Expanding multilingual and intercultural knowledge as expertise: young people arriving in Australia as refugees navigating education-to-employment trajectories

by

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Abstract

Investigating how young people who have had a refugee experience make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories is essential, considering the growing numbers of forcibly displaced people worldwide and the accompanying increase in linguistic, cultural, and social diversity. Many such young people are educationally and economically disadvantaged, and the increased challenges they encounter at school and work contribute to economic disparity. Research indicates that for them, living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own limits educational opportunities and achievements, which raises the prospects of underemployment and unemployment. Research to date concerned with young people who have had a refugee experience foregrounds the importance of acquiring English and 'acculturating' to Australian society to attain educational and employment equity. However, little is known about the role of the two or more languages and cultures of these young people in how they experience and understand their education-to-employment trajectory, from their firsthand perspectives. The qualitative study reported in this thesis elicited the narratives of 12 young people, aged 18–25, who arrived in Australia as refugees from the Middle East and Africa and resettled in South Australia. Data were elicited using an arts-based narrative approach, involving extended narrative interviews and creative processes. Two of the 12 young people also participated in an arts-based group workshop to access further insights. Drawing on Riessman's (2008) narrative approach, Ricœur's (1984;1984/2012) narrative phenomenology, and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980/2003) understanding that metaphors influence how people conceptualise their experiences, analysis of the data included thematic narrative analysis and metaphor coding and analysis. The investigation revealed how the participants experienced and made sense of their social realities, capturing the complexities encountered in education and employment. Three overarching findings were established:

1. Young people who arrive in Australia as refugees bring, and are further developing, linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge and expertise in educational and employment contexts and beyond. This knowledge and expertise include their home languages, cultures, knowledges, and multilingual and intercultural capabilities.

2. These young people are seeking dignity in the context of prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices.

3. Art unlocks insights into the internal worlds and tacit knowledge of research participants.

These findings contribute to an emerging body of scholarship (Baker & Irwin, 2021; Harvey & Mallman, 2019) that is only just beginning to foreground that young people who have had a refugee experience bring a wealth of multilingual and intercultural knowledge and capabilities, which this study shows are expertise that otherwise may not be available in Australia. The study highlights the pressing need to move from 'deficit views' (Candlin & Crichton, 2011) that permeate current research to a re-imagining of refugee narratives in ways that recognise and harness this expertise. Shifting from monolingual views that emphasise the need for English language proficiency and 'acculturation' to the dominant culture may unveil the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of the trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience. Through taking a multilingual and intercultural stance, insights into their diverse capabilities may be accessed; these are of potential value in broad fields of work.

Declaration

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, are clearly acknowledged.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background: Young people with a refugee experience living, learning, and working in complex diversity

Human mobility has intensified changes to the demographics of most countries across the world, with changing migratory patterns continually transforming the social, linguistic, and cultural spheres of human life at macro, micro, local, and personal levels (Heugh, 2013, p. 5). Diversity in languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, value systems, and practices are becoming increasingly complex as the phenomenon of human mobility increases (Kramsch, 2009, 2011; Lo Bianco, 2014). Kraus (2012, pp. 6–13) conceptualises this reality for contemporary societies as being on the terrain of 'complex diversity', that is, a sociopolitical context in which diversity has become an increasingly complex, dynamic, and fluid experiential phenomenon. These transformations occur in tandem with socioeconomic changes, which affect many dimensions of society significantly, including education and employment (Öztürk, 2017). As Piller (2016), highlights migration, like multilingualism, is not a new phenomenon. Yet, at no other time in history has it been so prevalent, with movement across nations and geographical, linguistic, and cultural borders now at an unprecedented level (Kramsch, 2011, 2014).

Various phenomena are influencing this movement of people, including contemporary sociopolitical and economic transformations, environmental adversities, international and internal conflict, claims the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2020), and the rapidly developing innovations in global information and communication technologies (Kramsch, 2009, 2011; Öztürk, 2017). Consequently, the global community is facing what Pennycook (2021, p. 6) describes as a time of 'historical disjuncture', as more than ever before people are struggling as refugees to find alternative places to survive among increasingly reluctant hosts. This fundamental necessity of life is being increasingly overlooked amid the 'pandemic panic'. Pennycook highlights that walls and fences, both metaphorical and literal, are a common response to these mobile populations, with divisive rhetoric perpetuated throughout the communities of the world by government bodies, the news, and other forms of media.

In 2019 the UNHCR (2019) reported 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide because of persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations. By 2020 this number had risen to 82.4 million of whom, at the end of 2020, an estimated 35 million (42%) were children under 18 years of age (UNHCR, 2020). In 2018, a global total of 1.65 million people were officially recognised as refugees, with Australia accepting 23,002 (1.39%) of them (Refugee Council of Australia, 2020). The number of refugees resettled to Australia decreased in 2019–2020 as a result of the Australian Government's COVID-19 response, which included a suspension on the granting of offshore Humanitarian visas, although a significant number of people continue to be resettled through the humanitarian program in Australia (Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia, 2020).

Young people aged 12–24 represent a significant percentage of humanitarian entrants to Australia, which in the 2019–2020 financial year was 29.5% (3,424), of whom 51% were aged 18–24 (Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia, 2020). Their top five countries of birth were Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Syrian Arab Republic, and Myanmar. Currently, the exact numbers of people residing in South Australia as refugees cannot be ascertained, however, the South Australia Refugee Council of Australia (2021) has established that most of those who are currently seeking asylum in the local community are from Sri Lanka, Iran, and Afghanistan, with most being under 36 years of age.

Young people forced to leave their homelands and come to Australia as humanitarian migrants are far from a homogenous group. They continue to come from vastly different backgrounds, bringing with them diverse languages, cultures, religions, life experiences, and knowledge (Olliff, 2010). Consequently, their movement across geographical, linguistic, and cultural borders is contributing to the increased diversity characteristic of contemporary societies. In turn, this phenomenon has stimulated interest in how those who are forced to leave their homes make a new life in what is for them an unknown language and culture, and how they make sense of their educational and employment experiences. In Australia there is an emerging body of research that seeks nuanced understandings of how people who have arrived in their host country as refugees experience their education (Correa-Velez et al., 2017; Olagookun & White, 2017) and employment (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Earnest et al., 2015; McMichael et al. 2017).

Young people who arrive in Australia as refugees not only come with a diversity of lived experiences, languages, and cultures, but they also come with a diverse range of strengths, including diverse knowledges (Baker & Irwin, 2021; Harvey & Mallman, 2019), cultural adaptability, resilience, and resourcefulness (MacKinnon & MacKinnon, 2019). Coming with enormous potential, they actively participate in and contribute to Australian society, but according to Baker (2020), it is widely acknowledged in the current research that they face disproportionate challenges in accessing and succeeding in education and employment compared with their mainstream peers. Even though there are opportunities available to these young refugees arriving in Australia — including access to education — the linguistic, cultural, and social complexities in their everyday lives are intensified. Although host countries such as Australia have humanitarian programs in place to accommodate the needs of refugees, racism and discrimination persist in educational and employment contexts and beyond. Furthermore, Baker claims, there remains a lack of sufficient resources to meet the complex needs of those who have had a refugee experience to access educational and economic equality.

Although these Australian studies acknowledge the interconnection of each of these domains, the education and employment experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience have tended to be treated separately. In recent times the transitions between education and employment have been considered in more detail in some studies (Baker, 2018; Baker & Irwin, 2021; Beadle, 2014, 2015; Hwang & Domina, 2017), which is vital considering that educational outcomes have been found to correlate directly with access to employment opportunities (McLachlan et al., 2013; Pager & Shepherd, 2008). Employment occupies a significant dimension of people's lives: it is integral to economic survival, and it influences their sense of identity, wellbeing, and social participation (McMichael et al., 2017; McMichael et al., 2015). Frequently, young people in particular experience a complex, nonlinear transition from education-to-employment, with emphasis on tertiary education, and insecure work and/or underemployment (Nunn et al., 2014, p. 1206). This is significant, considering that some of the most prevalent issues facing young people who have had a refugee experience in Australia are related to education and employment, and consequently, the accomplishment of their desires, aspirations, and identities (Abkhezr et al., 2015, p. 72).

Current research has established that young people who have had a refugee experience face distinct challenges in education (Bigelow et al., 2017; UNHCR, 2020) and

employment (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Fleay et al., 2016) in their host countries, in what is for them a new language and culture. These challenges include learning and acquiring an additional language, and adapting to unknown cultural, social, and value systems. Moreover, they are entering and are required to navigate an unfamiliar educational system, and find work and establish themselves in the Australian workforce (Earnest et al., 2010; Earnest et al., 2015). In instances where they do arrive with previous education, employment experience, and related qualifications, those things are often not recognised within the context of Australia (Beadle, 2014; Brooker & Lawrence, 2012). Furthermore, the global displacement crisis (UNHCR, 2020), alongside growing politicisation opposing immigration, fuels negative perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers amongst the wider global and local communities (Fleay et al., 2016; MacDonald, 2017; Nunn et al., 2014). Politicised public discourse contributes to racism, discrimination and disadvantage widely experienced by those who are living in a dominant language and culture that is not their own (Heugh, 2013; Pennycook, 2021), and this has been found to intensify challenges to educational and employment success for refugee youth in Australia (Fleay et al., 2016, p. 63).

It is necessary to briefly explain the notion of discourse because it is significant to discussions surrounding categories of identity, as discourse refers to ways of being in and understanding the world. It is imperative to consider the implications of social discourses in cases where the identities of those being discussed, such as those who are categorised as refugees, routinely face discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. As Block (2014, p.18) explains, discourses are conveyed through 'words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities'. These tend to be collectively agreed upon by a group of human beings in such a way that they become unconscious and appear natural, and thus often go unquestioned (Block, 2014, p.18). In other words, discourse refers to the production of knowledge through languaging, thus shaping social practices that are accepted and understood by a group of people institutionalising particular ways of knowing.

Maturana (2002) uses the term 'languaging' to refer to the reality that people live according to the construction of social realities that are organised by and operated within and through language. In other words, both the material and the conceptual worlds that people live with and in, arise in and through language, in interaction — they do not exist by themselves (p. 28). Block (2014) highlights this view, explaining that

cultures, and social and individual identities, are discursively constructed in and through language. Drawing on the work of Weedon and others, Block (2014) emphasises that discourses are the ways that people make sense of and organise their social and conceptual worlds. It is through languaging (Maturana, 2002) and the prevailing discourses of a given society that meaning is created about the world and social institutions and processes are organised (Block, 2014, p.19), including educational and employment contexts.

As Scarino (2014a, 2014b, 2020) highlights in her work (which is situated within a multilingual and intercultural view of language learning and teaching policy and practice), people's languages and cultures are not merely part of their 'background', rather, they constitute the interpretive resources through which they make sense of their experiences. For those who are learning an additional language, both the learning process and the use of languages in interaction with others to interpret and exchange meanings, involve 'moving between' languages, cultures, and knowledge systems, says Scarino (2020, p. 45). Taking a multilingual and intercultural orientation brings to the fore that both institutional language learning and broader life-world learning involve a process 'whereby people learn to mediate between their two or more languages and cultures' (p.44).

Acquiring and learning additional languages and the development of (cultural) knowledge is mediated through people's languages and cultures, which includes their framework of prior knowledge, understandings, and values, all of which are developed across their lived experiences (Scarino, 2014b, 2020).

> Mediation is central to the processes of interpreting, creating and exchanging meanings across languages and cultures. Students learn to become intercultural mediators, analysing the meanings of others, which are constructed within particular cultural framings. The process provides those who do not share a cultural framing with the means to understand diverse others (Gohard-Radenkovic et al. 2004). (Scarino, 2020, p. 44).

In seeking to understanding the experiences of those who live in a dominant language and culture that is not their own, it is essential to consider the relationship between identity, language, and culture. According to Besemeres (2018), there exists a multiplicity of dynamic social identities that emerges when moving between languages and cultures, because this complexity involves inhabiting significantly different conceptual worlds. As individuals engage with a language and culture they bring their

histories, their previous socialisation, and their enculturation experiences, which guide their sense of self, their perceptions of the world, and how they relate to and within it. As such, their capacity to interact interculturally emerges through operating in two or more languages and cultures in situ in their everyday lives; this is an active, ongoing, and emerging process (O'Neill, 2020; Scarino 2020). Currently, there is scarce research concerning how young people who have arrived in South Australia as refugees interpret their trajectories from education-to-employment through their own voices, that is, considering their multiple languages and cultures. Considering this scarcity, the present study was designed to access insights from firsthand accounts into how such people experience the opportunities and challenges of this trajectory.

In this section I contextualised the background of the study in the presence of racism and discrimination embedded in public discourse (Pennycook, 2021). I discussed that discourses related to social life include constraining discriminatory attitudes and practices that are embedded in both language and culture (Block, 2014), and that languages and cultures play a mediating role in the lived experiences of all people (Scarino, 2014b, 2020). I maintained that investigating the lived experiences of young people who arrive in Australia as refugees is a profoundly important area of investigation considering it is widely recognised that they face educational and economic disadvantage and disparity compared to those from the broader society (Baker, 2020). Inviting the firsthand perspectives of young people who have had a refugee experience in a particular locality (South Australia) at a specific point in history enables them to present understandings of how they themselves experience, reflect upon, and make sense of their trajectories. Because refugees are frequently represented as victims shrouded in human suffering 'begging at the doors of the West' (Phipps, 2019, p. 36), it is important that their perspectives are heard. Phipps calls these people 'experts by experience' who offer real-world insights into current understandings of how young people who have had a refugee experience make the trajectory from education-to-employment in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity. So as not to portray a homogenisation of what is in fact a highly complex heterogenous phenomenon I now turn to consider issues of terminology in relation to categorical labels such as 'refugee'.

1.2 Issues of terminology

It is vital to recognise that some of this study's characterising terms are not unproblematic. First and foremost, it is important to clarify the distinctions between the categorical terms 'refugee', 'asylum seeker', and 'migrant'. The terms 'refugee', 'asylum seeker', and 'migrant' are used to describe people who are on the move, who have left their countries and have crossed borders (Amnesty International, 2022). These terms are frequently employed interchangeably in academic discussions that address issues concerning those who have left their country of origin and are living, learning, and working in what is for them a new country, society, language, and culture. Yet, it is important to distinguish the differences between them, as each has significant social and legal variances.

The official or governmental terms ascribed to people who have been forced to leave their home countries tend to make distinguishing who is a 'refugee' confusing. As Christie and Sidhu (2006, p. 455) highlight, once refugees and asylum seekers reach a country of asylum, they become subject to the laws and regulations of the resident government. They are classified, and in turn, face regimes of practices that regulate their rights based upon the migration category ascribed to them. The authors claim this is clearly evidenced in Australia's practices and regulations in relation to different visa categorisations, which determine people's access to entitlements, and different rights to social, educational, and economic participation.

Conceptually determining who qualifies as a refugee is seemingly straightforward. Many definitions exist under various jurisdictions, and they are usually established in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention held by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (McMaster, 2001; Refugee Studies Centre, 2017). The Refugee Convention, a key legal document, defines a refugee as:

> … someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (UNHCR, 1951, p. 3)

'Refugees' are those have fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there and have been legally recognised as refugees (Amnesty International, 2022). They are people who have fled war, violence, conflict, or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in

another country (UNHCR, 2021). Such people have officially been granted access to international protection by the government of the host country (Amnesty International, 2022).

Baak (2016) explains that 'refugee' status is granted to 'asylum seekers' at the determination of the government of the host country in which asylum is sought. Determining who is a refugee is thus a process through which governments exert control over who can remain legally in a country of asylum, and who must either return to their country of origin or remain illegally in the country of asylum (p. 67). In the case of those who are recognised and categorised as 'refugees', the government has officially acknowledged that their lives are at risk to the extent that they have no choice but to leave their home countries. They have been accepted as legally seeking safety in another country because their government cannot or will not protect them. However, 'asylum seekers' are those who have fled their home country seeking protection from persecution and human rights violations, yet have not been legally recognised as a refugee and await a decision on their claim to seek protection (Amnesty International, 2022).

Asylum seekers do not have the same rights as refugees and, as Christie and Sidhu (2006, p. 456) clarify, offshore refugees are distinguished from onshore asylum seekers, and those who arrive by boat have been treated as 'threats to Australian security'. Only those who apply for refugee status before coming to Australia, or those who are assessed as refugees by the UNHCR before arriving, are given refugee status, with full residence rights and the right to apply for citizenship (p. 455). Those who have arrived by boat without visas are categorised as 'unlawful non-citizens' and historically have been routinely placed under mandatory detention while their refugee status is assessed (p. 450). Many who arrived in Australia seeking asylum have been 'locked away in detention centres', usually with limited access to education (p. 450), economic participation or medical care (Refugee Council of Australia, 2022). Since 2012, those arriving by boat who have sought asylum in Australia have been sent to Nauru and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea under a policy of offshore processing, an arrangement that officially ended in December 2021 (Refugee Council of Australia, 2022). As of 19 July 2013, the Australian Government's policy has been that no one in this group will ever be resettled in Australia, even if they are recognised as refugees.

There is no internationally accepted legal definition of 'migrant' (Amnesty International, 2022). However, Amnesty International (2022) defines migrants as those who are staying outside their country of origin and who are not asylum seekers or refugees. is essential to understand that migrants leave their country for a myriad of reasons, including issues related to poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters, or other serious circumstances. Although many migrants do not fit the legal definition of 'refugee' they could nevertheless be in danger if they were to return to their home countries (Amnesty International, 2022). Although I do not attempt to propose a definitive term, for the sake of continuity and as the means of conducting and presenting this research, I employ the term 'refugee' while acknowledging that the word is loaded with social and legal complexity. It is not intended as a singular defining category, as each individual has a unique constellation of experiences, linguistic and cultural profile, and values, and having been a refugee is but one of these.

Although some of the participants were categorically defined by the Australian Government as 'asylum seekers' rather than 'refugees', for the sake of clarity and uniformity, and to consider the similarities and differences among their experiences, throughout this thesis I refer to all the participants as 'refugees'. Although the terms 'asylum seeker', 'refugee', and 'migrant' are distinct legal categories, people who have had experiences that are designated by governments as characteristic of these legal and categorical terms do in fact share commonalities. These include, but are not limited to, the fact that they commonly share the reality that they have relocated to an unfamiliar geographical space that uses an unfamiliar language and has a culture that is not their own. In the present study, each of the participants arrived in Australia as a humanitarian entrant, was already multilingual, and was learning and/or working in what was, for that person, an additional and unfamiliar language and culture.

In addition, the word 'refugee' may convey a homogenisation of those who have been categorised by this term, and many may in fact not want this term to continue to be ascribed to them. Generalising notions of 'the refugee experience' as a singular condition and conceptualising refugees as a homogenous, universal categorisation negates the distinctive historical and political circumstances of dislocation, and the individual differences between people who have lived or are living a refugee experience (Eastmond, 2007). A challenge that has been identified in researching the refugee experience is that the 'refugee' label can be problematic because people who endure

such an experience may not wish to be categorised by the homogenising label (Dooley & Thangaperumal, 2011, p. 388), which can be a derogatory term in the Australian context (McBrien et al., 2017, p. 105). This sentiment is echoed by Kidd et al. (2008). Young people do not necessarily wish to be called refugees or asylum seekers; furthermore, once the category has been applied, when does one stop being a refugee? (p. 12).

Maylor (2009) identifies terms such as 'white', 'black', and 'race' as contested social constructs. Accordingly, I acknowledge both the contested nature of the term 'refugee' and its status as a social construct. Furthermore, following Baak (2016), who draws on Maylor's (2009) work, throughout this thesis when using those terms (i.e., 'white', 'black', and 'race'), along with others such as 'minority' and 'mainstream' I acknowledge the contested nature of such words. I recognise these words' standing as social constructs that position people in certain ways (Baak, 2016; Maylor, 2009).

Much of the literature included throughout the discussion presented in this study is related to the experiences of refugees as well as those who are categorised as migrants. This is because research concerned with the educational and employment experiences of those from diverse languages and cultures does not usually differentiate between categories but considers them as a group, although this is not always the case. This is in part because of the difficulty of identifying research participants who have had the refugee experience as distinct from others in the wider demographic of those who have relocated from another country (McBrien et al., 2017). Beadle (2014, p. 17) highlights this by providing insights into the label 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) currently used by many people and organisations to refer to those who have a cultural heritage different from that of most people from the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. Beadle explains that young CALD people frequently face different challenges than other young people in the Australian population. The author also explains that there are no 'objective' markers to categorise young people as 'CALD' or not. As a consequence, it is impossible to look at the available data and disaggregate it based on the CALD category. Moreover, she adds, because the ABS Census does not ask people to identify individual immigration status, there is no way of disaggregating Census data by refugee status.

Before turning to consider the significance of this study it is essential to reiterate that young people who have had a refugee experience come from a diversity of lived experiences, knowledges, linguistic, cultural, social, and religious backgrounds (Eastmond, 2007). Yet, they do face common challenges in their relocation. They are living the transition from adolescence to adulthood or have recently entered it. At the same time, they are establishing life in a different, and for them, previously unknown society, language, and culture (Guruge et al., 2015); with a history of lived experiences including displacement due to conflict, war, persecution, and human rights violations (Ennser–Kananen, 2016). Thus, without overlooking the fact that young people who have had a refugee experience cannot be understood categorically to embody a set of predefined characteristics or lived experiences, it is understood that young people experience resettlement in distinctive ways. Their commonalites are their age and developmental stage as they navigate life in the context of a new language and culture, facing additional transitions with increased complexities than their Australian-born counterparts face (Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia, 2016).

1.3 The significance of the study

Young people who are at an intersection between childhood and adulthood face multiple changes, including educational and employment transitions. These changes are increasingly complex for youths who have had a refugee experience. In the context of Australia, students from refugee backgrounds come from increasingly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and in increasing numbers (Oliver et al., 2016, p. 517). Social inequalities persist in education, access to jobs, and income for those who do not speak the dominant language of the host country as a first language or identify with the local culture experience (Erel et al., 2016, p. 1340; McBrien et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2017). Refugee youth in particular face increased challenges in education and employment. Research shows that poor educational opportunities and achievement increase the likelihood of underemployment and unemployment, as well as lower income and reduced access to employment opportunities (McLachlan et al., 2013; Pager & Shepherd, 2008). Some research suggests that many young people who arrive in Australia as refugees come with no or low literacy, having minimal and severely interrupted prior education (Dooley & Thangaperumal, 2011; McMichael et al., 2017; McMichael et al., 2015; Nunn et al., 2014). However, it is necessary to note that to

make such claims about literacy overlooks the fact that, in the context of Australia, to be literate is often equated with being literate in English only.

This monolingual conception of literacy is in the interests of some groups and not others, creating and maintaining political, economic, cultural, and social dominance despite Australia's ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity (Scarino, 2014b). Refugee youth often come from a history of lived experiences where they have been subjected to trauma, poverty, and limited access to life's basic necessities, such as clean water, food, and safety (Guruge et al., 2015). Markedly, the distinctive challenges that youth from refugee backgrounds face are far-reaching and consequential for their learning and vocational experiences, aspirations, and outcomes. Yet, youth from refugee backgrounds also face opportunities in their education-to-employment trajectories (Nunn et al., 2014). Furthermore, they demonstrate resilience (Earnest et al., 2015), adaptability, and aptitude in developing innovations in social, cultural, and linguistic spheres of everyday life (Baker & Irwin, 2021; Harvey & Mallman, 2019 (Khawaja, Hebbani, MacKinnon, & MacKinnon, 2019).

Many young people who have had a refugee experience face social inequality in living, learning, and working in what Amin et al. (2006) define as largely 'Eurocentric' environments. Furthermore, they are navigating family relationships and family responsibilities in what is for them a new language and culture (Correa-Velez et al., 2017, p. 792). Young people who have had a refugee experience also have increased familial responsibilities (Earnest et al., 2015). These include assisting parents with everyday activities because acquiring English is reportedly more difficult for them, and contributing economically to the family household, both in Australia and in their home countries (Nunn et al., 2014, p. 1206). Taken together, such research indicates that there is a growing need to better understand the challenges and opportunities faced by young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees. Insights into their education-to-employment trajectories is needed in order to move towards educational, economic, and social equity for all. Evidently, the education-to-employment trajectories of young people from refugee backgrounds is a significant area for research when experiences of disadvantage and discrimination among this group are so widespread and pervasive.

The disadvantage they face is in part because young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees are living, learning, and working in a dominant language and

culture that is not their own. They frequently find that their histories of experiences, languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices remain unacknowledged in educational (Ndhlovu, 2015a; Scarino, 2014a, 2014b) and employment domains (Clyne & Jupp, 2011; Harvey & Mallman, 2019). This is an essential consideration, given that their education-to-employment trajectories are consequential at both individual and societal levels (Fleay et al., 2016; McMichael et al., 2015). Despite the diversity reflected in Australian society, and the claim that Australia encompasses the peaceful co-existence of hundreds of different ethnic groups (Rubino, 2007), indigenous and migrant languages and cultures remain on the periphery of Australian society (Clyne, 2004; Rubino, 2007). Many of those who identify with languages and cultures other than English continue to be educationally and economically disadvantaged (McBrien et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2017).

Much of the current literature (Blake et al., 2018; Hebbani & Khawaja 2018) and policy recommendations (Economy and Infrastructure Committee, 2020) concerned with the experiences in education and employment of this demographic emphasises their disadvantage in terms of a lack of English language attainment and proficiency. Furthermore, the fact that they do not have the cultural and social knowledge and understanding that the wider this demographicpopulation have permeates studies (Abkhezr et al., 2015) concerned with refugee students' achievements and outcomes, and their subsequent employment aspirations and attainment.

In the present applied linguistics study, I have endeavoured to shift focus away from such a monolingual view. Instead, I have moved towards shedding light on the role of the multiple languages and cultures in the participants' education-to-employment experiences. In order to do so, this investigation was initially guided by the question '*How do young people living in linguistic and cultural diversity as refugee, experience moving out of education into employment in South Australia?*' Over the course of conducting the study the question evolved into, '*How do young people who arrive in South Australia as refugees experience their education-to-employment trajectories, living in linguistic and cultural diversity?*' The nuanced shift in the wording of the research question was significant for two reasons. Firstly, because the notion of 'trajectory' captures the participants' experiences overtime, encapsulating their non-linear transitions from education-to-employment. Secondly, because their trajectories were characterised and shaped by linguistic and cultural diversity.

Accordingly, the study has accessed insights beyond recognising the need for English language proficiency and cultural and social adaptation as a prerequisite for educational and employment success. In addition, although education and employment are related domains, which are interrelated dimensions of one trajectory, to date, there has been limited scholarly consideration of how students, irrespective of background (Baker, 2018), experience the 'transitions' between education and employment.

1.4 The aim of this study

This study sought to gain insights into the lived experiences of the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, from their firsthand accounts. In doing so, this study offered participants an opportunity to contribute directly through their own voices and in their own terms to emerging understandings and awareness of the needs, challenges, and opportunities that they experience across their trajectories. Influencing their experiences is the multifaceted and dynamic constellation of biographical, linguistic, cultural, and social aspects of life. Significantly, policy and practice play an important role in facilitating resettlement of this demographic (Correa-Velez et al., 2017; Fleay et al., 2016, p. 64). Such young people come with diverse knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and multilingual and intercultural capabilities that are largely ignored in the dominant mainstream society, language, and culture (Clyne & Jupp, 2011; de Jong & Freeman Field, 2010).

Considering the important role that policy and practice play in facilitating the resettlement of young people who arrive in Australia as refugees, the present study strove to:

- foreground the participants' voices through their own accounts in an attempt to interrupt the social, educational, and employment inequity many of them experience
- provide opportunities to 'decolonise' (Phipps, 2019) current knowledge and understandings that continue to dominate the implementation of policy and practice related to the education-to-employment trajectories of young refugees

- to hear the voices of the young people involved in order to create opportunities for them to enter academic discussions and policy implementation related to the education-to-employment trajectories of young refugees.

The objectives of this study hold implications for policy and practice around reconceptualising and responding to the reality of linguistic and cultural diversity in educational and employment contexts, and beyond, in the wider community. Because the accounts of the young people involved provide insights into their experiences through their own perspectives it is vital to this study that they are understood as the 'experts by experience' (Phipps, 2019).

