships with my colleagues was in my interest and in this sense I needed to be accommodating to their ways of thinking and doing by showing my ability to perform like a local while also showing that I was able to perform differently when the situation required. This, as Pennycook points out, is not about shifting in and out of languages as if language were an “undifferentiated whole” but a matter of engaging in “language practices”, that is, “we draw on linguistic repertoires, we take up styles, we partake in discourse, we do genres” (2012, p. 98). The real challenge as we work at the frontline is not about authenticity but of understanding where we are located and working out what kind of place we can occupy in that space. As Canagarajah (2012) once put it in a seminar on developing models for translingual competency, language learners/users need to show that they know the norms and discourses, bringing themselves into the language, that is, gradually bringing in their own unique ways of understanding and speaking.

Thinking about language, our bodies, and lives in resourceful ways and developing knowledge for translingual competency are particularly helpful not only in negotiating our linguistic identities in “foreign” spaces where, as I have mentioned previously, one might feel “freer” to be playful and “different”, but also in spaces where one’s linguistic identity may have a deeper and different set of emotional attachments that are harder to negotiate in practice. In the examples in the next section, I focus on one term, *uri* [“we”, “us” or “our”] in Korean that reflects my own lifelong ambivalence, and how by using related examples or experiences from different interlocutors and contexts I have come to see the real value of Canagarajah’s suggestion.

Section 4: “uri” as in “our” or “my”: “Who gives a shit right?”

For the first six months of my life in Japan, I lived in a women’s dormitory where the majority of the residents were Japanese university students who came from different prefectures. There was a small group of Korean students in their mid- to late-twenties who were studying Japanese to gain entrance into Japanese universities. There was the occasional slight bowing to greet each other in the hallways or the communal areas such as the cafeteria or bathing spaces, but I never voluntarily initiated a conversation. I was taking precautions not to fall back into the “group life” that I knew so intimately from my experiences in Beijing, where I knew I would begin to feel suffocated by the linguistic and cultural performances I would need to enact. At the time, I saw it as either choosing to “be Korean” or be “the Other”.

Eventually I became friends with a Korean woman in her early-forties, who I noticed often sat by herself. She had a strong Pusan *saturi* (accent) that immediately put me at ease, a feeling that I believe has been constructed by an assumption that people who don’t speak *pyojuneo* (Standard Korean based on the dialect of the area around Seoul) are less concerned about language accuracy. She was twenty years older than me and insisted I didn’t use honorifics when speaking so that we could become friendlier more quickly. Sora had lived in Guatemala for over fifteen years and felt she was “different” from the Korean women in our dormitory, though in reference to issues related to language and culture, she quite clearly identified herself as “Korean” and in making that position clear, it seemed to me that I was either too Korean or not enough Korean. One such example is demonstrated in a diary entry (pic. 5.9) I wrote after watching a Japanese TV drama called *God, please give me more time* (1998) with Sora in my room.

Date: 2000年12月22日 * * *

- 1 First X-mas in Tokyo! 蘇我 brought over a drama called Kami-sama
- 2 mou so ko shi dake - said even if I don't understand it all yet I can just
- 3 guess. Well it's not rocket science... Also brought some wine and 干物 but
- 4 the cork just broke half way which she then shoved into the bottle
- 5 which I didn't think was such a bright idea but we drank it anyway! ☺
- 6 Today Kazuka 先生 taught us 「~な+noun」 like in Korean
- 7 「~な+名詞」 so like 有名な建物, 静かな部屋 so when Fukada Kyoko
- 8 said 「好きな人とセックスした」 I totally got it ... except ... (!) I couldn't
- 9 believe it was possible to say such a thing to her mother so I thought
- 10 I misheard it! And they say セックス → so like セックス → do sex
- 11 not 「have sex」... I asked 蘇我 if I heard it right and she said
- 12 their dramas are a bit more open than Korean dramas. Bit!! Goodness
- 13 if I said that to my mom she'd faint and how come the dad doesn't
- 14 say anything? Really didn't get that part. Strange also how 蘇我
- 15 never says 日本ドラマ but 韓国ドラマ and makes me feel a bit
- 16 strange when she says 日本ドラマ Is this 日本 something that
- 17 includes me like "our" or 日本 as in "my" (her) country? Whatever
- 18 who gives a shit right?
- 19 That wine was seriously deplorable - note to self "never have
- 20 wine that has floating bits of cork in it!"
- 21/Tomorrow: Must ask Kazuka 先生 about 「した」 why 「した」 + 「た」 why not
- 22 「た」? Huh??

Pic. 5.9. Diary entry written after watching 'God please give me more time' (2000) Episode 1.

Transcript: brackets indicate Korean words, italics indicate Japanese words, bold indicates Chinese words

1. First X-mas in Tokyo! [Sora] brought over a drama called Kami-sama
2. Mou so ko shi dake - said even if I don't understand it all yet I can just
3. Guess. Well it's not rocket science... Also brought some wine some [dried octopus] and [fish] but
4. The cork just broke half way which she then shoved into the bottle
5. Which I didn't think was such a bright idea but we drank it anyway! ☺
6. Today teacher Kazuka taught us *adj+na+noun* like in Korean
7. [adj+han+noun] so like *famous+na+building* [famous+han+building] **building**, *quiet+na+room* [quiet+han+room] so when Fukada Kyoko
8. said *I had sex with a man I like* I totally got it ... except ... (!) I couldn't
9. believe it was possible to say such a thing to her mother so I thought
10. I misheard it! And they say *do sex* - so like [do sex] - do sex
11. not "have" sex ... I asked [Sora] if I heard it right and she said
12. their dramas are a bit more open than Korean dramas. Bit!! Goodness
13. if I said that to my mom she'd faint and how come the dad doesn't
14. say anything? (And the mom- how can she smile saying *which man*?! UNBELIEVABLE! Really didn't get that part. Strange also how [Sora]
15. never says [Japanese dramas] but [their drama] and makes me feel a bit
16. strange when she says [our drama]. Is this [our] something that
17. includes me like "our" or [our] as in "my" (her) country? Whatever
18. who gives a shit right?
19. That wine was seriously deplorable - note to self "never have
20. wine that has floating bits of cork in it!"
21. Tomorrow: Must ask teacher Kazuka about *did* why *do* + *did* why not
22. *did*? Huh??

Given that this was a romantic drama that airs on primetime TV and on local Japanese channels, I was amazed at some of the kissing scenes, scenes of high school students earning money by sleeping with *otaku* [geek] type men, and particularly shocked at the scene where the daughter defiantly tells her mother “I was having sex with the man I love”. In lines 8-10, I state, “I couldn’t believe it was possible to say such a thing to her mother so I thought I misheard it! ... [I]f I said that to my mom she’d faint and how come the dad doesn’t say anything. And the mom – how can she smile saying “what kind of man?! UNBELIEVABLE! Really didn’t get that part” (lines 13-15). Sora’s understanding that Japanese dramas were “a bit more open than Korean dramas” (line 12) seemed odd since to my knowledge, even kissing slightly on the lips was a big deal in Korean dramas. At that point, I had never even heard the word “sex” uttered in Korean dramas. At times like these, she would point out to me that although I was part of Generation X and born in America, there were aspects of me that seemed more conservative than Korean women from her generation in Korea.

She also frequently used the first person plural and possessive pronoun *uri* [we, our, us] (line 16). Whether it was comparing Japanese *miso* paste [bean paste] to Korean *denjang* [Korean bean paste] or Japanese dramas to Korean dramas, she identified things related to Korea as *uri* and things related to Japan as *yaenaedeul* [they, them, theirs]. The most basic usage of *uri* as Kim and Choi (1994, p. 246) state, is to “denote an inclusive group: we or us. It is a word used to denote a group of people (such as “our family”), an entity (such as “our nation”), and even possessions (such as “our house”)”. However, the connotation of *uri* has a distinctive feeling amongst Koreans who use it. It connotes oneness, an intimacy, a bonding that erases boundaries between selves. It implies a positive emotional bonding and intimacy that participants experience as extremely comforting. Choi and Choi (1994) state, “when Koreans...think of the word “we,” the most dominantly associated themes are psychological affects such as intimacy, closeness, love, acceptance, something good, comfort, [and] warmth” (p. 79). However, as Hoffman (1993) notes in her study of the concept and usage of *uri* to connote anti-Americanism or anti-foreignism, the term can also be used to define, protect and maintain “strong boundaries between the culturally ‘pure’ self and the impure outside, a distinction which is fundamental to what it means to be Korean and to define oneself as Korean” (p. 14).

I will come back to this diary entry in a moment. I want to divert my attention to another of Yoko's emails (see Figure 5.10), because she also uses *uri* in her *katakana* Korean: "Our Suh Ji Sub [Korean actor] got an award for *A Movie is a Movie* (also known as *Rough Cut*) (2008). I'm so happy!!!! Suh Ji Sub is a very sexy actor..... What do you think?"

I'm very happy to read your e-mail everything seems so well.
You seem spending very happy time .

Next year when you come to Japan, I want to see you at any cost.
At that time are you all right to speak Japanese?
Please get in touch with me at that time.

ウリ ソジソブ シガ「ヨンワ ワ ヨンワダ」エソ サン ル バダッソヨ ノム キッポヨ!!!
ソジソブ ヌン ノム セクシーハン ベウ ジャナヨ。。。。 オットケ センガカムニカ?

Pic. 5.10. E-mail from Yoko in Tokyo (2008).

Transcript: "Our *Suh Ji Sub* [Korean actor] got an award for *A Movie is a Movie* (*aka Rough Cut*) (2008). I'm so happy!!!! Suh Ji-Sub is a very sexy actor..... What do you think?"

What meaning lies behind Yoko's usage of *uri* when she states "our Suh Ji Sub"? Is she denoting her personal affection as in "my Suh Ji Sub" or that he belongs to both Korea and Japan? Or is she talking about the particular group of women in Japan who are his fans? Or is this "our" in reference to her and me where she assumes I also like him? Whatever the answer may be and whether there is a difference between her intention and the possible interpretations, by using the term *uri*, Yoko signals the blurring of the boundaries between us/them, an act that is not always easy or possible for a Japanese individual to do considering the history between Korea and Japan.

Returning to Sora's usage of *uri* and *yaenaedeul*, I could feel the division between Japan and Korea but I couldn't understand where I was placed in that division. "Is this *uri* something that includes me like "our" or *uri* as in "my" [her] country?" (lines 16-17). I understood that to be counted as part of the we-hood-ness was something that was supposed to be "good", but in this analysis, I am also beginning to see how I was simultaneously less anxious or uninterested in notions that set tight boundaries around

who I could be and where I could or should belong from the comment in lines 17-18, “Whatever who gives a shit right?” (Here, I also hear my stark “” voice again as I heard in pic. 3.6, line 28, “Hello?” in Beijing.) In making this comment, it may be possible to make the assumption that I am moving away from certain categorical notions that no longer define who I see myself as, but I cannot immediately assume that I am no longer troubled by or reject the cultural notions that I have been struggling with. Such statements may be temporary ways of dealing with a history of feeling excluded which is constructed partially by such notions and the frustration of not being able to find clear answers.

As I reflect on texts such as these as my study progresses, I am beginning to see that my struggle with Korea may not have been about a desire to be accepted, to belong, or a craving for acceptance from “natives”. I believe now such notions were largely constructed by others who wanted me to desire these feelings. I wanted my knowledge of Korea, my way of being Korean, and my other “capitals” to be recognized and seen in resourceful ways. To this extent, the friendships I developed with Yoon-hee, Hye-rin, Yoo-ri in Beijing were not helpful in that their usage of praising me as a “multilingual” was likely to have been premised on an “enumerative strategy of counting languages and romanticizing a plurality based on these putative language counts” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 16). At that point, neither they nor I had any notion of viewing speakers of multiple languages as “resourceful speakers”, that is as individuals who are able to use their language resources to shift between styles, discourses and genres (Pennycook, 2012, p. 99). Being the naïve teenagers that we were, it is likely that we made easy judgments about who could or couldn't be considered a multilingual based on idealistic norms or standards of certain “native speakers”. “The idea of native and non-native speakers” as Pennycook points out, “really does not do any useful work in thinking about real language use, and does a great deal of harm as a categorization that cannot escape its roots in nationalism, racism and colonialism” (p. 99). As I have experienced in Sydney in the presence of Korean individuals, such idealistic notions have the potential to create harmful feelings of imposture, illegitimacy, inauthenticity, and anxiety of being “caught out” when one is not able, or does not wish, to perform linguistically according to other people’s standards. The feeling of being “caught out” is also evident in other literature by Korean-American individuals, as in a poem by Valerie,

a Korean-American student, in Kramsch's (2009, p. 90) book *The Multilingual Subject*, which states:

I begin to drown...

Drown...

Drown...

I am caught. Discovered.

(I will have more to say about this poem in Chapter 6.) What seems to lurk behind these feelings of loss, fraudulence, suffocation and self-oppression is an idealistic notion that there is supposed to be a strong sense of affiliation and belonging to the Korean language and culture (in Korea) as a condition of our birth from Korean parents (literature on *jogiyuhaksaeng* [overseas Korean students] points to these strong ideologies about language; see special issue in *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 2012, vol. 16). That an individual carries this symbol "Korean" and cannot speak or can only speak partially is made into a source of shame that generates a sense of guilt. Derrida (1999) in *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* argues that since we are not the original creator of a language but learn it from others, there is no one who can be said to "own" a language. Since language is something that was never from the start "ours" but created by others, there is always alienation, that is, no one can feel completely at home in language. However, this estrangement is not to be seen as lack since there is no self outside of language. As Derrida states, "this abiding alienation appears, like lack, to be constitutive. But it is neither a lack nor an alienation: it lacks nothing that precedes or follows it, it alienates no *ipseity*, no property and no self [...]" (p. 25). What his view says to me is that I operate with certain properties of language that have been and are circulating around me; I do not lack anything in language other than what I do not know. Furthermore, Derrida's message speaks to my work in ways that warn me to be cautious about the idealistic fallacies inherent in language, particularly in relation to romanticizing about "origins"; that there are other ways we can think about that sense of loss or lack that language and others have imposed on us.

These varying degrees and types of attachments, playfulness, and understandings all seem rather chaotic but if we take Blommaert and Varis' (2011) understanding that "individual life-projects are a blending of several micro-hegemonies valid in specific segments of life and behavior", we can see that

people often are not at all “confused” or “ambivalent” about their choices, nor appear to be “caught between” different cultures or “contradict themselves” when speaking about different topics ... The complex of micro-hegemonies just provides a different type of order, a complex order composed of different niches of ordered behavior and discourses about behavior” (p. 2-3).

From this understanding of “micro-hegemonies”, it is not so strange that Sora feels I am more conservative in Korean than the Koreans in Korea if we consider that I have for a large portion of my developmental years lived in various overseas diasporic Korean communities that sometimes have the tendency to rigidly hold onto aspects of language and culture from a given point in time to preserve linguistic or cultural practices.

It is also possible to explain the attachments as feelings that have been discursively constructed from those micro-hegemonies that have entered our life projects. Because I already have a strong sense of being able to predict certain responses, read certain gazes and know how I am going to feel when I see myself being regarded as an “outsider”, I tend not to speak at all. This may seem like a loss of voice, but if we see this within the fabric of an individual life project then we might be able to see that this type of silence is also a temporary strategy to not allow oneself to position or be positioned in those moments. These silent spaces are “critical spaces” where one thinks about what it means to speak or not speak within the dynamics in which one is caught, and how that positions and creates power relations between the self and the interlocutor. The more resources and knowledge we have of discourses, the more these critical spaces will have the potential to help us become “unstuck”, bring clarity, and “pause to imagine ourselves out of exoticism” (Schenke, 1991, p. 50).