1.5 An arts-based narrative study: opening researcher self-reflections

Through this research, I have sought to understand the lived experiences of the participants through their accounts and reflections on their experiences in the present, in their own words and in their arts-based expressions. Adopting an arts-based narrative approach, this applied linguistics study addressed the question: *'How do young people who arrive in South Australia as refugees experience their education-to-employment trajectories, living in linguistic and cultural diversity?'* Through addressing this question, insights have been gleaned into how young people who have arrived in South Australia as refugees experience and interpret their trajectories. In conducting this research, I have an ethical responsibility to make transparent the fact that I cannot remove myself from what and how I observed, analysed, and represented their accounts, how I collected these as data and aligned them within existing theories and literature. Furthermore, as Baak (2016, p. 29) establishes, it is vital to acknowledge that the term 'research' cannot be extracted from European imperialism and colonialism and is thus a 'dirty word' for many whose lives have been impacted by colonialism and its legacies. Throughout history, qualitative research methods involving participant observation, interviewing, and ethnography has functioned as a 'scientific' basis for objectifying 'natives' and serving colonial enterprises, and thus, is implicated in contemporary forms of racism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). What I can do is be critically self-aware, reflective, and reflexive about my role in the construction of the participants' narrative accounts, as well as how I elicited, analysed, and represented their stories.

Following Riessman (2008) and Baak (2016), it is fundamental that I acknowledge that diverse interpretations of the participants' narratives are possible, as there are as many ways of understanding their meanings as there are people hearing them. This point gives rise to both ethical and philosophical dilemmas characteristic of interpretation present in research in the social sciences (Reissman, 2008; Baak, 2016). Considering that the participants' linguistic, cultural, and experiential understandings, and life-worlds are distinctive from my own, there are limitations inherent in my capacity to hear them. Critical to note here is that the notion of 'life-worlds' is taken up throughout this thesis in order move away from the idea of 'background'. Scarino (2014a) suggests that people's life-worlds constitute their distinctive interpretive resources, developed across their life trajectory and forming their interpretive framework, which they bring to social interaction. I too have adopted the term 'life-worlds' (Scarino (2014a, 2014b, 2020) in place of regarding the broader life realities and experiences beyond education and employment as merely part of the participants' backgrounds. I have chosen to do so as the notion better captures the influential role of people's histories of experiences and repertoires of languages and cultures that shape their frameworks of knowledge, understandings, values, and practices (Scarino, 2014a, 2014b).

My endeavour to access insights and come to understandings about the trajectories of the participants required a particular approach, one that aligned with hearing the stories and perspectives of the young people in their own terms. Yet, as Baak (2016, p. 3) states in her narrative study of the experiences of belonging of five Dinka refugee women who relocated to South Australia, with consideration of her own sense of belonging, 'I could not hear the narratives … outside of my own experience'. One cannot hear the stories of others independently from one's own experiences of being in the world, and this is something all researchers in the social sciences must attempt to do and acknowledge their limits in achieving. Baak describes people as interpretive filters that are shaped by their own experiences of being in the world. People are who they are and perceive all that they do through the accumulation of all the experiences had in the past, and what they anticipate and hope for the future. It is with this point in mind that Bryant (2015, p. 15) calls for researchers to consider some important questions, including:

> How do we democratise knowledge? How do we transform ourselves, our collaborators, and our readers? How can research transform communities and societies — that is, what are the implications of our research for social change?

A response to such questions, writes Bryant, is the notion of reflexivity, which entails ongoing examination of the production of knowledge, starting with where research begins, namely, the researcher.

To conduct research reflexively is a step towards doing research that is multilingually, interculturally, socially, and politically sensitive and reciprocal (Riessman, 1987). I have adopted the notion of reflexivity to refer to the questioning that occurs as people come to consider how they have come to be, see and experience — how they are fashioned and formed by the contexts, languages, and cultures that they move within (Riessman, 1987, 2008; Ricœur, 1994). Through reflexivity and self-awareness people come to see that their languages and cultures permeate daily habitual rituals, shaping their ways of being and their movements in the social worlds in which they live. Languages and cultures, then, can be understood to influence the way people move within, understand, and relate to the contexts they find themselves in, and how they understand and relate to both the omnipresent 'self' and 'others' (Ricœur, 1994). Taking this stance required me to call myself into question, to (re)think and (re)evaluate myself in interaction with participants, to be reflective and bring reflexivity to my practice throughout all stages of the research process (Bryant, 2015, p. 15).

People construct both themselves and meaning but not without influence, as experience is contingent upon the past, both remembered and forgotten (Ricœur, 1984/2012). As Bakhtin (1981) underscores, 'each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life' (p. 159). Bakhtin explains that in interaction with others, dialogue is not an invitation to ignore what historically separates people, but appeals for an attempt, or movement towards understanding one another's unique historical particularities as wholly as possible. As Ricœur (1984/2012) points out:

> …the collective unconscious, and unrehearsed speech confers on history a sense of strangeness, of distance and difference, comparable to that of the anthropologist's gaze … It is ordinary people, often denied the right to speak by the dominant form of discourse, who regain their voice through this type of history. (p. 110)

With these points in mind, I have endeavoured to conduct ethical, reflexive research, including what Bucholtz et al. (2016) term a relationship of 'accompaniment'. They encourage researchers within fields concerned with language, culture, and society to work with the concept of accompaniment in place of the notion of empowerment. The authors consider that 'empowerment' suggests that there is an 'endpoint to politically

engaged activities (i.e., when a group has "become empowered")', whereas the term 'accompaniment' conceives the 'ongoing, incomplete nature of social justice efforts' (p. 27). Furthermore, the notion of accompaniment highlights the mutuality of social relationships, leading to an awareness that young people have rich life experiences and insights that can be learned from in a reciprocal relationship where researchers and researched accompany one another (p. 27).

In this study, instead of seeking to 'empower', in line with Bucholtz et al. (2016), I sought to acknowledge, accompany, and engage reflexively with the participants and their stories. I have endeavoured to be attentive to my own researcher positionality through adopting a reflective and reflexive principled approach from the outset. This has included taking the principle of accompanying, rather than empowering. I have worked alongside; I have workshopped alongside; I have conducted research 'with' and 'for', not 'on'. I adopted an arts-based approach because it was conducive to nurturing my intention to accompany rather than empower—to engage reflexively in each stage of the project—and to move toward decolonial research practices. Taking an arts-based approach in narrative inquiry in this study, entailed participants engaging with art-making processes, and then reflecting on their art once it was created. Each of these processes offered alternative channels to understanding, and knowing both the self and experience. The participants either painted or drew their responses to questions related to their education-to-employment trajectories and subsequently shared their pre-verbal meanings embedded in their creative expressions. Through adopting these arts-based modalities this study accessed insights into the participants' inner worlds, revealing how they made sense of living their trajectories, because words alone may not capture the full spectrum of their intended meanings.

The participants' conceptual understandings of the world, as well as my own, are built from a chain of memories — memories of experiences that are our own, but which are also collective memories, engrained residues which are carried by and through the linguistic and cultural contexts within which each of us have grown up, lived, learned, and worked. In this way my aim in the present study was to foreground the participants' linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge. As a human being and researcher, I brought with me my own history of experiences, including my imagination and emotions, my own repertoires of languages and cultures that shape my own frameworks of knowledge, understandings, values, and practices. All that I observed, all that went

unnoticed, all that I included, all that I omitted, is owed to the lenses that filtered my interpretations, coloured my perceptions, and highlighted and concealed what I did and did not see. I was the lens.

In this introductory chapter of this thesis, I have introduced the background, significance, and aim of the study and considered my role in the research endeavour. Before I turn to introduce Chapter 2: Literature review, I offer a brief outline of the structure of this thesis.

1.6 Overview of chapters

This thesis comprises eight chapters. In this introduction I outlined the need for the present study, the issues it addresses and how it contributes to emerging research. Chapter 2: Literature Review, comprises four sections. Firstly, I present my considerations for understanding the notion and relevance of the education-to-employment trajectory and the need to take a holistic approach to understanding the participants' experiences across these two domains. Secondly and holistically, I consider the interconnected nature of education, work, and the participants' broader life-worlds. I review the literature that demonstrates current understandings of the education-to-employment experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience, Thirdly, I discuss why an applied linguistics approach and taking a multilingual and intercultural view is needed. Fourth, before concluding the chapter, I explain why it is important to privilege micro-contexts, that is, particular localities and the voices of those who are living the phenomenon under investigation. I maintain that examining the experiences of those who arrived in the local context of South Australia as a refugee by foregrounding their firsthand perspectives affords insights into how they experience and make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories. In addressing each of these four interrelated sections, I canvass contemporary literature salient to the educational and employment experiences of refugees and migrants. I focus on the mediating role of their multiple languages and cultures and the reality that such people are learning and working in a context of linguistic and cultural diversity.

In Chapter 3: Methodology, I describe the study, considering the value of adopting narrative inquiry with an arts-based approach. I outline the study design, explaining the process of data collection and ethical considerations. I also describe my approach to

data analysis, including the transcription process and the analytical approach. In this chapter I introduce each of the participants and consider key theoretical reference points that guided the study from its inception.

In the three chapters that follow I present three interconnected predominant themes that emerged independently from my analysis of the participants' narrative accounts, alongside some discussion with excerpts and images from the data. In these chapters my analysis reveals the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of the participants' trajectories, highlighting the reality that they are living, learning, and working in two or more languages, cultures, ways of knowing, values, and practices.

In Chapter 4: Growing, I discuss how the participants' accounts reveal that making the trajectory from education-to-employment, while moving in and in-between their multiple languages and cultures, is an ongoing, evolving process. I discuss 'growing' in relation to two subthemes that emerged through the analysis — 'adapting' and 'contributing'. These subthemes capture that their sense of self and their understandings of their education-to-employment experiences were unfolding in relation to their multiple languages and cultures.

In Chapter 5: Pathfinding, I discuss how the participants' accounts revealed that their trajectories were being understood and shaped, and were shifting in correspondence with the events across their whole-of-life experiences, which were unfolding in two or more languages and cultures. I address pathfinding in two subthemes. The first, 'uncertainty,' captures the reality that their trajectories from education-to-employment involved facing the unknown. The second, 'playing catch-up', demonstrates that they experienced a sense of being perpetually 'behind' as they were not at the same linear point as many of their mainstream Australian counterparts in terms of local linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge or educational and employment experience and success.

In Chapter 6, Facing obstacles, I examine how the experiences of the participants in the ways they managed adversities in educational and employment contexts were integrated into their evolving knowledges, capabilities, and sense of self. 'Facing obstacles' has two subthemes, 'rising above' and 'surviving'. In this chapter, I discuss that the participants were more or less conscious that they were developing the ability to live multilingually and interculturally, meeting obstacles not merely as obstructions but

rather as fields through which learning, self-awareness, and knowledge transpire. In chapters 5 and 6 I emphasise how the participants were positioned both by others and by themselves in interaction in the varying contexts in which they were living, learning, and working. I highlight that the ways in which they were received and responded to in interaction profoundly influenced their experiences of pathfinding and facing obstacles across their trajectories.

In Chapter 7, Findings and Discussion, I present an overarching discussion of three key findings related to how the participants experience, reflect upon, and interpret their education-to-employment trajectories in linguistic and cultural diversity. Finding 1 was that young people who arrive in Australia as refugees have and are developing multilingual and intercultural capabilities. These distinctive linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges constitute expertise that can be applied in in educational and employment contexts and beyond. This distinctive expertise remains largely unrecognised and is unharnessed in educational and employment contexts and in the wider society. Finding 2 was that young people who arrive in Australia as refugees are seeking dignity through work in the face of prejudicial thinking and practices in employment contexts. To address this, I propose the need for a shift from the monolingual views that currently permeate the contemporary research related to the education-to-employment experiences of this group of refugees. I establish that taking a multilingual and intercultural stance contributes a holistic understanding of the role of their diverse languages and cultures across their education-to-work trajectories. I suggest that the widespread discrimination and disadvantage highlighted in the existing literature on migrant and refugee education and employment continues, in part, because the plural linguistic and cultural resources of such people remain largely overlooked beyond their perceived English (im)proficiency and (in)ability to navigate Australian society and culture. Finding 3 was that employing art-based narrative approaches and taking an applied linguistic orientation to research affords access to the internal worlds and tacit knowledge of research participants. Although these findings are discussed independently, they are interconnected, thus they are brought together in the final discussion before I introduce the concluding chapter.

In bringing the thesis to a close, in Chapter 8, I summarise the key findings and consider the implications for policy and practice. I also consider the limitations of this study and

directions for further research. I conclude with a final, personal self-reflection as a researcher.

2 Literature review

The purpose of this review of the literature on refugees' and migrants' educational and employment experiences is to situate the present study. In order to do so, I position my investigation in the context of existing research concerned with refugee and migrant educational and employment experiences. I identify that taking an applied linguistic approach with a multilingual and intercultural orientation to examine the trajectories of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees affords insights into how they experience living, learning, and working in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity. Currently, understandings of the significance of multiple languages and cultures in the education and employment of this group of young refugees remain largely on the periphery of existing studies.

In discussing the literature, I show that research concerned with refugee and migrant education-to-employment experiences is only just beginning to integrate the applied linguistic research that takes a multilingual and intercultural orientation. It is vital to adopt a multilingual and intercultural approach to research such because societies comprise people who bring diverse knowledges, languages, and cultures to all that they do in their lives, which significantly include their education and employment. As established in Chapter 1, people's histories of experiences and repertoires of languages and cultures shape their frameworks of knowledge, understandings, values, and practices (Scarino, 2014a, 2014b). To move towards educational and economic equality understanding the experiences of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees that foregrounds the role of languages and cultures in their lives beyond that of the host country is needed.

In current studies that focus on refugee and migrant education-to-employment trajectories, a multilingual and intercultural stance is largely absent; consequently, the fundamental role of their histories of experiences, languages, and cultures is omitted. This matters for young people who have had a refugee experience because it leaves them disadvantaged in educational and employment domains compared to their monolingual English-speaking counterparts. Moreover, neglecting the role of their multilingual and intercultural experiences, realities, knowledges, and ways of knowing also matters to society, broadly speaking, as those things offer potential value in

educational contexts and the world of work that may otherwise not be available. Because research concerned with refugee and migrant education and employment is permeated with monolingual views, acknowledgement of or insights into the role of two or more languages and cultures in their learning and working experiences is largely absent.

The linguistic and cultural repertoires of young people who have had a refugee experience are a fundamental dimension of the diverse knowledges they bring to the Australian landscape. The absence of recognition of this aspect means there is a dearth of research into refugee and migrant educational and employment experiences that focuses on the reality that such people are living, learning, and working in the context of complex linguistic and cultural diversity. In essence, there is limited understanding of the role and significance of the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge of such people in their educational and employment experiences and how these impact them personally and the broader society in which they live, learn, and work.

Research in this area is 'inherently interdisciplinary' (Syed et al., p. 433). This is because, although people's life-worlds and the many domains that constitute contemporary societies are interconnected, they also have distinctive characteristics and are conceptualised and addressed in different ways. This means that different researchers who are concerned with issues related to refugee and migrant educational and employment experiences are guided by varying theoretical underpinnings, methods, and approaches within and across fields. Thus, the literature included in this review encompasses interconnecting themes from across diverse disciplines and approaches.

This chapter comprises four sections. Firstly, I discuss the literature that demonstrates the significance of the notion 'education-to-employment trajectory' to establish why it is essential to consider these two domains of experience holistically. Secondly, I review the literature that establishes what is currently understood about the educational and employment experiences of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees. Thirdly, I examine applied linguistic research that highlights the vital need to take a multilingual and intercultural orientation in investigating the education and employment of young people who have had a refugee experience. Finally, I review the literature that highlights the importance of taking a research approach that privileges local contexts at

a micro level by foregrounding the voices of those who live the experience under investigation.

2.1 Understanding the notion and relevance of the 'education-to-employment trajectory': a holistic approach

Because youth tend to experience a complex, nonlinear transition from education-to-employment and face precarious work conditions and underemployment (Nunn et al., 2014, p. 1206) it is critical to explore the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience. Moreover, the challenges and opportunities are increasingly complex for youth from refugee backgrounds as they are often faced with distinctive and intensifying obstacles in education and employment. These include coming with limited former education or employment; not yet speaking the language of the new country; racism and discrimination; the social and economic trials of making a home in a new, and for them, unknown country, language, and culture, and significant family responsibilities (Correa-Velez et al., 2017, p. 792).

Given these complexities of the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience, it is important to gain insights into their lived experiences across time, in both contexts. This is not only because their trajectories are nonlinear and nonuniform, but also because educational experiences and outcomes have been linked strongly to attaining meaningful employment and facilitating socioeconomic participation and upward mobility (AMES Australia, 2020a; Rizwana et al., 2017).

Education and acquiring vocational and professional training are widely considered to be an avenue through which those who have had a refugee experience can pursue their employment aspirations and/or attain meaningful employment (Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018). Thus, rather than investigating educational and employment experiences as distinct from one another, it is essential to understand how they are experienced together over time. This is because each of these domains of experience — education and employment — influences and shapes the other, including how people understand their own education-to-employment realities over time. As Khawaja and Hebbani (2018) suggest, in seeking to understand and improve the employment outcomes of those who have had a refugee experience, it is vital not only to explore their employment

experiences, but also, and equally, to explore their employment aspirations (Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018) and the link between educational pathways that lead to their employment. As such, in line with the notion of trajectory, I have factored into the discussion the literature that focuses on education and employment independently. Consequently, there is overlap between educational and employment contexts throughout this study, capturing the relationship between them. Throughout this thesis the two are held together by the concept of trajectory.

At this juncture it is vital to add that trajectory is also important because as Ricœur (1984/2012, p. x) suggested, schematising, through drawing together or integrating otherwise scattered life events, allows for a complete or whole story to unfold intelligibly. This is the case not only for the construction of narrative, but also, holistically, in how people make sense of their lives. As individuals reflect on their experiences, they project backwards and forwards while living in the present moment (Ricœur, 1984/2012;1988). Accordingly, understandings of the past are being shaped in a manner that is always relative to the present (what is going on now, both in the internal world of an individual and in the external situated reality), as are perceptions, expectations, and anticipations of what is possible in the future. In this way, the education-to-employment experiences of an individual establishes a sense of trajectory that is created over time through this backward and forward projection across time and space.

The notion that people connect backwards and forwards across their history of lived experiences as they make sense of and understand them also emerges in Dewey's (1938/1997) principle of continuity of experience. Dewey deliberates that in navigating through new experiences, past experiences are integrated both cognitively and emotionally into their understandings, shaping both present and future experiences. In this sense, life trajectories are a continuum; 'every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way, the quality of those which come after' (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 35). All the conditions and experiences people encounter across the landscape of a lifetime influences, for better or worse and to varying degrees 'the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose' (p. 39). Experience, then, can be understood as an analogue to memory, bringing an anticipatory quality to everyday life (Ricœur, 1984/2012, p. 12). People routinely predict future events based on prior experience, permeated with anticipating qualities such as desire, purpose,

aspiration, hope, and fear. As life unfolds, the way past events are remembered and construed is altered as new meaning is applied contingent to the accumulation of new experiences (Dewey, 1934, 1938/1997).

To better understand these qualities of trajectory, Dewey (1934, p. 39) offers a metaphor of a stone rolling down a hill: the stone begins, and continuing to roll, 'consistently as conditions permit', progresses en route towards an end point, a place and condition where it will experience cessation. Dewey contemplates the idea that as the stone makes this journey it anticipates the future with desire, to a destination and condition, engaged with and influenced by what it encounters across the trajectory of rolling down the hill. The conditions that the stone encounters may accelerate and/or impede its flow, with action, thought, and feeling arising according to how the (desired/imagined) end, relates '… to all that went before as the culmination of experience …' (p. 39). From this perspective, people's present experiences are a function of the interaction between their pasts, their lived histories, their present situations, and their imagined futures. Simply put, past experiences are always remembered and interpreted as contingent to the present moment and future possibilities (p. 249). As such, educational and employment experiences are interconnected; they are a part of the whole of an individual's trajectory, with each experience in either domain building upon the composition of an individual's movement from and between the other, and how the individual makes sense of them.

The understanding that education and employment are related domains of experiences and two interrelated dimensions of one trajectory is not a novel one. Although there has been a marked absence of scholarly interest in students' 'transitions out' of higher education, irrespective of background (Baker, 2018), some studies are beginning to signal the connections between the educational and employment transitions and experiences of refugees (Beadle, 2014; Hebbani & Khawaja, 2018; Khawaja et al., 2019).

For example, Beadle's (2014) guide to the development of future programs for young people who have had a refugee experience includes a review of current literature on the experiences of young people with refugee backgrounds transitioning from education into employment in Australia. In her review, Beadle acknowledges the distinct and diverse needs of such people and the necessity of adopting a holistic approach in addressing them. For Beadle (p. 29), a holistic approach is related to providing

wellbeing support alongside education and employment services without focusing solely on one or the other. She stresses that the needs of young people who have had a refugee experience are not catered to sufficiently. She highlights the need for support programs and societal awareness of how prejudice creates social, educational, and economic disadvantage and inequity for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In their study situated in the field of migration and integration, Hebbani and Khawaja (2018) also maintain that refugees experience specific difficulties in advancement in upward mobility in employment. Like Beadle (2014), they argue for the need for employment agencies to support refugees in improving their employment situation. Hebbani and Khawaja (2018) consider the employment aspirations of refugees resettled in Australia from Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Myanmar. The authors adopted a mixed-methods approach to show that the everyday obstacles experienced by participants result in a gap between their current job and future aspirations. Firstly, 222 participants completed a questionnaire with the assistance of interpreters. Of these, 47 were interviewed. Thematic analysis of the data established that, generally, participants aspired to pursue their own business, but were confronted with a range of obstacles to achieving their goals. Identified obstacles included limited English language proficiency and limited knowledge of how to secure employment in the fields and roles to which they aspired. In another study examining the link between education and employment in the experiences of refugees, Khawaja et al., (2019) explore the connection between tertiary education and its impact on the likelihood of being employed. The authors argue that level of education was not significantly associated with employment status, and their predominant focus was emphasising the participants' lack of English proficiency.

Although each of these studies (some of which are explored in more detail in the coming sections of this chapter) clearly do consider the interrelationship between educational experiences and employment outcomes and prospects, they do not bring them together as a whole, nor do they identify that education and employment are unified by the notion of trajectory. Furthermore, they tend to take a monolingual view that does not address the multiple languages, cultures, related knowledges, and social realities of refugees and migrants. Insights into the role of the multiple languages and cultures in the trajectory from education-to-employment of young people who have

arrived in Australia as refugees, through their own voices and in their own terms, are lacking. Thus, I have adopted this holistic approach. Considering the dearth of research that acknowledges and addresses the holistic nature of their trajectories, it is essential to investigate as interdependent the educational and employment realities of young people who have had a refugee experience, and how these are reflected upon and understood over time.

As I have foreshadowed throughout this section, the idea of taking a holistic approach also includes consideration of the linguistically and culturally diverse nature of their realities. As young people who have had a refugee experience make their trajectory from education-to-employment, they do so in the context of complex diversity, in which their multiple languages and cultures are always at play. Yet, this point remains largely omitted from the mainstream literature that addresses this area of research. I now turn to review studies concerned with refugee and migrant educational and employment experiences, illustrating the pressing need to consider the role and significance of the multiple languages and cultures in their learning and working experiences.

2.2 Understanding the education-to-employment experiences of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees

It is widely accepted that employment occupies a significant space in people's lives as it is through employment that people can access income to support themselves, affording a sense of meaning and fulfilment, and opportunities to participate in and contribute to the society in which they live. As Bakhshi et al., (2017), underscore the present and future of employment across the world is in a space of uncertainty, with a labour market of growing complexity influenced by the rapid advancement in technology with people moving across fields and inhabiting multiple geographical spaces (International Labour Office, 2015), languages and cultures (Kramsch, 2009, 2011; Shohamy, 2006) in their lifetimes. This uncertainty is increased for those who are living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own. Although there have been significant improvements in the work force status of 'minority' groups, disparity remains (Pager & Shepherd, 2008, p. 185).

Many people across the world face multiple disadvantages that reduce their chances of and in work, and which are largely the consequence of discrimination in the unequal

distribution of employment (Pager & Shepherd, 2008, p. 182). In Australia, this discrimination has frequently been found to be based on race and ethnicity (Beadle, 2014; Oliff, 2010; Shergold et al., 2019), with some studies downplaying racism as an issue for refugees in employment contexts (Curry et al., 2018). Other studies (Colic-Peisker, 2009; Colic-Peisker, 2006; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007b) situated in the field of psychology have found that discrimination experienced by refugees and migrants is related to linguistic and cultural difference, including speaking English with an accent different from that of the mainstream society and perceived lack of knowledge of Australian culture. Irrespective of these various findings related to the grounds for and the extent to which such people face discrimination, the literature concerned with refugee and migrant employment experiences and outcomes indicates that securing employment is more challenging for those who are living in a dominant language and culture that is not their own, compared to their mainstream counterparts (Hwang & Domina, 2017).

A plethora of difficulties that young people who have had a refugee experience encounter in accessing employment, including interrupted education and barriers to educational success, have been well established (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Beadle, 2014; Nunn et al., 2014). These include a common expectation that all students will experience a linear progression through education into employment (Abkhezr et al., 2015, p. 72; Beadle, 2014, 2015, p. 17) and experiences of structural and social discrimination (Nunn et al., 2014, p. 1206). Considering it is known that this demographic face linguistic and cultural discrimination and disadvantage in learning and working (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Earnest et al., 2015; Hwang & Domina, 2017; McMichael et al., 2017; Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia, 2019), it is essential to understand the role of language and culture across their experiences in accessing and participating in education and employment. This is vital given that educational and employment disparity remains for those who speak English as a second language and come from diverse cultural life-words, and bring with them diverse knowledge, understandings, values, and practices.

As I have discussed throughout this chapter thus far, the role of refugees' and migrants' multiple languages and cultures in their experiences and the multilingual and intercultural nature of their realities remains at the margins of the discussion. As such, a primary dimension of their experience remains underexplored. For example, in a study

situated in Western Australia, the authors, Earnest et al. (2015) investigate the resettlement experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience. They report on the impact of language (understood as English language) on the participants' employment experiences, along with their resilience and desire to succeed in education and employment. Adopting a psychosocial conceptual framework employing qualitative methods including focus group discussions, interviews and thematic analysis, the importance of English language proficiency in accessing and maintaining employment is emphasised through the participants' perspectives.

In researching the experiences of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, it is vital to acknowledge that their experiences in education, employment, and beyond, in the wider world around them, are characterised by monolingual contexts. The reality, however, is that Australian society is a community composed of many who are multilingual and who live in more than one language, culture, way of knowing, and value system. The dominant languages and cultures of refugees are different from the dominant language and culture of the society they have entered upon their arrival in Australia. Although this is becoming increasingly acknowledged (AMES Australia, 2020a; Rizwana et al., 2017), it causes continued educational and employment disparity for refugees in terms of access and outcomes, and leads to their overrepresentation in particular fields of work (Charlesworth & Isherwood, 2020; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Hebbani & Khawaja, 2018; Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018).

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) describe the Australian labour market as characterised by segmentation, with those who have had a refugee experience overrepresented in 'bottom jobs' in refugee employment 'niches' that their local counterparts tend to avoid. The authors, who combined quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis in their sociological study, consider the lack of recognition of previous education and qualifications to be a form of systemic racism and cultural discrimination. The data were collected through a survey of 150 refugees resettled in Perth, Western Australia, as well as from data collected in two other sociological research projects conducted by the authors independently from 2001 to 2005. They highlight that the most vulnerable migrants are refugees, as they tend to be channelled into and restricted to disadvantaged, low-status, and low-paying jobs in the so-called 'secondary labour market'. These jobs tend to be located in labour market niches, including cleaning services, care of the aged, meat processing, taxi driving, security, building, and roles

that provide services that attend to the settlement and educational needs of their own communities.

Although the authors signal issues surrounding language and culture, these are generally not considered beyond the fact that being visibly different is a barrier to meaningful employment. The notion of 'visible difference' in their study refers to the phenomenon of being categorised disadvantageously based on linguistic and cultural difference, including physical appearance, and accent. This means that those who have arrived in Australia categorised as refugees or migrants are generally disadvantaged in the workforce. They do not have equal access to the opportunities available to the broader community because they do not fit the norms of the dominant mainstream.

In another study (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007a), the same authors explain that:

> We have used the term 'visible difference' or 'visibility' as a less value-laden concept than race, as it does not carry the unwanted historical connotations of racial hierarchy. The concept of visible difference simply denotes a visible minority status in a particular social environment, which stems from the culturally and historically defined 'normal' or 'standard' majority self. (p. 60)

The authors argue that refugees and migrants' unchangeable linguistic and cultural characteristics trigger prejudices that translate into discrimination in employment (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006, p. 223). They conclude that employers frequently conceal such prejudice in 'politically correct' discourse, and many are reluctant to report incidents of discrimination.

This study was conducted in 2006, yet it remains influential; it is frequently drawn upon in the current literature concerning refugee and migrant education and employment in the Australian context. Today, some 15 years later, people with a refugee experience continue to be channelled by social and institutional forces into employment niches where labour shortages exist (Charlesworth & Isherwood, 2020; Hebbani & Khawaja, 2018; Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018). The participants in the study by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) were from 'visible' refugee groups, including those from Yugoslavia, Africa, and the Middle East. They experienced immense downward occupational mobility with little opportunity to access work in positions with opportunities that allowed upward occupational mobility (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006).

The participants in the study were educated, yet their skills remained unharnessed in Australia, consequently, education was found not to determine employment that fits

their experience or qualifications, with many facing unemployment and/or underemployment. Although Colic-Peisker and Tilbury highlight ways that the 'refugee' category frequently limits the industries and types of jobs such people have access to, issues around language and culture are considered only in terms of 'accent', 'proficiency', or 'language difficulties' relative to English as the norm. Issues related to notions such as 'accent' and 'proficiency' have been addressed in applied linguistic research that considers the experiences of those who have are living, learning, and working in the context of a dominant language and culture that is not that of their primary socialisation. For example, Ellis (2016) explores research undertaken with teachers in Australia and abroad, questioning the widely accepted view that as long as those who are Teaching English as a second or foreign language (TESOL) have proficiency in English, their other languages, or lack thereof are irrelevant (p. 1).

Issues surrounding the notion of 'accent' are raised by Derivry-Plard (2011, 2013, 2018). In her discussion of the 'native speaker teacher' in languages learning contexts, Derivry-Plard (2018) advocates for the need for a multilingual paradigm for plurilingual and pluricultural language teachers. In doing so the author offers a critique of the notion of 'native speaker'. She illustrates how instinctive value judgements are frequently imposed upon those who do not speak with an accent that fits within the traditional, monolingual paradigm of the educated native speaker. The 'native speaker', she argues, 'is basically the sole legitimate speaker of the language excluding the educated non-native speaker once and for all' (p. 326). The insidious notion of being a 'native speaker', or of 'owning' a language categorised by the geographical place in which one has been socialised, and speaking with an accent that fits that of the majority of a given social context can profoundly impact the perceived legitimacy of a speaker/teacher. This reality is based on the native speaker fallacy, which is that if a teacher teaches their native language, the language is legitimate, and consequently the native speaker teacher is legitimate. Conversely, for the non-native speaker teacher, they are frequently judged as illegitimate as they do not speak the language taught with a 'native speaker' accent.

Much literature has documented this issue for language teachers for the last 30 years and particularly for English language teachers since English is the most widely taught language in the world (Derivry-Plard, 2018). As Derivry-Plard states:

> In a nutshell, the educated non-native speaker is nearly there, just about there but remains a second-class speaker of the given language: whatever they do, there will

> always be a slight unexpected way of speaking, a use of vocabulary or intonation that will disclose their non-nativeness. (p. 327)

The work of Derivry-Plard, like that of Ellis (2016), stresses that the accent in which a person speaks, can profoundly impact their life chances, because of the deeply rooted ideologies around accent, which are ingrained in binary oppositions such as inclusion/exclusion, or us/them.

The work of Derivry-Plard and Ellis is important to consider at this juncture, given that research suggests that the inequity and disadvantage experienced by refugees in education and employment is a global phenomenon, frequently attributed to perceived accent and language proficiency. For instance, in a study situated in the field of public health and education in North Carolina, USA, Sienkiewicz et al. (2013) investigated the experiences of ten French-speaking participants of African descent who had recently arrived as refugees. Taking a phenomenological approach, the aim of the study was to capture an understanding of the pre- and post-migration employment expectations and realities of recently resettled African refugees. A collective expectation that 'life is good if you have work' was reported, and participants expressed that they expected to find work in their fields with relative ease. However, they were largely unemployed or underemployed, which in part was the result of discrimination and what the authors describe as limited English comprehension and issues related to language proficiency. Echoing the findings of Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006), the study by Sienkiewicz et al. (2013) highlights that the participants experienced a loss of occupational status. This loss of previous educational and professional status in the country of resettlement is widely recognised as a significant barrier to employment across the literature concerned with refugee and migrant education and employment (Baker, 2020).

Sienkiewicz et al. (2013) also highlight that participants experienced identity issues stemming from under- or unemployment. They emphasise the significance of lack of English comprehension and navigating an unfamiliar language, culture, and society. Although issues related to language and culture are considered in the studies by both Sienkiewicz et al. (2013) and Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006), neither study considers their role in the discussion of refugees' educational and employment experiences. Consideration of language and culture beyond accent and the fact that refugees do not come from the mainstream is imperative, given the mediating role that languages and culture play in interaction and how people understand themselves, others, their

experiences, and the wider social worlds around them. As Baker and Ramsay (2016) point out, many refugees who have resettled in Australia are in fact literate in their own language, and it is not only issues surrounding English literacy that impact on such students' educational and employment experiences and outcomes. Disparate educational systems between their countries of origin and that of the host country, as well as different languages and cultural and societal values, all contribute to the challenges that young people who have had a refugee experience face.

In their recent study situated in Australia within the field of psychology, Khawaja et al. (2019) highlight that the research concerned with refugee experiences has been found that English language proficiency increases the probability of employment. Yet, they also point towards a study in the Netherlands that found that host-language proficiency did not affect refugees' chance of employment but did affect their occupational status (p. 429). For example, Khawaja and her colleagues investigated the correlation between demographics, acculturation, acculturative stress, resilience, and the employment status of those who have had a refugee experience. They point to the substantial research evidence that reveals refugees' employment experiences are characterised by a far-reaching range of difficulties as they settle in their host country, which I considered in Section 2.1.

The researchers gathered qualitative questionnaire data from 169 participants from Ethiopia, Congo, and Myanmar, all of whom had relocated to Brisbane, Australia (Khawaja et al., 2019). The study establishes that resilience and demographic variables such as age, education, gender, and country of origin were not associated with being employed. Instead, being acculturated increased the likelihood of being unemployed, while increased stress associated with acculturation increased the likelihood of being employed. The authors found that unemployed participants perceived themselves to be acculturated and integrated, while those who were employed reported more stress, which was connected to their acculturation experiences. They conclude that employment, despite its lauded impacts, can also be stressful. This suggests that for those with a refugee experience, employment is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, refugees face increased challenges in accessing employment in the first place. On the other hand, once in employment, the challenges continue, for example in the guise of stress in adapting to the dominant language and culture and that of the workplace.

Khawaja et al. highlight that many who have had a refugee experience face opportunities as well as challenges in their education-to-employment trajectories.

Consideration of the opportunities highlighted by Hebbani, MacKinnon, and MacKinnon (2019) is echoed in the emerging literature concerned with refugees' educational and employment experiences and outcomes (Mupenzi, 2018; Newman et al., 2018), demonstrating that many refugees display immense resilience, adaptability, and aptitude in navigating social, linguistic, and cultural spheres of everyday life. The findings established by Khawaja et al. (2019) indicate that in the experiences of many refugees, working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own can present challenges that profoundly influence not only their employment status and outcomes, but also their wellbeing. Yet, this fact is not sufficiently explored; the role and consequences of their languages and cultures (other than their English proficiency, or lack thereof) are not addressed. Accordingly, such studies indicate that further investigation is warranted to understand more deeply what is contributing to what Khawaja and her colleagues call 'acculturative stress', and the role of the diverse languages and cultures in refugees' experiences beyond their need for English and acculturation. Although the authors recognise what is being referred to as the 'resilience' and 'adaptability' of those who have had a refugee experience, they continue to focus on language and culture in relation to English and adapting to the 'mainstream culture'. Thus, such people's experiences are generally understood only through a monolingual lens that fails to consider their home languages and cultures and how they experience living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own.

Although the emerging literature, including the study by Khawaja et al. (2019), is beginning to hint at the linguistic, cultural, and social adaptability and aptitude of refugees, issues of language and culture remain on the periphery. Investigations into how such people experience education and employment, and that foreground the role and significance of their two or more languages and cultures, are largely absent from scholarly discussions. This point is taken up by Ndhlovu (2015b) in a study situated in regional New South Wales, underscoring the point that there are spheres of possibilities presented by immigrants' skills in multiple linguistic repertoires. Taking an applied lingusic lens with a multilingual view, the author highlights that Africans who have Australian citizenship or hold permanent resident visas, generally have very limited

employment opportunities when compared to more established Australian citizens. Drawing on interview data from African-born Australians with refugee backgrounds illustrates that the participants' multiple and diverse linguistic and cultural repertoires are an untapped resource. The author outlines that English proficiently, or lack thereof, can determine who has access to opportunities for economic advancement. This is because it is the language that enables people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to establish connections and perform all the necessary interactions outside of their immediate family and friendship communities.

Ndhlovu's study indicates that English language proficiency profoundly impacts access to meaningful employment. However, as Ndhlovu argues:

> The past experiences of African denizens—whether they be experiences of conflict, war, hunger, political persecution, displacement and/or loss of property, along with their associated emotional, social and economic consequences—should not prevent us from seeing the capabilities and the 'spheres of possibility' (the prospects and opportunities of intra- and cross-cultural networking that are facilitated by the ability to speak multiple languages in remote rural and regional areas of Australia) that lie beneath these tragic events. (p. 9)

What Ndhlovu proposes is, a broader understanding of the capabilities of refugees in Australia by considering their history of lived experiences, including their migration journeys, and their linguistic and cultural resources. As the author makes clear, the experiential, cultural and linguistic repertories of those who have experienced forced migration require the attention of the academic community, policy makers, service providers and other practitioners at the point of service delivery. This is because they are in-fact inhabiting 'spheres of possibility' as the margins and marginality create opportunities for transformation and new beginnings. Taking this positive view, or what Ndhlovu refers to as 'spheres of possibility', inhabiting 'the margins', affords different insights into the experiences, linguistic and cultural capabilities of the African diaspora in Australia. In turn, this perspective reveals the potential value of the prior linguistic practices and cultural resources that refugees already have, in addition to varieties of Englishes, that otherwise remain concealed by overemphasis on English proficiency.

The focus on refugees' and migrants' attainment and proficiency of the dominant and mainstream language reflects a recurring pattern in the current literature concerning their education, and access to and outcomes in employment. Although English occupies

an unquestionably significant role in educational and employment attainment and success in the experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience in Australia, the focus on English proficiency and acculturation overlooks the role and significance of their first languages and cultures in these spheres. This is noteworthy because, as Beadle (2014) highlights, there is a need for increased awareness of the ways in which linguistic and cultural prejudice and discrimination maintain structural disadvantages for those who have had a refugee experience.

Examining statistical data and a combination of quantitative and qualitative research related to the education-to-employment experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience, Beadle (2014) argues that the needs of young people with refugee backgrounds are insufficiently addressed or accommodated in educational domains, adversely impacting their employment opportunities and outcomes. Beadle identified various obstacles as barriers to accessing employment, including what she refers to as 'language barriers'; unfamiliarity of local and institutional culture; limited financial resources; scarcity of information related to educational pathways; and lack of recognition of prior education, qualifications, and work experience (p. 7). Considering the educational and economic disparity faced by refugees and migrants that Beadle highlights, applied linguists have been calling for more research into the experiences of such multilingual people for decades (Clyne & Jupp, 2011).

Emerging and contemporary research has sought to understand and foreground the educational and broader social implications for such people in a rapidly changing and 'super-diverse' (Vertovec, 2007) linguistic, cultural, and social world. In doing so, a wide range of applied linguistic studies concerned with education policy and practice, including Clyne and Jupp (2011), Heugh and Liddicoat (2014), Kramsch (2009, 2011), Ndhlovu (2015a), and Scarino (2014b) have drawn on the work of Bourdieu and his collaboration with Passeron and Thompson. Taking a Bourdieusian perspective underscores the production of (symbolic) power and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) by employing market metaphors to conceptualise the social, symbolic, and unequal distribution of power that characterises societies. For Bourdieu (1986), social worlds are marketplaces in which individuals strive for what he termed economic, social, cultural, and linguistic capital. Linguistic capital refers to the qualities of language that have value and prestige in particular social contexts, with different forms of languages having prestige in different

social environments. Accordingly, the form of language that an individual speaks may hold value and prestige, or not, depending upon social context. This means that the linguistic capital of an individual fluctuates under the domination of those who have the greatest 'market share' in each social setting, and consequently, linguistic capital is not distributed evenly between individuals or across societies.

In drawing on a Bourdieusian perspective, such studies (Clyne & Jupp, 2011; Heugh & Liddicoat, 2014; Kramsch; 2009, 2011; Ndhlovu, 2015a; Scarino, 2014b) underscore that 'upward' social, educational, and employment mobility of those who do not come from the dominant language and culture is impeded by structures that privilege those who come from the mainstream. However, such insights are only recently beginning to be taken up in studies that focus specifically on refugee educational and employment experiences. Harvey and Mallman (2019), for example, focus on the role of the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge of those who have had a refugee experience in educational contexts. The authors investigate how students from refugee backgrounds navigate higher education in an environment where there is a lack of recognition of what the authors call their 'alternative strengths' and 'cultural capital'. Like Ndhlovu (2015a) and Scarino (2014b), whose research is often grounded in educational contexts, the authors argue that many students' multilingual resources go largely unnoticed. Adopting a critical race theory lens and applying Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural and social capital, Harvey and Mallman (2019) reveal how social inequity is sustained in educational and economic systems. Their qualitative study included interviews with 18 students from Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, all of whom were studying in one of three regional university campuses in the state of Victoria. Their findings underscore the reality that those from refugee backgrounds are less likely to find employment within their preferred field post-graduation, in part owing to prejudice based on accent and/or perceived English proficiency.

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital, Harvey and Mallman (2019) argue that refugees tend to be positioned by others, such as educators and employers, as deficient in strengths and forms of cultural and social capital necessary for university success. They emphasise that these students' alternative strengths and cultural capital are under-researched and remain largely unharnessed (p. 660). Thus, when scholars and educators emphasise what these 'disadvantaged' students lack and how they can access

the forms of strength and cultural capital that those from the dominant mainstream possess — 'traits of privilege' — they may unconsciously legitimise the cultural capital of the dominant culture. The authors establish that, in doing so, the forms of 'linguistic and cultural wealth' that such students bring are habitually overlooked. When research focuses only on what those who are 'disadvantaged' lack, and how they might be provided with access to qualities and traits of privilege, research may inadvertently perpetuate the problem. For example, omitting recognition of other forms of cultural wealth (p. 659), including their diverse languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices. Harvey and Mallman underscore that further research investigating the role of refugees' multiple languages, cultures, and other forms of experiential capital is necessary, given that their education-to-employment experiences are characterised by linguistic and cultural diversity. This is a reality that remains unresearched in fields related to the educational and employment experiences of refugees who are living, learning, and working in the context of complex diversity.

Considering this absence of studies that take into account the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities of refugees in educational and employment contexts, Baker and Irwin (2021) call for further research and practice that takes a holistic approach to research and practice. The authors highlight that in seeking understandings of the educational realities of refugees' it is important to consider that the transitions into and throughout higher education of this demographic is a complex, multilayered phenomena. A holistic approach involves foregrounding the reality that such students, who have faced forced migration and resettlement, bring their unique histories to their educational experiences (p. 76). Their rich and diverse range of languages, cultures, knowledges, and practices (p. 77), which, the authors found, are overlooked in current studies. They urge researchers to conduct their investigations in a way that acknowledges their unique histories and realities.

Taking a longitudinal and ethnographic approach, Baker and Irwin (2021) analysed the educational transitions of seven adult refugees living in a regional city in Australia. They question how 'traditional' hegemonic understandings of educational pathways as linear can account for the heterogeneity of their lived experiences of participating in higher education. Over a three-year period, each of the participants was interviewed up to eight times. There were three focus groups and five one-to-one interviews. In this study, situated within the fields of higher education and migrant cultural studies, and

pedagogy, Baker and Irwin point out that despite the increase in academic interest in refugees' transitions into higher education, universities continue to struggle to support such students.

Baker and Irwin (2021) establish that standard notions of educational transitions serve to conceal the complexity of refugees' educational experiences, leaving them in what they refer to as 'stuck' in 'liminal spaces'. The authors' notion of 'stuck places' refers to the conditions that prevent refugee students from transitioning out of or moving forward along their educational pathways. Their conception of liminal is employed as a way of capturing the messy experience of transformations as a place between states, which takes place as part of transition (p. 80). The study challenges dominant understandings of transition as linear and normative, maintaining that a more nuanced understanding of educational transitions are experienced by refugees is required to better understand the educational pathways of refugees. The present study has sought to contribute to this emerging literature that is beginning to foreground the reality that refugees bring a diverse range of languages, cultures, knowledges, and practices to their learning and working, as Baker and Irwin point out.

In this section, I have discussed the current literature related to refugees' and migrants' educational and employment experiences. In examining this literature, I have shown that it is necessary to access insights into the role of the multiple languages, cultures, and knowledges of refugees in their learning and working beyond issues related to their need for English proficiently and 'cultural fluency'. In doing so, I have established that current studies largely overlook the role of refugees' linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge in their experiences, which is a fundamental omission given that such people live, learn, and work in linguistic and cultural diversity. As a result, this consideration remains outside of discussions related to their educational and employment experiences.

In the next section I turn to the need for and importance of taking a multilingual and intercultural orientation in researching the educational and employment experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience. I identify why taking a multilingual approach matters for young people who have had a refugee experience themselves, as well as for the wider communities in which they are living, learning, and working. In discussing applied linguistic research, I highlight that a multilingual and intercultural

orientation accesses insights into multilingual research participants' implicit and tacit linguistic and cultural knowledges. I suggest that taking a multilingual and intercultural view enables insights into the reality that because refugees and migrants live in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously, their experiences also are had multilingually and interculturally (Scarino, 2020). As such, their tacit multilingual and intercultural realities and knowledges are manifested in dynamic social processes in interaction with others in contexts characterised by linguistic and cultural diversity, and it is through this that they mediate meaning within and across languages and cultures (May, 2014; Pennycook 2021; Scarino, 2020). Currently, studies concerned with education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience lack the multilingual and intercultural stance that I argue is needed to access insights into their experiences and their understandings of those experiences.

2.3 Taking an applied linguistic approach

As I have discussed throughout this chapter thus far, research related to refugee and migrant education and employment experiences focuses on the need for such people to adapt to what is for them a new social, linguistic, and cultural landscape in order to experience successful resettlement. Significantly, successful resettlement includes issues related to educational attainment and access to opportunities for employment, and because refugees are learning and working in an English language environment, English is a prerequisite and their key to educational and employment opportunities and success (Hebbani & Preece, 2015). However, it is through taking such a monolingual and monocultural view of language and culture that the linguistic, cultural, life-worlds, and experiential knowledge that refugees do have and the role that these play in their experiences remains overlooked. Despite the increasing recognition that language and culture play a mediating role in the life experiences of all people (Pennycook, 2021; Scarino, 2020), current studies that focus on the educational and employment experiences of young people who arrived in the host country as refugees (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Beadle, 2014, 2015; Hwang & Domina, 2017) continue to be situated within a monolingual framework. Although this research focuses on the educational and economic disadvantages experienced by many, as I have emphasised throughout this chapter thus far, they continue to do so through a monolingual lens, focusing on their

need for the dominant or mainstream language and acculturation to the mainstream society.

It is widely accepted by applied linguistics scholars and researchers (Clyne & Jupp, 2011; Heugh & Liddicoat, 2014; Kramsch 2009, 2011; Ndhlovu, 2015a; Scarino, 2014a;2014b) that contemporary societies are characterised by social, linguistic, and cultural diversity. These researchers underscore that overarching hegemonic structures both in and outside of educational and employment context constrain the individual agency of those whose primary language of communication and home culture is not that of the wider society. Accordingly, it is vital that a multilingual and intercultural orientation replace the monolingual approach that pervades current research concerning refugees' education-to-employment trajectories. In shifting from a monolingual to a multilingual and intercultural view, languages and cultures are no longer conceived as being held separately in the lives and minds of those who live in two or more languages and cultures. Rather, they are understood to be simultaneously at play. Focusing on issues related to language and culture through a monolingual view that considers only the role of the dominant language and culture omits what Pennycook (2021) and Scarino (2020) describe as the mediating role that people's home languages and cultures play in their whole-of-life experiences, which includes their learning and working. In working towards linguistic, cultural, and social equity for all it is imperative to take a multilingual and intercultural stance in research that seeks to understand the education-to-employment experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience.

As Scarino and Crichton (2008) highlight, it is key that language is understood not only as a structural, grammatical system, but also as the lens through which people mutually interpret and communicate meaning. This is because as Scarino's work (2014a, 2014b, 2020) emphasises, language always involves the interpretation of meaning in social interactions in specific cultural contexts. Language is inextricable from culture, they are intimately related, as culture is mediated through language. This mediation through languages plays a pivotal in that language itself constitutes an interpretive framework through which social worlds are both created and made sense of (Scarino, 2014a, 2014b). Therefore, language and culture must be understood together when considering communication and experience in general (Liddicoat, 2009). In taking this multilingual and intercultural orientation, I foreground the need for an awareness of how those who are research participants make meaning across their two or more languages and cultures.

In her work around language learning, teaching, policy practice, and assessment, Scarino (2014a, 2014b, 2020) highlights that people's multiple linguistic and cultural repertoires, knowledges, values, practices, and life-worlds play a fundamental role in learning and language use more broadly speaking. She explains that all interaction involves the interpretation and exchange of meaning in reciprocal processes of simultaneously making sense of diverse participant contributions (Scarino, 2020, p. 46). This is because different languages create different social realities, through which distinct cultural framings come into play (Scarino, 2020). In discussing the challenges in languages education policy in Australia, Scarino (2014b) gives an account of both policy and curriculum development of languages in school education, underscoring ways in which educational contexts in Australia are characterised by a pervasive 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne, 2008). She highlights that although culture is often considered in government and education policy and initiatives, the linguistic resources of students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, including refugee youth, continue to be ignored. This is a significant oversight concerning refugee education and employment experiences, given the mediating role of language in the interpretation and exchange of meaning in interaction. Accordingly, the role of language needs to be considered along with the culture in studies concerned with refugee education-to-employment experiences. People's previous, present, and future experiences and their multiple languages and cultures are integral to their learning (Scarino, 2014b), thus it is understood that people learn, through what they already know, through past experiences and their multiple languages and cultures.

Scarino's (2014a, 2014b, 2020) work underscores that the monolingual perception of education is that knowledge and learning are understood and mediated through the singular lens of one language and culture (notably, English, in the Australian context). On the other hand, taking a multilingual and intercultural stance, both institutional and life-world learning and knowledge development are understood to be mediated through people's multiple languages and cultures (Scarino 2014a, 2014b, Scarino, 2020). People's diverse languages and cultures are not just tools for the construction and exchange of information or knowledge, rather, they constitute the linguistic and associated cultural systems that shape the interpretation of meaning in interaction.

People who live in multiple languages and cultures operate in-between the different social realities of those languages and cultures, and it is through these that their

multilingual and intercultural realities and capabilities arise (Scarino, 2014a, 2014b, 2020). As Ndhlovu (2015a) reveals in discussing his conception of 'ignored lingualism', research concerned with language education and policy resonates with contemporary discussions around social justice and equity, yet frequently does not depart 'from the hegemony of standard language ideological frameworks that inform the monolingual mindset' (p. 400). This reality is reflected in research focusing on the education-to-employment experiences of those who arrive as refugees because although such research is often geared towards resisting linguistic and cultural homogenisation, hegemonic forces persist. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Ndhlovu (2015a) coined the term 'ignored lingualism' to provide theoretical insights geared towards dismantling – or 'unlearning' as Scarino (2014b) terms it – the monolingual mindset in language education policy. Like Scarino, Ndhlovu (2015a) advocates that language education policies, conversations and social policy frameworks require a shift from 'monolingual mindset' to a multilingual orientation.

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977) notion of 'habitus', Ndhlovu (2015a) argues that current conversations about multilingualism tend to be stuck in a theoretical model of language as a standard, pre-given entity. For Ndhlovu, the focus needs to be on how the notion of 'lingual' is conceived. He proposes the question: What are current concepts of the 'lingual' in 'monolingualism' and 'multilingualism'? In response to his own questioning, he proposes the notion of 'ignored lingualism' to better capture that language practices are generally not recognised in contemporary language education policy discussions and implementation. Ndhlovu's (2015a) notion of 'ignored lingualism' and Scarino's (2014b) concept of 'unlearning' the monolingual mindset in language education policy are essential to discussion related to refugee education and employment. This is because the prevailing focus on what multilingual refugees and migrants do not have and what they need to acquire obscures their linguistic, cultural, and experiential life-world knowledge.

As Pennycook (2021) highlights, the linguistic, cultural, and life-worlds of all people are always at play, in all spheres of social life. Lo Bianco (2014, p. 314) argues there is a responsibility in educational and employment contexts to appreciate and legitimise 'existing stocks of knowledge, skill, awareness, and behaviour' that are present in Australia and beyond, throughout the global community. To accomplish this, research related to the education-to-employment experiences of those who have arrived as

refugees, such as the present study, requires a multilingual orientation. This is because taking a multilingual and intercultural stance facilitates insights into and supports a nuanced understandings of people's lived experiences and the mediating role of all their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges.

In current discussion in the literature concerned with the experiences of refugee and migrant employment, language and culture continue to be discussed predominantly in relation to their need for English language proficiency and adaptation to Australian society and culture (Baker, 2020). May (2014) refers to this as a 'monolingual bias', arguing that conceptions such as the idealised 'native speaker' and 'language competence' have been established in relation to monolingual speaker norms. Consequently, monolingual perspectives underscore migrants' and refugees' lack of English proficiency and relevant cultural knowledge, which are widely understood and discussed as negatively impacting their educational outcomes and employment attainment (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Blake et al., 2018).

In her applied linguistic narrative study of the experiences of 12 multilingual French-speaking migrant professionals working in Australia, O'Neill (2015), drawing on the work of Gogolin (1994, 2002) and Benson (2013), discusses a 'monolingual habitus' prevalent in educational and social policy and practice (p. 9). She explains that for people living in a dominant language and culture that is not their own, acquiring and speaking the mainstream language 'well' is vital to avoid marginalisation and to become integrated. However, the mainstream society is constituted by social structures that make their endeavour to do so immensely challenging (O'Neill, 2015, p. 9). The idea of a 'monolingual habitus' is that being multilingual is viewed as a divergence from the mainstream society in which a speaker is embedded, which in turn negatively impacts those who do not speak the dominant language. Even so, research that does take a qualitative approach in investigating the educational and employment experiences of migrants and refugees can still be limited through the lens of a monolingual habitus (Clyne & Jupp, 2011).

Heugh and Liddicoat (2014) suggest that languages other than the dominant language of the 'habitus' of a given society have been considered 'barriers to effective learning of the dominant language' and accordingly, 'an educational problem to be solved, ideally through language shift and assimilation to the monolingual norm' (p. 80). The focus on

the need for English and acculturation to the dominant culture continues to overshadow discussions related to research into migrant and refugee education-to-employment trajectories (Beadle, 2014; Blake et al., 2018), perpetuating the experiences of discrimination and disadvantage that many face. This preoccupation with what they lack in relation to the language and culture of the mainstream society means that refugee narratives in Australia continue to be characterised by deficit discourses (Curry, Smedley & Lenette, 2017, p. 2), that omit the role of multiple languages and cultures in their experiences. The notion of deficit discourses (Candlin & Crichton, 2011) has begun to be taken up in contemporary literature (Harvey & Mallman, 2019) that investigates this area. This is because the concept aptly captures the reality that such people are frequently positioned through a monolingual lens as not having relevant linguistic and cultural knowledge, which overlooks the linguistic and cultural resources that they do have. Nevertheless, monolingual views persist in the literature concerned with refugee and migrant workers (Baker, 2020), as well as in policy, practice, and recommendations (Cerna, 2019; Sherrell, 2017; UNHCR, 2019). This is reflected in the treatment of their home languages and cultures and the English language and Australian culture independently, if their first languages are considered at all.

Globalisation and the ever-increasing human movement across geographical, linguistic, and cultural borders, creating what Vertovec (2007) describes as 'superdiversity', has moved applied linguists to focus on the complex, dynamic, hybrid, and transnational linguistic repertoires of multilingual individuals. Such repertoires, May (2014, p. 1) points out, are described by various scholars in different ways, capturing the phenomenon where diverse languages and cultures are so profoundly intertwined with each other that it is difficult to determine boundaries that indicate that there are multiple languages and cultures are at play. These conceptions include Makoni and Pennycook's (2012) lingua franca multilingualism, along with many others, such as Rampton's ideas of 'crossings' (2017) and contemporary urban vernaculars (2011), Canagarajah's (2011) codemeshing, Creese and Blackledge's (2011) flexible bilingualism, Otsuji and Pennycook and Otsuji's (2010) metrolingualism, García's (2009) translanguaging, and Jørgensen's (2008) polylingual languaging. Although I do not draw on these terminologies in the present study, I have introduced them to illustrate that a multilingual and intercultural orientation in applied linguistic research captures the fluidity of language as a cultural and social practice in ways that are simply not possible

when taking a monolingual view that attends only to the language and culture of the mainstream society.