Chapter Summary

Pennycook (2012) finds the notion of passing problematic because it “implies being something that one is not, fooling others into believing that one actually is a native speaker ... [T]his idea potentially reinforces, rather than undermines, the non-native/native dichotomy” (p. 76). What I have come to understand from analyzing and interpreting my own experiences in this period is that notions such as passing can expose deep-rooted ideologies of language and identity which can open up a wealth of possibilities in coming to think differently about what we have become all too familiar with in language (provided of course that we *want* to think differently about them). One major way in which I have come to think differently through the notion of passing is to replace this term with the notion of being a resourceful speaker, which of course also includes one’s body and experiences as resources, as a more efficient way forward in thinking about language and identity.

Earlier, I pointed out Piller’s (2002) suggestion that we still know very little about “whether L2 speakers consider themselves high-level achievers, what high-level proficiency means to them, and how and why it has been achieved, or whether they can and do pass for native speakers” (p. 184). Based on my own interrogation here, I think Jacquemet’s questions can take us to a more advanced and progressive understanding of the relationship between language and identity. As he states, we must “now raise the question of how groups of people no longer territorially defined think about their multiple voices, transidiomatic practices, and recombinant identities ... [I]t is time to conceptualize a linguistics of xenoglossic becoming, transidiomatic mixing, and communicative recombinations” (p. 274). Bringing to the fore the focus on multiple voices that speakers carry (sometimes in simultaneity) as I have shown in my unsent letter to Kenji (pic. 5.5) and in Yoko’s emails to me (pics. 5.6 – 5.10), can, I believe, point us towards thinking about the particularities, such as, the interlocutors, location, genres, discourses, images and so on of linguistic and other semiotic performances, hopefully moving us away from limited understandings that are bound in binaries, ideologies and exoticisms. A focus on a notion of multivocality would help us to understand that “translingual language practices of metrolingualism, polylingual languaging, or plurilanguaging are not the occasional language uses of exceptional communities but rather the everyday language practices of the majority world” (Pennycook, 2010, p. 133). What we require now is to seek to look at different sites of

individuals' lives, those of the visible, hidden, silent, agentic, complicit and vulnerable spaces; as Canagarajah (2004) states, "the data we need may not be more of the same; we may need data from different sites of [everyday] life" (p. 117-118). In autoethnographic types of research, from personal memories to textual artifacts, researchers are able to pull together data that range from major incidents to the most microscopic details of, for instance sitting Korean style, eating *bibimbap*, and watching Japanese animations. Such data can be helpful in gaining a deeper or different understanding of the changing practices of everyday life.

We cannot be equipped with a complete set of strategies that will be useful in every situation but it is possible to raise our level of awareness by starting with an investigation of our positionings, complicities and attitudes, taken from our everyday life histories, as a step towards "critically examining the pervasiveness of cultural essentialism and dichotomies" (Kubota, 2005, p. 324). Such a strategy involves the difficult work that Pennycook (2012) points to in doing work around critical resistance – that we have to turn our critical gaze onto identity categories and "work with the paradox of reclamation and rejection simultaneously" (p. 97). I am still using labels such as "Korean-American" a label that is and isn't relevant to how I see myself, but not without "circl[ing] 'the truth' with all kinds of signs, quotation marks, and brackets, to protect it from any form of fixation or conceptualisation" (Cixous, 1993, p. 6). As I become more conscious of my own and others' politics against different backdrops, I begin to see features within "language" as resources to simultaneously represent and trouble, "reclaim and reject" certain identity positionings.

In demonstrating my own self-exploratory journey as both the "researcher" and the "researched" and returning to Block's (2010) view of how those "in the 'experience near' can surprise researchers in the experience far" with their own experiences (p. 29), I think the same can be said about how skills of those in the "experience far" can create deeper, more critical and productive understandings for those in the "experience near" as they encounter new situations. Thinking through the lens of notions such as passing and resourceful speakers, I was able to see how speakers of multiple languages are positioned by others and how they position themselves as a result of their different circumstances, using various and sometimes co-occurring linguistic and/or semiotic resources to achieve particular goals. Individuals do "do their own thing". These "own things" are shaped by the multiplicity of their voices. The (re)combination of multiple

linguistic and semiotic resources from various linguistic and cultural codes are able to demonstrate the multiple meanings single utterances can hold which have traces of one's personal history and the prevailing discourses of particular times and spaces. Combinations are organized, amenable, adjustable, and able to be recreated according to the dynamics of where the participants are located, the uncertain practices they become involved in, the particular relationships between the interlocutors, the particular norms and discourses that circulate certain spaces and the unique history of each individual. Understanding that the link between utterances and identity performances are partial but simultaneously multiple can move us towards the "dissolution of the supposedly 'natural' link between place/territory and cultural practices, experiences, and identities" (Jacquemet, 2005, p. 262), opening up more possibilities for the ways in which we can mix, match and utilize the resources we have available.

Coda

I am snapping the dirty tails off what seem like hundreds of bean sprouts as I sit "Korean style" with my cousin's wife who, with my cousin, has recently come to visit me in Sydney. Seeing us chat away, my cousin comments that I am increasingly turning into an *ajumma*. I am indeed old enough to fit this category, and apart from not having short permed hair, I replicate the image quite well, i.e. having my hair in a bun, wearing baggy sweat pants, wearing no makeup, sitting on the floor in this particular sitting position, holding this particular vegetable and talking non-stop – an image I often see represented by Korean mothers, aunts, and grandmothers when I visit them in Korea. In a different time and space, told by someone else and without the critical reflection in which I have been engaged, I might not have been as accepting as I am now to be called this, but in the moment, it feels like I have freed myself from media images of angelic Korean heroines in Korean dramas or sophisticated Japanese OLs that carry a certain way of holding themselves in society. I do not reject those images but I no longer find them desirable on my body.

I thought about the years of struggle trying to belong, fit, escape, deal with, explain and understand who I was supposed to be or how I was supposed to think, feeling that I would never be able to be comfortable in my own skin, but in this little corner of the house, on the floor, sitting *ajumma* style, chitchatting about life in general, separating the edible part of the bean sprouts from the dirty tails into two separate

buckets, I thought about what that was all about. I have always had comforting niches in my life like this, performing small fragments of cultural practices in hidden spaces. Why couldn't I see this, value and nurture my difference, use my hybridity more resourcefully? To be able to come to this realization, to feel what language or certain discourses are making me feel now and question their hold on me as things happen in real-time, is nonetheless a giant leap forward, an important strategy for survival for me.

I let out a laugh at that moment and in that seemingly insignificant laughter, I realized I could do more than question language; I am able to laugh at it or more precisely, laugh about the ways it tries to position me at different stages in life within defined categories, images and norms. As I remind myself of the ways in which the researcher takes pieces of text and turns them into data (cf. Chapter 4), it is this emerging heteroglossic "I" that can take language and turn it into something that works for me. The notion of heteroglossic becomings is important in how I want language to work with my changing subjectivity because it is centrally about holding onto different ideas simultaneously, taking notice of the possibilities that open up in the process of searching, not passing authoritative judgments, and not looking for *an* answer but seeing the value of many answers. This brings me to re-think the aforementioned statement of my acceptance of this new label *ajumma*. Am I really ready to accept it? Am I really done with the images of Korean heroines and OL's on my body? Or is this writing influencing me to represent myself in ways that seek to show my "before" and "after" transformation? It's perfectly possible to be in a transitioning space where I both desire and don't desire certain images for myself while also being ready but not quite ready to become something new or different. The production of this laughter, then, is a moment of my heteroglossic becoming where I can hold onto the ambivalence of who I think I am and how others and language have the power to position me. Holding onto this laughter is, as Bakhtin (1968) viewed it, to value the unfinished in everything because it is always "ambivalent" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 444). The "real" giant leap forward is to come to these realizations where I can surprise others and myself with the multiple possibilities for identity that multivocality has to offer.

Appendix 1



Pic. 5.11. Feature story on English lessons using mobile phones in the Japanese weekly magazine shukan posuto [週刊ポスト]. Tokyo (March 8, 2002).

Appendix 2



飲茶は本場で。 中国語は で。

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新橋校
ビル3F
JRP新橋駅

横浜校
ビル3F
JRP横浜駅

池袋校
ビル3F
JRP池袋駅

西口より徒歩2分 ヨートリビル3F
北郷ビル3F 河野ビル3F
コンビニampmの3F
とまで 浜西ビル5F
60通りの入口 ロッテリアの3F

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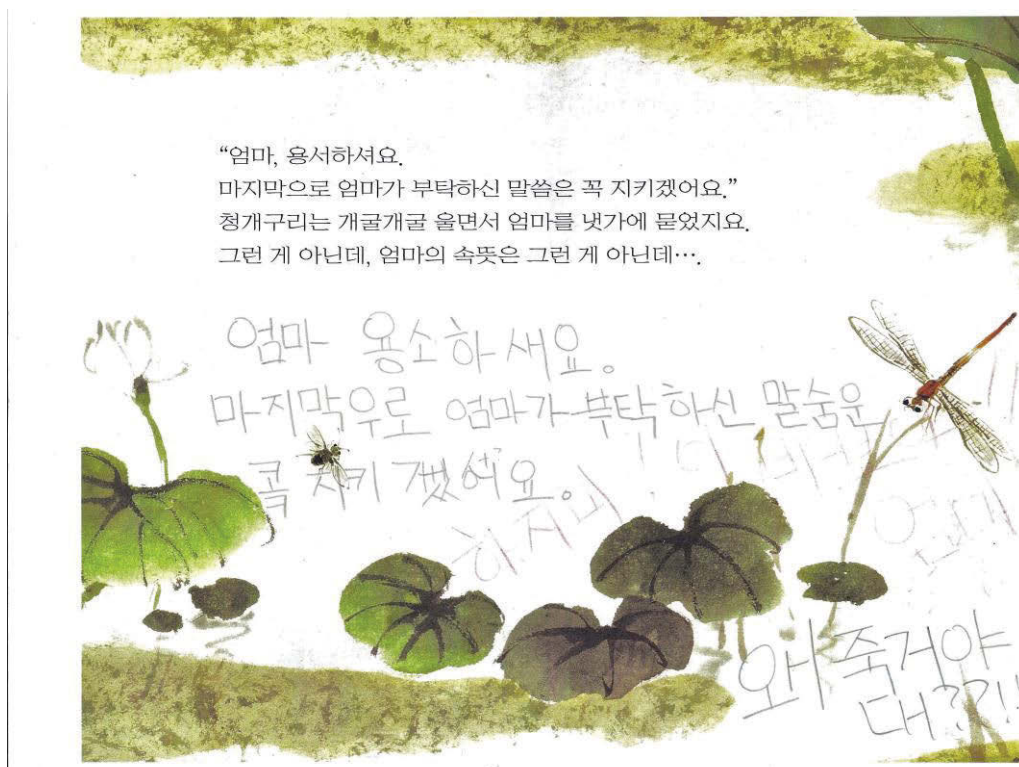
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※給付には一定の条件があります。

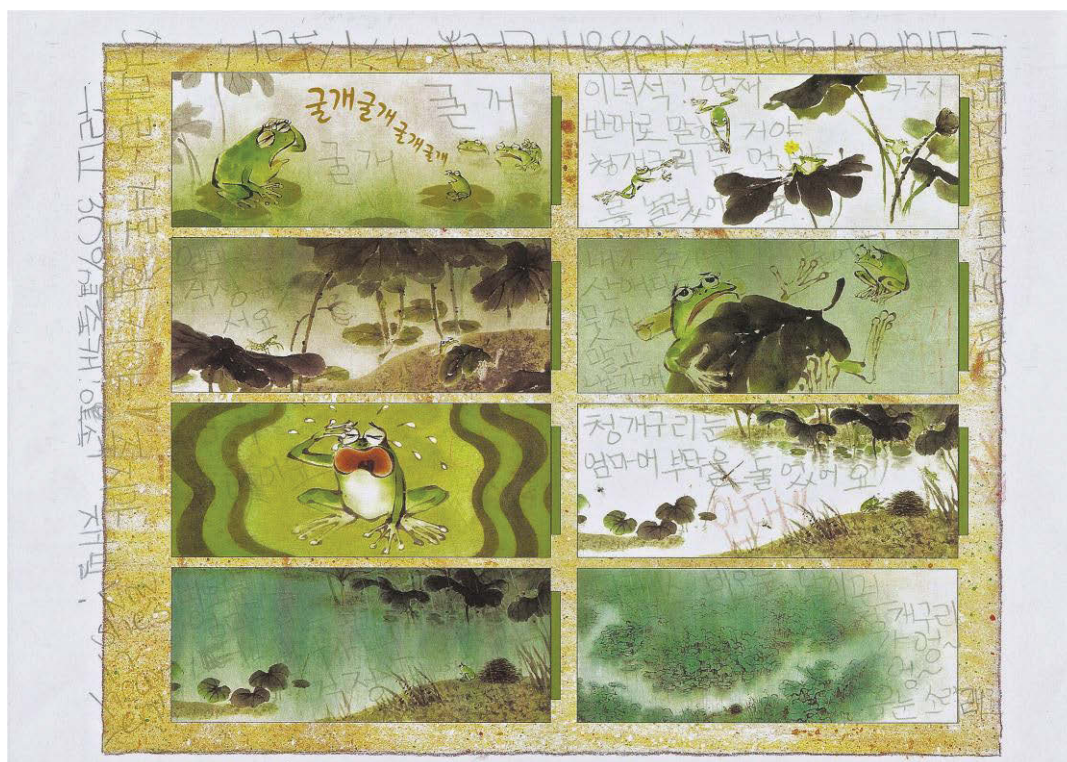
Pic. 5.12. School advertisement in Tokyo JR Line trains. Tokyo (2006).

Chapter 6

Giving an Account of Oneself



Pic. 6.1. This is a page from a Korean folktale book called *The Tree Frog* [청개구리] or otherwise known as *The Disobedient Frog* in English. The story is about why frogs croak when it rains. A baby tree frog constantly disobeys his mother until her death. Knowing he will do the opposite of what she asks, she tells him to bury her by the riverside when she dies. When she dies, he regrets his ways and decides for once to do as she requested. Whenever it rained, for fear she would be swept away, he held onto her grave and cried out for her. *My scribbles on the page:* (in Korean) Don't do it! You stupid!! Mom [two crying faces]! Why do you have to die??!! [하지마!! 이바보야!! 엄마 왜 죽거야대??!]. New York, (circa 1986).



Pic. 6.2. This is one of the pages of the wordless section of the book. My mother used to read me this type of book with wordless pages when I was a young child as I started to learn *hangeul* [the Korean alphabet]. She would read the story and I would write what I heard. We had many of these Korean storybooks but my mother only saved this one because, as she now says, she was touched by the comments I made on my own on the margins of the page. [For the reader's reference: when I was child I had some idea that I would give 30% of my salary when I became an adult to my mother so that she wouldn't have to worry about money in her old age.] *From right to top to the left margins of the page:* (in Korean) "Mom, don't die! I'll listen to you from now on! I'm sorry mom. I love you! Live with me! I'm going to marry you! And I promise I'll give you 30% of my salary! Promise. Don't die. Please! (in English referring back to the story when the mother frog dies) Now she's in heaven!" [엄마 죽지마! 말잘들개! 미안해 엄마 사랑해! 나랑 가치살라! 엄마랑 겨론할거야! 구리고 30% 줄개! 약속. 죽지마 재발!] *New York, (circa 1986).*

Introduction

From the disorderly handwritings and drawings to the straightforwardness of expressions, one instantly detects a rawness of emotions in childhood writings, with none of the heavy and complex layers of life experiences adults carry around. However, these writings are anything but simple; embedded in these texts are worldviews, ideas about truth, morality, redemption, reason, knowledge, and so on. They carry culturally constructed “grand narratives” that convey feelings of fear, worry, anxiety, pain and suffering which are preventable if we are or become “good” and do what is “right”. Though this type of moralistic storyline grows more complex throughout our growth, the traces of childhood “folktale” psychologies, as Bruner (2004) prefers to call them, stubbornly linger in the many accounts we give of ourselves throughout our lives. Such lingering vestiges become visible if we concentrate both on what is being said as well as how it is being said.