A multilingual and intercultural stance does not do away with a monolingual view to distinguish languages as fixed, bounded systems that one acquires and then learns to employ in interaction (Scarino, 2014a, 2014b, 2020). Instead, people's multiple languages and cultures are understood to be at play simultaneously, and therefore provide them with multiple lenses of interpretation through which they mediate their understandings, how they relate to the self, others, and the social worlds in which they live, learn (Scarino, 2020) and work (O'Neill, 2015; 2020). Blommaert (2013, p. 194) describes this understanding:

> A notion such as 'integration' used in relation to immigrants can be redirected from its usual monofocal bias — integration in the 'majority' social system, integration into 'our' culture and values, and so forth — into a more nuanced, plural, and surely more accurate direction. 'Being integrated,' we can see, means being capable of making oneself understood in a wide variety of social environments.

May (2014) explains that since the multilingual turn, applied linguistics scholars such as Ortega (2014a, 2014b) and Scarino (2014a, 2014b, 2020) have foregrounded the importance of taking languages and cultures into consideration when researching the experience of educational and employment environments. Taking a critical stance, May (2014) problematises the dominance of monolingualism that continues to underpin research concerned with language acquisition and use more broadly speaking. He explains that although the concept is often discussed as a recent discovery in 'Western' applied linguistics multilingual perspectives have been argued for by scholars throughout the world for decades (p. 2).

Pointing towards 'Southern' or 'Decolonial' understandings of language use or languaging (Maturana, 2002), May (2014) highlights that although monolingual norms and terminology continue to prevail in many academic and policy discussions related to the study of language acquisition and use, multilingual and intercultural views are not a new phenomenon. Without ignoring the ethnocentrism embedded in the Western concept of the multilingual turn, May (p. 1) points out that current research in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics has foregrounded multilingualism rather than monolingualism as the norm for research approaches, practices, and analysis. However, as I have argued thus far, although a multilingual and intercultural view is required to access insights into the role of language and culture in the lives of multilingual people,

to date this has not been the case in the research specifically concerned with refugee education-to-employment experiences.

Moving away from notions such as 'communicative competence', 'native speaker', and 'mother tongue', May (2014) and Ortega (2014a, 2014b) explain that with the emergence of the multilingual turn came critical applied linguistic perspectives, which Pennycook (2021) describes as challenging traditional notions of language acquisition and use. As both May (2014) and Oretga (2014) suggest, some labels used to discuss language learning and use that conceive language and culture through a monolingual framework cannot be wholly abandoned. This is because such terms are useful in making sense of and discussing the social, linguistic, and cultural phenomena that people encounter in their everyday lives. For example, the still ubiquitous term 'native speaker' and even 'language' itself are useful (May, 2014, p. 2.). As Ortega (2014b) states:

> The terms native speaker and nonnative speaker offer a useful point of entry into understanding how language ideologies work in disciplinary knowledge. These labels are used … as if their meanings were objective and neutral, denoting two natural categories of language users. (p. 35)

Thus, since the rise of critical applied linguistic approaches that have emerged with the multilingual turn (May, 2014; Pennycook, 2001), many terms have been created to capture what Shohamy (2006) describes as an 'expanded view of language'. May (2014, p. 2) welcomes the 'terminological proliferation' that has accompanied the increasing focus on 'super-diverse' (Vertovec, 2007; Blommaert, 2013) linguistic contexts, because the emerging terms seek to capture the phenomenon of people living in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously, which is the reality for many people throughout the world, including young people who have had a refugee experience — such as those involved in the present study.

The concepts that have emerged with the multilingual turn reveal what Pennycook (2021) describes as the interrelationship between the self, society, languages, and cultures. Expressions such as 'language as social practice', which captures the interactional, social, and dynamic nature of language, are better equipped to convey the nuances and complexities in seeking understandings of the intersection between these ideas (May, 2014). This is important to the present study, as each of the participants is living, learning, and working multilingually and interculturally. Yet, there is a dearth of

studies that take a multilingual and intercultural stance in focusing on refugee and migrant education-to-employment experiences, and the emphasis continues to be placed on their lack of English language skills and what Pittaway, Bartolomei, and Doney, (2016) describe as cultural fluency — 'the capacity of a community to operate successfully in the wider Australian context, or individual capacity to "understand the Australian culture' (p. 412).

In their article, Pittaway et al. (2016) report on the outcomes of a qualitative sociological project in the fields of community development and refugee studies, investigating how refugees resettled to Australia. Adopting a participatory approach, the researchers invited the voices of those who have lived the experience while under investigation to be heard and then subsequently foregrounded in the overall design of the study. Multiple consultations were held with the participants. This included small focus groups of between 5 and 20 participants and involved the construction of storyboards. Altogether the study involved 35 men, 45 women and 5 adolescent girls, from Mandean, Afghan, Congolese, Burundian, Sierra Leonean, Liberian, Iraqi, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Sri Lankan backgrounds. The need for 'welcoming' communities, 'mutual respect' and acceptance of diverse cultures that the authors underscore is frequently referred to in the literature, policy, practice, and recommendations regarding refugee employment, which is imperative given that Australian society is constituted by increasing linguistic and cultural diversity (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Although Pittaway et al. (2016) consider the importance of recognising, valuing, and what they term 'accepting' diverse cultures, they omit considerations of the role and significance of refugees' and migrants' multiple languages in their experiences. The design of the study does offer opportunities for those who live the experience under investigation to be foregrounded and thus heard, but the role of their multiple languages and cultures in their experiences is largely absent. For instance, participants involved in the study indicate the importance of having their own backgrounds, cultures, cultural values, and lived experiences acknowledged and viewed as having potential value in the Australian context. As one participant in the study stated:

> From my background as an African, it is a fact that we have been seen always how we do wrong, as we have non-English-speaking background … [Australians never

> ask] ‘do the Africans have anything to offer [in terms of cultural values] that we can [learn] from them?’ (Resettled refugee, Sydney). (p. 414)

Through foregrounding the voices of participants in their article in this way, the authors hint at the importance of the participants’ multiple languages and cultures. However, the focus is unwaveringly attached to the participants’ fundamental need for English and their ability to navigate Australian society. As I discussed in the Sections 2.1 and 2.2, this is frequently the case in studies (e.g., Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018) that investigate the educational and employment experiences of refugees and migrants.

Applied linguistic research taking a multilingual and intercultural orientation to young people who have had a refugee experience, particularly in the context of education, has begun to emerge in recent times. For example, in their sociolinguistic study, Bigelow et al. (2017) reported on and evaluated how pedagogical practices can effectively employ refugee student’s native languages in classes that are multilingual and in which the teacher does not speak the students’ home languages. The researchers invited 19 students from Somalia, Kenya, Djibuti, Ethiopia, and Ecuador from a summer English as a Second Language class to participate in a study of how in-class use of social media analysis can function to accomplish multilingual and literacy learning goals. The findings highlight how students can benefit from use of their native languages in education.

Data were collected in the form of students’ written and oral analyses of their conveyed representations, including visual images, which they created to express their perspectives about themselves and their home cultures. These were then posted on an online social media platform where members of the participant cohort could comment on one another’s artefacts, as well as discuss them in class. The researchers examined the students’ responses to teachers’ efforts to encourage peer-to-peer native language communication, and subsequently analysed how these efforts created opportunities for their language development. Bigelow et al. (2017) highlight that refugees’ experiences of disadvantages are related to monolingual pedagogical approaches, which continue even though there is a vast body of literature that verifies that the use of native languages supports the development of learners’ linguistic repertoires, including their home languages, academic language, and literacy in the new language (p. 196). Although research from a multilingual perspective is being adopted in educational

contexts of this group of refugees' experiences, such approaches have not yet entered research focusing on their employment.

The reality that the linguistic and cultural resources of refugees remain largely overlooked beyond their perceived English proficiency and their ability to navigate Australian society and culture successfully contributes to the widespread experience of discrimination and disadvantage. This is because even though linguistic and cultural diversity is continually increasing in Australia (Australian Bureau of Satistics, 2017), monolingual perspectives and attitudes in research, social policy, and practice continue, maintaining social structures that facilitate the dominance of a 'monolingual mainstream' (Clyne, 2008). For that reason, it is necessary to invite a multilingual and intercultural orientation to research, policy, and practice, such as I have adopted in the present study. Multilingual and intercultural views in research that considers the role of all of the languages and cultures of refugees is needed in order to re-imagine the narratives of deficit (Curry et al., 2018) that currently pervade the literature concerning refugee and migrant educational and employment experiences.

Pennycook (2021), who explains that the world has been divided on racial lines, urges recognition of how race is intertwined with what he terms 'native speakerhood' (p. 10). That is to say, the idea of the native speaker cannot be considered without understanding the social processes involved in the ways in which language is racialised in everyday social practice and discourse. Taking this view, I cannot ignore issues surrounding race — or that attempts to understand language in the context of employment cannot be disentangled from global social and political forces (Pennycook, 2021, p. 10). Clearly, there is a need for research that focuses on the role of all the linguistic, cultural, and experiential resources refugees bring with them in their education-to-employment trajectories. Because social justice is inextricably linked to linguistic and cultural discrimination and disadvantage (Heugh & Liddicoat, 2014; Clyne & Jupp, 2011; Scarino, 2014b), it is imperative that insights into the experiences of those from refugee backgrounds be accessed. In considering language beyond the need for English, and culture beyond the need for acculturation to the dominant mainstream society, it is possible to understand the mediating role that people's diverse languages and cultures play in educational and employment contexts.

Throughout this review I have examined some of the recent and emerging literature concerned with themes related to refugee experiences that hints at the role and significance of their languages and cultures in educational and employment domains beyond English language proficiency and acculturation (Beadle, 2014; Harvey & Mallman, 2019; Miller, Ziaian & Adrian Esterman, 2018). Such research focuses on opportunities for interrupting the reproduction of institutional and social disadvantage faced by young people who have had a refugee experience, which systematically disadvantages them (Beadle, 2014). As Dooley and Thangaperumal (2011) point out, this is appropriate given that the increase in forced humanitarian migration mobility is widely understood to be occurring in a global context of uneven educational and employment opportunities and outcomes. Unfortunately, when contemporary research that investigates the educational and employment experiences of refugees and migrants does consider issues related to language and culture, it tends to focus on concerns related to not having English or relevant local cultural knowledge.

This focus inadvertently gives the impression that such people have what has been termed a linguistic and cultural deficit (Candlin & Crichton, 2011). In turn, their multiple languages and cultures are frequently ignored altogether, or considered to negatively impact their ability to successfully navigate the social structures of everyday life, including their educational outcomes and capacity to attain and maintain employment. In order to work towards social, educational and economic equality for all, it is necessary to consider the role of languages and cultures across refugees' trajectories beyond the deficit views that pervade existing research. This matters because Australian society comprises people who bring diverse languages and cultures, many of whom are young people who have had a refugee experience, learning, and working in the context of a dominant language and culture that is not their own. Experiences of downward occupational mobility attributed largely to lack of knowledge of the dominant mainstream language and culture is a phenomenon that has been reported internationally for decades (Krahn et al., 2000). As this review has substantiated, young people who have had a refugee experience do not experience equity in education or employment; they face a myriad of challenges in these spheres, including linguistic and cultural discrimination and disadvantage.

In this section I have reviewed literature from within in the field of applied linguistics that takes a multilingual and intercultural stance. In so doing, I have highlighted that a

multilingual and intercultural orientation foregrounds the role of language and culture in refugees' experiences that continues to be concealed in mainstream literature owing to a prevailing 'monolingual lens' (May, 2014). This is critical to consider because, for young people who arrive in Australia as refugees, their whole life, including their learning and working, is mediated by their two or more languages and through the lens of the cultural worlds in which their lives are embedded. Thus, their education-to-employment trajectories are experienced and made sense of multilingually and interculturally, a reality which has received little focus in the current research concerned with refugee education-to-employment experiences.

By conducting research that shifts the focus from a monolingual to a multilingual and intercultural view, the experiences of those who are living, learning, and working in the context of complex diversity, such as young people who have had a refugee experience, maybe better understood. Such a stance foregrounds the role of their multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices. In turn, such research may contribute to insights into how such people experience, reflect upon, and make sense of their learning and working in the context of a dominant language and culture that is not their own. I now turn to consider why it is important to access understandings of the education-to-employment trajectories of young people living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own, in specific localities. I maintain that, to capture the social, linguistic, and cultural nuances of their realities, it is essential to take approaches that privilege the personal perspectives of those who live the experience under examination in micro rather than macro contexts.

2.4 Privileging the local and the voices of those who live the experience

The research methods of the studies from across various fields incorporated throughout this chapter have included a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. Through interviews, questionnaires, and statistical data they have provided insights into the educational and employment experiences of migrants and refugees. Heugh and Liddicoat (2014) explain that approaches that do not include a qualitative dimension can perpetuate and reinforce notions of difference, concretise stereotypical categorisations of people, and ignore complexities. Furthermore, qualitative research affords

possibilities of more nuanced accounts that locate young people's education-to-employment trajectories in specific contexts, permitting rich insights into their experiences and perspectives. Such research is required because it does not only investigate the educational and employment outcomes of refugee individuals and communities; it also addresses questions surrounding their own and others' perspectives, their social positionings in interaction, engagement, and participation in society, and social issues relating to access to and equity in education and employment.

Recent qualitative studies (Malsbary, 2016; Phakiti et al., 2018) in this area have highlighted an awareness of and sensitivity to the local and cultural particularities of research participants and contexts (Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2009, pp. 1–2; Malsbary, 2016). This attentiveness captures the increasingly fluid and unstable nature of subjectivities; social relations; linguistic and cultural identities; and practices (Blommaert, 2013; May, 2014; Ortega, 2014b).

Owing to their distinctive generational qualities as well as youth culture's constantly emerging and creative linguistic and cultural hybridisation, young people's experiences may convey the ways in which broader categorisations of human experiences such as language, culture, and identity are becoming increasingly fluid and blurred (Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2009, pp. 1–2; Malsbary, 2016). Malsbary (2016) suggests that in the context of globalisation, with changing demographics on both local and global levels, researchers struggle with the complexities of issues surrounding culture and identity. Through analysis of an applied linguistic multimodal and longitudinal qualitative study, Malsbary demonstrates that youth practices across two schools were similar, even though each of the schools had contrasting missions, policies, organisational structures, curricular techniques, and teacher beliefs about the linguistic and cultural diversity of the student bodies. According to Malsbary (p. 1492), educational contexts that are 'hyper-diverse', encompassing multilingual and multicultural resources that students bring with them on both social and personal levels, afford youth distinct practices. Drawing on recent conceptualisations of metaphors of movement pertaining to spatial frameworks of the global and the local such as 'transnationalism', 'transculturalism', and 'translanguaging', Malsbary addresses questions of what the increasingly complex linguistic and cultural nature of society in global times means for young people. She maintains that globalisation means more cultural affiliations and the blurring of national, ethnic, and racial categories in the context of schools and beyond (p. 1492).

It is widely accepted that the life conditions of young people are diverse as they face individual life circumstances within and across geographical locations, languages, and cultures (Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2009; Malsbary, 2016; Orellana, 2016; Phakiti et al., 2018). Bucholtz and Skapoulli (2009) suggest this complexity forces a particular approach to research that requires researchers to commit to ways of investigating and understanding the lives of young people that 'privilege the local, the immediate, and the everyday over the global, the historical, and the momentous' (p. 4). This is not because the macro context of globalisation does not affect the lives of young people, but because, in the complexity of contemporary times, youth sociocultural experiences can be studied meaningfully only through approaches that privilege the perspectives of those who live the phenomenon under investigation. Considering this understanding, research grounded in people's lived experiences affords insights into the nuances of specific people, their experiences, and how they make sense of them in everyday settings in specific geographical, social, linguistic, and cultural contexts. Accordingly, research seeking insights into how young people who have had a refugee experience make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories in a context of more than one language and culture would benefit from their firsthand perspectives. Through taking such an approach, it is possible to access local understanding of their lived experiences. This is fundamental because an individual's account contributes to understandings about a particular phenomenon at a particular point in history, in specific contexts (Riessman, 2008).

Currently, there is little research foregrounding the voices and perspectives of young people who arrive in Australia as refugees that underscores the role of their multiple languages and cultures in their everyday educational and employment experiences in this country. Drawing on critical theoretical insights from recent studies of youth identities, Bucholtz and Skapoulli (2009) also underscore that researchers must contemporaneously consider the linguistic and cultural dimensions of the contexts that shape young people's lives and be empirically grounded in the everyday lives of those who experience them. For youth who are living in contemporary migration conditions, living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own not only increases the difficulties in securing a livelihood, but it also profoundly affects their sense of belonging. The authors point out that issues related to society, community, and sense of belonging and identity are central to the experiences of young

people who live in contemporary conditions of mobility across geographical, linguistic, and cultural borders. Consequently, there is a need for research to simultaneously take into consideration the linguistic, cultural, interactional, and wider sociocultural contexts that shape their education-to-employment trajectories in Australia.

Presently, there is an effort by researchers towards seeking to understand the experiences of young people who come from linguistically marginalised communities such as those who have had a refugee experience. Through their commitment to sociolinguistic justice, such researchers (Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2009; Malsbary, 2016) highlight the close connection between linguistic and social inequalities, with a central focus on the relationship between their experiences and their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge and how it can benefit individuals and societies. Bucholtz et al. (2016, p. 26) go beyond the notion of 'empowerment' that has been popularised in social justice research of the past several decades, because this concept carries potentially condescending connotations. An example is in research where those from the dominant language and culture 'give voice' to those from 'minority' languages and cultures (p. 26) whose experiences are being researched. Instead, they propose the notion of 'accompaniment', which better captures the processual, social, and reciprocal nature of sociolinguistic research. In this sense, all involved in a study are considered to be researchers; all participants accompany one another and contribute different forms of 'expertise' and understanding.

Such an approach involves a reflective and reflexive approach and recognises research participants as what Bucholtz et al. (2016, p. 40) describe as 'linguistic experts, knowledge producers, and agents of change'. Those who occupy the role as researchers in the traditional sense, 'embrace the role of learner' (p. 40). This is necessary to consider because young people who arrive in Australia as refugees bring with them linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities that researchers (such as I) do not hold. Thus, privileging the voices and perspectives of those who are 'researched' may yield knowledge and insights that may otherwise not be accessed. In addition, I deliberately chose an arts-based approach as I was seeking to capture expressiveness that may be beyond words. Words are crucial, and I was attentive to their words, but I deliberately created opportunities for them to express that which may usually remain hidden to the participants themselves, and thus to researchers, such as myself.

As a researcher taking a reflective and reflexive stance, I accompanied the participants, which involved maintaining a sense of self-awareness about the principles and theories that I was drawing from. In taking such a stance several key principles came into play, which were as follows:

- beginning always with the participants— understanding and respecting first and foremost the participants, and recognising the reality that their lifeworlds are crucial in all their experiences
- being attentive to the role of the researcher, recognising, that all researchers come from somewhere, as all participants, do. This involved being conscious of my own prejudices and biases and what lenses I brought with me in conducting the study
- being attentive to the mediating role of language, because the way questions are framed, the way responses are conveyed, listened to and heard, are essentially linguistic acts— they are acts of languaging
- being reflective and reflexive involves turning to alternative approaches. It is through alternative approaches that meaningful phenomena are captured, accessing insights which may go beyond words.

Phipps (2019) emphasises the significance of foregrounding the experiences, perspectives, and voices of those who are researched, going beyond traditional conceptions of what counts as academic scholarship. In her sociolinguistic practice that is geared towards social justice for those who face linguistic subordination, Phipps advocates for extending the boundaries of what counts as research and what counts as knowledge. This involves adopting an approach that privileges the perspectives of those who are 'experts by experience' (p. 6), because they have firsthand insights into the politics of language and inequality as well as the different forms of linguistic and cultural knowledge and expertise that they each hold.

Phipps (2019) urges the need to open up the possibilities of what counts as research and knowledge concerning both indigenous peoples and those who have been exiled from their own lands. Her work is a move towards 'decreating' coloniality, and what have now become habitual modes of researching and understanding. Her series of sociolinguistic essays are characterised by what she terms decolonising attempts — trying to decolonise language learning and multilingualism. Each of the chapters

throughout her book concludes with a poem that connects to the felt practice captured within it.

Drawing upon her lived, and what she describes as 'felt practice', expressed through autoethnographic narratives, fragments, poems, interludes, critical reflections, and some theoretical engagement, Phipps (2019) guides the reader through her endeavours in engaging multiple ways of researching and knowing. Phipps explains that felt practice involves ethnographic forms of research that locate the researcher in their work, through which they feel the work that they are doing. This includes employing poetry and other forms of creative practice. In taking such an approach, Phipps (p. 2) 'defamiliarises' and highlights 'hyper-local' epistemologies, which are normally consigned to the margins of the discussion. For example, in Chapter 13, Phipps gives a deeply personal account of her experience as a visiting professor at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. During her contract of employment at the university, Phipps resolved to begin learning te reo, the Māori Language, as a move towards decolonising her own multilingualism. She describes her te reo language learning journey, which is part of what she calls 'felt practice' in her research, throughout this chapter. Although she writes predominantly in English, Phipps's use of language is improvised, and she encourages other researchers to follow suit.

In seeking to understand the experiences of young people who have arrived in their host country as refugees, such as in the present study, it is essential to honour the perspectives of those being researched. This is important because there is little known about how young people who have had a refugee experience make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories through their own perspectives in terms of the challenges and the opportunities they encounter. Phipps (2019, p. 9) states, 'If we are going to do this, let's do it in a way which is as local as it is global: which affirms the granulations of the way people name their own worlds'. Taking a multilingual and intercultural stance in the present study, I have endeavoured to expand current understandings of how such people experience their education-to-employment trajectories in linguistic and cultural diversity. I have done so by seeking insights into how such people make sense of their trajectories through their voices and in their own terms by employing an arts-based narrative approach, which I discuss in detail in the coming chapter. In the present study, I examine and foreground the participants' own words concerning issues related to the role of their diverse languages and cultures as

they are living, learning, and working in a specific point in history, in an exact geographical, linguistic, and cultural location.

2.5 Conclusion

In reviewing the literature discussed throughout this chapter, I have identified the need for research to take a holistic and multilingual orientation. I highlighted that beyond the applied linguistic research situated in educational contexts, studies related to the educational and employment experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience tend not to consider language and culture beyond that of the dominant society in Australia, namely, learning English and cultural adaptation to Australian society. Instead, research in this area largely focuses on the need for such people to adapt to what is, for them, a new social, linguistic, and cultural landscape in order to experience successful resettlement (Blake et al., 2017; Blake et al., 2018; Fleay et al, 2016; Hebbani & Preece, 2015). Significantly, 'successful resettlement' includes issues related to educational attainment and access to opportunities for employment, and because refugees are learning and working in an English language environment, English is both a prerequisite and their key to educational and employment opportunities and success (Hebbani & Preece, 2015). However, it is through taking such a monolingual view of language and culture that refugees' existing linguistic, cultural, life-world, and experiential knowledge and the role that these play in their experiences remains overlooked.

In the present study, each of the 12 participants were from African and Middle Eastern countries. Thus, as Colic-Peisker (2009) suggests, they are more likely to experience underemployment through discrimination as 'visibly' different refugees. 'Visible' or 'culturally different' (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006, p. 223) refugees are frequently considered as 'not fitting in' based on linguistic and cultural grounds, and thus experience restricted access to employment outside of the secondary labour market. Likewise, the fact that they live, learn and work in their multiple languages and cultures frequently goes unappreciated in the literature concerned with such people's employment experiences. To address this gap, in the present study I adopted a multilingual and intercultural orientation by considering the role of each participant's two or more languages and cultures in their experiences. Furthermore, I invited them to contribute their firsthand perspectives on their education-to-employment trajectories in

my endeavour to privilege their voices, as they are the 'experts by experience' (Phipps, 2019) in the context of a specific linguistic, cultural, and social location — Adelaide, South Australia. This study, then, contributes to emerging understandings of the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience and who are learning and working in the context of a dominant language and culture that is not their own.

3 Methodology

The aim of the study reported in this thesis was to access insights into the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have arrived in South Australia as refugees through their own voices and perspectives. In doing so I took a qualitative orientation, employing an arts-based narrative approach. I investigated the question, '*How do young people who arrive in South Australia as refugees experience their education-to-employment trajectories, living in linguistic and cultural diversity?*' This question evolved from, at the inception of the study, '*How do young people living in linguistic and cultural diversity as refugee, experience moving out of education into employment in South Australia?*' The reason for the subtle shift in the wording of the question was that each of the participants were at different points along their trajectories. This meant that capturing their experiences of moving out of education into employment was not possible for all participants as some were still completing Year 11, while others had already entered the workforce. Accordingly, the notion of trajectory was implemented as it better captured the diversity of experiences and points where they were at, whether that be in education or already established in a field of work.

Through the participants' narratives it became possible not only to elicit their own personal experiences in their own voice but also to capture insights into how they made sense of their education-to-employment trajectories in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity. By eliciting the participants' narratives through extended semi-structured interviews involving art-making processes, and then analysing them, their distinctive insights into the role of language and culture in their experiences convey the nuances and complexities encountered across their trajectories. This captures an aspect that is largely absent from existing studies.

As discussed in the previous two chapters, it is vital that the linguistically and culturally diverse community that constitutes Australian society be understood, nurtured, and maintained. Inquiry of and with migrants, including refugee youth, contributes to larger discourses surrounding migrant communities (Phipps, 2019; Rubino, 2007). Australian scholarship on refugee experience requires reinvention, locating current investigations within the wider contexts of contemporary migration, humanitarianism, and globalisation, with the aim of contributing to charting innovative approaches to

responding to and understanding refugees' experiences in present times across the global community (Ngo et al., 2014; Phipps, 2019). This study was designed to fulfil this ambition, seeking insights into the subtleties of the experiences of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees as they live their education-to-employment trajectories, through their own perspectives.

In this chapter, I first explain the overall design of the present study. This includes a discussion of the theoretical elements of the methodologies adopted, including narrative inquiry, an arts-based approach, extended semi-structured interviews, and a group workshop. I provide details of the rationale in taking this approach, with a discussing how each element fits together as a whole in the development of the study's design, followed by ethical considerations. Next, I explain how I applied each design component in conducting the study and how I implemented the theoretical foundations discussed in the opening sections of this chapter, including details of the processes involved in carrying out this investigation. This includes the participants' selection criteria, biographical details, data collection, and how I incorporated key theorisations that guided the analysis.

3.1 Design and approach of the study

3.1.1 Narrative inquiry

I adopted a qualitative research orientation because the focus of this study was on the experiences and perspectives of the participants. In taking a qualitative method of research I sought to garner insights into the subjective nature of human experience and how people make sense of those experiences across time and space (Riessman, 1993). Research within a qualitative paradigm is not designed to prove or disprove anything. Rather, it is geared towards seeking to understand how participants make sense of their own experiences. Such understanding is largely inaccessible through a quantitative approach because the complexity of any experience is lost in statistical data, which cannot capture the nuances of a given phenomenon and how participants themselves experience and make sense of it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In adopting a qualitative approach, I employed narrative inquiry, which is not a single method concerned with determining a single meaning, or locating themes that refer to universal or objective, quantifiable truths (Pavlenko, 2007; Riessman, 2012). Instead, in narrative inquiry,

knowledge is subjective, as researchers seek phenomenological insights into how individuals draw meaning from their own experiences in the social worlds they inhabit (Riessman, 1994, 2008, 2012). To briefly explain the notion of 'phenomenological insights', I point towards the work of Duranti (2010), who draws on the seminal works of phenomenological scholar Husserl and others, including Heidegger and Schutz. Duranti explains that phenomenology is experience of the world made sense of through human consciousness. Research that takes a phenomenological approach explores people's experiences through their own understandings of given phenomena. Broadly conceived, phenomenology is concerned with questions related to human consciousness, stretching across issues pertaining to first person and intersubjective experience. Phenomenological approaches to accessing understandings of people's personal experiences and their perspectives of them are helpful as they afford insights into perspectives of those who are living the phenomenon under investigation.

In addition to the insights into a given social phenomenon that adopting narrative inquiry can yield, participants may also access a sense of 'agency and voice' in matters that are significant to them (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 180). This means that narrative research, such as the present study, may create opportunities for participants they may not otherwise have had to convey how they make sense of the social phenomena they encounter in their lives, as they are invited to share their stories. Narrative inquiry and analysis permit participants to reflect upon, recount, and share their histories of lived experiences, affording researchers insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Riessman, 1994, 2008; Ricœur, 1984, 1984/2012). I am guided by Riessman's (2008) approach to narrative methods and Ricœur's (1984, 1984/2012) narrative phenomenology in allowing the participants' accounts to illuminate their personal perspectives as well as offer a window into the social worlds in which their trajectories were unfolding. Data were elicited through extended interviews involving art-making processes and subsequent analysis, revealing not just what was told, but also the social realities in which they were situated (Riessman, 2008; Ricœur, 1984; 1984/2012; 1988).

Riessman's (1994, 2008) approach to narrative highlights the notion of 'polyphonic voices', underscoring that narratives not only provide windows into people's lives, but also reveal the social realities that they face within them. Riessman (2008) explains that narratives are saturated with the voices of others, as well as the discourses and social meanings of the society in which individuals and collectives are embedded. For him

(p. 105), ‘stories are social artefacts’, revealing as much about society and culture as they do about individuals or groups. Thus, a narrative approach contributes to knowledge about a particular social phenomenon at a particular point in history through the voices of individuals, revealing the intersection of the personal, social, political, and historical (Riessman, 2008, 2012a). For Ricœur (1994a, 1984/2012, 1988), personal identity is understood to be accomplished through story, both those that are explicitly expressed, or implicitly held and believed by an individual in relation to their life history. The stories people tell to others and to themselves bring a sense of unity or resolve to their selfhood as their life unfolds over time (Ricœur, 1988).

As Mercurio and Scarino (2004) highlight in their book, which created a historical document capturing the narratives collected from individuals of the Sangiorgesi diaspora in South Australia, narratives collected from individuals can form a collective narrative. Curating individual life histories forms a collective narrative, as each person’s life history encapsulates the shared dimension of the experience under investigation, while simultaneously capturing those that are unique to the individual. Eastmond (2007) explains this reality as ‘by juxtaposing individual accounts, we may glean the commonalities in the experiences of a particular group … as well as understand the internal variation among them’ (p. 253). Thus, similarities and differences among participants’ life stories illustrate commonalities as well the uniqueness of their life history.

In the context of the current study, the ‘personal’ refers to the emotions, hopes, desires, values, and individual attributes of these young people, whereas the ‘social’ refers to the context in which their experiences unfolded, which is understood, created, and interpreted as coherent and meaningful through the languages and cultures in play. I have considered both the personal and social in this study because narratives are co-constructed between the narrator and researcher, shaped by the setting of production (the language ideologies and discourses that have currency in the narrators’ communities), and reveal how they situate themselves within them (Riessman, 2008, 2012). Narrative then, is not merely a qualitative research method but an integral part of human life (Riessman, 2012). Narratives are not renditions of ultimate facts or truths; rather they are discursive constructions (Ricœur, 1984, 1984/2012). As such, narratives require consideration of the broader social contexts that are reflected in them, and which shape them (Riessman, 2008). As Pavlenko (2007, p. 164), explains, resonating with the

understandings of Ricœur (1984, 1984/2012) and Riessman, (2008, 2012), as people reflect on their experiences and make sense of them in the present, the meanings of events are transforming.

Narrative is not only a representation of experience, but 'experience itself is an embodied narrative life composition' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 38). The triumphs and adversities of people's lives, past and present, are transformed through reflection, as experiences are reformed and reconstituted across time, enabling the past to be perceived independently from the historic moment of the lived experience (Ricœur, 1984/2012). This is important to consider in terms of both the opportunities and challenges that the young people have encountered, as time plays a powerful role in human experience; how experience is understood and reflected upon depends upon the present moment and those moments yet to come (Ricœur, 1984/2012). With this point in mind, I now turn to discuss how implementing arts-based processes in a narrative approach (i.e., by using multi-modalities) provides a means of accessing additional understandings from the intersection of biography, history, and society. I highlight that employing an arts-based narrative orientation as a qualitative method of research affords different insights into the subjective nature of the participants' lived experience, including how they make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories across time and space (Riessman, 2008, p. 11).

3.1.2 An arts-based approach in narrative inquiry

For the purpose of this research, I chose to adopt an arts-based narrative approach because of the study's purpose to gain deep understandings of a particular phenomenon. An arts-based process was central to the design of this study as I strove to gain different insights into the participants' experiences than are possible when employing language as the sole means of expression. By broadening the narrative approach to include art-making processes to collect data, additional sources of knowledge were made accessible. Arts-based expression in the context of narrative research is a means of externalising the internal worlds of participants, revealing how they manifest, order, and understand their experiences. The use of arts-based interviewing as a research method in narrative research involves more than simply inviting participants to express their narratives artistically, followed by the researcher analysing these artefacts. An arts-

based approach entails participants talking and/or writing about the meanings embedded in their representations.

Artefacts may act as texts that may be read and interpreted by their maker and their audiences, such as researchers (Mitchell, et.al., 2011). Processing the representations once they have been created can be transformative, stimulating further pertinent data generation and contributing to different understandings of the phenomenon in question (Case & Dalley, 2006, p. 135). In employing art as a way telling of knowing in this arts-based study, it is critical to articulate to participants and readers that the arts-based processes are not about creating a beautiful work of art. Rather, they are about accessing each participant's pre-verbal meanings to capture deep insights into their inner worlds, how they make sense of the phenomenon under investigation. This is because an art-centred experience both within the context of research and in life more broadly, can facilitate transformations of people's usual and habitual ways of reflecting upon, relating to, interpreting, and perceiving the self and their lived experiences (Rappaport, 2013, p. 103).

As different metaphors emerge in reflecting on the concrete forms that are created in art-making processes, different ways of framing, understanding, and relating to one's experiences are made possible. Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003, p. 235) reflect this understanding where they point out that as new metaphors arise, the possibility of different ways of understanding past experiences emerge in the present. It is widely understood that artistic expression can mediate between unconscious and conscious knowledge (Dewey, 1934; Eaves, 2014; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003) embodying the past, the present and the (imagined) future of the creator. Through artistic, pre-verbal expression, people may more readily access all the enmeshed dimensions that are integrated and integral to living an experience (McNiff, 2004, 2013). This is because through creative processes, the representations that come into being form a bridge (Anzaldúa, 2012) between the inner world and outer reality (Rappaport, 2013) of its narrator, accessing different channels of insight than what would emerge through words alone (Allen, 1995; Leavy, 2015; McNiff, 2004, 2013). Accordingly, through adopting an arts-based orientation, by using art-making processes to elicit narrative data, it is possibilities to more easily access all the integrated aspects that are important to any experiences.

Importantly, it is both in the process of bringing the art into the world and in the viewing of the expression once it has been created as the maker bears witness to their expression that is meaningful (Dewey 1934; Eaves, 2014, p. 147). McNiff (2013) supports this understanding, explaining that both the art and the art-making process offer different ways of understanding and knowing the self and experience. In turn, this may influence the ways in which people reflect and reflexively relate to their past, present, and future lived experiences (Ricœur, 1988). In their respective works, Ricœur in considering time and narrative, Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) in exploring the influence of metaphor in everyday language and thought, and Dewey (1934) in his understanding of experience, each reveal that people's imaginations, their emotional worlds, their unconscious thoughts, and their feelings may arise in their accounts when invited to express themselves through art.

For Ricœur (1984, 1984/2012, 1998), the concept of refiguration is fundamental to how experience is understood. Pointing towards poetic forms of expression he reveals that the way in which an experience is articulated, that is, the way it in reconfigured through all forms of expression, influences possibilities for making sense of it (Ricœur 1984/2012). In other words, through creative expression, different possible worlds or realities are created. For Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), the spontaneity through which metaphors emerge through creative expression creates the possibility for novel ways of conceptualising and relating to the phenomena experienced in everyday reality. This is because engaging in art-making processes invites the integration of the imagination, cognition, emotion, subconscious and conscious feeling, and reason (Dewey, 1934; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003; Ricœur, 1988). According to Dewey (1934), by ignoring the multiple dimensions integral to lived experience many significant qualities of experience and possibilities for understanding experience may be missed. As Rappaport (2013) states:

> Given that the felt sense is beyond words and our cognitive minds, it needs a medium that allows for capturing all of it at once. The arts are able to do so and provide a vehicle to help externalise this knowing, to carry it forward, and help it to be seen and known. (p. 98)

Anderson and Braud (1998) point out that researchers of social phenomena who are working within the social sciences can be restricted or limited by the constraints imposed by conventional qualitative research methods. Consequently, there is a tendency towards:

> seeking to observe reality with one eye, process what is learned with one brain and express our findings with one mouth. The one eye is the eye of the conventional sense through which we survey the external world. The one brain is a left-hemispheric, logical, analytical, interpretive approach to working with the data we have collected. The one mouth is the expression of our findings through the writing of linear, scientific prose. (p. 151)

What Anderson and Braud (1998, p. 152) suggest is that research can be approached in a way that is 'polyoccular', broadening the spectrum of research modalities. The authors encourage researchers, to consider unconventional methods to access different insights, different knowledge, and different ways of knowing and representing research findings. Anderson and Braud's argument is reflected in the recent work of Phipps (2019). Working within a 'creative practice' paradigm, Phipps (2019, pp. 1–6) urges researchers to 'lean in' to working with and in indigenous languages, perspectives, and philosophies alongside those who are seeking asylum, refuge, or living under siege or occupation and who are 'the experts by experience'. Bearing in mind that language can be both limited and limiting in what it can convey of people's lived experiences (or any other thing in their realities), Riessman (1994, p. 292) clarifies that language makes experiences real, or at least knowable to ourselves and shareable with others: 'All we have is talk, and texts that represent reality, partially, imperfectly' (p. 297). In light of this, Riessman (2008, p. 18) encourages innovative methods in social research such as those of Phipps (2019), which transgress the borders created by distinct methodologies and approaches.

However, all forms of representation communicate or transmit ideas, and each form of expression is a channel to a particular manifestation of understanding. Something articulated in a specific medium cannot be articulated with the same nuances as another, and cannot be translated to another, without a loss of meaning. In other words, all forms of expression or representation of an experience are partial or incomplete (Hohr, 2013, p. 32). Verbalisation is not the only way people's lives speak — they speak through their actions and reactions, their intuitions, instincts, and feelings, and their bodily states of being, perhaps more profoundly than through words (Palmer, 2000, p. 6). Although verbal language is expressive too, a significant strength of employing an arts-based narrative inquiry is that it provides opportunities for different insights and perspectives to emerge, because words alone may not capture the full spectrum of intended meaning (Eaves, 2014). Barone and Eisner (2012, p. 3) question if 'one might ask whether we can trust what we derive from such material'. However, as Van der Vaart et al. (2018) stress, much of the emotional and symbolic qualities of people's experiences are not

always easily accessed by methods that depend upon verbal or written expressions alone. Coming from a pedagogical perspective, Palmer (2004, p. 182) also discusses that having what he calls 'third things', such as works of art, poems, songs, and stories, evokes opportunities to gain insights and perspectives on the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of individuals and communities that may otherwise not arise. In this way Palmer (p. 90) emphasises that artworks act as metaphorical embodiments that allow people to approach topics indirectly. In this way artefacts, or 'third things', act as a concrete form through which to reflect upon issues, ideas, and the self metaphorically. This is significant because metaphorical use of language affords insights into the sensory and emotional, as well as the cognitive and intellectual which may make way for otherwise unspoken qualities of experience to come through in the plot (Ricœur, 1984; 1984/2012).

Ricœur's (1984/2012) notion of plot conceives that people 'emplot' their lives by assembling events into a narrative form. The construction of their personal narratives or life histories affords a sense of meaning, coherence, and continuity to their lives and their sense of self. Ricœur (p. 66) describes emplotment as 'the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession'. He explains that a narrative is configured through forming a sequence of events; that people employ narrative to present themselves and bring a sense of order and coherence to their experience and their lives: 'Narrative integrates into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events, thereby schematizing the intelligible signification attached to the narrative taken as a whole' (p. x). This means that emplotment (Ricœur, 1984/2012) draws together in chronological organisation the dimensions of an experience, including particular events, the surrounding circumstances (e.g., others involved), actions that took place, goals, and consequences. Simultaneously, narrative is configured by the selection of events that are brought together, how they are arranged in the narrative's unfolding into a unified temporal whole of the plot (Ricœur, 1984/2012, p.66). Yet, Ricœur (1984/2012) saw that although people make sense of their lives by bringing together what may otherwise be perceived as disconnected temporal occasions, life is lived in a perpetual present, an idea that is confirmed in the work of Maturana (2001, 2005).

The past and the future always exist in union the present (Maturana, 2001, 2005) as people make sense of their present experiences based on their understandings of all that they have experienced across their histories (Dewey, 1938/1997), which in turn, shapes

their anticipations regarding what will happen next (Ricœur, 1984, 1984/2012). The way that people remember their histories of lived experiences reconstructs the past in particular ways and thus forms how it is (re)interpreted in the present, which in turn influences the meaning derived from it and shapes how the future is anticipated. This means that the way people remember a historical event in their lives creates the potential to transform how they reflect on the past and what they understand (in the present) as possible for their futures (Maturana, 2001, 2005, Ricœur, 1984, 1984/2012). Thus, as I have suggested throughout this section, employing art as a research method facilitates, for both research participants themselves and researchers, the emergence of different ways of knowing and understanding a given phenomenon.

Yet, as Cicourel (2003) points out in his work within applied linguistic research, the ways in which the same questions are posed and subsequently interpreted may vary in each study. A given question, the way that it is structured, and how a group of questions are organised, influences what and how responses are formed in research interviews. The same questions are not understood or responded to by all uniformly because of the individual and interpretive nature of understanding and language, and the multiple and diverse tacit assumptions of both researchers and participants in interaction. In an endeavour to bring about transparency and methodological rigour and coherence, Talmy (2010) urges greater reflexivity on the part of applied linguists who use interviews in their studies. He explains that researchers need to be self-aware and cognisant of the processes and outcomes involved in interview data that is often intuitively collected, applied, analysed, and represented. They need to explicitly consider the status that they ascribe to the data and how they came to understand and capture their findings from the data. Taking this view, the collection, analysis, and representation of both verbal and arts-based interview data needs to be fundamentally reflexive, meaning that there has been some accountability for not only the content of what was said, but also consideration of the influence of the interactional and interpersonal circumstances of the interview production and how meaning has been derived from it (Talmy, 2010). Accordingly, I now turn to discuss theoretical considerations in adopting semi-structured and extended interviews in the design of the present study.

3.1.3 The role of interviews in narrative research

There is a plethora of approaches in narrative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Riessman, 2008) and as Talmy (2010) highlights, the adoption of interviews has proliferated in qualitative applied linguistics research in the past two decades. The increased popularity of the research interview is a consequence of its lauded and well verified (Cicourel, 2003; Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Riessman, 2008; Talmy, 2010) capacity to yield deep insights into the perspectives and understandings of individuals in relation to their identities, experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and orientations in relation to a given phenomenon. Yet, with this proliferation of interview research in qualitative applied linguistics that Talmy (2010) calls attention to, comes inconsistencies in how the interview is theorised and applied in the field, a problem which has been widely considered (Cicourel, 2003; Clandinin, 2006, 2013; Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) by scholars across diverse fields. Accordingly, in the present study, I acknowledge that the participants' narratives came into being in interaction with me in the context of research interviews. Thus, the questions I asked and how they were subsequently understood by the participants and what they then chose to share and convey was shaped in and by the social context established by our interactions.

The participants' narratives, elicited through extended semi-structured interviews, contribute to emerging knowledge about the broader social contexts that those who arrive in Australia as refugees face across their trajectories while living in linguistic and cultural diversity. However, the meaning of an experience is ambiguous for researchers, as it is reconstructed from the primary experience, to which as a researcher, I can never have direct access. The meanings of narratives are ambiguous because they arise through language out of a process of interaction between people (Riessman, 1994, p. 296), which is even the case in eliciting narrative data through an arts-based means. As Talmy (2010) suggests in his discussion of interviews as a research instrument perspective and research interviews as a social practice, it is not only the data generated by research interviews that requires consideration.

Like Riessman (1994, 2008), Talmy (2010) highlights that the process involved in the co-construction of meaning has implications for data analysis and the significance that researchers derive from them. The questions researchers ask, how they ask them, and

their interpretations of participants' responses to them depends upon the researchers' disposition, research focus, and orientation. Interview data are frequently decontextualised in research. Participants' responses to questions are quoted as if they were isolated speech events that capture their voices and perspectives unclouded by the co-construction of what was said and why, and the analysis treats them as if their meanings are unambiguous (Riessman, 2008; Talmy, 2010). However, the ways in which participants share their stories are shaped in interaction with those who are inquiring about them or who are the audience, and how they are interpreted depends on the meaning derived from them in analysis. Accordingly, it was through my elicitation and listening and what I chose to attend to in analysis that shaped the construction and representation of the data throughout this thesis.

As Riessman (2008) and Ricœur (1984, 1998) suggest, people's narratives are co-constructed and continually reshaped across time and space according to how they are received by those with whom they are in interaction. Thus, although certain perspectives, 'truths', and ways of reflecting upon experience were shared and co-constructed with me in the interviews and group workshop, what was true and real for the participants in the moment was evolving and changing as life continued to unfold. The truth of lived experiences is transformed in the act of narration (Pavlenko, 2007; Ricœur, 1984; Riessman, 2012). There is never a final word, truth, knowing or understanding (Riessman, 1993, 1994). New understandings are brought to bear in different contexts, with different people (Ricœur, 1984b/2012), meaning that others are always implicated in the way that individuals make sense of their past and present experiences and imagine what is or is not possible for the future. All forms of representation of experience, whether expressed in language or otherwise, are limited sketches, because there is an inevitable gap between a lived experience and any communication about it (Riessman, 1994). Riessman suggests that it is impossible to access the ideas to which words refer, for language is uncommunicative of anything other than itself. However, she also makes clear that without words, phenomena in the world cease to exist, arguing that it is language that makes them real. Through making meaning in and of experience, and subsequently conveying it in words, permits both self and others to think about experience/s and not just live them (Riessman, 1994, p. 292).

No participant's life stories are ever fixed and static, rather, they are dynamic and even at times contradictory, as the individual gains new experiences in different contexts,

with positions and sense of self forever changing, shifting, and emerging (Ricœur, 1984/2012; Riessman, 2008). In talking about experiences, people select features of the experience to tell particular listeners and add other interpretative elements along the way. Transcribers, analysers, and readers all use this selective process too. Each participant in any research encounter makes choices (Riessman, 1994, p. 297). Narrative, according to Ricœur (1984, 1984/2012, 1998), is fundamental to how people make sense of their lives through time. Hence, it is through the stories told that meaning is applied to experience, which is reconfigured backwards and forwards across time in light of new experiences (Ricœur, 1984, 1984/2012) and, in the present study, diverse listeners/interactions. Accordingly, as the young people in the present study participated in the research interviews and described their trajectories, the 'truths' of their experiences were being formed in the act of narration (Ricœur, 1984/2012). This is because their perspectives on their lives change as experiences are lived and subsequently reflected upon, influencing their understandings of the present, the past, and possibilities imagined for the future (Ricœur, 1984, 1984b).

3.1.4 The value of using a group workshop to elicit narrative data

A group workshop was incorporated into the study design to elicit responses from participants through which they would be able to uncover knowledge about their own and each other's lived experiences relating to their trajectories. Self-disclosure occurs through the making of art, and through verbal interaction that follows the art-making process (Case & Dalley, 2006). In a group setting, similarities and differences amongst experiences, thoughts, feelings, and reflections emerge, contributing further to phenomenological insights gained in individual interviews. Additionally, as Case & Dalley point out, group work holds the potential to nurture hope for change through communal sharing and discovery that the issues and problems faced by the individuals in the group are mutually experienced and shared (p.231).

At the commencement of this study, I completed a one-year Advanced Diploma of Transpersonal Art Therapy. I did this training because, although I did not intend to employ art in a therapeutic sense, I saw the value in learning about the ways in which art can be employed to access deep insights into people's lived experiences in the context of qualitative research (McNiff, 2004; Leavy, 2015; Allen, 1995). The diploma involved two work placements as an art therapist, one of which I undertook at a not-for-

profit organisation that provides social services to migrants and refugees. This placement was an informative experience for me as a researcher employing art-based methodologies, as I facilitated a six-week group art therapy workshop program working with a diverse range of adults from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The program involved inviting clients to express their experiences through engaging with a range of art materials including paints, pastels, pencils, and markers on paper in a group setting, followed by a group discussion based on the artworks.

Additionally, once I had completed my training as an art therapist, in the first year of undertaking the present study I volunteered in another not-for-profit organisation that provides services to refugees and migrants. My role involved working in a therapeutic drumming program using ancient rhythm techniques with a group of 20 multilingual young people who had a refugee experience. This included supporting the social worker to facilitate each session and act as an art therapist in a group setting. The program ran across 10 weeks and developed my understandings and practice of working with young people from refugee backgrounds. Through my participation in this program and in my training as an art therapist, I gained firsthand experience in cofacilitating group art therapy workshops, which was preparatory for conducting the present study. These experiences afforded me insights into how art can be used as a way of accessing insights into the internal worlds of each participant, and in how to facilitate a group discussion creating opportunities for both individual and collective stories to emerge. Arts-based processes, followed by a group discussion, can facilitate the emergence of individual and collective narratives as participants are invited to convey their experiences and perspectives in interaction with one another, thus fostering different insights.

Throughout this chapter thus far I have given an overview of my choice of orientation and approach. In doing so I provided a rationale for the design of the present study, with a discussion of the power of narrative as a qualitative research method and the role that art-based processes can play in a narrative study. I considered the function and nature of research interviews in collecting narrative data, as well as the value in conducting a group workshop to elicit further narrative data. In the coming section, I turn to give a description of how I implemented this investigation design. Firstly, I briefly explain ethical considerations before introducing each of the 12 young people who participated in the study. I now turn to briefly outline ethical considerations taken into account in conducting the study.

3.1.5 Ethical considerations

The study (Protocol # 200838) was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the University of South Australia to protect the individuals concerned and to ensure the integrity of the research. Participation was voluntary and potential participants were provided with an information sheet (Appendix A) in plain English outlining the project and what their participation would involve if they chose to opt in. Informed written consent (Appendix B) was obtained from all participants prior to commencement of the research. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also made aware that if they found discussing their experiences during the interviews or focus group distressing there are several free support services available to help, which I would personally assist them to access. The interviews were conducted in convenient and safe places for both the participants and me. The confidentiality of individuals and organisations has been maintained by de-identification (all participants have been given pseudonyms) and safe storage of the data according to the university guidelines. Given that in the workshop narratives, including personal information, were shared in the presence of others, confidentiality of group discussions cannot be guaranteed. However, confidentiality on the part of all participants was agreed before commencing the activities and discussions.

Next, I give details of how I carried out the overall research design, including an outline of the process of data collection and analysis and a summary of the themes and codes that emerged throughout the process.

3.2 Conducting the study

3.2.1 Participants

The identification of potential participants was based on the following considerations:

- they were individuals who had relocated to Australia as refugees or asylum seekers
- they were currently in
  - secondary or tertiary education, *or*
  - currently seeking employment, *or*
  - recently employed and had a minimum of six months of secondary or tertiary education in Australia, *and*

– were 18–25 years of age.

I chose to focus on this age group because as young adults preparing to complete secondary or tertiary education, and seeking employment or currently employed, they would be qualified to reflect from various stages of their education-to-employment trajectories. The participants were recruited through four organisations. In recruiting participants from each of these organisations, initial contact was made in various ways including email contact and face-to-face meetings. To maintain participants' anonymity, I do not disclose details of the organisations or identify meeting places.

The study involved 12 young people living in South Australia as refugees (see Table 3.1). All the information included regarding the participants' biographical profiles is based on self-reports. I selected this number of participants to capture a diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ages, genders, and educational and employment experiences. The interactions shared afford insights into where each of the participants is at now on their evolving education-to-employment trajectories. As they reflected on their past in the present, and shared their hopes, fears, and anticipations for the future, both the diversity and similarities of their experiences were revealed. It is understood that the participants' education-to-employment trajectories are nonlinear, complex, dynamic, and often overlap, both backwards and forwards, between education and (un)employment. With this in mind, each of the young people has a unique education-to-employment story, yet similarities do exist among them.

Table 3.1: Participants

Name	Country of origin	Languages	Education	Employment	Aspirations	Time in Australia
Aadhil	Pakistan, of Afghan descent	• Dari • English • Farsi • Indonesian • Urdu	Successful completion: • Year 12 Currently in: • second year of a double degree in Bachelor of Social Work and International Relations	Previous: • in the kitchen at a fast food restaurant (casual); administration at a migration firm Current: • SSO at a local high school (casual part-time) working with students and families from new arrival backgrounds	To work as a social worker and then move into human rights law working for the United Nations	6 years
Arezzo	Pakistan, of Iranian decent	• Dari • English • Hazaragi • Urdu	• Left school part way through Year 11 • Completed VET [b] training as a beautician • Currently enrolled in SACE [c] Mathematics and English at TAFE SA	Current: • local Afghan supermarket (casual)	To join the police force	5 years
Bashar	Afghanistan	• English • Hindi • Pashtu • Urdu	Part way through Year 11	N/A	To become a politician	1
Halima	Afghanistan	• English • Hazaragi • Urdu	Part way through Year 11	Current: • local NGO thrift store (volunteer)	To become a reporter, a lawyer, sports person, or join the army	1
Ibro	Iraq	• Arabic • English	Successful completion: • Year 12	Previous: • two fast food chains	To become a nurse, with current plans to study Bachelor of	4

Name	Country of origin	Languages	Education	Employment	Aspirations	Time in Australia
		• Kurdish • Turkish	• Certificate II in Community Service • Certificate II in English Proficiency Currently enrolled in: • foundation course[e] at university to commence 2019	• two supermarket chains (unpaid extended work experience) Current: • unemployed and seeking paid work	Business and complete Certificate III in Community Service	
Karla	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	• English • Kirundi • Kinyabwisha • Lingala • Rwandese • Swahili	Successful completion: • Year 12 Currently in: • second year of a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations	Current: • multicultural awareness adviser at a local NGO (casual) • coordinating a youth ambassador program (casual/contractual) covering a colleague on maternity leave • Multicultural Youth Ambassador for a local Australian Football League club (unpaid)	To work in international relations in a role that enables her to improve living conditions of the people of the DRC	11
Latif	Iran	• English • Farsi • Kurdish • Turkish	Completion of: • some first-year courses of a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering in Australia and Iran	Current: • running a family-owned café	To complete a PhD in electrical engineering and become a professor	5
Mya	Sierra Leone	• English • Liberian • Kreyol (English-based pidgin spoken in Liberia)	Successful completion: • Year 12 • Certificate IIII in Disability • Certificate III in Community Services	Current: • residential support worker (permanent part-time)	To become a midwife and/or registered nurse	5 years

Name	Country of origin	Languages	Education	Employment	Aspirations	Time in Australia
Razi	Afghanistan	• Dari • English • Farsi • Haszaragi • Hindi • Urdu	Successful completion: • Year 12 • Bachelor of Aviation	Previous: • in fast food chains stores and other retail chain stores (casual) Current: • in two leading retail chains (casual)	To translate and facilitate sessions on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) [d] personality inventory in Hazaragi and Farsi in order to help people understand their personality types	11
Roland	DRC	• Chibemba • English • French • Ikibyagranda • Kirundi • Mandarin • Ndebele • Nyanja • Portuguese • Shangani • Sotho • Swahili • Tsonga • Tswana • Xhosa • Zulu	Successful completion: • Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) • Certificate IIII in Disability • Certificate III in Community Services	Previous: • Ingham's factory (casual) Current: • residential support worker • individual support worker	To become a social worker and/or a fully qualified nurse	4
Vincent	Sierra Leone	• English • French • Fula • Kriol	Successful completion: • Year 12 • Bachelor of Social Work Currently studying: • Bachelor of Ministry	Current: • multicultural development officer Transitioning soon into: • School support officer	To integrate his passions for soccer, social work, and ministry into his desire to work with young people, particularly those from new arrival backgrounds	14 years

Name	Country of origin	Languages	Education	Employment	Aspirations	Time in Australia
Zahra[a]	Iran, of Afghan descent	• Dari • English • Hazaragi	Successful completion: • Year 12 • Diploma of Community Services Currently in: • first year of Bachelor of Social Work	Current: • social worker for young people with refugee and migrant backgrounds (casual)	To become a social worker and an interpreter in roles where she is able to draw on her multiple languages and cultures	12 years

Notes:

[a] All names are pseudonyms.