In this chapter, what I am interested in is the importance of developing a “critical eye/I” in telling and listening to our own and others’ stories about lives, selves and identities. To be more precise, it is not “stories” but the act of “giving an account of oneself” that I wish to highlight. I have already discussed the major difference between story and accounts in Chapter 2. In the context of this study, I view stories as how we make sense of our lives with accounts as narratives that are strung together either consciously or unconsciously, with the intention of justifying our position and persuading others to see things from our perspective. They need not necessarily be explanations in response to wrongdoings, as is often the case in narratives of accountability, but nonetheless “accounts” hold an air of justification and explanation. There are three published statements written by authors of multilingual backgrounds that have, throughout the duration of my study, stayed close to my writing because they resonate deeply with my own experiences, feelings and bodily reflexes. The themes include the notion that people are different in different languages, the impossibility of being who one wants to be in different languages, and the feeling of being “caught out” in what some multilinguals may regard as their “heritage” language. As much as they have resonated with my own experiences, I have also come to question the ideas that lie behind the stories, attitudes and tones represented through the writing. In illustrating and discussing these elements, I will offer my own suggestions for a different kind of storyline that multilingual stories can work towards.

Two of these texts are taken from Kramersch's (2009) book *The Multilingual Subject*; one is in the form of a testimony by a Persian and English-speaking participant in one of Kramersch's seminars, and the other is a poem by one of Kramersch's university students who is a speaker of Korean and English. The third extract is an excerpt from the non-fiction book *Polite Lies: a woman caught between cultures* by academic and novelist Kyoko Mori (1997). Mori is a speaker of Japanese and English. All of these authors currently reside in the United States. These are not texts that the authors have specified as accounts in the way to which I have referred to them here; however, each of them embodies a sense of justification of their "split selves", suffering of some sort, and of being "caught between" different worlds. Until now, I have only considered their statements separately, but putting their experiences together here makes me question: are multilingual lives really split and suffering in their in-betweenness? As I pointed out quoting Blommaert and Varis (2011), "people are not at all 'confused' or 'ambivalent' about their choices, nor appear to be 'caught between' different cultures or 'contradict themselves' when speaking about different topics" (p. 3). Are there other ways we can think about the splits and our in-betweenness? I keep these questions in mind as I cross-reference the experiences of Mori and the two students with my own, and with my understandings of the literature in this area.

The "split subject"

1. A testimony by a female teacher educator on intercultural communication who is a speaker of Persian and English based in the United States.

Over the course of five days, tears streamed down my face for reasons outside of my consciousness. My back went into spasms several times a day although I had not had any back problems to date. One of the course participants was a young Swedish professional married to an American living in the Midwestern part of the US. She said to us "My sister is coming to visit this summer, so I guess I will have to get back into my Swedish self to prepare for this." She was clearly very aware of this multidimensional aspect of her identity, both linguistically and culturally. I then asked myself "Do you have a Persian self?" In spite of using Persian on a daily basis as a language of communication in my home (English is my first language) since 1979, raising a bilingual child, and teaching courses routinely on

intercultural communication for language educators, it had never occurred to me to consider that I might have a “Persian self”. When I shared this anecdote with several Persian colleagues who teach in the social sciences and/or education areas, they laughed and said “You do too. We see you switch all the time. You speak much more loudly in Persian than in English”. When I thought about their comments, I realized they were right and the tears I was shedding along with the pain in my lower back were somatic connections to identity issues I had not begun to resolve. Am I a different person when I speak Persian? Absolutely. Would I have answered this question affirmatively five years ago? Absolutely not (Kramsch, 2009, p. 1).

My interest in this testimony is on the comments about the ability to “go back into” a certain linguistic or cultural self and the absolute affirmation that one is able to be a “different person” when speaking in another language. On the one hand, we might argue that such comments are not to be taken literally and are only used metaphorically to describe what it feels like to switch in and out of different languages, but if we follow the argument of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that our metaphorical concepts structure the way we think, what we experience, what we do every day, and how we relate to others, we cannot take a nonchalant view of the central role these metaphorical concepts play in shaping how we recognize our identities and realities. In the commentary that follows this testimony, Kramsch has interpreted the participant’s emotional upheaval by stating “it is the sudden realization that by knowing another language, she has access to another reality, and that the world in English is not the only reality possible. Her everyday world acquires a different meaning by being named differently. Indeed, the very sense of who she is can be very different in English and in Persian” (p. 2). However, there is a difference in saying one *is* a different person and saying that “the very sense of who [one] is can be very different” and if we probe the explanation that “knowing another language” causes one to feel different more deeply, we can uncover important ideas that might make a significant difference in the way we think we can perform in different languages.

I cannot know what the somatic connections are for this speaker in relation to how her tears and back spasms are related to resolving identity issues that relate to Persian and English, but I am willing to go along with the idea that all individuals have a perception of language that triggers certain feelings in the body in a unique way. In my

own case, when I am near a Korean speaker, I not only feel dispossessed of my ability to speak Korean but I find myself acting in ways I myself do not understand. My body clams up, making me behave in all kinds of introverted ways that could possibly be seen as strange and deceitful to the people around me. I briefly mentioned this in Chapter 5, but one explanation might be offered by Blommaert and Varis' (2011) view that individual life projects are made up of a complex combination of *micro-hegemonies* or *micro-hegemonized niches* learned from different segments, registers, genres, speaking positions and viewpoints of life. In other words, we learn or become accustomed to a certain way of speaking, behaving and feeling according to the particular practices and surroundings in which we were involved while operating in a specific language. We carry these memories, knowledge and feelings throughout our growth and while they do and can change, with very little effort we find ourselves performing what we know or have become used to. From this viewpoint, we can see that the idea of a different self is not necessarily based on views of language and culture but is more about the particular relationships we have experienced in a particular language. Our experiences are shaped by specific memories of a language that are located in discrete times, spaces, and practices, conducted with particular individuals. Thus, one's *sense* of oneself speaking in a particular language can indeed be different.

From a different angle, in claiming that one is a different person in a different language, we run the risk of implying that individuals can only operate within an essentialist framework, speaking and behaving in ways that comply with stereotypical or traditional characteristics upheld by people who speak that language in its native nation-state (i.e. the "homeland" of the language). Can one speak as loudly in English as one does in Persian? Is it physically and linguistically possible to be whoever one thinks one is in English when speaking Swedish? Whether it is possible seems to be a matter of how we understand our personal histories, language and identity, our knowledge of other discourses, and the extent of our desire or willingness to think differently. Language and culture do play a role in how we think about who individuals can be and what they can do, but there are other more intricate details to consider in such claims.

Reading my own childhood writings in the page margins in pics 6.1 and 6.2, I sense the uninhibited frame of mind I had in using Korean as a child growing up in New York. There is no sense of worrying about spelling or grammatical errors, or where spaces need to go after certain words and particles; no concern about which words to

use or whether words need to be used correctly. There is urgency in making my emotions, desires and thoughts visible to my mother or myself. The “I”, the thinking and feeling self’s intentions and motivations are the priority here, and whichever language I have available suffices to express my feelings. It is unlikely that using Korean in such a scenario is an indication of feeling that I had to switch to a Korean self while engaging in thoughts about my Korean mother, nor do I think the use of a particular language in moments where the need to express oneself in language is strong is a “choice” one makes. Which language to speak is perhaps of later concern, rather, the larger concern at the time is how to express one’s message clearly depending on the interlocutor, while drawing on all the linguistic resources available in one’s multilingual repertoire.

Ultimately, what the “different person in a different language” view tells us in terms of identity is that we are predisposed to do certain things, or be a certain way in certain codes, without taking into account the increasingly multifaceted, changing and playful ways individuals use language. Such limitations, as I understand them not only in my own experience but also in the works of others who operate within such a view, bring about strong feelings of living painfully, helplessly and in a state of frustration when negotiating the various languages in their linguistic repertoire, as we will see in the next extract. The danger here is that a certain kind of unproductive assumption can become present and “fixed” in the ways speakers think about different semiotic worlds.

2. An excerpt by Kyoko Mori, a Japanese-American novelist and professor of creative writing in her book *Polite lies: on being a woman caught between cultures* (1997).

I don't like to go to Japan because I find it exhausting to speak Japanese all day, every day. What I am afraid of is the language, not the place. Even in Green Bay, when someone insists on speaking to me in Japanese, I clam up after a few words of general greetings, unable to go on ... Talking seems especially futile when I have to address a man in Japanese. Every word I say forces me to be elaborately polite, indirect, submissive, and unassertive. There is no way I can sound intelligent, clearheaded, or decisive. But if I did not speak a “proper” feminine language, I would sound stupid in another way – like someone who is uneducated, insensitive, and rude, and therefore cannot be taken seriously. I never speak Japanese with the Japanese man

who teaches physics at the college where I teach English. We are colleagues, meant to be equals. The language I use should not automatically define me as second best (Mori, 1997, pp. 10-12).

What resonates strongly with Mori's account and my own dilemma in "clamming up" in Korean is the reserved ways in which we have learned to speak to certain people in certain languages. In re-visiting and examining the kinds of discourse I was exposed to during my formative years living in Korean communities and taking part in Korean cultural practices, I realized as Mori points out in her ideas of women speaking in Japanese, how I had come to think that women speaking in Korean had to speak in "elaborately polite, proper feminine language being indirect, submissive, and unassertive", particularly in interaction with Korean men. Again, these relate to the micro-hegemonies I have spoken of earlier that have been picked up from different stages and places in our lives. In this case, the political implications about what women can or cannot do are particularly striking. Mori's own tumultuous family history, particularly in relation to her parents and her departure from Japan at the age of twenty for the United States, with very short and limited visits thereafter to Japan and the rise of her professional career in English, makes it understandable that her two worlds signify very different possibilities for her. She has made up her mind about Japanese - that she is "unable to go on", it is "futile" to talk, there is "no way" to sound intelligent, and that she "never" speaks Japanese to her Japanese colleague. Then again, we might ask: is there really "no way" to speak intelligently, clearheadedly, and decisively without sounding stupid, uneducated, insensitive, and rude in Japanese as a woman, or is it that Mori has not learned the skills to speak in these ways? Mori predominantly sees her frustration as being with the formal structure of the Japanese language and the set gender roles in Japanese society, but as I came to understand in my own study, it is not so much about the norms of language and gender in certain societies but that memories of norms that were prevalent many decades previously have a strong hold, so that when I interact in Korean, my body remembers and immediately responds and reacts. These reactions are still ongoing for me, but the more recent awareness of the historical construction of the reaction, and the political and ethical implications of blaming "language" or others, allows me to feel and speak differently about those bodily reactions in those moments of dispossession.

Memories also need further scrutiny. Before this study, I have by default told others that I was not brought up to express emotions such as “love” to my parents in Korean, that statements such as *saranghae* [I love you] in Korean were strange and never uttered to family members, that Korean is not that kind of language. Coming back to pics. 6.1 and 6.2, what I learn now from reflecting on artifacts from my past is that making such emotional statements and expressing deep emotions were not only present but also full of intense desires, will and affection (e.g., “Mom, don’t die! I’ll listen to you from now on! I’m sorry mom. I love you! Live with me! I’m going to marry you! And I promise I’ll give you 30% of my salary! Promise. Don’t die. Please!” [엄마 죽지마! 말잘들개! 미안해 엄마 사랑해! 나랑 가치살라! 엄마랑 겨론할거야!구리고 30% 줄캐!약속. 죽지마 재발!])). Memories are not always as we remember them, thus how we talk about them needs to be reflected on and voiced cautiously.

Some may suggest that in Mori’s case, a “return to origins” or to the homeland to experience first hand the changes in that country could be helpful in changing her mind about how women contemporarily speak. That is not what I am suggesting here, however; there are many ways we can utilize technology, media and local communities to experience the multicultural realities of those worlds. What is necessary is a recognition or awareness that our understandings are derived from very particular practices, people, times and spaces and thus are always unique and partial. For affluent individuals of multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds, who live relatively privileged lives, the claim that a particular language is problematic in being who one desires to be can be read as a justification or excuse for one’s own inability and unwillingness to find ways of thinking differently. That Mori’s voice can be heard publicly in English demonstrates that she is not “stuck” but that she has an outlet not only to speak, but to speak with a strong, independent voice. In the long run, she is left to value or compromise one language over another: “I am willing to compromise my proficiency in Japanese so that I can continue to think the thoughts I have come to value in English” (p. 19).

There are strong feelings Mori explicates here – feelings of exhaustion, fear, and being forced to behave in certain ways. It is understandable that when one cannot find a way out of one’s discomfort, there is frustration and anger at being caught between

worlds where there is conflict as to how to express oneself. However, as pointed out in Chapter 5, this can be thought through by first coming to the understanding that multiple repertoires are not chaotic, which goes back to the notion of micro-hegemonies; the micro-hegemonies are composed of “different niches of ordered behavior and discourses about behavior” (Blommaert and Varis, 2011, p. 3). There is, in a sense, nothing strange about what we can or cannot do, who we desire or desire not to be in different niches and circles of life. In other words, we do not have to view what we are not recognised as or what we cannot do as a form of lack or contradictory way of living out our identities. It is also helpful to remember here that even amongst native speakers of one language, there are always those who have more or less linguistic capital that elevates speakers in unequal positions of power. It is our epistemological understanding of “language” that we need to criticize, not those who speak the language. My conclusion from Blommaert and Varis’ view on micro-hegemonies is that there is no need to think that we are caught between since the complexly ordered life we lead is as “normal” as any other way of life.

The perseverance of the “split subject caught between two worlds” theme forms a kind of exoticism about multilingual life that perpetuates late twentieth century themes of displacement and liberation and constitutes a lingering vestige of essentialist thinking that nevertheless infiltrates modern accounts that seek to break categorical ways of thinking. The next account is written in the form of a poem, and I will analyze the way in which the author’s intentions seem focused on breaking categorical ways of thinking but nevertheless remain essentially fixed and “monologic”.

3. A poem by Valerie, a US born 19-year old Korean-American college student whose first language is Korean. She started learning English when she was five (Kramsch, 2009, pp. 90-91).

To belong

In what category do I fit?

Name. Valerie.

DOB. 11/05/83

Korean American

Am I Korean American?

South Korea. The crowded streets filled with bustling people.

They all pass by...

An elderly *halmuni* [grandmother] from the local *yakgook* [pharmacy] with medication for her ailing back

An *ahghushi* [middle-aged man] in business garb setting off a hurried bus

A girl clothed in a *che-ik bok* [a school uniform] with her *mulrhi dae-ed* [braided hair]

I am a cactus. Water. Need water

Q: Mool jool soo ees suhyo? [Can you give me some water?]

Here is fertile ground – the homeland

A: It can make me whole

Soak in the culture

Immerse yourself with Koreans, with the language, the environment

But I begin to drown...

Drown...

Drown...

At the bottom of the pool awaits a woman.

“Ah you prum [from] Ah-meh-ri-ca?”

I am caught. Discovered.

California. The streets are wide. Maybe here I will feel like I *belong*.

They all saunter by...

A woman so involved in putting on her eyeliner that she runs into me

An angry teen on the phone screaming in Spanish

A black boy running, dribbling a basketball gracefully

...am I at home here?

Yes I was born in the U.S.

Yes, I speak the language without an accent.

So why do you stare? What more do you want?

Do you want me to dye my hair, bleach my skin, forget my history...

merely to “assimilate”?

You're Korean?

Yep.

Jin jah? [Really?] I thought you were Chinese...or Japanese.

Nope. I'm Korean. American. Korean American. Actually...

My name is Val.

I am Val. Valerie. Hyunna.

A daughter, sister, granddaughter, and friend

A keun ddal [eldest daughter], *unni* [sister], *sohn nyuh saekki* [grand daughter], and *chin goo* [friend]

A girl who loves and is loved

Sarang eul joogo battgo [You give your love and then you receive love]

No category necessary

The context in which Valerie's poem was produced or its purpose (i.e. whether this poem was produced as an assignment or from Kramersch's in-class activity) is unknown to readers, but Kramersch's interpretation of Valerie's account is centered on the notion of "belonging". Kramersch states that

Valerie found a way out of her dilemma not by sidestepping, but by resignifying the dilemma itself, that is, by reformulating the question...: "Where do I belong?" into "How do I belong?" What does it mean to be situated in particular places, what does it mean to belong, and what different ways (or modalities) of belonging are possible in the contemporary milieu? (p. 93).

What caught my attention most in relation to Valerie's poem was her description of drowning in Korean, of being "caught" and "discovered", as these feelings seemed to capture precisely how I experience my moments of speaking Korean to anyone who is not a family member. However, something about Valerie's tone and statements made me think harder about the feelings she expressed, the direction of her writing and how she had chosen to represent herself.

Valerie's positioning of herself as Korean American does not align her with either Korea or America. Both places are inadequate for her sense of belonging, as she

discovers through her self-dialog. In South Korea, Valerie's voice seems quieter, evoking a sense of suffocation and fear of being "caught out" by "native speakers" perhaps because she feels pressure to speak "perfect" Korean, as native speakers might expect. In California, the dialog she produces with an imaginary Other is of a more assertive voice than the one she portrays in relation to Koreans in South Korea and is complexly intertwined with feelings of being positioned as a second rate citizen for her appearance. There is a "coming out" of her repressed thoughts, "Yes, I was born in the U.S. Yes, I speak the language without an accent", and a tone of "talking back" from being scolded, "So why do you stare? What more do you want?" Back in her own space in the last stanza, where it is not so clear who her interlocutor is, her voice becomes the assertive decision maker, "I am Val. Valerie..." who has found the solution to her sense of belonging. There is a finality to her understanding that there is "no category necessary" in her search for identity and belonging. It is not so much the mixture of voices that needs to be highlighted in this section (though I will have something to say about this later), nor is it her ultimate choice to view her identity or sense of belonging in a specific way. Rather, it is the question of the assumptions about Others that underlie our statements and the tone we wish to set in what we wish to communicate about our multilingual identities to others.

In asking the questions "[d]o you want me to dye my hair, bleach my skin, forget my history... merely to 'assimilate'?" or "*Jin jah?*" [Really?] I thought you were Chinese...or Japanese", the reader can assume that Valerie's experiences in the United States perpetuate the idea that it is not possible to be recognized as "American" without looking a particular way and holding the mainstream beliefs of the majority. Furthermore, through her questions, American society in general is portrayed as one that places anyone of Asian experience into an homogeneous group. While her assertive stance shines through, it seems to be at the expense of portraying others in an unfavorable light. The statement "I'm Korean. American. Korean American", while simultaneously making a case for her individuality, i.e. "a daughter, sister, granddaughter, and friend, a girl who loves and is loved" interests me in two ways. The desire to draw attention to her roles can be read as a tactic to break categorical boxes, as she states "no category [is] necessary". However, in stating "I'm Korean. American. Korean American", there is still reliance on these labels. In other words, the categories are still useful in the identification of her mixed identity. In both Busch's (2012) study

analyzing the text of an individual of multilingual background as well as Kramsch's (2012) own analysis of researchers' interpretations on the multilingual informants of their studies, categories cannot be simply "done away" with but are dealt with in complex ways that both disorientate and liberate individuals. The categories Valerie enlists here also point again to the notion of micro-hegemonies, that what forms us are the various roles that we simultaneously juggle at different stages of our lives. Although I share the feelings and understandings represented in Valerie's poem, what immediately occurs to me at this stage of my study is the authoritative and finalizing stance of the last stanza. Somehow, her authoritative voice distances me from her in our dilemma or struggle on identity.

In some ways, Valerie's questions, such as "Maybe here I will feel like I belong", "...am I at home here?" are questions that help her to reflect, but they are also somewhat predictable and "closed", precipitating a "yes" or "no" answer. Thinking back to Ang's (2003) own account on living in-between, Ang speaks of a necessary discomfort in speaking from a "suspended in-between" place. She states:

I would describe myself as suspended in-between: neither truly Western nor authentically Asian; embedded in the West yet always partially disengaged from it; disembedded from Asia yet somehow enduringly attached to it emotionally. I wish to hold onto this hybrid in-betweenness not because it is a comfortable position to be in, but because its very ambivalence is a source of cultural permeability and vulnerability that is a necessary condition for living together in difference" (pp. 8-9).

Whether one sees oneself as caught between or in-between, what seems to be lacking in all of the accounts I have illustrated here is precisely this sense of ambivalence. Writing or giving one's account seems to be a tool for coming to "see the light", making up one's mind, finding an answer, fixing what needs repairing, even overcoming bad bodily pain. Authors do need to take positions in terms of their views (even not taking a position is to take a position), but we can think about holding a position in ways that demonstrate a "*stabilised for now*" (Luke, 2009, p. 490) reality, that is, we come to know something through our examinations, investigations, and reflections, but what we come to know and state as our position is only tentative, partial, contingent and open to multiple interpretations and possibilities. This partial knowing is in line with a

postmodernist position that “allow[s] us to know ‘something’ without claiming to know everything. Having a partial, local, and historical knowledge is still knowing” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 961).

In Butler’s (2005) view, this partiality that we may be haunted by is unavoidable in part because all accounts “arrive belatedly, missing some of the constitutive beginnings and the preconditions of the life it seeks to narrate” (p. 39). One cannot know all the events that have taken place before one’s story, or how one emerged in a certain way and was left to “recuperate, reconstruct, fictionalize and fabulate” (p. 40) those origins, which are always undergoing revision in one’s effort at narrative reconstruction. Butler (2005) does not seek to devise a definitive story but uses that partiality as a resource for ethics, a way of binding herself more deeply to language and to her interlocutor in new ways. Being more deeply bound to language, as I understand it in my work, is about thinking, reading, listening and speaking carefully about the language we use to talk about the limits of our knowing and its capacities. Being more deeply bound to others is about realizing that not being able to give a full, definitive account of oneself is not an ethical failure but a way of knowing that I also cannot fully know others, nor should I expect them to be able to know and give a full account of themselves to me. It also means that I cannot know myself without others, but I can know something about myself through something the other wants to know from me. While Valerie is able to decide for herself who she sees herself as, the definitiveness of her position doesn’t encourage readers to approach her text with feedback, questions, conversation and negotiation for the multiple ways in which she can experience her linguistic identity. As Kramsch (2012) also notes in an article pushing for a postmodernist approach to understanding multilingual experiences and identities, “doing away with categories is not the same as questioning their conditions of possibility” (p. 499). It is the questioning – whose discourses and interests are present in the experience/text, what the historical, social, and political conditions are that shape the text, the exploration of the very categories that make up certain ideas – that needs to be dealt with.

What Ang also brings to light in her statement is an in-betweenness that does not have the same connotation as our commonly understood notion of people “caught between” with great difficulty, pain, or suffering. Her account resonates with what Luke (2009) sees as useful in the kinds of identity narratives we can begin to build, “where

one learns to live within the interstices and gaps of images, without a perpetual feeling of absence, loss, or lack -- the absence loss or lack presupposed in assimilationist, psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic analyses of difference” (p. 490). Luke suggests that narratives on blending and hybridity that seek to “represent and describe the emergence of new cultural transformations, texts and identities” can have a playful and celebratory tone, such as that of Filipina-American writer Hagedorn (1990) in her fictional story *Dogeaters* “where identity, sexuality, and politics are stitched together from popular cultural images, which are debated, mocked, critiqued, played with – without the will towards the fixity, the certainty of assumption of singular, centred identity” (Luke, 2009, p. 490). In bringing a more playful and celebratory tone, we must also take care to not fall into a different trap of “happy hybridity” where “there is little tension, conflict or contradiction involved in this understanding of inter- and/or cross-cultural encounters” (Lo, 2000, p. 153).

The identity, or “faces” of multilingual authors who write about their linguistic identities are no longer easily traceable or clear. Foucault states in his critical account of himself, “do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same. More than one person, doubtless like me, writes in order to have no face” (cited in Miller, 1993, p. 19). The kinds of accounts I have in mind are not easily categorizable into pre-established genres nor can readers easily identify where the author’s linguistic and cultural allegiances lie (if they lie anywhere at all). The face of the author is blurred as s/he writes at the intersection of languages, cultures and identities where a bricolage, a montage, a collage of things is put together. These accounts speak of struggles but are not angry, painful or frustrated. They capture oddities through the lens of mundaneness. The self is held partially accountable without having to victimize, berate, confess, blame, nor exoticize the Self and Other. There is nostalgia for times past, longing for certain ideological ideas of language and culture, but the authors’ understandings are not guided by determinate and essentialist beliefs. There are structures but they are destabilized and decentered. Authors are assertive, independent and strong-minded without being all-knowing and definitive. They carry an inviting tone because they do not preach and finalize. Such accounts resonate with Bakhtin’s ideas on “polyphonic” texts, to which I now turn.

Polyphonic texts

Bakhtin's (1984) ideas around polyphony mainly arose in reference to his examinations of the multiple independent voices of characters in Dostoevsky's novels where "a hero appears whose voice...is just as fully weighted as the author's voice", sounding as if it were, "alongside the author's word and in a special way combines both with it and with the full and equally valid voices of the characters" (p. 7). Firstly, by "voices" he is referring to the realities, value systems, and beliefs of the characters, who hold their own ideas and sense of the world. He was commending Dostoevsky's ability to allow each character's voice to shine without the imposition of his own ideals, views, and attitudes as the author of his characters. To be sure, the author creates the characters, but as the characters begin to take shape in the novel, not even the author can predict how they will speak and react. It is similar to being able to inhabit someone else's consciousness. The voices of these different characters are not merged into a single perspective or standpoint and each has equal power to shock and subvert the reader. There should necessarily be contradiction, argument, and provocation when these voices come into contact and collide with conflict. Where author and character merge is not considered polyphonic, but rather the imposition by Dostoevsky of his own singular reality of the world on his characters. When two voices joined together in dialogue, he saw the possibility of changing both of them, giving rise to new insights and new dialogues.

What lies behind Bakhtin's advocacy of polyphonic ways of thinking was a desire to replace what he saw as "monologic" (i.e. only one way of viewing reality, truth, or world view) approaches to culture with one that requires "a plurality of irreducible consciousnesses" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 251). To do this, Bakhtin believed that authors need to change the nature of the structures that contain their current monologic views. Authors need to think differently about the "grand narratives" they are accustomed to and instead focus on creating a "great dialogue" with many disparate points of view. It is only then that authors and readers can come to recognize and appreciate the "different kind of order" that a polyphonic world portrays. Bakhtin (1984) states that, "we must renounce our monologic habits so that we might come to feel at home in the new artistic sphere which Dostoevsky discovered, so that we might

orient ourselves in that incomparably more complex *artistic model of the world* which he created” (p. 272).

We can apply Bakhtin’s ideas on polyphony to the ways in which we make sense of our multivocal lives, or use them as a tool to think differently about our experiences in ways that produce productive and ethical lives. In all three of these earlier accounts, the authors end with a final stance or solution, which is of course typical of our understandings of how stories, narratives or accounts are related. However in polyphonic texts, Bakhtin would say there is nothing lacking or failing in an author who does not seek a resolution or make a single proposition, or does not conclude with one idea or value. A multivocal author is more active, and the nervousness and tension of the voices only show the author’s constant and energetic participation busily trying to incorporate and express different points of view and kinds of truth. There is no sense of despair in the absence of finding solutions. On the contrary, what is seen as regretful is when the conversations need to come to a close. As Bakhtin (1984) states “the end of a novel signified for Dostoevsky the fall of a new Tower of Babel” (p. 39). In returning to the accounts I have examined above, our accounts need not end up “absolutely” or “absolutely not” anything, nor do we need to make firm decisions that “no category [is] necessary” or state the obvious, that the “language [we] use should not automatically define [us] as second best”. I have, in the countless rewritings of my own drafts of my narratives here, also been subconsciously led to these conclusions. Here, I am reminded of how I learned how to write diary entries at school (pic. 4.1) where in a similar manner, the template asks writers to start with a description of the day, then to describe the climax (the highlight of the day) and to close with a resolution that states “what one would do differently if one could”. We understand our lives by making sense of them through others’ structures.

In my own work, using the idea of being an author giving an account of my different voices was helpful in positioning myself as the narrator living amongst the different voices that I carry. I cannot predict the words or thoughts of those voices before I actually come into dialogue with them. My work as the narrator is not to judge or impose my ideas as the narrator of my distinct voices, to mold and shape them but to think about the historical make-up of their personalities, to be willing to listen to them, to actively try to understand them, and to engage in the conversations from time to time

myself using my outsider position to engage them in what I hope is/was/has turned out to be a genuine open-ended dialogue. Done successfully, such acts are, as Bakhtin (1984) noted, where “everything essential is dissolved in dialogue, positioned face to face” (p. 299). In my own data, I began to draw out this plurality of voices, ones that I often had to trace all the way back to my childhood life in America, various Korean communities and specific practices, such as watching Korean dramas that were particular to those periods in time and space, to get a feel of what those voices were. Although I could feel their individual “tastes” and “timbres” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 434), ultimately they exist together, on the same page, sometimes as layers in the same sentence (see data in Chapter 5, fig. 5.5, line 9). The “thickness” of a voice, a voice that is infused by Japanese words, Korean proverbs and expressions in English, shows us that the language of multilingual users does not always have demarcated lines where users switch in and out of different languages and different worlds. Each language adds to the other, “awakening new and independent words” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345) in ways I cannot predict myself. From this perspective, the self is clearly not another person when speaking in another language; rather, the self [or body] is a complex entanglement of different voices.

We have a particular life history with languages that make us feel a certain way, but there can be multiple explanations and possibilities of why and how they appear on our bodies. Ultimately, once we take the position that we are separate people, language does not function as a useful resource but becomes one that tells us that we can only be this or that in a particular language and that we are likely to feel pain and stress in transitioning from one linguistic and cultural world to another. Kramsch (2012) points out in her analysis of researchers’ comments on multilingual statements that we need to be cautious of the kinds of questions we (as researchers) are asking when we interpret the struggles and positions that multilinguals attest to in our pursuit to open up their realities to different and multiple possibilities. My own reflections on this topic and through this study have taught me that we also need to find ways of involving multilingual authors themselves in the process of writing their perspectives and lives with a knowledge of politics and ethics in mind.

Conclusion

No story is simply “told”; it is always told within a specific set of conditions and fused by a practice of a certain kind of telling. In autobiographical accounts, accounts are shaped by questions such as “who is asking this of me? What do they expect? In what language will my answer satisfy? What are the consequences of telling and of not telling the truth about myself to this interlocutor?” (Butler, 2005, p. 124). To speak of ourselves to others can be a harrowing act that one never feels one can get “right” or do justice to. There is vulnerability, uncertainty and fear of attack by those we do not yet know. However, as Butler states “there may well be a desire to know and understand that is not fueled by the desire to punish, and a desire to explain and narrate that is not prompted by a terror of punishment” (p.11). In addition, in *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault explains that it was a certain type of curiosity that motivated him to examine the concept of pleasure. He states, “it was curiosity...not the curiosity that seeks to assimilate what it is proper for one to know, but that which enables one to get free of oneself” (1985, p. 192). “Curiosity” in this sense does not hold a pejorative or celebratory tone; it is a spirit of inquiry, of being inquisitive in order to cultivate the self through the recognition of possibilities for other and multiple simultaneous ways of life.