[b] Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications have been developed with the specific goal of preparing students with skills for work. VET is designed to help people to join or rejoin the workforce, move into a new career or gain additional skills in their existing career (https://www.upskilled.edu.au/faq/qualifications/vocational-education-versus-higher-education)

[c] The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is a modern, internationally-recognised secondary school (https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/studying/your-sace/what-is-the-sace)

[d] The purpose of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) personality inventory is to make the theory of psychological types described by C. G. Jung understandable and useful in people's lives. The essence of the theory is that much seemingly random variation in behaviour is actually quite orderly and consistent, owing to basic differences in the ways individuals prefer to use their perception and judgment. (Myers & Briggs Foundation n.d.)

[e] Foundation Studies programs are designed primarily for people who do not have the qualifications required to get directly into a bachelor degree, providing possible options for those looking for an alternative pathway to university. (University of South Australia, n.d.

3.2.2 Participant vignettes

Aadhil came to Australia alone when he was 17, in 2012. Aadhil was longing to be able to visit his family back in Afghanistan, which was not possible in the foreseeable future because he was on a five-year temporary visa. For Aadhil, volunteering was a channel through which he found opportunities to make friends, establish connections in the community and to participate in both education and employment.

Arezzo came to Australia with her family when she was 15, in 2014. At the time of the interview Arezzo had recently left school midway through Year 11 owing to what she described as 'bullying' from both students and teachers. At the time, Arezzo was working casually at a local deli, being paid below the minimum wage, and considering training to become a police officer. She was determined to work outside of the family home; however, she was unsure of how to navigate her trajectory in the face of her two contrasting languages and cultures and the social expectations that come with each.

Bashar arrived in Australia with his family when he was 17 years of age, in 2017. At the time of the study, he was in Year 11 and aspiring to complete Year 12 and go to university and study politics and international relations. This plan for his trajectory was born form his desire to follow in his father's footsteps and to one day become a politician to serve both the wider Australian community and the Afghan community in Australia and abroad.

Halima arrived in Australia with her family as an Afghan refugee when she was 16 years of age, in 2017. Halima was volunteering in a local community secondhand store, which she experienced as a means to participate and connect with the wider Australian community. At the time of the study Halima was in Year 11 and planned to do Year 12 in 2020, yet she was unsure what employment she would like to pursue as she had many interests. She was contemplating several occupations including becoming a lawyer, a journalist, joining the army and a sports person, all of which she described as avenues to be of service to the wider community.

Ibro came to Australia with his family when he was 14 years of age, in 2008. At the time of the study, he was actively seeking employment. He was struggling to find paid work but had completed extended work experience in two leading supermarket stores. Although his dream was to become a nurse Ibro was about to commence Foundation

Studies so that he could access entry into a business degree, which he was to commence in the following semester.

Karla came to Australia with her family when she was ten years of age, in 2007. At the time of the study Karla was casually employment at a local not-for-profit organisation that provides support services to refugees. Her role involved sharing her 'story' and bringing about intercultural awareness in the wider community, in individual businesses, and organisations. Karla had recently resumed her university studies after taking a year's break from a double degree in international relations. She aspires to one day take her developing expertise home to alleviate the challenges faced by the Congolese community.

Latif came to Australia with his family when he was 21 years of age, in 2012. At the time of the interview Latif was co-managing his family's café, and held a five-year temporary visa. Latif had been part way through an electrical engineering degree 'back home' in Iran, but his past education was not recognized in Australia, so he had to start it from the 'beginning again'. Latif's time was dedicated to running the family business, so he was unable to continue his studies at the time, but he aspires to one day become a professor of engineering, a dream that he described 'as being on hold'.

Mya came to Australia alone when he was 19 years of age, in 2014. She was living with her uncle who had previously resettled in Australia, but she was living alone at the time of the study as the situation at home with her uncle and his family was untenable. She was in permanent part-time employment as a residential aged care worker, though her main aspiration is to one day become a doctor or a midwife, which she described as being motivated by her desire to be of service to others.

Razi arrived in Australia alone when he was 11 years of age, in 2007. At the time of the study, he held two positions, in customer service and retail. He described his time working as a team leader for school camps in a South Australian Aboriginal community as rewarding, explaining that he felt a sense of connection with the indigenous people of the community based on shared experience. Razi aspires to one day translate and facilitate sessions on the Myers Briggs personality inventory in Dari and Hazaragi.

Roland came to Australia alone when he was 20 years of age, in 2014. At the time of the interview Roland was working as a residential support worker in aged care to

support both his young family in Australia and his extended family in Africa. Roland aspires to become a social worker one day, which he described as being motivated by his desire to 'pay back' the community. He also dreamed to own his own home someday.

Vincent came to Australia with his family when he was nine years of age, in 2004. Vincent was employed full-time as a multicultural development officer. He was the only participant in full-time work at the time of the study. His role included working with schools, local government, broader community organisations, and not-for-profit organisations to develop programs for young people from new arrival backgrounds. He was also studying ministry part-time, as he aspires of becoming a pastor someday. He explained that he would like to bring together his passion for soccer and ministery to facilitate young people to engage with the sport, connect to the community and to their faith.

Zahra came to Australia with her family when she was ten years of age, in 2006. At the time of the study, she was in her first year of a Bachelor of Social Work degree which she described pursing in order to be of service to the Afghan community in Australia. She had a casual position at a local public community service provider for young people with refugee and migrant backgrounds. Zahra aspires to become a social worker and interpreter in roles where she can draw on her linguistic, cultural, and experiential expertise to be of assistance to others who have had a migration experience.

3.2.3 Data collection

Analysis began from the inception of the study. In the interviews, in the co-construction of narrative data, and in making choices about and in doing transcription, there were interpretive dimensions at play (Riessman, 2008). This means that the accumulation of interpretive layers that have been at play across the research trajectory all contribute to the form of the analysis presented in the following sections. Each process throughout the research built upon and deepened the next. What follows is a guide through the data collection and analytical approach that I took. The questions I asked, the way in which I asked them, my standpoint, and the focus on particular social phenomena emphasised in the representation of data shaped both what was told and what has been highlighted in the analysis. At the same time, other aspects present in the data and significant social phenomena may be obscured by the research focus, and perhaps, in some instances, by

my lack of awareness of phenomena that I simply cannot see. As a human being doing arts-based narrative research, I am a filter through which my analysis, no matter how rigorous and no matter how systematic, is sieved. As summarised in Chapter 1, my own linguistic and cultural lens is brought to bear upon the choices and the omissions that I made.

Before commencing the data collection, the questions were workshopped, rehearsed, and rewritten under the guidance of my supervisors (see Appendix C for a full account of the workshopped interview questions). This process included writing and practising the questions to ensure that they were appropriate and would adequately elicit responses that afford insights into the perspectives and experiences of participants concerning the role of language and culture across their trajectories. The interviews and arts-based workshop were conducted in several different settings and each context influenced how we situated ourselves for the relational experience of the interview. Data collection included two individual arts-based narrative interviews (approximately one hour, face-to-face) with seven of the young people, and for the other five, one individual narrative interview involving an art-making process (approximately one hour face-to-face). A plan was outlined for the collection of data before the commencement of the study (see Table 3.2). However, for different personal reasons not all participants were able to attend the second interviews or the arts-based workshop, such as family and work commitments, thus actual data collection (see Table 3.3) did not adhere to the initial plan.

Table 3.1: Planned data collection

Autobiographical texts	Interview 1	Interview 2	Group workshop
12 x written participant profiles	12 x creatively expressed representations and verbal reflections	12 x creatively expressed representations and verbal reflections	12 x creatively expressed visual representations
	12 x approx.1 hour	12 x approx. 1 hour	3 hours

Table 3.2: Actual data collection

Participant Name	Interview 1	Interview 2
Zahra	24/05/2108	N/A
Mya	04/06/2018	N/A
Arezzo	12/06/2018	N/A
Vincent	19/06/2018	24/07/2018
Aadhil	02/07/2018	01/08/2018
Latif	10/07/2018	25/07/2018
Karla	15/08/2018	29/08/2018
Razi	27/08/2018	N/A
Roland	23/09/2018	N/A
Ibro	16/10/2018	26/10/2018
Halima	19/10/2018	26/10/2018
Bashar	14/11/2018	28/11/210

Table 3.4: Group workshop 16/11/2018

Participants present
Halima
Karla

In each of the individual interviews a selection of materials was available including pastels, paints, markers, pencils, and paper. Upon completion of their creative expressions, each participant was invited to explain explain their symbolic representations verbally. In addition, an arts-based workshop was scheduled. All participants were invited to take part, however, due to their busy schedules only two of them were able to participate in this group workshop (see Table 3.4). Considering the transformative potential of metaphors that emerge in the art-making process and the participants' reflections upon them, in this study, the concrete visual arts-based forms did not act as raw data for my own analysis. The works of art provided a starting point for further inquiry. In employing an arts-based approach to narrative inquiry my interest has been in the provision of different perspectives of the social phenomena that the participants faced across their trajectories. In the process of creative expression, which in the context of this study was drawing and painting followed by reflection and discussion of their images, participants were able to access deep levels of communication and understanding. Adopting an arts-based narrative approach in the

present study created opportunities for the participants to reflect upon their education-to-employment trajectories in different ways than would have been possible if they had responded to questions about their experiences in language alone. In turn, this study has contributed different insights than those already established in the literature concerning how young people who have arrived in South Australia as refugees experience and make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories.

As each interview unfolded, the conversations I had with each participant did not unfold uniformly, rather, they flowed organically. As Riessman (2008) and Ricœur (1984/2012) underscore, it was important that I did not adhere too tightly to scripted interview questions. This is because in a sense, to remember is to put together what may appear to a listener to be discrete branches of disparate temporal occasions connecting unrelated locations — yet, for the teller they are unified, bringing coherence and meaning to their lives (Ricœur, 1984, 1984/2012). I was interested in what the participants wished to share and reveal about their personal histories experiencing the transition from education-to-employment, even if what they chose to reveal to me did not appear to be directly related to their trajectories. Each interview and the group workshop were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed by me, and all artefacts created were photographed and catalogued together.

In co-constructing the narrative data in each interview and in the group workshop, I was aware of how I adapted to the interpersonal style that unfolded between myself and each participant in the interviews and in the group workshop. In the process of eliciting the narratives of the participants I sought to be self-aware and self-reflective. While the language that I used gave the participants an impression of who I was, as well as my intentions for conducting this investigation, the participant's own use of language in expressing their narratives was revealing of themselves. They were opening up (to me), willing to recount their personal stories for the purpose of the study. As the participants and I revealed ourselves to one another with our words, I learned that each interview is a unique exploration of a relational experience involving the other. It was of great importance to me that I was sensitive to the participants' level of comfort: What was an appropriate duration for our discussion? What were they comfortable with? What do I sense is too much to ask? Accordingly, in each phase of data collection, the ordering of my questions and the timing of introducing the art processes were slightly different owing to the organic and unpredictable nature our delicate interactions.

3.2.3.1 Interview 1

The purpose of this interview was to gain insights into:

- the perspectives, experiences, and reflections of each participant in relation to the role that their knowledges, languages and cultures play in in their education-to-employment trajectories
- how they experience and understand their trajectories from education-to-employment.

I was particularly interested in gaining an understanding of the extent to which each participant was aware of language and culture in their educational and employment experiences. Did they experience their languages and cultures as a resource or a hindrance?

In the second half of this interview, I invited each participant to visually express how they had experienced their trajectories to date. I also invited each participant to write a linguistic and cultural autobiography about his or her personal profile and migration experience. I explained that this piece of writing could be in their language of choice, and if necessary, could be translated into English by a qualified translator. This autobiographical piece was intended to act as a participant profile to gather basic information about the participant, such as date of birth, country of origin, languages, and cultures. However, each participant indicated that they preferred to speak to me about their profile, as they were all busy and it seemed to be an arduous 'homework' task for them.

3.2.3.2 Interview 2

The purpose of this interview was to gain more of an in-depth insight into the perspectives, experiences, and reflections of each participant in relation to how they made sense of their education-to-employment trajectories. It focused on how, in the context of their education-to-employment trajectories, they:

- understand the role their knowledges, languages, and cultures play in in their education-to-employment trajectories
- experience their sense of self in interaction with others.

I undertook this second round of individual interviews following initial transcription and preliminary analysis of the first interviews. The second interview provided an opportunity for the participants to further recount and reflect on events and experiences that arose in the first interview.

There was a minimum of one week between the preliminary and second interviews, allowing participants time to remember and further reflect upon experiences they perceived to be relevant to their trajectories. This second interview was important, as it gave the participants an opportunity to further explore themes that were meaningful to them as well as those that had arisen in the previous interview, facilitating deeper insights into their reflections and the significant events being narrated. Riessman (2008, p. 26) argues that it is preferable to have repeated conversations rather than the typical one-off interview, particularly when investigating biographical experience. Another reason for having a second interview is that cultural clues are often missed by researchers whose primary language and culture is different to that of participants, and are not noticed until the transcription process, if at all (Riessman, 1993). This may lead to the omission of significant points raised by participants. For this reason, I endeavoured to be open, to hear unfamiliar expressions, thoughts, ideas, worldviews, and ways of knowing in each data collection phase, which I continued throughout the subsequent transcription and analysis of the data.

3.2.3.3 Group workshop

Once each participant had taken part in their initial individual interview, I conducted a three-hour creative expression group workshop, to which all participants were invited. The purpose of this workshop was to encourage questions and responses from participants to uncover knowledge about their own and each other's lived experiences relating to their education-to-employment trajectories and the role language and culture plays in them. However, only two of the 12 participants were able to attend. The workshop involved engaging with three creative processes, followed by a group discussion of the artworks created. The discussions of what the artefacts represented to each of the participants who were involved afforded a collaborative and conversational flow that explored experiences and meanings concerning the questions raised, and co-constructed interpretation and knowledge (Wang, 2016). In discussing the personal meanings of the paintings and drawings created by each of us present in the workshop,

our stories were woven together. This created a group story, encompassing a constellation of each participant's lived experiences. The weaving together of individual stories opened different ways of seeing one's own story at the same time as locating different and multilayered understandings of both each unique story and the collective story.

Qualities that are considered common to all groupwork include communication and interaction, cohesion, and the emergence of group culture, which may enhance or inhibit positive outcomes for group functioning (McDermott, 2002, p. 46). In the context of the present study a sense of cohesion was fostered through respect and care in relating with one another. As facilitator of the group, it was my responsibility to ensure that everyone present felt safe to explore, play, and express using the art materials present. This involved reassuring the participants that the processes they were engaging in were not about a final product or artefact. Rather, it was about externalising their reflections on their experiences in different ways and then coming together to discuss the embedded meanings of those articulations as a group.

In order to work towards creating a cohesive group environment I took part in the workshop as a participating member, which involved engaging in each of the art-making processes. Through my participation, I intended to create a sense of group participation, myself included. I made the decision to participate as a dimension of facilitating the group work because a 'group culture' is developed whenever a collection of people converge for a group workshop (Case & Dalley, 2006). Case and Dalley explain that a group culture emerges based on the way members participate, interact, and engage; how artefacts are formed and worked with; and how this is facilitated by the facilitator. Thus, it was important that the culture created a context that allowed the group to explore the created artworks, enabling both personal and communal meaning to emerge (p. 248). As researcher, facilitator, and participator in the workshop it was my role to offer some direction as to what was involved at each stage of the session. I was required to initiate discussions and to develop the exploration of ideas through further inquiry into pertinent themes as they arose. As such, my role included guiding constructive dialogue between members of the group and the work created, allowing meaning to unfold in the dynamics of the group process in way that assisted the continued flow of discussion.

For the first art-making process in the group workshop I invited each participant present:

> Take notice of whatever is present for you right now in reflecting upon your experiences, affiliations, desires, aspirations, and goal/dreams for the future in terms of transitioning from education into employment.

For the second art-making process I invited participants to express their response to the prompt:

> Reflect upon your education-to-employment journey so far. Where have you been? Where are you going? What have your experiences been? What has your education-to-employment experience been so far?

A selection of art materials was provided, including pastels, paints, markers, pencils, paper, glue, magazines, and modelling clay. After each activity the participants shared their expressions, their reflections, and any insights gained. This was then followed by a group discussion of how the participants reflected upon and made sense of their own and each other's accounts as a group. These group discussions were guided by the questions:

> Where do you see yourself in relationship to the collective story? Are there similarities or differences to your own story and the story of others in the group that stand out to you?

The third creative process was introduced before bringing the workshop to a close. I invited the participants to write a poem about their experiences. The writing was framed by the question:

> What surfaces for you personally as you reflect on your education-to-employment experiences to date?

The writing was done in free-form poetry or prose. Each participant subsequently read their poem to the group. The written poems have been included as part of a coda to Chapter 8: Conclusion as a means of incorporating what Phipps (2019) calls 'felt practice'. Rather than analysing the poems, they have been situated as part of the text to capture the 'felt practice' that writing these words entailed for the participants, including myself.

In this section I have introduced the participants and described the process of data collection. I now describe the analytical approach that I took once I had completed the task of eliciting the narrative data for this study, which begins with transcription.

3.3 Analytical approach

Throughout the analysis I was guided by Riessman (2008, 1994) to consider important questions such as: How will participants' replies to questions be represented and interpreted? Where is the researcher situated? These questions emphasised that I was required, ethically, to consider difficult issues, such as my position as a relatively privileged white Western woman (Riessman, 1994, p. 292) studying the experiences of young people living in South Australia as refugees who face linguistic and cultural disadvantage as part of their everyday lived experiences. Riessman (p. 298) highlights that many researchers are privileged and white, and that there needs to be conscious awareness about the ways in which some voices and perspectives dominate. Accordingly, I do not claim to 'give voice' (p. 288). Rather, my aim has been to listen, to hear, and subsequently to share the participants' voices. Yet, throughout each phase of data collection, I recognise that I have influenced the participants' telling. Following Riessman, I have composed, constructed, and interpreted meaning from the transcripts, which were formed from co-constructed interaction in interview settings, between the participants and myself.

Here it is important to clarify that I understand that I cannot speak finally and with ultimate authority for others (Riessman 1994, p. 292). Interpreting experience involves representing reality and recreating voices over and over again, and all representations are necessarily partial and incomplete in that they are (re)constructed and can be (re)constructed differently (p. 298–299). The interpretive nature of qualitative research such as this is stretched even further — by the understanding that every text is plurivocal and open to multiple readings and constructions (p. 296). Accordingly, I understand the creativity involved in qualitative research, as analysis produces a story about 'what happened' by asserting what the interview narratives signify, through a process of reshaping what was told, forming a hybrid story, a 'false document' (p. 295).

3.3.1 Transcription

Even though efficient software is now available that eases the demanding task of transcribing and coding, I chose to do this manually. This was a purposeful decision as I wanted to directly engage with the data. As Nowell et al. (2017, pp. 4–7) stress, it is fundamental that researchers immerse themselves with the data to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. My focus in analysis was not on investigating a

linear history involving a sequence of events. Instead, I concentrated on the participants' use of narratives, and the identification of significant metaphors and themes that were salient to how they reflected upon their education-to-employment trajectories. I was attentive to their own reflections over time, specifically to what their accounts revealed through my analysis of their own understandings of their own past and present situations, and their evolving aspirations and expectations for their futures relating to their education-to-employment trajectories.

By transcribing the audio-recorded conversations, I constructed written texts that closely mirrored the verbal speech of the research interviews and workshop. However, as Riessman (2008, p. 21) observes, the subtleties and movements of conversation are lost in transcription, as it 'flattens out' the dynamics of live interaction. The unique and tangible energy of the meeting of two or more human beings — the facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice all become indistinguishable in the transformation from audio recording to text. Much is muted in transcription, and key features slip away (p. 29). Bearing this in mind, the interpretive process began even before transcription, during the conversations between research participants and me as researcher. In the process of the interviews, we mutually co-created the narrative data, which I subsequently transcribed adding further layers of interpretation (p. 26). Riessman (p. 21) clarifies that transcription and interpretation are not two distinct stages; there is an interplay between them — they are held together, intrinsically enmeshed. In the process of transcribing the data, themes began to emerge that are reflected in Chapters 4–6. '*Growing*', '*Pathfinding*' and '*Facing obstacles*' were the overarching themes that came to the fore in transcribing the participants' narrative accounts. Although each of these themes were distilled from the collated data, they were experienced in nuanced ways, distinct to the unique trajectory of each participant involved.

I made the choice not to include pauses and hesitations in the transcriptions. Doing so was not necessary because my focus was on the words and perspectives of the participants. If I did include elements of talk such as pauses and hesitations, another layer of interpretation would be needed to establish an understanding of why such instances occurred. I would be required to analyse the meaning of non-lexical utterances. However, the focus of this study was on the words and perspectives that the participants conveyed to make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories.

I transcribed the audio recordings of each phase of data collection as soon as possible after the event because while the lived experiences of the interviews and workshop were fresh in my mind, I was able to reflect on the encounter more vividly. In the process of transcription, I documented the initial stages of my analysis. I wrote down instances where I had noticed significant narrative segments, themes, metaphors, ideas, and questions that arose immediately after each interview and the workshop. I took note of recurring and significant themes and kept a journal of my thoughts and reflections along the way. Accordingly, analysis began with a focus on the reflective and reflexive co-created nature of the interactions in the data collection phases and the ensuing transcription, owing to the interpretative nature of these processes (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014; Riessman, 2015). Having described the process of transcription I now give an account of the deeper analysis that followed.

3.3.2 Analysis

Taking a multifaceted approach to the analysis enabled me to access insights into multiple dimensions of how the participants experienced and made sense of their trajectories, revealing their internal worlds as well as the wider social structures and contexts in which their experiences were embedded. The research methods and modes for analysis used highlight certain phenomena, while hiding others. The theories that I brought to bear upon the structuring of this research, have made visible certain features of the terrain that I am on and obscured others (Riessman, 1994, p. 283). In the process of analysis the possibilities are open, yet limited (Riessman, 2008). I can only attend to and address so much within the confines of this study, and for the purpose of this research the view I have taken is based on the understandings I have outlined throughout this section, and in line with the research question.

The process of analysis that followed transcription was multilayered and included thematic narrative analysis and attentiveness to the presence of metaphor. I took this approach purposefully as I set out to conduct a qualitative narrative study that uncovered themes and accessed insights into the complexity of the phenomenon under question by engaging with the data through multiple lenses. I was attentive to metaphors that arose in their narratives because they offer direct insight into how people make sense of and synthesise events into their understandings (Lakoff, 1990; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). I employed thematic narrative analysis with consideration of the

role of metaphor, as I was interested in what was most significant to the participants as they made the trajectory from education-to-employment, and how they were making sense of the trajectory.

In taking this approach I acknowledged that as the young people told their stories, they were interpreting their experiences of their education-to-employment trajectories, and simultaneously making sense of who they understood themselves to be. As Ricœur (1988, p. 246) explains, people's life stories continue to be reconfigured by both 'the truthful' and 'fictive' stories they tell about themselves. This involves a process of 'reconfiguration', which makes life 'a cloth woven of stories told' (p. 246). People do not only make sense of experiences through narratives and metaphors; they also construe and create their sense of self through them (Ricœur, 1984/2012). This is because given life is equated with the stories told about it (Ricœur, 1991, 1984/2012, 1988). Ricœur (1988) states: 'To answer the question "Who?" is to tell the story of a life. The story told tells about the action of the "who". The identity of this "who" therefore itself must be a narrative identity' (p. 246).

Thus, the construction of these young people's narratives shaped how they bring coherence to their own experiences and their sense of self, and in turn how, as a listener, I was able to interpret how they have come to understand their experiences (Riessman, 2008).

Thematic narrative analysis

Using Ricœur (1984/2012) and Riessman (2008) as starting points, I distinguished narrative segments by attending to sections of text that reflected on experiences in narrative form. I identified these segments by attending to features of their accounts beyond a linear understanding of narrative set in a chronological order with a sequence of events depicting a beginning, middle, and end (Ricœur, 1984/2012). Narrative is central to how people make sense of their lives across time (Ricœur, 1984/2012, 1988). Thus, taking a thematic approach, I attended to sections that reflected a narrative structure that established and connected meaning and coherence to their experiences, revealing how they situated themselves within them. The themes were established through concentrating on key organising concepts and collective underlying ideas that were evidenced across the data set, by way of identifying repeated events and commonalities (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 168). Yet, as Riessman (2002, p. 3) cautions, when

narratives are grouped into a similar thematic categories, it is possible to lose sight of ambiguities, divergent responses and the unspoken. Accordingly, I was attentive to themes that did not necessarily fit into any developing typology as they emerged alongside more dominant ones.

As Riessman (2008) points out, taking a thematic narrative approach does not come with a predefined set of instructions to work within. Accordingly, thematic analysis is not restricted by boundaries of theoretical commitments — and yet this does not mean such an approach is atheoretical (Braun & Clarke, 2017; Pavlenko, 2007, p. 171). Rather, thematic analysis is flexible, leading to a wide range of applications, meaning that it can be applied across a wide range of theoretical frameworks and research orientations (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Riessman (2008) emphasises that different researchers vary the approach and adopt it differently. According to Riessman (2008, pp. 53–54) the primary focus in thematic narrative analysis is frequently what is said rather than who, to whom, or for what purpose. In other words, the primary concern in thematic approaches to narrative research is often in the 'told' of the recounted events (p. 54). Although I took such an approach, with my focus concerned predominantly with the content of the participant's accounts, I remained attentive to dimensions of how their accounts were structured. For example, where significant, I noted instances where their language indicated that their accounts were shaped by the context of the speech event — the research interview, the narrated event — and for what purpose the participants told a particular story. In doing so I was attentive to structural and dialogic/performance dimensions of their narratives as Riessman recommends.

In observing the structural and dialogic/performance dimensions of their accounts I took notice of how the participants structured their narratives. I considered not only what they said, but also why their narratives were told in particular ways, and I located the voices of others within them. In attending to the language that they employed in this way I was able to analyse not just what was told, but also how the participants brought to the fore particular experiences, as well as the voices of others. Taking this analytical approach allowed me to access insights into the intersection between the personal and the social. Drawing on Bakhtin's notion of 'polyvocality', Riessman (2008, p. 107) explains that narratives are 'polyphonic' or 'multi-voiced'; the words of narrators always carry the voices of others, which in turn, reveal concealed discourses and

historical perspectives embedded in a given historical, geographical, linguistic, and cultural context.

Taking a narrative approach to analysis required consideration of multiple dimensions and perspectives that frame personal narratives, because human beings are always encompassed by larger social and cultural contexts, influenced by interlocutors, space/place, and historical time (Riessman, 2008, 2012). Applying elements of Riessman's (2008) structural and dialogic/performance analysis in addition to thematic analysis allowed me to consider the meanings of the participants' use of language. Structural elements that I noted included repetition and reported speech as well as their use of pronouns. For instance, in some instances participants employed reported speech to narrate events by assembling a cast of those involved, including themselves, reenacting what was said and by whom. In observing such features in their narratives, the analysis not only exemplified what was going on in an event, but also revealed how they were positioned by others and how they positioned themselves in relation to others. For example, as captured in Chapter 5, in reporting her inner dialogue, Zahra stated that '*I just told myself / "If I don't get an education / I'll just have to keep living / Like every other Afghan woman / Be a housewife"* '. In enacting her inner voice in this way, Zahra positioned herself as actively pursuing education as a pathway away from what she considers the norm for Afghan women.

The presence of metaphor

Taking the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) as a point of departure, I was attentive to the presence of metaphors that related directly to the education-to-employment narratives of the participants. This facilitated insight into the participants' internal worlds, as their use of metaphors revealed how they conceptualised their external education-to-employment realties internally. As the authors highlight, much of the meaning that human beings make of their experiences of and in the world is metaphorical in nature. Metaphors influence the ways in which people navigate the world as it is through metaphor that they understand each other, themselves, their relationships, and the (social) worlds in which they are situated (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003; Kövecses, 2010). Further still, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) state, it is through metaphor that people make sense of their bodily experience of being, as well as the conceptual realities that frame human life. The authors show that many of the

metaphors that are embedded in the conceptual systems of English speakers arise from correlations between co-occurring embodied experiences; for example, *happy is up*, *sad is down*; *more is up*, *less is down*; *affection is warmth*. Much of the meaning applied to human experience and understanding is achieved conceptually through metaphor. Without metaphor, or symbolic meaning, life might be constituted by a succession of disconnected, chaotic events without a sense of meaning or purpose.