In Bakhtin’s view, a truly dialogic work is immensely difficult in novels because without a deep understanding of what a multi-voiced world looks like, authors inevitably fall back on the ruse of monologic habits of thinking. Every individual, I believe, lives a multivocal (or polyphonic) life, but not all of us yet know what that means for ourselves and for others and how to write our lives in such ways. For individuals who operate with more than one language, coming to understand what the extra semiotic resources they can draw on can mean for their identities might be a confusing matter. In any case, if we hope for this polyphonic field of vision to become more visible to us, we need not only to learn the skills of intellectual analysis, reasoned thought and ongoing dialog but also to be able to demonstrate those skills contrapuntally with compassionate voices that genuinely seek to explore, desire to know, understand, explain, and narrate in an effort to grow. There will be no singular answers awaiting our explorations and too many elements we cannot account for in our conclusions, but I do not believe such factors render our attempts to give an account of ourselves an ethical failure or a waste of our time; quite the opposite, as Butler states,

we must recognize that ethics requires us to risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness, when what forms us diverges from what lies before us, when our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human. To be undone by another is a primary necessity, an anguish, to be sure, but also a chance – to be addressed, claimed, bound to what is not me, but also to be moved, to be prompted to act, to address myself elsewhere, and so to vacate the self-sufficient “I” as a kind of possession. If we speak and try to give an account from this place, we will not be irresponsible, or, if we are, we will surely be forgiven” (p. 136).

As I re-read my desperate warnings to the tree frog not to bury his mother near the river, the contemplations of death and my imaginations of a painful life in a world without my mother, I am reminded of how my mother used *The Tree Frog* as a default story whenever I was disobedient, stubborn or throwing temper tantrums. Even if only temporarily, it was powerful enough to make me be quiet and rethink my actions. The story “undid” me, provoking all kinds of feelings of anguish, despair, fear, pain and a sense of ethics in relation to others, i.e. what I needed to do to prevent bad things from happening to those I cared for, and what kind of life I should lead to avoid pain and trouble. It prompted me to act, to address myself, to vacate my more immediate world and step into a different space of self-reflection, consequences, and a revival of what was important in my life. I was willing to engage in those spaces, immersing myself fully into the position of the frog, imagining the grief and pain the frog would have to carry throughout its life. These were moments of “becoming human” and such moments are filled with the will to search for possibilities (e.g., marrying and giving thirty percent of my salary to my mother), to make things “work”, to keep things that are important to us alive.

The different languages and cultures that multilingual individuals inhabit are additional resources to help them see, think, feel and live more deeply. There are, to be sure, struggles and politics in shifting in and out of different semiotic worlds, but honesty, grace and beauty are also produced through the simultaneity and negotiations of those worlds. We need better multilingual accounts or, in the spirit of Bakhtin’s work, “multivocal/polyphonic texts”, and we need others to help us find new words. To do this, we need to make others interested in our lives so that they care to listen. As Pratt

(1991b) states, “this listening is one way of finding out how to get to the new place where we all can live and speak to each other for more than a fragile moment” (pp. 30-31). Others are an integral part of helping us tell our stories. When we cannot find a way of telling our story by ourselves, our story tells us.

Chapter 7

The Possibilities in Silence

Sydney (2007-2013)

Introduction

In this final chapter, I return to my starting point for this study, the concern for my increasing silence in situations where speaking Korean is involved. As a way into exploring this silence, I started by thinking about Ang's (2001) book *On not speaking Chinese*, where "not speaking" has to do with *not being able to* speak Chinese but being expected to because she "looks Chinese". Ang, a person of Chinese descent, who was born in Indonesia, raised in the Netherlands and now lives in Australia, uses her in-between position to consider the social and intellectual space of the "in-between". By reflecting on the mutual entanglement of Asia and the West, she argues for a theorizing of living "together-in-difference", that is, in "complicated entanglement of living hybridities", rather than "living-apart-together", which is generally how the concept of multiculturalism operates in many societies "maintain[ing] the boundaries between the diverse cultures it encompasses" (p. 16). Taking on her views but thinking more carefully about my own situation where I *am able to* speak Korean but do not, I wish to explore the many dimensions that constitute silence and how we might think differently about silence in language and identity studies where the literature is increasingly shifting towards a conceptualization of "a linguistics of xenoglossic becoming, transidiomatic mixing, and communicative recombinations" (Jacquemet, 2005, p. 274).

In thinking about the incidents and moments of silence in my current location in Sydney over the past few years, I have drawn on Schenke's (1991) work where she illustrates different types of silence within the context of differences in gender and race amongst ESL learners. Schenke, drawing on Walkerdine (1990), starts her "talking story" with certain democratic assumptions related to speaking, such as "speaking is presumed to be better than silence, that everyone speaking is better than a few speaking, that thoughts are better 'out than in', that silence is untransformative, passive, alienating and disempowering" (p. 49). Taking these assumptions as my starting points also, the incidents I describe here are about how different forms of silence have invited me to see

myself in multiple and unexpected ways. I draw on Pennycook's (2012) notion of "through others' eyes and thinking otherwise" (p. 38) to illustrate how moments of not knowing can also be moments of possibilities in which to seek new ways of thinking. In the Chapter Summary, I will draw on what I have learned through this analysis to discuss how critically reflecting on the condition of "being able to speak but not speaking Korean" has helped me to understand the possibilities in my silent multivocality.

Section 1: Silence in the Multivocal Classroom

One of my teaching responsibilities at a university in Sydney where I am currently an instructor is to visit graduate level students of TESOL who aim to become teachers of English. As a requirement, they are placed in English language schools in Sydney to practice teaching for a total of eighteen hours per semester. In their placements, they are assigned an experienced "coordinating teacher" currently working in the school whose main duty is to guide the student teacher in preparing lesson plans and provide feedback on their teaching for the duration of the placement. The purpose of my visit as a supervisor is to observe the student teachers on their last day of teaching for one hour, provide feedback and produce a final report.

In a visit in 2010, I had arranged to visit Paula, the student teacher, at a fairly well-established English language school located in Sydney's central business district. Having become used to being mistaken for a student, I am accustomed to the surprised look on the coordinating teacher's face when I introduce myself. It is customary for coordinating teachers (herein referred to as "CT") to meet and greet supervisors (my role) in the lobby of the school to direct us to the classroom. I was writing the name of the student and school on the formal report sheets (see pic. 7.1) provided by the university as I waited in the lobby when an apparently Anglo-Australian woman appeared before me and asked in what seemed a very energetic and bubbly voice:

CT: Are you Paula's supervisor from UTS?

J: Yes I am. My name is Julie.

CT: OH MY GOD. You look like a little B-A-B-Y! (covering her mouth with her hand laughing)

J: (thinking to myself, in Japanese: ショック) [!!!! “shocked!!!!”]

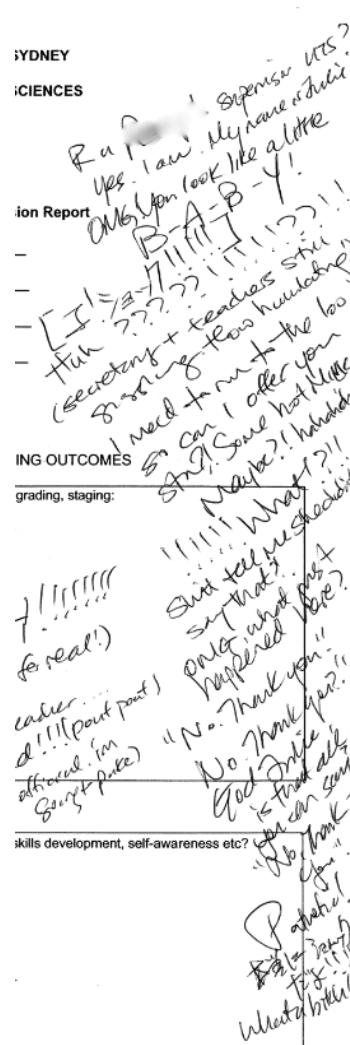
(Huh?????!!!!!! Looking at secretary and other Westerner teachers still giggling. How humiliating!)

CT: I need to run to the loo so can I offer you something?! Some hot MILK maybe?! Hahahahaha

J: (thinking to myself, !!!!!!! WHAT!?! Shit tell me she didn't say that?!

Oh my god, what just happened here?) “No. Thank you.” (No. Thank you?!!” God Julie is that all you can say “No, thank you.” Pathetic! in

Japanese: 本当にショックだよ) [“that was really shocking!!!”] (What a bitch!)



Pic. 7.1. Notes on interaction with Paula's CT, Sydney (2009). Note: I wrote this while waiting for CT to come back from the restroom. I wasn't writing this as a way of creating "data", but using writing as a way of avoiding making eye contact with those who had heard our encounter.]

Transcript:

CT: Are you Paula's supervisor from UTS?

J: Yes I am. My name is Julie.

CT: OH MY GOD. You look like a little B-A-B-Y! [covering her mouth with her hand laughing]

J: [thinking to myself, in Japanese: ショック!!!!!! “shocked!!!!!!” Huh?????!!!!!!]

Looking at secretary and other Westerner teachers still giggling. How humiliating!]

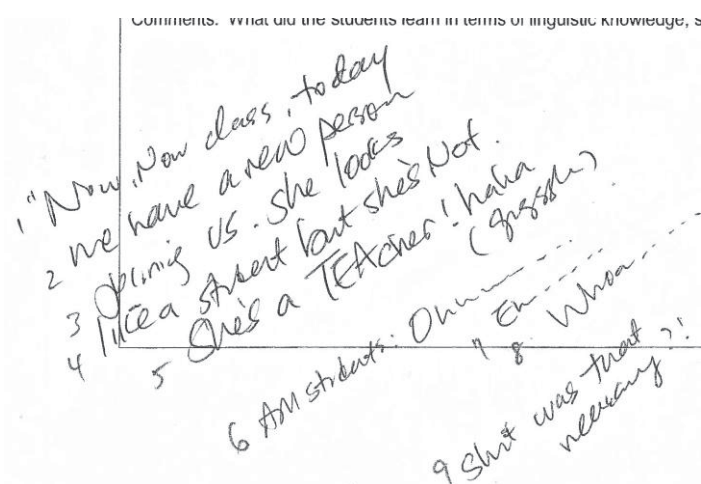
CT: I need to run to the loo so can I offer you something?! Some hot MILK maybe?! Hahahahaha

J: [thinking to myself, !!!!!!! WHAT!?! Shit tell me she didn't say that?! Oh my god, what just happened here? “No. Thank you.” No. Thank you?!!” God Julie is that all you can say “No, thank you.” Pathetic! (in Japanese: 本当にショックだよ) “that was really shocking!!!”) What a bitch!]

I was nowhere close to thinking of comeback lines. Had I heard her words correctly? “A little baby?” “Hot milk?” Her bubblyness and giggles were confusing to me: was it a joke, an insult, some kind of Australian humor I didn’t know about? Was it ignorance or personal lack of sensitivity? Could there have been the minutest possibility of it being a compliment, a form of flattery perhaps, to say I looked young? On my way home I thought of all kinds of lines such as, “It must be the new lotion I’m using, you may need some yourself” or, “Why don’t you get me a bib? I might spill it all over me” and so on. Sometimes, just imagining saying these lines can feel satisfying but even if the situation were to happen again, I probably would not say anything.

There are two factors that I see as affecting this silence. The first is related to concern for my student teacher and for the institution I work for. Causing a scene could have unwelcome ramifications for others. The second factor has to do with getting the right kind of body movement to achieve the intended effect. I know how to perform that final “yo” in Japanese (pic. 5.2) with the precise pitch and body movement that will provoke a specific response from my interlocutors, but I have never had a confrontation in English in a professional environment where I needed or wanted to indirectly counterattack using sarcasm. Where is the pitch in “why don’t you get me a bib? I might spill it all over me”? What kind of facial expression fits here? In this particular case, not returning the insult successfully would end up causing even greater anxiety. The desire to perform in a certain way is there but the language is not. By “language” I am not referring to a specific language but to language in general. Silence in these situations is not a loss of words but a realization of a new or different way of wanting to speak and be, a way of speaking that may have been witnessed and found attractive but never performed oneself. These are moments of noticing voices that are not even in one’s linguistic repertoire yet and can be opportunities to realize the potential for new voices.

As I walked into the classroom, I noticed that the desks were shaped in a U style and that there was only one seat left in the middle between a group of Korean students and Japanese students. I took my seat and a few students had started whispering, trying to work out whether I was a new student (see pic. 7.2), when the coordinating teacher introduced me:



Pic. 7.2. Notes on CT introducing me to students, Sydney (2009).

Transcript:
 Line 1-5: CT: Now, now class, today we have a new person joining us. She looks like a student but she's not. She's a TEACHER! Haha [giggle]
 Lines 6-8: All students: Ohhhh... Eh.. Whoa....
 Line 9: Me: (thinking to myself) Shit, was that necessary?!

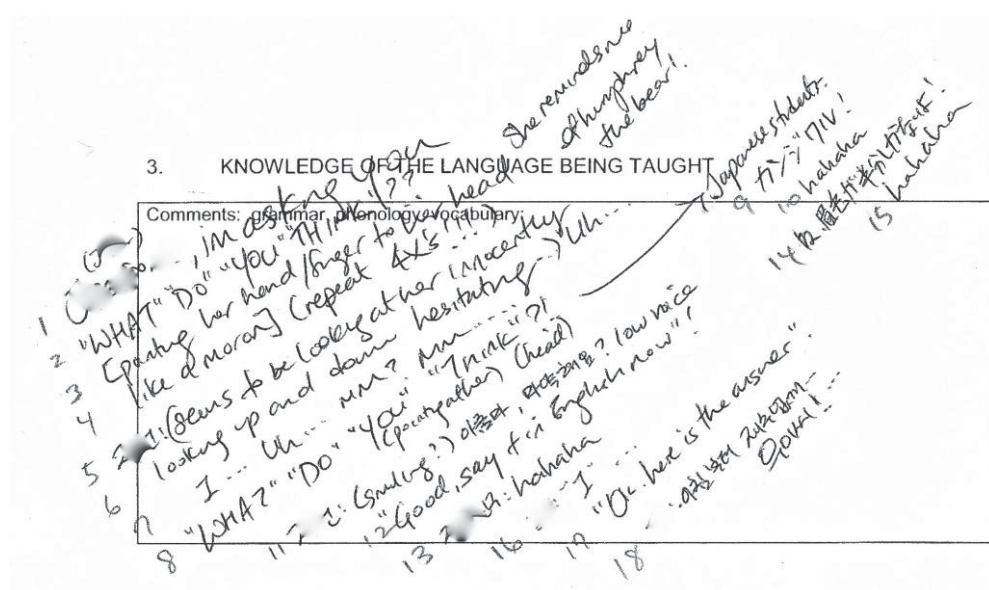
CT: Now, now class, today we have a new person joining us. She looks like a student but she's not. She's a TEACHER! Haha (giggle)

All students: Ohhhh... Eh.. Whoa....

Me: (thinking to myself) Shit, was that necessary?!