Kövecses (2010) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) say that metaphor is frequently viewed as a characteristic of language, rather than a feature that influences everyday human thought and action. They stress that metaphors are not merely literary, poetic linguistic devices or embellishments. They are also a shaping force in the conceptual structuring and restructuring of human experience, which these authors refer to as 'conceptual metaphors'. Conceptual metaphors can be understood as referring to one domain of experience, which is typically abstract, in terms of another, which is typically concrete. An example can be found in the Western cultural conceptual metaphor 'time is money' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003, pp. 7–9). People spend time, waste time, invest time, lose time, and borrow time. This metaphor is so pervasive in Western society that it directly influences people's relationship with time.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003, pp. 7–9) discuss time as a valuable commodity, a limited resource that people use to accomplish goals. Time is money in many ways that influence how people act in respect to time, and accordingly how they conceive of time Metaphors are culturally specific and embedded, thus there are cultures where time is none of these things. This means that metaphors can be understood to influence the mapping of the conceptual systems that shape how people perceive and navigate the world and relate to others. Because it is not only the language that is metaphoric, but also the way people conceptualise and relate to the world, the metaphors that the participants employed reveal how they conceived their experiences. For example, the participants collectively employed metaphors that conveyed that they conceptualised their life as a journey in describing their experiences from across their education-to-employment trajectories, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5: Pathfinding.

The theme 'pathfinding' captures the way in which the participants conveyed their experience of their trajectory from education-to-employment as a journey. As Kövecses (2010, p. 4) explains, 'the abstract concept of life' is routinely conceived metaphorically

and spoken about as a journey. Metaphors such as 'life is a journey' pre-exist in the languages and cultures in which people are born, and in the subsequent languages and cultures that are woven into their linguistic repertoires in their ongoing socialisation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). These are referred to as conventional metaphors that structure the basic conceptual systems of a given language and culture (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 139). Yet, people's use of metaphor can also be outside conventional conceptual systems, as they invoke metaphors that are imaginative or creative and which can generate different understandings of experience. This was evidenced in the participant accounts, because even in instances where they drew on metaphors that are pre-existing in everyday language and thought, the ways in which they applied meaning to them were routinely distinctive to each participant.

Metaphors permit an understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another, yet, in many cases there may be no physical correspondence or similarity between the metaphor's source domain and the target domain (Underhill, 2011, p. 28). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) observe, this means that metaphor is one of the most basic mechanisms human beings have for understanding experience. Through metaphor people can create different meanings and thereby make sense of their realities in different ways that are nevertheless related to the metaphors that are drawn upon. Lakoff and Jonson identify three interconnected categories of conceptual metaphors, which often coincide and overlap. These are structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors, whereby conceptual mappings between elements of a target domain (the concept being referred to) are attributed elements of a source domain (the concept being drawn upon to describe the concept being referred to).

The first category, *structural metaphors*, are generally captured in cases where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. Two examples of this category of conceptual metaphor are the 'time is money' and 'life is a journey' metaphors discussed above. In structural metaphors the source domain provides a knowledge structure for the target concept (Kövecses, 2010, p. 37). The structure of the concepts being referred to are conceived and experienced as having the same or similar structures or patterns of way behaving and arising in the world.

In the second category, *orientational metaphors*, a whole system of concepts is organised in relation to another. These are predominantly spatial orientation terms such

as up–down, in–out, above–below, and front–back (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 14). Kövecses (2010, p. 40) suggests that orientational metaphors can be better understood as 'coherence metaphors'. The notion 'coherence' simply means that certain target concepts are frequently conceptualised in a uniform manner. An example that Kövecses gives is that each of the concepts are characterised by an upward orientation, while the opposite receives a downward orientation. Thus, more is conceived conceptually as up and less as down (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). For example, as seen in economic terms, 'prices are going through the roof', or 'prices have plummeted'.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) discuss that these spatial orientations arise from the fact that people, that is, human bodies, have a particular biological configuration and function in a particular way in relationship with their physical environment. Yet, it is necessary to note that orientational metaphors cannot be represented independently of their experiential basis. For example, 'more is up' has a different kind of experiential basis than 'happy is up'. Although the concept *up* is the same in each of these metaphors, the experiences on which these are constructed are different. It is not that there are many different *up*s; instead, verticality enters human experience in various ways and thus gives rise to diverse metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). For instance, as Lakoff and Johnson point out, when a person is happy, they smile and their facial muscles go up, and when a person is sad, they tend to go down. Thus, the conceptualisation of happy as up and sad as down shows how the linguistic correlates with the embodied experience (Lakoff, 2016, p. 270).

Finally, *ontological metaphors* are located where experiences are conceptualised in terms of objects, substances, and containers, without specifying exactly what kind of objects, substances, and containers (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson 1980/2003). Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) explain that understanding experience in terms of objects and substances enables people to pick out aspects of experiences and treat them as discrete entities. In identifying experiences as entities or substances in this way, they can be categorised and quantified (p. 25). Personification, where human qualities are given to nonhuman entities, is a form of ontological metaphor (Kövecses, 2010, p. 39) that was observed across the participants' accounts. For example, in Chapter 4: Growing, the participants described their lives or themselves as having the qualities of nonhuman entities such as trees, flowers, and seeds. In employing these ontological

metaphors, the participants revealed that they conceptualised themselves as having the qualities that these phenomena in the natural world are understood to possess.

Because metaphor is so pervasive in everyday thought and language (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) its role is intrinsic to the development of narrative in all forms of representation, creating coherence to people's history of lived experience. Metaphorical concepts create the frameworks for applying meaning to experience. As they learn and acquire their linguistic and cultural repertoires, people integrate hundreds of metaphors into their conceptual systems. People think in terms of metaphors; thus, metaphors characterise the way people conceive experience. Metaphors affect how people act, understand, relate, and experience across all spheres of human life (Lakoff, 2012, 2014; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). Accordingly, it was through coding the presence of conceptual metaphors in the analysis of the participants' accounts that themes were established. It was the prevalence and significance of conceptual metaphors in the participants' narratives that guided the decision to establish thematic codes based on the presence of conceptual metaphors in their accounts.

Conducting the analysis

Guided by the analytical process suggested by Riessman (1994, 2008), I read the interview transcripts closely multiple times. In the initial readings I took preliminary notes concerning the significant narrative segments, in which metaphors were establishing the emergence of significant themes. This was followed by multiple further close readings. With each pass through I expanded upon and reviewed my initial notes and identification of themes. These were then developed into codes and contrasted with emerging themes that I identified across the data. In the analysis, I developed preliminary thematic codes, which evolved throughout the reading and rereading of the data. The coding was based upon the way in which the participants communicated the opportunities and challenges they had experienced living their education-to-employment trajectories in linguistic and cultural diversity. As I attended to the data through these multiple readings, the narrative segments, metaphors, and themes were compressed through systematic compilation of both the recurring and the striking features present in the data. Through this process of distillation and refinement of codes, larger patterns of meaning were established through the identification of three major themes.

Once I had collated all the data with a list of codes identified from the transcriptions, I organised the relevant excerpts thematically. I organised themes by coding those significant to the participants' educational and employment experiences and their understanding of them. Throughout this process of analysis, I noticed a distinct pattern of metaphors that the participants were applying to their experiences. These metaphors tended to be threaded through their articulations, resurfacing throughout the dialogues that we shared, and they appeared to frame how the participants made sense of their experiences. The more I read and re-read the interview transcriptions, I could see that metaphor really is everywhere in everyday thought and language, as Lakoff and Johnson (2003) suggest. However, I did not attempt to notice or analyse all the metaphors present in the participants' accounts as my focus was on the presence of those that related directly to their understandings of their education-to-employment trajectories. Accordingly, the metaphors that arose in the participants' narratives, which predominantly emerged when reflecting upon their visual representations, demonstrated the internal ways in which participants made sense of their education-to-employment trajectories.

In each read through of the transcripts I was attentive to the presence of narrative segments and metaphors that were salient to the research focus. Thus, the codes that I distilled from the data captured the features significant to the research focus. In doing so, I took note of instances where the participants referred to their education-to-employment experiences and how they perceived their broader life-worlds in relation to their understandings of those spheres of their lives. For example, during analysis I noticed that as participants discussed their experiences related to work their trajectory, 'contributing' was a recurring feature of the meaning that they applied to their participation in both education and employment. As such, contributing emerged as a subtheme, distilled from the participants' own accounts of their experiences. This is highlighted in Chapter 4: Growing, where many of the participants' accounts revealed that their motivation in both education and employment was about contributing towards enhancing the conditions within the community and, in some cases, other refugees and migrants specifically. For instance, when Latif reflected on his work in his family's business, he described contributing to the community as a key motivation.

Following O'Neill (2015, p. 45), rather than establishing thematic coding characterised by nouns, which may obscure the evolutionary nature of the participants' education-to-

employment experiences, I used present continuous verb forms. I adopted the present continuous form as it better captures the 'doing' and 'becoming' nature of their trajectories. As I went back and forth between the collated data and refined the codes that were emerging from my analysis, three predominant themes emerged — 'growing', 'pathfinding' and 'facing obstacles' — along with their associated subthemes (see Table 3.5). These processual verb forms established ways of looking at the data that revealed the ongoing and evolving nature of the participants' trajectories and the emergent ways in which they were making sense of them. Each of these processes is considered independently in chapters 4, 5, and 6 and together, more broadly, in Chapters 7 and 8. Yet, these were not held separately in the participants' accounts of their lived experiences, rather, they were experienced contemporaneously as they continuously holistically ecologised all that they had experienced across their education-to-employment trajectories living, learning, and working in and between multiple languages and cultures.

Table 3.5: Themes and subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Growing	Adapting Contributing
Pathfinding	Uncertainty Playing catch-up
Facing obstacles	Rising above Surviving

Issues of representation

Representational decisions were made along the way, and these decisions influenced the structuring and rendering of the participants' accounts. As discussed through this chapter, this was an interpretative process. With this in mind, part of my approach in presenting the data as text has been to include the data in poetic form so that readers can see the participants' accounts separately from the analysis. Poetic forms of text can tap into a collective sense of experience Ricœur (1984/2012). Another reason for implementing a poetic rendering of the interview transcripts is that experience can never be represented directly (Riessman, 2008). Instead, it is modified at different stages of the process from life to text (Ricœur, 1998) and as Phipps (2019, p. 9) highlights, poetry

enters the intellect through reaching the heart. Accordingly, I represented the interview data in poetic form in order to capture the expressiveness conveyed by each participant; poetic language renders both the context and the emotion conveyed in their accounts. In presenting the data in poetic form I have not positioned the words in the precise order that they were spoken. I placed sentences together from different sections of the same stretch of talk and omitted segments that did not reflect the themes connected to the overarching research question.

Riessman (2008, 1994) emphasises that an important aspect to approaching transcription is interrogation of the decisions made in constructing written representation of oral narrative, because 'transcripts contain invisible, taken-for-granted theories of language and the "self" ' (2008, p. 37). This means that there are significant considerations in transcribing interactions. Any transcription is incomplete, partial, and selective (1994, p. 293). In considering the interpretive conundrum that transcription presents, it was necessary to contemplate how I would approach the undertaking:

> How can I best capture the rhythm of one's talk? Do I include pauses, hesitations, and indications of vacillation, such as non-lexicals like 'uhm'? What layout do I present the talk as text in? Is talk captured in poetic or rhythmic form? (p. 294)

These questions illustrate that there is no one true representation of verbal language, and that meaning is established in varying ways with alternative transcriptions of the same stretch of talk (p. 294). Riessman points out that qualitative researchers tend to seek to depict other people's experiences but write as though representation were unproblematic (p. 288). I have endeavoured not do this.

As I have indicated in Section 3.1.2, the emphasis in elicitation of the arts-based narrative data was on what the participants themselves made of their own representations, not my own interpretation of them. Thus, in the analysis it was the verbal explanation that followed each of the creative processes that was collected as narrative data. Yet, it cannot be ignored that the images themselves do in fact speak to the audience, and what they say depends on the audience and the audience's own unique interpretation. Accordingly, the artefacts themselves have been included in the representation of the data, because although I do not analyse them, they are the concrete forms through which the participants subsequently gave their accounts of their embedded symbolic meaning. The visual representations have been included as reference points for understanding the significance of the art-making process, and as an

avenue for developing insights into what the participants expressed in visual form, alongside the language that they subsequently employed in reflecting upon the images' embedded meanings.

To demonstrate the manifestation, presence, and relevance of each theme the excerpts and images were selected across the transcripts and collection of images because they illustrated the salient aspects of the participant experiences. I have juxtaposed these excerpts from the data transcripts in poetic form and the correlated visually expressed images correlated. In their accounts, the participants collectively highlighted how experiences were initiating changes that were occurring not only externally, but also in their embodied internal worlds. These were internal processes; they included thoughts and emotions that corresponded with experiences from across their education-to-employment trajectory, and reflecting upon them in the present**.** Thus, throughout Chapters 4–6, the excerpts I have included are sometimes more revealing of the internal reflective processes experienced by the participants and at other times more revealing of the external social reality of their experiences. In these three chapters I discuss the main themes established by my analyses of the young refugees' accounts of their education-to-employment trajectories.

Each of the three main themes is explained and discussed in relation to excerpts selected from the data, and where applicable, alongside their visual representations. In doing so, insights foreshadow the overall findings discussed in Chapter 7, contributing to understandings of how the participants, who are living in South Australia as refugees, experience their education-to-employment trajectories. These three themes are 'growing' (Chapter 4), 'pathfinding' (Chapter 5), and 'facing obstacles' (Chapter 6). While I have presented each of the themes separately and sequentially to give an account of the analysis, these processes were not held independently. It is important to note that although these themes are discussed through in Chapters four, five, and six independently, they were at play contemporaneously, enmeshed, and interrelated, and they are brought together in the final two chapters of this thesis. Nor does the order the themes necessarily have hierarchical presence or reflect relevance. Each of these processes can be at play simultaneously as they overlap and interconnect; they may have greater or lesser significance at a given moment in time, or in the process and the intention behind the telling.

3.3.3 Conclusion

This research was grounded in real people's everyday lives (Bucholtz & Skapoulli, 2009) and has afforded insights into the participant's understandings of their education-to-employment experiences. Throughout this chapter I have provided a rationale and description of this study, outlining the decisions that I made throughout the research process, including the approach, design, and process of analysis. I discussed the key theoretical underpinnings that were used as a starting point, including but not limited to Riessman's (2008) narrative approach, Ricœur's (1984) narrative phenomenology, and Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) notion that metaphors are intrinsic to how people make sense of everyday life. I have embraced these reference points gently, as I do not intend to exclude other theories and theorists that have facilitated my emerging understandings of the data.

Bringing these young people's narratives to light affords opportunities for their voices and perspectives to be heard by stakeholders and policy makers in education and employment spheres and beyond, in the wider community. This fosters community awareness about the linguistic, cultural, and social realities they face across their trajectories and with it, an opportunity to re-imagine the current situation, made possible through taking an arts-based narrative approach. In my analysis of the narratives, I established conceptual or thematic groupings of poetically rendered excerpts to illustrate and create connections across themes (Riessman, 2003, p. 2). What became apparent throughout the analytical process is that in many instances there were similarities in their accounts of their experiences, and in the way that they made sense of or applied meaning to those experiences. I put this point forward without ignoring the differences, nuances, and uniqueness of each participant and their lived experiences. The connections observed across the data are relevant to current and developing understandings of how young people who are living in South Australia as refugees, make sense of their education-to-employment trajectories. This is because individual lives, in specific locations and points in time, afford insight into a given social phenomenon (Riessman, 2008).

Throughout the coming chapters I consider that it was in social, linguistic, and cultural contexts, in interaction with others, as well as in the internal worlds of the participants, that they had their experiences, including how they come to reflect upon and

subsequently make sense of them (Ricœur, 1984/2012). Accordingly, the participants' narratives exemplify how they were integrating their education-to-employment experiences into their sense of self, and how they were positioned within those experiences by others. This is because people's life stories are not fixed but dynamic as they gain new experiences in different contexts. Social positions and sense of self are never static; rather, they are changing, shifting, and emerging (Kayı-Aydar, 2019, p. 11; Riessman, 2008).

Because social positions are achieved interactionally, in language and culture, people's positionings are relative to others in particular contexts (Riessman, 2008). People behave, communicate, and perceive themselves in relation to others and the contexts that frame their experiences, not as independent entities (Maturana, 2001). Accordingly, the notion of 'position' that is in play throughout the coming chapters is understood in the understandings of the self, in the context of both:

- the understandings of the self, located in the context of the experience being told
- the context of the unfolding narrative account.

Davies (2000a, 2000b) points out that the self is at once located in and shaped by interactions in socially produced storylines, that is, in discursive processes. Positioning in this sense is understood to be a reflexive process in which the participants situate themselves in social interactions, while simultaneously making sense of how they were positioned by others.

4 Growing

In Chapter 1, I highlighted the increasing phenomenon of human movement across geographical, linguistic, and cultural borders, which is contributing to the evolving and complex diversity that characterises contemporary societies. As emphasised throughout this thesis, a significant number of those who experience this phenomenon are young people who have had a refugee experience and who are living their education-to-employment trajectories in what is, for them, an unknown language, culture, and society. As outlined in Chapters 1–3, the present study has captured the voices and perspectives of young people who have had a refugee experience, concerning their own education and employment. In doing so, this study offers insights into how the participants experienced and made sense of their own trajectories, in their own terms. In this chapter and in the two that follow, I discuss three major and interconnected themes that emerged from my analysis of their narrative accounts. These are 'growing', 'pathfinding', and 'facing obstacles'. Together, these themes capture how the participants experienced and understood their trajectories as a process of evolution, as they made their varying pathways from education-to-employment.

The first theme, which is considered in this chapter, analyses the participants descriptions of their education-to-employment experiences as a process of evolution. 'Growing' captures how each participant conveyed their development as a sense of (re)creating their understandings of themselves and their experiences. For them, growing was accomplished in relation to acquiring another language and learning to navigate a new linguistic and cultural world, with others, in social contexts. This means that they grew in interactional experiences as they lived, learned, and worked in relation to and with others, as they adapted to unfamiliar linguistic, cultural, and social contexts and ways of knowing. I have termed this process 'growing' because each participant ubiquitously employed in their accounts what Lakoff and Johnson (2003) describe as structural metaphors that encompass phenomena that grow in the natural world. As discussed in the previous chapter, structural metaphors include instances where one concept is structured metaphorically in terms of another. The participants employed structural metaphors in their accounts to describe their sense of self, their understandings through describing their experiences or themselves as phenomena found in the natural world, such as flowers. Through the use of such structural metaphors, the

participants conveyed their shifting and evolving sense of self with a sense that they were growing in relationship to their education-to-employment experiences. Moreover, the participants all employed the concept of growing to describe their sense of self, their experiences, and their understandings of the processes involved in learning to navigate life, education, and work in an unfamiliar language, culture, and society.

Two major interrelated subthemes to the evolutionary process of growing were captured - 'adapting' and 'contributing'. The first, *adapting*, emerged in the participants' accounts as they described that. for them, growing meant adjusting to what was for them a new language, culture, and society. They were forced to adapt to living, learning, and working in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity, in a dominant language and culture that was not their own. The second subtheme, *contributing*, emerged in their accounts as a desire to participate in and belong to the community that developed their aspirations to employ their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges in their roles and fields of work. In considering the theme 'growing', which emerged from the analysis, I address each of these associated subthemes in turn in Sections 4.1 and 4.2. In doing so, I signal connections between the participants' accounts of their experiences, related theorisations, and current research, thus contextualising how each participant experienced and made sense of their education-to-employment trajectories living, learning, and working in linguistic and cultural diversity.

4.1 Adapting

The first subtheme, adapting, is intrinsic to growing as it involves the process of developing the wherewithal to live, learn, and work in and in-between multiple languages, cultures, related knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices, which each participant experienced in their own ways. As they did so, they each developed the ability to hold multiple perspectives simultaneously. With this ability, they fostered a heightened sense of self-reflection and reflexivity, which regularly came into play in routine experiences of, and encounters with, those who held prejudicial attitudes and behaviours. Throughout this chapter and those that follow, I hold the notions of reflection and reflexivity together. This is because, together, they capture the participants' heightened sense of awareness that they developed alongside their capability to inhabit multiple languages, cultural realities, and identities, and to live, learn, and work in and between these. As Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014) illuminate in

their work, there is a need for what they call a reflexive turn in applied linguistics. Without intending to give a definitive or constraining singular, static theorisation of the phenomenon, they aim to highlight the complicated and multiple ways in which they have come to understand and practice reflexivity as an ongoing, multifaceted, and dialogical process.

Reflection refers to how the participants' accounts captured their awareness of their own understandings and how they then considered them by questioning how they made sense of themselves, others, and their experiences — and in turn, how others understood them. Reflexivity refers to reflection on self and the adjustments that they sometimes made to their understandings of themselves, others, their experiences, and ways of interacting that emerged as a result of their reflections. Put simply, reflection captures an internal process whereby they came to understand themselves and what was going on in their experiences and social interactions, and reflexivity refers to how they were adapting to the circumstances in ways that corresponded to those reflections. Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014, p. 18) explain reflexivity as developing psychological and emotional states of awareness that are linked with becoming something other or something more than one was or happened to be before — a transformation, an altered or heightened sense achievable through particular experiences.

Adapting emerged in the analysis as the young people described growing from education-to-employment, revealing experiences of living their trajectories in-between their own languages and cultures and those of the wider, dominant Australian society. Living, learning, and working in this in-between space required that they adapt to the new language, culture, and social structures in which they were making their trajectories. Anzaldúa (2012) described this sense of in-betweenness as being in the 'borderlands'. Anzaldúa's borderland theory was developed through her reflections on her own life as a gay Chicana woman, the daughter of extremely poor farmworkers living in complex linguistic, cultural, and social diversity and under immense oppression. Anzaldúa's theory (p. 7) can be drawn upon in the context of any personal and social dislocation. For her, the concept of 'living in-between' offers theoretical insights into the experiences of linguistically, culturally, and socially oppressed individuals and communities who live in multiple and often contradictory languages, cultures, knowledges, value systems, and social practices. The borderlands are present wherever two or more societies, languages, and cultures edge each other. This was the

reality for the participants of the present study. They were adapting to living their education-to-employment trajectories in what is for them a new language and culture, while simultaneously, living, learning, and working in their primary languages and cultures through the lens of their primary socialisation experiences.

To give an example of adapting as identified in my analysis, I turn to the account of Karla, who came to Australia with her family as a refugee from the DRC at ten years of age. At the time of the study Karla was working on a casual basis as a cultural awareness officer and was in her second year of a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations. She was also covering a colleague on maternity leave to coordinate a youth ambassador program and had recently been appointed an unpaid position as a multicultural youth ambassador for a local national sports club. Karla's verbal account of the first visual representation she created in the group workshop (see Excerpt 4.1) captured a sense of adapting in her learning experiences, which she unambiguously termed '*growing*'. On being invited to reflect verbally upon the image she created using acrylic paints on an A2 sheet of white paper (see Fig. 5.1), Karla described how growing involved learning what she needed to change:

> But at the same time growing,
> Like this is Year 11, Year 12,
> I am growing,
> I'm learning more about,
> What do I need to change?
> What do I need to do more?
>
> But with education it starts off again,
> With not being happy,
> Because I had to learn a whole new language.
> So, it's like studying, learning a whole new language
> Really focusing on the education,
> the learning.
>
> **Excerpt 4.1 Karla, group workshop, p.18**

Karla's self-questioning revealed her sense of adapting to the structures of the Australian educational system in order to navigate her final years of high school, which included learning English. Her account captured that she perceived she was required to view herself from outside of her experience as she learned to navigate an unfamiliar language culture and social world: '*What do I need to change? What do I need to do more?*' This suggests that for Karla, adapting involved developing her capacity for self-reflection. Karla's reflection on her awareness that she needed to '*change*' as she was

'*learning*', which for her was intrinsic to growing, indicates that she was responding reflexively by consciously adapting with self-awareness to what was for her a new linguistic and cultural context. To be reflexive involves stepping out of the structures of understanding and assumptions of one's own habitual ways of thinking and relating to others, which is achieved by examining the self from outside of the self (Bolton, 2018). Karla's words clearly articulated this sense of viewing herself from outside of herself, as she pondered what it was that she needed to do more of and what she needed to change in navigating her final years of high school. As such, she was not only reflecting, but also responding reflexively to the circumstances of her education-to-employment trajectory.

Arezzo's account also emphasised a sense of growing that involved a process of adapting. Like Karla, Arezzo drew a flower (see Fig. 4.1) to convey how she conceptualised her educational experiences. However, rather than revealing a sense of adapting in relation to the new language, culture, and educational system, Arezzo stressed a sense of adapting in relationship to '*problems*', which were growing in tandem with her (see Excerpt 4.2). Arezzo grew up as an Afghan refugee in Pakistan and had arrived in Australia with her family in 2014. At the time of the study, she had recently left high school midway through Year 11 and was about to commence SACE Mathematics and English at TAFE SA. In expressing her education-to-employment experiences so far through visual means, she employed markers on cream paper. In describing the significance of her visual representation, Arezzo did not give details about a particular educational or employment experience. Rather, she described her internal thoughts and the emotions that arose when reflecting upon her trajectory holistically. In other words, as she gave her account of growing, she did not distinguish between her broader life-world, education, or employment. As Arezzo created her image a flower emerged, and as she drew, she spontaneously narrated her personal meaning of her visual expression without any prompting.



Figure 4.1: Arezzo, Interview 1

This flower
Is like my life,
Small,
Small,
Then it gets
Bigger,
Bigger,
And then
When it gets bigger
It just dries up.

My life
It dies,
It ends
Everything.

The problems start
As small
And then small
And then it gets bigger
As you grow,
Because sometimes
The situation is worse
And sometimes it's normal.

Everyday fighting
I hope the flower grows,
Or to stay fresh,
Give it water every day,
Give it hope every day.

Excerpt 4.2 Arezzo, Interview 1, pp. 22–23

Arezzo simultaneously drew while verbally explaining the meaning of her image by employing a structural metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), conceptualising her life as a flower. In doing so she revealed that she made sense of her life by conceptualising it as sharing the characteristics of flowers. Drawing on this structural metaphor to make sense of her experiences. This is revealing of what Lakoff and Johnson explain are the ways in which external experiences are internalised. In detailing the 'growing' nature of her flower, Arezzo revealed a sense of adapting to the problems and emotions that she faced in her life experiences. Her account captured that as she was growing, the problems were growing too, creating a feeling of helplessness. A sense of effort in adapting was evident for Arezzo, as there was self-determination on her part — she is required to give it '*water*' or '*hope everyday*'. The action required on her part suggests that she had a sense of self-awareness and self-reflection. Arezzo was cognisant that she, like a flower, does not simply adapt to the environment without effort or struggle. Action is required on her part to '*stay fresh*' in the context of the challenges involved in adapting to a new linguistic, cultural, and social environment.

Like Arezzo, Karla also experienced the effort involved in adapting. However, for Karla the effort involved was retaining her home languages and cultures and related ways of knowing, which she referred to metaphorically as her '*foundation*' (see Excerpt 4.3). In response to questions about her education-to-employment trajectory in her second interview, Karla also drew an image of a flower with markers on cream-coloured paper (see Fig. 4.2). She explained that the flower represented herself. She placed the flower two structures, one representing education and the other employment, revealing her own sense of effort in adapting.



Figure 4.2: Karla, Interview 2

This is like
A little bit of,
You know,
The growth stage,
And it's growing up
A little happier
And trying to find
Those happy moments
And still remembering
That foundation.

Grow as much as I can.

The two institutions
Being different,
But at the same time
They are still two building blocks.

The structure
Is sort of the same,
Where they will teach you
To earn money,
Help others
And work with others
And to learn different things,
In the same way
That it will teach you,

Also, to work with others
It will also teach you to learn
Different things,
But they are separate.

And that one is different,
It's like a profitised thing,
You have to make money
To succeed,
I feel,
The difference,
between
It's from the same institution
I think I will always be
between them.

Excerpt 4.3 Karla, Interview 2, pp.9–13

At the time of the second interview Karla had recently recommenced looking for work in customer service and retail. She was yet to be successful in obtaining such work. The in-between nature of her education and employment that Karla described in her account captured the reality that many of the young people were studying, looking for work, or working concurrently. Where Karla mentioned '*remembering that foundation*' (i.e., her primary socialisation, which included her first languages, cultures, knowledge, and history of lived experiences), she captured a sense of integrating all her life's experiences into her growing. This indicates that, for Karla, growing was accomplished in learning to live in the borderlands. She was adapting to her experiences of learning and working in the between space located where two or more social worlds, languages and cultures meet and intersect. Growing involves developing the ability to navigate this space, as each participant was learning to live, learn, and work within, and move between, two languages and cultures at the same time. For Karla, this involved not forgetting what she called her '*foundation*', a characteristic of the developing nature of her linguistic, cultural, and social knowledge and understandings. Her knowledge and the languages and cultures of her primary socialisation travelled with her as she made the trajectory from education-to-employment, simultaneously adapting to the new linguistic, cultural, and social context and learning to move within and across the two. In comparing her experiences of education and employment (see Excerpt 4.3), Karla described employment as a '*profitised thing*', which also required adaptation as she moved from educational contexts into employment.