Students quietly made “ooooh”, “ehhh” and “whoa” noises trying to work out where I was from in their own languages, most of which I could understand. Trying to avoid any eye contact and having to speak I continued to scribble something, anything, on my piece of paper. CT was observing Paula from her desk near the whiteboard. Paula was doing fine until a Korean student called Jae-sun, sitting on my left, hesitated to answer a question Paula had asked. The task in the textbook was to match six Hollywood celebrities (three male and three female) according to who the student thought would make the best couple and then to explain their answer using comparative and superlative adjectives. The question to Jae-sun was “who do you think will be most suitable for Drew Barrymore? What do you think?” Jae-sun murmured sounds such as “mmm.... mmm.... uh.... mmm....” while looking up or turning away smiling but also looking somewhat confused. Such moments can be moments of panic for student

teachers who are under observation. Without moving my head I took a peek at Jae-sun's textbook, and she had matched Drew Barrymore with Sean Connery and not with Brad Pitt or Tom Cruise as might be expected if the thinking ran along the ideological assumption that people who are similar in age are more suitable as partners. I also noticed she had matched Meryl Streep with Brad Pitt. I wondered whether she felt shy about answering; whether it was her particular choice that she was shy about, or whether she was searching for the words she would need to explain her answer. Meanwhile, she was still hesitating to answer and I felt that this hesitation and partial silence were becoming awkward for Paula. CT stepped in, in a manner that suggested Paula needed to be rescued. Standing only several inches in front of Jae-sun (in close proximity to where I was sitting), she began to take action (see pic. 7.3).



Pic. 7.3. Notes on Jae-sun and CT's interaction, Sydney (2010).

CT:

Line 1: Jay-sone (CT's pronunciation of Jae-sun's name) I'm asking you

Line 2: "WHAT" "DO" "YOU" "THINK"?? [lines 3-4] (pointing her hand/finger to her head like a moron – repeats four times!!! She reminds me of Humphrey the Bear, a fictional character in an Australian children's television series)

Jae-sun:

Lines 5-7: (seems to be looking at her [CT] innocently looking up and down hesitating) “Uh... I...mm? Mm.....”

CT:

Line 8: “WHAT” “DO” “YOU” (pointing at Jae-sun) “THINK”?! (pointing at her own head) Okay you think about it.

Interjection of two Japanese students on my right:

Line 9: Japanese student 1: in Japanese: カンジワル! [She (CT) disgusts me!]

Line 10: Japanese student 2: hahaha

Jae-sun:

Line 11: (smiling?) (looking at CT saying in Korean in low voice) 아줌마, 마약해요? [Are you taking drugs *ajumma*?]

CT:

Line 12: (assuming she is answering the question in Korean) “Good, say it in English now!”

Line 13: (Jae-sun’s Korean classmate sitting next to her) hahaha

Interjection of two Japanese students on my right:

Line 14 Japanese student 1: in Japanese: 眉毛が半分しかないよ! [Hey!

She only has half of her eyebrows!] (Note: It seemed to me that CT had plucked most of her eyebrows just before the arch and had forgotten to draw in the rest of them when she put on her makeup.)

Line 15 Japanese student 2: hahaha

Jae-sun:

Line 16: “I”...

CT:

Line 17: “Ok. Here is the answer.”

Jae-sun:

Line 18: 아침부터 재수없게... 우이 씨! [What bad/shitty luck I’m having this morning] (lets out a heavy exasperation in Korean!)

I have, of course, experienced students' hesitation when answering a question or trying to make a comment when I have taught English in my own classroom. In those situations, I understood their body movements, pauses, and ways of speaking coyly, as habits that students develop in their long history of interactions with teachers in English language classrooms. In this situation, as an observer from that angle of the classroom, Jae-sun's hesitation seemed to be more than habitual bodily responses. I am not completely sure whether I was picking up a vibe from her because I was sitting on that side of the room, or whether the many years I have lived in Asia and taught Asian students has made me more familiar with certain looks or body movements, but I was certainly "reading" her movements. I recognized the innocent looks, the turning away, looking up and down, interjections, slight smile, and low voice (lines 5-7 and 11) as secret codes that only "we" on this side of the room seemed to "get". Jae-sun and I shared and sat in the shadow created by CT's looming figure looking down at us. Being seated on this side of the fence was more than sitting in a certain side of the room; it was to be "there" on the other side of reality, this side of history both mine and not mine. I cannot know Jae-sun's struggle in these moments of Otherness, but I felt myself being angry for her and for me. I felt angry with CT even though I did not think it was "her" that made me clench my pen. I also looked away. I could no longer bear to watch CT.

Bourdieu (1992) defines "symbolic violence" as "*the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity ... [S]ocial agents are knowing agents who, even when they are subjected to determinisms, contribute to producing the efficacy of that which determines them insofar as they structure what determines them*" (p. 167-168). Jae-sun's hesitation in the beginning seemed to be about wanting some time to think about how to explain her choice, but at the progression of CT's acts between lines 8 and 11, something seemed to shift as if she was recognizing the violence and allowing it. Jae-sun didn't give in to what CT wanted, an answer, any answer, nor did she fall completely silent, and this refusal to surrender while simultaneously not letting go completely seemed to provoke and challenge CT's patience, provoking more animated behaviors. The longer she stayed the shy, afraid, incompetent Asian student, the longer CT stayed the "*ajumma* on drugs" or the *kanji warui* [bad/feeling/disgusting] individual, as the Japanese students named her. Jae-sun's actions didn't seem to be about wanting to do harm to CT but about knowing how to uphold and hold onto her sense of self in the face of the dominant/powerful.

In Foucault's works, silence is understood in various ways. As a child he realized that "there were many different ways of speaking as well as many forms of silence. There were some kinds of silence which implied very sharp hostility and others which meant deep friendship, emotional admiration, even love" (1988, pp. 3-4). He also saw it as a strategy of power, as he states, "the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks (for it is he who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing" (1978, p. 62). I thought about how her silence might be a way of avoiding the workings of disciplinary power and how by not giving the answer, Jae-sun left open the possibility of her freedom, her right to be silent. Such silences as a strategy of power are not simply done by closing one's mouth and producing no sound; they are packaged in defined ways that do not allow others *not* "in the know" to find out.

This unique position of not being allowed to speak as an observer, being seated next to Jae-sun in such close proximity and looking like one of the students, allowed me to develop my own listening silence in which I was able to understand the impossibility of knowing an other or others' wishes to remain silent and the possibilities of silence.

Section 2: “Korea’s gone Global. So should you.”

In 2009, I joined what seemed to be a popular online Korean drama forum comprising thousands of participants around the world, which I thought was mainly made up of Korean-Americans/Koreans who spoke about Korean dramas in English. At the time, I had read an increasing number of recent studies on the Korean Wave and non-Koreans watching Korean dramas (see Huat & Iwabuchi, 2008), but studies on Korean diasporic viewings of homeland dramas seemed to be relatively under-studied (except for some older studies such as Lee & Cho, 1990; Park, 2004). I was curious about some of the changing ways in which the Korean language was being used by Korean females in the dramas and wanted to seek the perspectives of Koreans and how they understood these changes. I sent out a general post that might create a thread. The following is the first response I received from a user named “grace” who was later revealed to me as a white, American soccer mom, married to a Korean man living in New Jersey, New York.



Pic. 7.4. Online posting by “grace” Re: Watching Korean dramas: Questions on Identity. Message posted to <http://forum.koreandramas.net>. (2009, Sept 1).

I remember feeling agitated by her tone unsure of whether I was being told off and why I was being positioned as “backwards” by this “white” non-Korean. What did she know about Korea and Korean dramas? “I have Korean blood, have lived in Korea,

speak (or don't speak) Korean and grew up with Korean dramas", was generally what I was thinking to myself at the time. I know nothing about the personal histories and relationships to Korea of this person, or the hundreds of other non-Korean viewers and users on this site, but it peeved me that a non-Korean English speaker who has jumped into the Korean Wave relatively late, advised me to "go global". I felt defensive about something I didn't quite understand and compelled to write back without knowing what I wanted to say or from which position I wanted or needed to write. Which point of view *could* I write from - Korean, Korean-American, American, overseas Korean-American? Every attempt at a response ended in deletion.

I didn't write back but I have been thinking/writing/talking about this exchange on and off, speculating on whether it was my lack of knowledge about changes in the Korean media over the past several years, our racial differences, or my longer history watching Korean media outside of Korea that made me think I knew more than her and was more worthy of being heard. I can see now that most of those attempts to "give an account of myself" were ways of fictioning my way out of seeing what I had become. In this setting, I was positioned as "narrowly Korean" when this is exactly *not* how I wanted to be positioned. To be more precise, for practically all of my life I have been silently talking back to certain Koreans in my past or present who hold rigid, homogenizing, essentialist, and exclusivist views about who can or cannot be considered a "knower" of Korean language, culture and identity. Yet in that moment in cyberspace with a non-Korean viewer who may indeed have more intimate, real-life everyday contact in an environment filled with Koreans in the US, I became, without my knowing, *that* kind of person I have been talking back to.

For every moment that I have thought and written about what I dislike about certain discourses and cultural practices related to Korea, those discourses or secret codes were also written on my body, ready to become visible under a certain light. I didn't want to let the "outsider" into this coherent entity called Korea/Korean culture. I didn't want her to be a knower, to be "right". To confirm her view was to confirm my backwardness, my ongoing "denial of coevalness" in relation to Korea. Putting aside the fact that I didn't know this particular online discussion forum was for non-Koreans, why was I seeking Korean viewers' opinions in the first place, without even considering the possibility of seeking the opinions from non-Korean viewers? Korean dramas, music videos, and other variety shows are no longer solely made for the enjoyment of

those who speak Korean or are located in Korea but are produced with the hope of exportation to countries where Korean dramas are in demand. As South Korean television drama producer Noh Young-Rak of the action-packed series *Fugitive Plan B* (2010) states:

Korean dramas are in a different and widening phase now. We need to think about exporting when we begin to think about production. In the case of the series *Fugitive Plan B* where we had every intention of exporting this drama, we assumed that including foreign actors would be a great help ... [and] because Korean dramas are not only popular in Korea but also in Japan, Southeast Asia and South America, it is essential to include foreigners and shoot scenes in many locations. Bringing in the locals help to create a more realistic imagery. In casting biracial stars, both the producers and actors benefit. From the point of view of the producers, the dramas generate a familiar and special feeling to fans of Korea and from the actors' point of view, they are able to create a name for themselves in Korea (Lee, 2010 *my translation*).

While there are deeper politics and implications that need to be considered in relation to the visibility of foreign bodies, the audibility of different languages, and the representation of different cultural spaces in texts created by the media, they are not the focus of this chapter. Whether it is the increasing visibility of non-Korean bodies in the Korean media, the high ratings of non-Korean viewership around the world, or bi-racial actors creating a name for themselves in Korea as well as in other non-Korean television and film industries, Grace's comment that "Korea's gone global" is accurate.

Grace's posting provoked me and was relentless in forcing me to see the complicities written on my own body. It was the unexpectedness of being told off and kicked out by a non-Korean on how to think about Korea that led me to examine the unexpected reflection of my Other in myself. In the space of online forums it may not have been so appropriate, but one lesson in the larger scheme of conversations with others was not to engage in a practice of what Bakhtin calls the "monologization of the Other" (Holquist, 1990). By this, he is referring to situations in which a dialog may be in place but the interaction is not in the true sense of the term "to have a dialog" since one interlocutor tries to control and speak for the other, treating the other as if s/he were

a non-responsive object. The dialog is empty, lifeless and finalized with no questioning and answering; the dialog ends up as a monologue. For a dialog to take place in the true sense of the term, in Bakhtin's view, conversations need to start with a destabilization of the assumptions of others and a continuous critical self-questioning of our own attitudes and beliefs. Grace's comment was one that silenced me, but being engaged in critical autoethnographic work helped me to make use of this silencing to reflect and rethink our politically situated perspectives. Silence in this case has taught me a valuable lesson about how I might think and act differently about the vulnerable feelings that appear on my body, to find ways to open up dialogic ways of speaking, embrace ambivalence, hold onto one's in-betweenness, and onto vulnerability itself.

Ang (2001) wishes to hold onto her "hybrid in-betweenness...because its very ambivalence is a source of cultural permeability and vulnerability that is a necessary condition for living together in difference" (pp. 8-9). For me, it is the holding onto this silent space where knowing escapes us, or as Pennycook (2012) drawing on Butler states, it is moments of "impossibility, of vulnerability, of unknowingness, when a willingness to become undone constitutes a moment of humanity" (as discussed in Chapter 6), that allows me to start a "whole new way of thinking, of searching always for ways of thinking otherwise" (p. 48).

Section 3: True, False or Maybe: Japanese students are quiet

In this final section, I draw on a recent experience teaching thirty-two university-level Japanese students from various universities across Japan. Three of the thirty-two students were Chinese students studying in Japanese universities. The course was an intensive three-week program on *Experiencing Australian Language and Culture* (EALC) in English at the university in which I currently work. At varying beginner to lower intermediate levels of English, my goal was to cover as much as we could about iconic emblems of Australian culture, habits, customs, lifestyles, history, politics and features (e.g., pronunciation, rhythm, slang, expressions) of Australian English. While it was acceptable to use Japanese if communication became difficult, the main point of the students' three-week study in Sydney was to engage in activities, listen to, and practice speaking in English as much as possible.

Over the past five years I have been teaching mainstream and indigenous Australian university students, mostly at graduate level, working with professional student teachers, joining academic conferences and concentrating on my own reading and writing of language, culture and identity at the postgraduate level. Aside from the understandings I have gathered about Australia from my everyday life, none of these activities directly involves learning about Australian English, the culture or identity. I decided to use this opportunity as an example of how “we” as non-Australians and people with experience in, and thoughts about, the Japanese language, culture and identity, might learn together to create a space for a unique way of “experiencing Australian language and culture”. I used the very broad themes of “English”, “language”, “culture” and “identity” as my framework for introducing information on Australia, while also introducing some of my experiences and knowledge of Asian languages, cultures and identities. The main aim was to realize the partialness of our knowledge and how each of our fragments combined make up our perceptions of the Self, Other and society at large.

My biggest challenge was to present fairly complex topics on, for instance, Global Englishes, practices, hybridity, power, positioning, fixity and fluidity and structure and agency, using familiar everyday examples, explanations and basic vocabulary, visual diagrams, and photographs. With ample time to prepare, this wasn't as difficult as I expected, but I had forgotten how quiet Japanese students could be in English language

classrooms and how uneasy that silence can be for the teacher in a classroom of thirty-two pairs of eyes either looking or deliberately not looking at the teacher, with no obvious indication of emotion. For the teacher and the students, the easiest explanation for their silence may be to say it is their “culture” to be silent, or that not being able to speak well in English or being afraid of making mistakes makes them shy. These reasons may or may not be “true” but in any case, it leaves the teacher at a dead-end where language learners are determined and “fixed” by cultural stereotypes. As Kubota (2004) notes, an “excessive emphasis on cultural differences has created stereotypes or the ‘Othering’ of ESL students” (p. 24). We need to, as she contends, “become aware that a particular meaning of cultural difference arises from a complex web of discourse and is never apolitical” (p. 37).

Unnerving silence

Having sat on their side of the classroom as a language learner myself several times before, I felt I could relate to that silence, a silence that isn’t necessarily one that doesn’t want to speak. For a variety of reasons that changes day-by-day, students end up either smiling or sitting quietly. In this sense, creating opportunities for dialog may be helpful on the teacher’s part but *not* with the full expectation or assumption that students will or should respond. Ha and Li (2012) point out that for teachers, when a pedagogical approach favors talk or holds views that only talk can enhance learning, “teachers are fearful of and impatient about silent moments and quiet students, thus potentially leading to negative and misinformed reactions among both teachers and learners where silence is present” (p. 13). In my own day-to-day experience, particularly in intensive programs such as these where thirty-two students are in contact with one teacher six hours a day and four days a week, the desire for students to speak is indeed present, but it is also the physical intensity of being in the same classroom space in close proximity for long hours that can make a teacher feel fearful and impatient.

The silence I experienced was unnerving. As I was speaking about something to them, I was also simultaneously asking myself all kinds of questions, “Are they happy, sad, angry, bored, tired, hungry, sleepy, eager to read their Facebook messages? Am I doing something wrong? How can I save this lesson, make the next two hours more interesting? Should I abandon the lesson plan but then what would I do? How might I produce some laughter to break the ice? What if it ends up being a laughter out of pity?”

In Ha and Li's (2012) study on the silence of Chinese students from Mainland China studying in Australia, their informants, far from explaining their silence as being influenced by Confucian ideas, explicitly point to silence as a right, a choice, resistance and strategy in a classroom context. When a teacher was viewed as "bad" or "inefficient", students would use silence as a form of resistance. These students saw silence as the best choice or option to show their attitude while protesting in a respectful manner. Silence was "a strategically respectful way to ignore teachers in class" (p. 9). There was no guarantee my students' silence in my class didn't reflect these comments.

Between the cracks of the simultaneous acts of speaking and silent self-questioning, I also notice that my voice is so much louder than when I teach other classes. I hear myself sounding enthusiastic and a little too animated. There is something about this voice that bothers me. I sound like a cheerleader. Jae-sun's voice "are you on drugs" rings loudly in my ears. In Stanley's (2013) study on Western teachers in China, she notes that "backpacker teachers" who are hired to teach English are "under pressure to be fun, bubbly, ever-smiling, and entertaining ... [And] there are some whose only qualification for the job is a degree of enthusiasm" (p. 2). My own experience of teaching in Japan is not far from this description, and while I may feel that I have moved beyond these contexts and experiences, traces of them linger in my consciousness every time I hear my own voice in front of language learners. When I become cautious and fall silent or just "normal", students will then ask me if I'm sick or feeling all right. A part of me begins to understand and sympathize on some level with CT's bubblieness and what I perceived as "unnatural" enthusiasm.

My body movements

In the beginning of the second week in my lecture on "culture", I decided we would talk about stereotypes and I devised a slide with a few common stereotypes. The students could yell out "true", "false" or "maybe" all together on my cue.

True, False or Maybe

- Japanese students are quiet.
- Japanese students are shy.
- Japanese students don't like to say what they "really" think.
- Japanese students are good at Math.
- Japanese students hate speaking in English.
- Japanese students never ask questions.
- Japanese students never use bad words.

Pic. 7.5. In-class Powerpoint slide, Sydney (2012).

The responses to all of these statements were varied, and listening to each other disagree out loud seemed to raise their awareness of the variety of understandings Japanese students have on “Japanese culture”. Getting students to speak was not the intended aim of this activity but it did produce an unexpected fracture of the silence. Among the several reasons Ha and Li’s informants gave for choosing to stay silent in the classroom, students mentioned that “questions asked by teachers usually allowed only one standard answer that teachers were looking for. Therefore...speaking up in class in this context was not an expression of their ideas, but a repetition of what the teachers had said or an offering of the standard answers available in the reference books or test papers” (p. 8). In this regard, using the theme of “Japanese students” and some common stereotypes they were likely to have encountered in their lives gave students an opportunity to speak about something they knew or had opinions about, where each opinion would be considered equally valuable.

Such an activity also raises the importance of focusing on engaging students with tasks that focus on communicating *meaning*, not only on accuracy. As Luk (2004) points out in her study of the dynamics of classroom small talk between teachers and students, “students respond not because they are obligated to do so under the teacher’s instruction, but because of an urge to communicate meaning to the teacher. The reduced concerns by both parties about the need to elicit and display linguistic knowledge, and the freedom to choose what to talk about, seem to [make] the interaction experience a particularly enjoyable and meaningful one” (p. 127). In this case, I have chosen the

topic to discuss, but what is central here is that the topic is one where the students are the “knowers”, the knowledge holders and the teacher is the learner. Drawing on Turner’s term on “liminality”, Rampton (1995) defines liminality as the “interactive space where the dominant norms of everyday life are temporarily jeopardized or suspended” (p. 167). As Luk (2004) points out, by mitigating the asymmetrical power relationship between teachers and students, and by teachers demonstrating unconventional features of the teacher’s role, the speaking dynamics of the classroom can become more “authentic and creative uses of the target language in language classrooms” (p. 117) can also become possible. Such activities are not meant to force students out of their silence, but to create options or alternatives for students to speak if they wish to.

By the end of the second week, I felt we had developed a good rapport. However, the manner in which two of the students, Misaki and Kyoko, continued to hold their silence almost as if they wouldn’t surrender or didn’t want to give me that sense of satisfaction, the way Jae-sun wouldn’t give up her right to silence, made me feel self-conscious and nervous. In their eyes, I saw my image as CT. This reflection of myself as CT gradually made me aware of all kinds of ways in which my body automatically moves in front of the students. For instance, in notifying them of a lunch barbeque at one o’clock, I signal “one” with my index finger when I know all of them understand this, and then I give the “A-OK” hand gesture (connecting the thumb and forefinger in a circle and holding the other fingers straight or relaxed in the air). I know all of them know the word “piano”, but my hands just lift up in the air and start playing when I am describing something about pianos. Even if each individual gesture were “innocent”, done with purely good intentions, how can I know which movements have crossed the line from helpful to condescending? Many students, even when the gestures are blatantly patronizing, refrain from confronting their teachers but do find ways of “talking back” through different codes, other semiotic resources or indirect actions. In her own indirect manner, demonstrated in her final in-class presentation, I felt Misaki was telling me something about how she perceived my movements and behavior.

Misaki

As I assigned groups their presentation topics, which they were to present in class in the final week, Misaki called me over to her desk to ask a question for the first time. She said she had nothing to say about her assigned topic “what is culture?” which surprised me since most students cannot decide what to choose because “culture” can be thought of in a vast range of terms. I began to brainstorm with her, “what about music, movies, art, fashion? There are so many things you could talk about”, at which point I must have raised my arms and hands half way into the air saying “everything can be culture”. She seemed satisfied with that answer. On the day of her presentation I sat in the back of the room, watching her give her talk. She mentioned that in the beginning, she had no idea what to talk about and had asked for my advice. She then began to impersonate me, lifting her arms and hands exactly the way I did, using exactly my tone of voice and, to an extent, even my pronunciation. I was surprised at how well she “played” me and was relieved that she felt comfortable impersonating me (or was it “having a go at me”?) in front of the class without, as far as I could see, any indication of malicious intent behind her act. She had captured me so well that all the students (and I) laughed in unison. I didn’t think much more about it then, but looking back, I’m left wondering what that little performance was “really” about. It wasn’t so much that she could imitate me well, but the cleverness of this whole setup, that is, adding this feature and making it relevant to her assignment, choosing to do it in front of the class, yet not showing any personal feelings, makes me think that this was her way of letting me know what I looked like in her eyes through the use of my own words and actions.

In Scott’s (1985) study of smallholders and landless labourers in a small, Malaysian rice-farming community, the peasants, to protect themselves from those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rent, and interest, use “everyday forms of resistance” such as

foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth ... They require little or no coordination or planning; they often represent a form of individual self-help; and they typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms. To understand these commonplace forms of resistance is

to understand what much of the peasantry does “between revolts” to defend its interests as best as it can (p. 29).

By using Scott’s literature on peasants, my intention is not to compare Misaki’s position as a student to those of peasant farmers but to acknowledge that in any relationship of unequal power, considering the ways in which people, particularly those who we believe are in positions of lesser power, may be using their power. Whether or not they are recognized, needs to be given greater attention. As Ha and Li state, “their [students’] feelings, emotions, attitudes, resistance, resentment and even rebuttal acts behind their silence could be viewed as individuals exercising their will” (p. 13).

Kyoko

In a different manner of silence from Misaki, Kyoko gave me the impression that she didn’t particularly like speaking in any language and I later found out she was much more interested in art. The only time we spoke was when I took the class on a field trip to the *Art Gallery of New South Wales*, a museum in Sydney that features a wide collection of art from around the world. She was looking intently at a Renaissance era painting by Frans Snyder, *The Boar Hunt* (circa 1650s) in which several dogs are ferociously attacking a boar and piercing its body with their teeth.



Pic. 7.6. Looking at Frans Snyder’s painting The Boar Hunt (circa 1650) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2012).

I asked her what she thought about the painting. In whatever way she could, using both English and Japanese, she told me about a Japanese myth of the *namazu* [giant catfish] who was known as the cause of earthquakes and how the symbol of the catfish had over time become the *yonaooshi daimyoji* [the god of world rectification]. The myth was about how ideas could be something bad and then good. She explained that in

Snyder's painting one couldn't tell which of the creatures was good/bad. The inversion of symbols, i.e. small animals attacking a large boar, the idea of dogs as pets, and the different expressions on their faces made her wonder what the painter wanted to convey.

I remembered David Kunzle's chapter *World Upside Down* (WUD) in the book *The Reversible World* (1978) about symbolic inversions in images. I wanted to tell her about some of the interesting broadsheet prints from the sixteenth to nineteenth century that depict images of "discontented, lower-class elements who sought or fantasized about the subversion of the existing order" (p. 40) but I found myself in a quandary about how to talk about symbolic gestures in Japanese. I was hearing myself speaking in my imagination, struggling to find words and not explaining things properly, thus causing great dissatisfaction to myself and probably to my interlocutor. As a student, she might feel obliged to listen to me and probably obliged to respond by telling me my thoughts were interesting. We began looking at other paintings and taking turns imagining what an inversion of symbols would look like, i.e. black maids bathing luxuriously in outdoor Pompei bathtubs while white upper class women attended to the tea and towels; what a baby holding her mother in her arms and looking at her endearingly would look like; and what horses riding men might signify. I wanted to ask her what kinds of inversions she would make if she were an artist, or what might be an interesting way to portray the power of non-verbal communication over verbal communication, but I wondered whether I genuinely "wanted" to know any of this or whether I was just trying to fill any awkward pauses until we could naturally separate. What was this constant feeling of the need to talk in the presence of another? In that large empty space, talk was unnecessary, intrusive and tiresome. I was thankful that she didn't talk or ask similar questions of me, because I was sure whatever they were, I would not have had interesting answers, and would have answered only for the sake of answering. If the position had been reversed and I was the second language learner/Japanese student, I would have felt an obligation to listen and commend the teacher for her thoughts. It all seemed too superficial. In contexts such as these where words are not necessary or even desirable, as Ha and Li point out, "the major advantage of silence is that it embraces what the individual can actually see and hear in a natural social context rather than having to linger on a verbal situation to abuse meaning and to violate certain expected norms of respect" (p. 14). Without any explicit signal, Kyoko and I both separated to our own corners of the room.

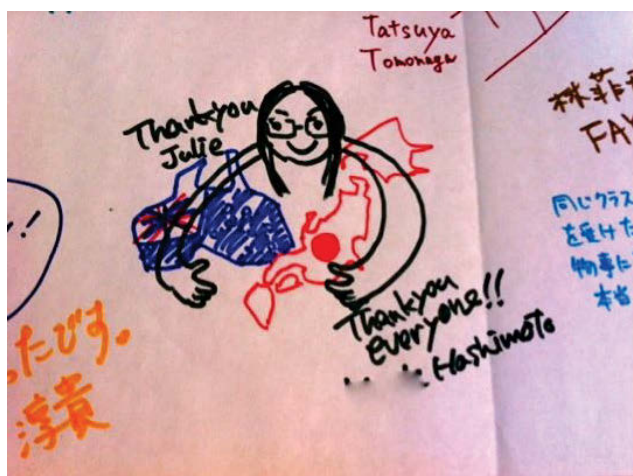
Leaving behind the silence between us, I thought about how I might change my thinking from silence as something “awkward” to silence as something that could be “accommodating” for both the self and other. Studying the patterns of silence in Western Apache Culture, Basso (1972) brings to readers’ attention the strong predilection for keeping silent or speaking only when absolutely necessary. In the presence of a grieving person, for example, it is customary not to speak or only to speak minimally. Informants in Basso’s study reveal three reasons for silence in this situation. Firstly, the grieving can be “so burdened with intense grief that speaking requires of them an unusual amount of physical effort”. Secondly, talking even if it is for reasons of solace and sympathy only reinforces the sadness felt by those who are still grieving. Lastly, a person suffering from intense grief is “likely to be disturbed and unstable”. For these reasons, the Western Apache view silence as expedient, appropriate and courteous in these circumstances (pp. 78-79). From this viewpoint, it is possible to think about silence as a courteous act, one that does not put others in the awkward situation of having to utter, release or surrender information about the Self that one might hope to keep private or is not ready to disclose. Kyoko and I had only spoken briefly, but what we exchanged during those short moments left me thinking more about the very compulsion of speaking. Alcoff (1991-1992) states,

The impetus to speak must be carefully analyzed and, in many cases (certainly for academics!), fought against ... The impetus to always be the speaker and to speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: a desire for mastery and domination. If one’s immediate impulse is to teach rather than listen to a less-privileged speaker, one should resist that impulse long enough to interrogate it carefully. Some of us have been taught that by right of having the dominant gender, class, race, letters after our name, or some other criterion we are more likely to have the truth. Others have been taught the opposite, and will speak haltingly, with apologies, if they speak at all (p. 24).

The resistance of the impulse to speak was long enough for me to question “speaking”, asking myself why I felt compelled to speak, what speaking might mean for speakers in different positions with different resources, what potential dangers or risks there could be and in what way my speaking would or could contribute something interesting or meaningful.

Perhaps it was because of that non-infringement of silence that Kyoko ended up thanking me (see pic 7.7), but what she doesn't express through words but expresses through her drawing of me embracing Japan and Australia also leaves me thinking about how skillfully, using her own resources as a talented artist, she has captured the goals I have wanted to set but couldn't quite articulate myself – the possibilities of what I now think about as “xenoglossic becomings”, a way of taking up, “making up” new positions by mixing up and refashioning identities that do not, by “normal” expectations, belong to us. What she seemed to take away was the possibility that identities are recombinant, crossing national, cultural, linguistic and racial borders, and the realization that for some people such mixings are the norm. What has taken me almost six years to understand, Kyoko seems to have learned in three weeks.

It is through reflecting on this most recent experience in Sydney that I begin to see myself at the crossroads of a critical “economy of looking” situated between the bodies of multiple others. In my own invisible and eavesdropping space between Japanese and Korean students, in addition to my own experience of being positioned as a “little baby”, I experienced what “we” (Jae-sun and I) might look like to those who stand on the other side of the classroom and how silence, foot-dragging, facial gestures, speaking in different codes, and “writing back”, refusing to allow others to position us in certain ways, could be used as strategies/weapons (Scott, 1985). In relation to my position with my Japanese students, I saw the potential and possibilities of my reflection as CT becoming over-animated, unnaturally enthusiastic, strange, and offensive. What



Pic. 7.7. Kyoko's farewell message given to me by the students written on a poster in class. Sydney (2012).

crisscrosses my body in moments of speaking is the knowledge of what power can look like from different angles and to what extent we can recognize movements, utterances and performances as a form of productive or unproductive power. Where issues of culture are involved, taking heed of Kubota's (2004) suggestion to ask questions such as: “Who

benefits? Who is oppressed? What concepts are resisted? What ideas are promoted? What are the social, educational, and political outcomes?” (p. 37) is crucial.

Through a different set of lenses, it took a non-Korean soccer mom’s eyes to stir and destabilize in me my stubborn attachments to particular ideological discourses. Even though one cannot “know” what it means to be in someone else’s position or understand the struggles of others in the same way, there is possibility in learning from each other’s unique experiences and positions through conversation, but only if, as Schenke (1991) points out, “both are reflexive, and open to critique” (p. 52). Furthermore, as Ang (2001) also states, it is our differences, the unfamiliarity of our narratives that should encourage us to engage in dialogue and deeper examinations. She states:

It is at moments when comprehending my local-specific narrative becomes problematic to you, my reader, when such comprehension seems muted because I do not seem to speak in familiar discourse, that the malleability of general theoretical concepts such as “race”, “nation”, and “identity”, not to mention metaphors such as the “borderlands” and the “crossroads” becomes evident. It is the ways in which we both do and do not share these (and many other) concepts and metaphors across local/particular/specific boundaries that we should begin to interrogate and highlight (p. 176).

What is it that we share and do not share and how willing are we to let others’ voices edge into our consciousness, to engage with their suggestions? Whether one is paralyzed for speech, cannot find the words, is being silent out of courtesy, prefers silence or simply does not wish to speak, falling silent is our cue to think harder, listen closer, study deeper, and seek wider. Silence is not a simple linguistic device free of contradictions, but it can be a politically intended intervention in that silence can turn listening into speaking. In this sense, silence can be seen as a “counter language” (Lewis, 1993), one that “opens the possibility for drawing competing meanings and competing discourses out of social relations” (p. 49). Used effectively, silence can provide us with a space in which we are “learning to unlearn”, to “become aware both of one’s own ways of thinking and of other possibilities” (Pennycook, 2012, p. 43).

Chapter Summary

As I return to my original concern of trying to explore and understand my “being able to speak but not speaking Korean” in Sydney, I realize that in large part, my linguistic insecurity in any language will always be a part of me. However, this is no longer because I am afraid of making mistakes or being seen as incompetent; rather, it is because I am cautious about language, its fragility, its slipperiness and inadequacy in both my own usage and in others’ utterances. Reflecting on my data from different stages of my life, a slight pause or silence has always been a part of my repertoire, which has only recently become more pronounced to me. I now also understand pauses (of all lengths) as something rather ordinary for individuals who operate with more than one language as I read accounts by other multilingual authors. For instance, as a bilingual writer of Spanish and English, Molloy (2003) states that

When I drive down a country road and see the sign “Hay” my first reaction is to read it in Spanish – *hay*: there is, or we have – and wonder what it is they have to sell, before realizing that it is...*hay*. For me, the sign should read *hay hay*, the first in Spanish, the second in English. I find these trivial little miscomprehensions annoying yet cannot avoid them: I am always caught, for a second, off guard (p. 74).

In my case, my first reaction towards an interest in a word, an expression, a certain way of speaking or an unfamiliar but attractive performance, is to codify (pic. 1.5, observing black/Hispanic students speak), try out the grammatical structure in other languages by testing them to see how similar they are (pic. 5.9, “adj+na+noun”), think about where pitches go (pic. 5.2 “yo”) and what kinds of facial expression are necessary when uttering certain words or statements (incident with CT), or question whether words have the same meanings as I understand them in other languages (pic. 5.9, “uri” as in “our” or “uri” as in “my”). Like Molloy, I also feel that these moments of being caught off guard are unavoidable and sometimes “annoying”. For Ní Dhomhnaill (2005), she states that the inner contradictions of her bilingual existence feel like there is a “civil war” going on inside of her. All her “energies get sucked down into the subconscious, with a depression characterized by overwhelming lethargy as its most obvious physical manifestation. Even in better times there is a constant restlessness” (p. 102). My own exhaustion that arises from weighing different positions and possibilities often makes

me wonder how it is possible to speak or what the point of speaking is. This is not a silence that then wants to “give up” speaking nor does it “give into” speaking; it is a silence that is filled with deep consideration for things one doesn’t know, that one seeks to explore and understand better before ideas are articulated in words and heard by others. The first understanding to realize is that silence is a necessary act and a space in which to think about one’s own position and ideas in relation to others’ lives and experiences. As Ha and Li’s informants point out, silence can be a habit, a learning style and a way of thinking. It is appropriate, legitimate, not something to be corrected or remedied, and individuals are aware of it and not ashamed of it. Keeping or breaking the silence will naturally depend on one’s specific aims and the kind of politics this silence supports, but any notion that liberation can only be achieved when one is able to shift silence into verbal expression is an ill-founded and ill-advised one. Implementing ways for people to come out of their silence is a risk, and a gamble with someone else’s way of life.

What comes out of my incidents related to silence in Sydney is the feeling of awkwardness and impatience that silence can create. Here we can dig a little deeper in thinking about what we are doing in this necessary space of silence. This is not only a space to hear our “mad monologues” but, as I saw in the incidents related in this thesis, periods of silence were spaces of engaging with “the unexpected and the critical” in what Pennycook (2012) views as “critical moments”, moments where “we seize the chance to do something different, when we realize that some new understanding is coming about ... where something changes, where someone “gets it”, where someone throws out a comment that shifts the discourse” (p. 131-132). The kind of “critical” he is concerned with here is the ability to “think critically, to draw on [the] long history of critical work and to problematize our practices” (p. 130) when we reflect on those small unanticipated comments and ideas that turn up in unexpected places. To “acknowledge that we cannot expect the unexpected, since to do so is to undo the unexpectedness, to fail in our readiness to be open to the new” (p. 131), the potential to “open the door on a more critical perspective” (p. 149) becomes possible. I now think of my silence as a kind of “critical silence” that resonates with what Hurtado (1996) calls “strategic silence”. She explains that many women of color learn about power without those in the dominant position ever suspecting they are being studied. These women “use silence with a specific goal in mind and return to their own safe communities to share what they

have learned and to verify the accuracy of their observations” (p. 382). In reflecting on my incident with CT where I was at a loss for words and upset that I could not talk back, that silence can also be seen differently, since by bringing the incident back to the academy, sharing it with others, and writing about it here, I have spoken and am continuing to speak, as I have done here. Spaces of silence are not merely spaces in which to think but opportunities to think critically about alternative and multiple possibilities.

In this “critical silent space” then, we can examine the feelings of awkwardness and impatience triggered by silence in the classroom space by asking ourselves why the silence should be something surprising. Specifically, what is surprising about students’ silence in teacher-dominated transmission styles of classroom discourse and in configurations where spaces are cramped, teachers are usually positioned in front of the students talking “at” them, topics are boring and time is limited? Silence is a reasonable and expected option to resort to. It should be more surprising that the pedagogical approach carries the expectation that students should and will talk. Awkwardness and impatience are hallmarks of one’s own self-consciousness and misconception about why students are not reacting in the way one thinks they should or hopes they will. Moments of silence can be moments of panic for teachers who do not have other materials or cannot proceed without obtaining verbal responses from students. Far from silence being a problem for students or a cultural issue, for instance, for Asian students, as teachers sometimes think, how teachers understand silence and how they might include silence as part of their teaching pedagogy are questions teachers themselves need to rethink and find ways to apply in their teaching practice.

I am also now at the point of re-examining why I regarded the condition of not speaking Korean when one is able to as something that was unexpected. In a recent telephone conversation with my mother in which I told her about not speaking Korean to the Korean cleaners who I have now known for five years, she found it “normal” that this would be the case. In her experience, living more than half of her life outside of Korea, long-term overseas Korean residents not speaking Korean to newly-arrived Koreans is something entirely expected, because they have different and busy lives compared to those who have not adjusted to the new environment and expect to do things the “traditional” way. Not speaking Korean or not letting the other know one is Korean can be a way of not having to deal with unnecessary pressures or the stress that

might follow. As newly-arrived immigrants establish themselves in new systems and experience busy lives themselves, they come to understand and use these same strategies of not speaking when they do not want to. This awareness is not spoken about but is, as she understands it, common amongst many long-term overseas Korean residents. Listening to her experience, I can see how entirely “expected” this act, practice or condition is, and how being able to speak Korean but not speaking Korean is nothing new. Since this awareness, I have begun to see my interactions within my everyday transactional Korean spaces in a new light, as spaces where people have more important things to do than worry about where I am from, what my affiliations to Korea might be and how well I speak Korean.

To conclude, silence is one of my many voices, equal in weight to my speaking voices, reacting and performing according to different situations that I shift in and out of throughout my daily life. A dualistic framework of placing speaking and silence together can be harmful because it prevents us from thinking about the simultaneity of silence in speaking. Winterson (2011) points out that when we write or speak, “we offer the silence as much as the story. Words are the part of silence that can be spoken” (p. 8). Silence is embedded in words uttered; we are never only listening to the sounds made audible but listening in tandem to those “speaking personalities” (Bakhtin, 1984), the “packages of identity” (Blommaert, 2005), the “secret codes” (Bourdieu, 1991) that come with the sounds that are offered. This simultaneity of speaking and silence also has implications for multilingual performances. While speakers of multiple languages are speaking and performing in one language, they may also be silently thinking in a different language. Their utterances are multilayered, being informed and constituted by the different understandings, histories, desires and abilities of various languages and cultures. Being silent, then, is also to be silent in several languages, an opportunity to critically reflect on the different understandings, histories, desires and abilities within a framework of a politics of ethics.

There is no interest here in preferring one to the other (e.g., silence over speaking) or to believe that having additional lenses of different languages is something advantageous or disadvantageous. Rather, through this critical silence the point is to see what we may only know superficially; that different people have different ways of speaking. My xenoglossic or heteroglossic becoming moves my speaking in ways that are silently multivocal, that is, I am speaking with my multiple speaking personalities;

they are harmoniously arguing, contesting, contradicting, listening and affecting one another, only they are not always produced as sounds. It is an unexpected way of speaking if one aligns this type of speaking to a view of multilinguals having to demonstrate their multilingual proficiencies out loud, but it is an expected behavior if one reads and notices that many multilingual writers (see de Courtivron, 2003; Craith, 2012; Hoffman, 1990) feel belonging not in places, language, races and identity labels but in the quiet space of their own thoughts, produced in spaces and acts of writing where creativity, meaning and sensibility return.

Afterword

Engaging in this study has led me to see the valuable contribution that “translingual practice” (Canagarajah, 2013) offers for language teaching and learning pedagogies. A translingual view of language is foregrounded on the idea of languages that are always in contact and mutually influential. Operating with a multitude of languages in one’s daily life is not about mastering each code, striving for accuracy or correctness, or measuring fluency in one language over another. Rather, it is about using languages in resourceful ways that expand one’s repertoire, finding ways to negotiate meaning, becoming aware of the particular discursive constructions and ideologies behind language, and listening more carefully to the so-called silent elements of language that make up our linguistic performances. Although verbal interactions are harder to capture in our research when they are being described, facial expressions, bodily gestures, tone, volume and so on are, to be sure, *not* “silent” in moments of verbal utterance. Johnson (2009) states that a speaking voice is first and foremost defined

by its tone, rhythm, volume, contour, source – in other words, by its qualities as sound. Only secondarily, through processing these elements, is sound recognized as voice, let alone identified with a particular speaker. Only relatively late in this unfolding process of perception comes the linguistic content of the voice, the words spoken ... The tone and delivery of what is said are prior to, and take priority over, the words that are said (p. 4).

A multivocal understanding of the relationship between language and identity attunes our ears to recognize the qualities of sound and delivery, to lean into spaces of the absent or silent in order to understand the multiple possibilities of what is in the process of being communicated. What are the intentions, desires, emotions, histories, circumstances, discourses, and politics of what others and we ourselves are trying to get across? What cues are our interlocutors giving us through the movements of their eyes, the awkward pauses, the particular giggles, smiles or laughter? What do the things they say, and the ways in which they say them, tell us about what is assumed within our spaces of speaking? What might we really be trying to communicate in our exchanges but perhaps are unable to, for a variety of reasons? Engaging with others’ utterances at this level may be more important for building relationships and connecting with others

than worrying about the actual utterance of words. To be constantly cautious of linguistic performances at this level is undoubtedly an exhausting process. On the other hand, following Kramsch (2012), these uncertain and skeptical feelings are, as mentioned throughout this study, also an “unavoidable and necessary vulnerability of the multilingual speaker—a vulnerability that is the very condition of his/her linguistic survival” (p. 494). Reading between the lines, reading more into the lines, or thinking about the importance of knowing what might be going on behind the scenes, moves me away from interacting with others based on the labeling cues that identify us such as names, origins, sexuality, or status, and closer to the particular experiences individuals have experienced in particular times and spaces, as well as towards what individuals might be seeking to do with language.

Mulvey (1975), on analyzing visual pleasure in the image of women in narrative fiction film, states that “analysing pleasure, or beauty, destroys it”. Old satisfactions, reinforcement of the ego, certain pleasures, need to be attacked to “make way for a total negation of the ease” of looking/watching. The aim is not to reconstruct a new pleasure but to re-conceptualize a whole “new language of desire”. In such a transition, there is a “thrill that comes from leaving the past behind without rejecting it, transcending outworn or oppressive forms, or daring to break with normal pleasurable expectations in order to conceive a new language of desire” (p. 8). Engaging in this work has not eliminated feelings of being “caught-out”, but analyzing feelings of imposture has helped me to re-signify the stubbornly attached ideologies that have unproductively concealed the wide range of possibilities that my identity can become and have limited the pleasure of watching women’s roles enacted in the fictionalized images of the media. I still enjoy watching Korean dramas, but I have a whole new set of eyes, desires and pleasures in how I think and talk about the storylines, discourses and imageries. My emerging new voice is equipped with knowledge of a variety of discourses, skills to analyze and question, and a core desire to work towards a politics of possibilities. It is a voice that seeks to overshadow society’s discourses, gazes, and idealized expectations. Following Pratt (2010), “I [am] learn[ing] a way of looking at the world that is more accurate, complex, multilayered, multidimensioned, more truthful ... I feel the *need* to look differently because I’ve learned that what is presented to me as an accurate view of the world is frequently a lie” (p. 266).

It is in the realization that I can now think and look differently that I have been able to take full heed of Lin's (2011) comment to me after giving my conference presentation about my "stuckedness" in ways of thinking and feeling that I cannot speak. She pointed out that the very act of taking action in engaging in this work, writing, publishing and presenting it to the public, means I am "no longer stuck" (pers. comm., 23 Nov). Taking my own learning and struggle as a guide, I have become more sensitive to the understanding that "learning" and "change" in those deep senses of the words, cannot be imposed by others but need to be guided cautiously, patiently and sympathetically, listening to the rhythms of others' lives, their particular histories, desires, pleasures, and own ways of knowing. In terms of teacher education and professional development for researchers, such sensitivity and understandings are crucial for many of us who work in what Pratt (1991a) calls "contact zones". These are "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (p. 1). Autoethnography is, as she states, a "phenomenon of the contact zone" (p. 2) and can contribute significantly to creating a pedagogy that works towards "figur[ing] out how to make that crossroads the best site for learning that it can be" (p. 6).

Countless others writing about identity politics have come to these realizations; thus, they are by no means "new". However, each of these texts is demonstrative of how small, steady and careful steps can make possible a whole new way of living and becoming in the world. Moments of silence now sing like songs without lyrics - the tune, beat, melody, and noise are audible, but what they say or mean has different meaning for those who are, can and know how to listen. It is a silence that makes present what is absent. Many people have asked me if I have found my own distinct "voice" as a result of doing this work. In moments such as those, I am reminded of a comment in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* about Mahler's style as a composer by classical music critic Bekker (1911), who described Mahler as "belong[ing] to that class of composers who lack a language of their own and therefore speak in many" (cited in Johnson, 2009: 152). I have a wardrobe of voices that I am able to mix, match and create anew. Whether such a bewildering plurality of fragmented voices, when orchestrated, counts as a distinct voice or not is of little concern to me now. As Said (1993) pointedly states, "for the intellectual there is quite enough of value to do without *that*" (p. 408).

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