For Karla (see Excerpt 4.4), transitioning from education-to-employment involved adapting to a different reality than the one she was expecting. At school she had experienced being well received, supported, and encouraged by teachers, and yet her trajectory did not evolve as anticipated. The expectation that she would get '*straight into work'* was fostered through her experiences at school in her interactions with teachers. Once she did commence looking for work and '*that did not happen*' as anticipated, she began to question herself. This self-questioning indicated that Karla was reflexively adapting to how she was received by others as she transitioned from education-to-employment. This was revealed as she questioned herself and reconsidered her past interactions with teachers, which had developed in her a sense of security in gaining employment. Karla's narrative demonstrates that the way she came to see herself and what was possible for her trajectory was achieved in interaction with others such as her teachers, peers, and family members.

I was very ecstatic
I was like
'Yep, finish high school, getting straight into work'
I don't think really anyone said
'Hang on a second,
That might not work.'

So, I felt like,
With my experiences
And everything else,
Teachers were very positive,
'Oh wow, you are really good,
You will get received really well out there.'

And I think that made me too secure,
'Wow, if these guys can say it
and be positive about it,
I will do really great out there.'
That did not happen.

I was really in that very positive state,
That I have been put into,
By the by the schooling system,
And then getting out of that system was like
'Oh crap. What's wrong with me?
Or why am I not doing so well?'

Excerpt 4.4 Karla, Interview 2, pp .3–4

For Karla, adapting involved changing dreams and adjusting to Australian society, which meant not only learning English, but also integrating into the Australian cultural context, as revealed in Excerpt 4.5:

> When we first
> Got here
> The dream
> And aspiration
> Was learn English,
> Adapt,
> Be a part of the community,
> The society.
>
> It wasn't you know
> The big
> 'I'm going to be a prime minister'
> Or
> 'I'm gonna be this.'
>
> So, once we got that down,
> English,
> You know learnt
> And the adaptations
> Was slowly going,
> Assimilating.
>
> **Excerpt 4.5 Karla, Interview 1, p. 6**

Karla's narrative of '*assimilating*' is telling of what Riessman (2008) describes as the subtle ways structures of inequality reveal themselves in what appears to be simply talk about one's own experiences. Karla's use of the word '*assimilating*' is revealing of current and historical policy and practice within government, education, and employment institutions in relation to multiculturalism in Australia, 'where attitudes towards immigrant minorities are still strongly influenced by the expectation that they will "integrate", even 'assimilate' (Clyne & Jupp, 2011, p. 51). For Karla a primary '*aspiration*' was to learn English — a requirement of adapting in order to become '*a part of the community*' — before dreaming into the future in terms of education or employment was possible, or even imaginable. Although Australia is a multilingual society, there still exists a 'monolingual mindset', where multilingualism is seen as the exception (p. 60). Karla's narrative hints at the sense that these young people's education-to-employment trajectories are saturated in implicit social inequality; in this case, in the form of the expectation to assimilate.

Like Karla's narrative, Roland's account (see Excerpt 4.6) reveals a sense of adapting in the context of a 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne & Jupp, 2011). For Karla, adapting to the social context, language, and culture of Australian society was fundamental to her evolving sense of self and what was possible for her future. It included '*assimilating*', while remembering her linguistic, cultural, and social foundation. However, for Roland, adapting involved seeking an environment that suited his style and approach to learning in the face of a monolingual education system that did not support him to achieve his education-to-employment goals. In his first interview, in response to questions about his education-to-employment experiences, Roland gave an account of changing educational institutions while completing a Certificate III in Community Services:

I decided to drop the course,
I used to tell them
'The language that you guys tell me
English is my second language
And I'm not perfect at it.'

And I tell them like
'If you give me the book today
Don't expect for me to finish it then
I have to sit down and think,
And digest all the words
Before I put my thoughts down there.
But if you think
I can't do it
Then what can I do?'

They be like,
'If you don't want to do this
You better leave.'
I said,
'It's okay'
And then I decided to leave.

And then from there,
I found a course online
And this course
Made me feel,
More comfortable
'Cos the people
They be very friendly
And if I don't know something
They are always willing to help me.

Excerpt 4.6 Roland, Interview 1, p.19

In Roland's narrative of studying Certificate III in Community Services in English he employs direct speech, establishing believability and bringing me, the listener, into the moment, thus conveying an important message about himself (Riessman, 2008, p. 112). Roland positioned himself as an English as a second language speaker/learner who was willing to learn in a context where this was ignored, and he was expected to learn at the same pace as students who had English as a first language. In turn, he experienced being excluded because he was perceived as not absorbing information at the expected pace, a symptom of a 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne & Jupp, 2011) within the institution. In enacting the experience (Riessman, 2008, p. 113) Roland conveyed a portrait of a young man adapting to the English language and willing to apply himself to his education. His use of the personal pronoun '*they*' in talking about the people with whom he was interacting is indicative of a sense of being positioned both by others and subsequently by himself — both in the experience he recounted and in his reflection of that account (Riessman, 2008).

It is imperative to note, here, the role of emotions in the experiences of each of the participants. Emotions cannot be ignored in anything that people do because, as Maturana and Bunnell (1999) suggest, they are fundamental to what happens in all of human experiences. In their work at the intersection of neuroscience, biological and cultural studies, and applied linguistics, Maturana and Bunnell explain that life is not experienced merely physiologically. Emotions that arise in any experience contribute to the way in which people come to understand their realities. They guide them towards their interpretations of the events that take place in their lives. Emotions, then, can be understood not only to impact how people feel, but also to shape what they do and the way they interpret and respond to their experiences, in this way influencing the paths that they take. As Maturana and Bunnell state, 'different emotions take us along different paths; we live different histories according to our emotions' (p. 60).

This understanding of the role of emotions is revealed in Roland's experience of adapting. As Roland conveyed the emotional resonance that arose in the experience of changing educational institutions, he '*felt comfortable*' learning. This signals the influence of emotions on how the participants responded in and adapted to their experiences (Maturana & Bunnell, 1999) and how they shaped their education-to-employment trajectories. In the case of Roland, he felt '*comfortable*', which created the conditions in which he was able to successfully complete his certificate.

Aadhil's account (see Excerpt 4.7, Fig. 4.3) reveals he experienced a sense of discomfort as he was adapting to what he described as a feeling of being in the '*middle*'. On being invited to express his education-to-employment experiences to date visually, Aadhil drew with markers on an A4 sheet of white paper. He depicted what he described as himself with clouds, sky, and some buildings, which represented institutions, including those in which he had learned and worked.

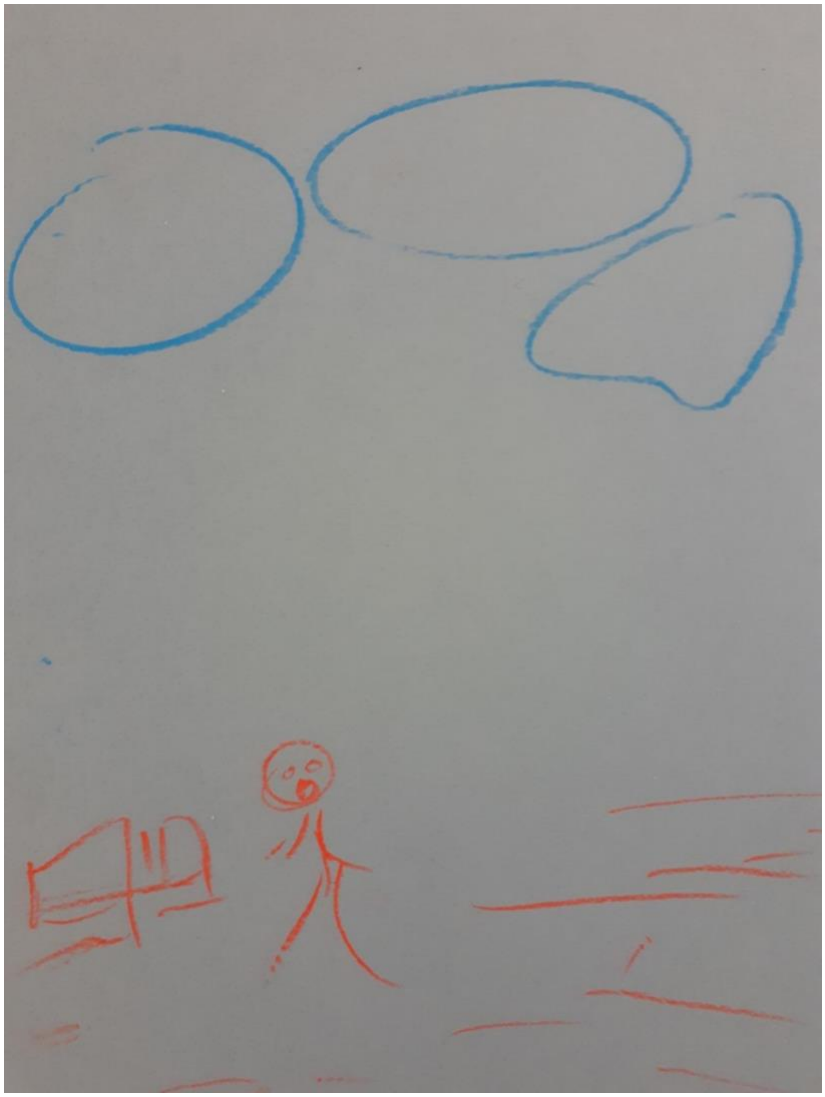

Figure 4.3: Aadhil, Interview 1

I am just in the middle,
Like putting someone in the middle of these two tables
And squeeze them in,
That's me,
That's a feeling that I have,
Like being squished in the middle.

Excerpt 4.7 Aadhil, Interview 1, p.34

Aadhil explained that he felt like he was in the '*middle*', which he experienced with a sense of being '*squished*', revealing that his trajectory had a tension-filled sense of being in-between language and cultures. He was adapting to living, learning, and working in the face of linguistic and cultural diversity in a dominant language and culture that was not his own, categorised as an asylum seeker, and growing in the space between the two. Like the accounts of Karla and Roland, Aadhil's account in his first interview gave a sense of adapting to an unfamiliar language, culture, and society in the context of a monolingual mindset (Clyne, 2004; Clyne & Jupp, 2011). Aadhil was an Afghani refugee in Pakistan before he came to Australia alone at the age of 17 in 2012. At the time of the study, Aadhil was working part-time at a local high school as a support worker for young people and their families who had arrived in Australia as migrants and refugees. He was also in his second year of a double degree in Social Work and International Relations. In contrast to Karla, who emphasised her desire to remember her '*foundation*' while adapting (see Excerpt 4.3), Aadhil explained that he had made the conscious decision to completely '*exclude*' himself from the Afghan community:

I have been a bit
Excluded
For the first three years,
I decided to exclude myself
From my community,
Just for the sake
Of learning
The English language.

I really didn't integrate much
In my own community,
For the first three years
And mainly decided
To just be with
Different people,
Like, you know,
Who could not speak my language,
So, I could practice my English,
So, I could learn English,
So that was a strategy that I applied
So, what happened?

I mean,
When I first came here
It was hard for me
Because,
I looked around my self

And everything was totally new,
Like I didn't have friends,
Didn't have family,
Didn't have anything,
Didn't have the language either.

I came here on my own
When I was 17 and a half
So, it was so confusing
Like it was it was hard for me,
Like I was quite challenged
By the surroundings.

I was like what to do?
Because obviously
If you can't speak the language
You can't make friends,
And if you want to do something
If you want to do a high school
Or going to uni,
I think it is important for me to learn
The English language.

So that was a strategy
That I applied,
And it worked quite well
Like in the first three years,
I learned the language
And I went to high school
And struggling
But at the same time,
I made some friends.

After school,
After uni,
I did some other volunteering work,
So just for the sake of being excluded,
And not see any Afghan friends
So, I could practice my language
The English language.

Excerpt 4.8 Aadhil, Interview 1, pp. 2-3

Through replaying what an experience was like (Riessman, 2008), Aadhil conveyed a vivid sense of being a highly determined learner despite the '*strugg[le]s*' that he faced. In structuring his narrative, Aadhil described his learning of English in a way that underscored his motivation in education and in integrating into the wider Australian society. He repeats the phrase '*For the first three years*', highlighting this period as key in his experiences of adapting, the first three years included learning English, through which he anticipated and subsequently accessed opportunities for education and

subsequent employment. Aadhil did not address the social conditions in which he was located directly, but 'naturalises' them in his narrative (Riessman, 2008, p. 115). His choice of the possessive personal pronoun '*my*' in talking about both language and community points towards a sense of affinity, connection, or belonging with the Afghan diaspora in South Australia and with his home languages, Urdu, and Dari. Yet, he excluded himself from these linguistic, cultural, and social connections in his '*strategy*' to adapt to what was for him a new language, culture, and society. His emphasis on '*exclud[ing]*' himself as a *'strategy*' towards adapting reflects the wider social conditions in which he was located. For instance, Aadhil may have told the story in this way for an imagined public audience, or what Riessman (2008) described as 'ghostly ones'; that is, audiences that might question his willingness to integrate into Australian society, learn the English language, and adapt to the Australian culture and way of life, maintaining connection only within diasporic niches composed of 'others of his own kind'.

Bashar, who arrived in Australia with his family as an Afghan refugee from Pakistan before 2017 at 17 years of age, showed a similar sense of adapting. At the time of the study, Bashar was in Year 11 and aspired to become a politician. In Excerpt 4.9, while talking about his experiences of adapting, Bashar also described creating distance between himself and his first languages:

> It's better to not speak
> Your own language
> In classroom.
>
> Because here
> I'm still like,
> I can talk in English
> But I think
> I'm still not that good.
>
> So, it's better to not speak
> In your own language
> In the class,
> Even if it can help you.
>
> But you should speak always
> In English,
> I think that would be better
> Because you want to improve your English.

Even in my class,
Like there are some people from Afghanistan
That when they speak to me
In Dari or Pashtu,
I just answer them in English,
Because here,
I want to be more
Better in English.

Excerpt 4.9 Bashar, Interview 1, p. 4

Bashar's reflection that '*It's better to not speak your own language in classroom*, *even if it can help you*', is indicative of the presence and integration of a monolingual view into his understandings and marks its importance to him. This suggests that he had internalised public discourses surrounding second language learning, such as an understanding of literacy as monolingual, for example, as literacy in English (Scarino, 2014b, p. 291), an interpretation embedded in a 'monolingual mindset' in the Australian educational system (Clyne & Jupp, 2011). Even though Bashar recognised that his own languages may have helped him in his learning, he had adapted to the understanding that it was better not to speak or use his primary languages in the classroom. Concealed in his words are current and historical discourses and ambiguities surrounding multilingualism as the norm in the context of a monolingual framework (Clyne & Jupp 2011; Scarino, 2014b). This shows that as Bashar was growing as he was learning, he was adapting to the environment by integrating the monolingual discourses that circulate in Australian society into his evolving understandings. As Riessman (2008, p. 107) suggests, this is evidence of 'polyphonic' or 'multivoiced' qualities of talk, located not only in Bashar's account, but also Karla's assimilation narrative (see Excerpt 4.5) and Aadhil's account of excluding himself from others from what he termed '*my community'* (see Excerpt 4.8).

Both Bashar's and Aadhil's accounts conveyed that for them adapting involved surrendering a part of themselves, their languages, in order to '*improve*' their English. In Bashar's second interview (see Excerpt 4.10), his account highlights that although he had adopted a monolingual understanding of language learning, which was identified in his idea that it was '*better'* not to speak his own languages in the classroom, he also saw the value in living, learning, and working in and between multiple languages and cultures. When questioned about the role his multilingualism played in his trajectory he described a process of adapting, which involved coming to understand and develop

knowledge through multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, and related ways of knowing, values, and practices:

> Whatever I learn in Australia
> I always convert them
> To my own culture
> And to my own traditions
> And then I balance it.
>
> So that's important for me
> Like whatever I learn,
> I see on my culture point of view
> And my religion point of view as well,
> And then I balance it
> And come up with a moral.
>
> And that's what gives you more knowledge,
> Expands your knowledge
>
> **Excerpt 4.10 Bashar, Interview 2, pp. 8–10**

Bashar explained what was involved in the internal process of growing as part of learning in Australia. He emphasised the importance and high value he attributes to '*knowledge'*, while indicating that he has access to multiple ways of knowing. In converting what he learned in the Australian context and then balancing this with his own culture, he revealed the development of an increased sense of self-awareness and what he described as expanding knowledge. As he reflected on his experiences and processes of learning, he explained that he would consider a subject, issue, or understanding from multiple views simultaneously, before balancing it. The '*balance*' that Bashar described captures an experience of living in the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2012). As he lived and learned in multiple languages and cultures, he developed the ability to live in both simultaneously, as well as to exist and make sense of his experiences in the space between them. Bashar's account of balancing two languages, cultures, and knowledges captures what Anzaldúa (2012) terms 'mestiza consciousness', 'border consciousness', or 'border thinking'. Anzaldúa explains that living in two or more languages, cultures, and social systems produces knowledge that encompasses being able to hold multiple perspectives simultaneously. Bashar appeared to have an awareness of this consciousness as he explained, '*And that's what gives you more knowledge, expands your knowledge*'. Further still, Bashar's account captured that his sense of self and his knowledge was evolving in relation to the linguistic and cultural environments in which his experiences were unfolding.

In his second interview, Bashar revealed he considered that others with whom his experiences unfolded had an influence upon who he was and who he was to become (see Excerpt 4.11). In response to the invitation to express his education-to-employment experiences to date employing the art materials provided, Bashar drew what he described as the meaning of education (see Fig. 4.4). He revealed that for him, education never ceases across the span of a lifetime, because while they are growing, people are continually adapting to the circumstance of their lives, and others with whom they are living:

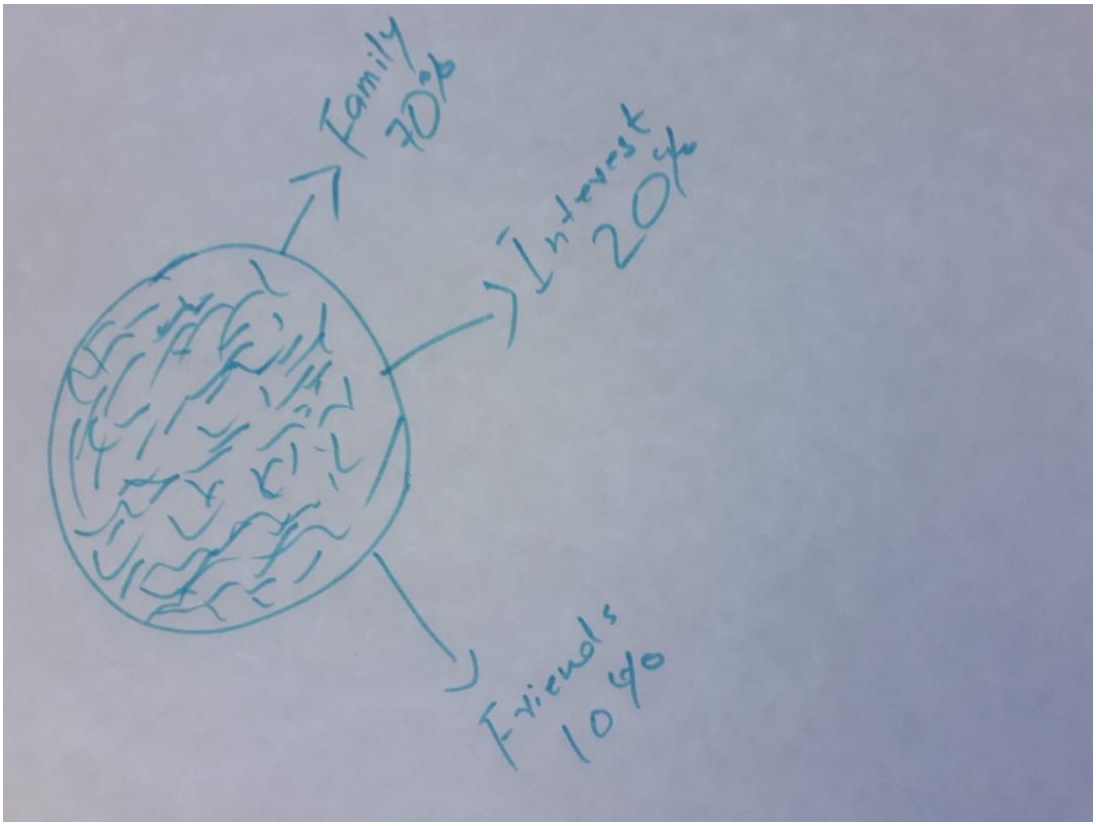

Figure 4.4: Bashar, Interview 2

Actually,
For me,
Education means the world to me.

And education is like an ocean,
It never finishes.
So that's my world,
And that's the ocean.
So, like in every step you take,
You learn something,

I believe you learn something more.

So, whether it's a bad,
Whether it's a good,
Education doesn't have an ending spot for me.

Because even if the higher stages,
Even at the PhD,
After that you get a higher in a place,
You get a job, you also learn.

So, learning never stops,
So, the biggest influence for the education,
That means to me a lot, like a world and an ocean.

It is my family, 70%,
My interest 20%,
And my friends 10%.

Like many people say that,
Whatever the company you are being surrounded with,
You will become like them.

Excerpt 4.11 Bashar, Interview 2, pp.1–2

Bashar's account reveals that for him, growing involved adapting to those with whom he was living, learning, and working, '*Whatever the company you are being surrounded with, you will become like them'*. On a micro level, this can be understood to concern his interpersonal relationships. On a macro level, it can be considered in light of the wider social structures in which he was now embedded, including the dominant language and culture in which his trajectory was unfolding. Adapting to the new language and culture and integrating them into his evolution in the way he described, not only captures his experiences of living and learning in the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2012) but also connects with the understanding that people experience all that they do as cultural–biological beings, as described by Maturana et al. (2016). Maturana et al. argue that people generate their social worlds through what they term 'languaging' in their conversations, explanations, reflections, and theories. That is to say, people exist as cultural–biological beings in whom their cultural and biological manners of existence are distinguishable, yet inseparable. People are continually evolving in relation to the linguistic, cultural, and social environments in which they experience their living. As they do so, they transform in relation to their interactions with those environments and others within them with whom they are interacting. This cultural–biological process lasts as long as a person is alive, living with others in the world.

Maturana et al. (2016) theorise that people are cultural–biological beings. This theory, which builds on earlier work (Maturana & Varela, 1992), highlights that it is because people are molecular, biological beings with a nervous system, that they are able to experience at all. For example, Maturana and Varela (p. 20) describe the experience and perception of colour corresponds to a specific pattern of states of activity in the human nervous system determined by its biological structure. Colour is not something that exists externally to the seer — rather, colour exists only in the interaction between the viewer and the external world. As Maturana and Varela (p. 26) suggest, 'there are no facts or objects out there that we grasp and store in our head'. All reflections, including one on the foundation of human knowledge, 'invariably take place in language, which is our distinct way of being human and being humanly active'. As such, people's experience in the world depend upon the biological structure of being human. As living and social beings, people have history. Firstly, the authors explain, they are descendants by reproduction, and secondly, as organisms they are multicellular beings, and all the cells descend by reproduction. With each of these characteristics of reproduction people live their history in relation to being both cellular and social beings (p. 56).

The way in which the world is perceived, reflected upon, and understood is achieved through language, and as Maturana and Varela (1992, p. 23) emphasise, 'we cannot separate our history of actions — biological and social — from how this world appears to us'. As such, the participants of the present study, who were living, learning, and working in two or more languages and cultures, were doing so in two linguistic and cultural worlds simultaneously. They were evolving in relationship to the diverse linguistic and cultural contexts and ways of knowing, always in relation to others with whom they were interacting. Thus, Bashar's experiences are what Anzaldúa (2012) describes as 'borderlands', living in-between languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, and social worlds, including values and practices. This reality created the conditions for his understandings and knowledge to evolve in a manner that enabled him to develop the ability to operate within, in-between, and across multiple languages and cultures simultaneously. In turn, this development in his ability to hold multiple points of view or ways of knowing and bring them together fostered his heightened sense of reflection and reflexivity.

As exemplified throughout this chapter thus far, the participants emphasised that learning English was a principal dimension in adapting to the broader cultural context of

South Australia. In the accounts of Karla, Aadhil, and Bashar (see Excerpts 4.5, 4.7, 4.9), adapting by learning English was a prerequisite for them to make the trajectory from education-to-employment. Karla accentuated this where she explained the necessity to make '*adaptations*' and to '*assimilate*', highlighting the role of learning English in this process where she pointed out '*The dream / And aspiration / Was learn English*', as captured earlier in this section. Arezzo, however, emphasised her experience of adapting in terms of the visibility of her cultural background. In Excerpt 4.12, in response to questions about her education-to-employment trajectory in her first interview, Arezzo gave an account of her experiences of wearing a hijab:

> The place that I work,
> Is like Muslim area
> Because we have halal things in the shop.
>
> I feel like Afghani people
> Is little bit rude
> Because,
> Whenever they look to you
> And then if you like,
> If you have something less,
> Maybe you don't say
> 'Hi'
> To them
> Or something else,
> They will just
> Straight away
> Tell to your mum.
>
> Like three months ago
> I stopped wearing the scarf,
> I was hanging out with my friends
> Going to the city.
> And some woman saw me,
> And then they straightaway
> Called my mum,
> 'Oh, do you know that
> I saw you daughter at the city,
> Without wearing the scarf?'
> And my mum was like
> 'Why you are doing these things?'
> And
> 'Blah, blah, blah'
> And then I was like,
> 'Okay.'
>
> It's like
> I can't find any job
> because I am wearing the scarf.

I can't go anywhere
Because people judges me,
Because people says
'You're a terrorist'
Because of my looks,
The scarf and all that.

And like in my career,
I am not even sure
If I go to police
They will not allow
To wear a scarf.

And then I told my mum,
Because I want to be a police officer,
'So, what if I go there
And if I get in
What?
They will not allow me
To wear a scarf.'

And then she is like,
'Yeah, I am okay with that
As long as you work.'
And I was like
'Why not?
Why don't I just start up
From now,
Not wearing it?'

Excerpt 4.12 Arezzo, Interview 1, pp. 13–14

This excerpt shows that Arezzo set a scene and assembled a cast of those involved in a manner that highlighted her self-positioning in adapting in her narrative of (not) wearing '*the scarf*' out in public. Although her self-positioning is evidenced where she strategically chooses when to wear a hijab or not, there is a sense of dissonance in her experiences of adapting to life in and in-between multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices. Arezzo's account captured that living her education-to-employment trajectory in-between languages and cultures and related knowledges and ways of knowing, involved dissonance because the discourses and expectations from the wider Australian culture and that of her home culture contradicted one another. This is because, in either case, '*people judges*' her. This points to the conflicting values that the participants frequently faced in living, learning, and working in-between two or more languages and cultures. Spivak (2012) terms this complexity as a 'double bind', capturing the reality that those who live in the 'borderlands' (Anzaldúa, 2012) often encounter a space where there is a continual

communication of conflicting messages and expectations between the languages and cultures in which they live.

Arezzo considered adapting between her home culture and the wider Australian culture in relation to the longer-term and social implications of wearing a hijab in the context of pursuing her dream to join the police force. She considered how she had been received in her past experiences and how she might navigate them in the future. This points to an internal self-reflective and reflexive process prompted by her encounters with prejudicial attitudes and behaviours. Arezzo's sense that '*the scarf*' was impeding her access to opportunities for employment is well substantiated in the literature (Charlesworth & Isherwood, 2020; Colic-Peisker, 2009; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018; Wood et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2019); those who come from visibly different refugee backgrounds, such as women who wear a hijab, reportedly experience increased discrimination in employment. Through encountering prejudicial attitudes, she was forced to self-reflect and move through her daily life with a heightened sense of self-awareness. As she did so, she learned to navigate living, learning, and anticipate working in an in-between space characterised by a 'double bind' (Spivak, 2012).

Turning to Halima's account, through living in multiple languages and culture she was forced to adapt and grow in the face of experiences of discrimination. Halima had arrived in Australia with her family as an Afghan refugee from Pakistan in 2017 at 16 years of age, and like Arezzo, wore a hijab as part of her religious and cultural practice. At the time of the study, she was partway through Year 11. In response to questions about her education-to-employment trajectory, Halima's narrative of encountering others who held prejudicial attitudes resembled Arezzo's experiences, as captured in Excerpt 4.13:

> So, there's a woman
> Who usually come on that bus,
> So, one day
> Me,
> My sister,
> And my friend,
> We three always walk together,
> And we were sitting
> We can see that there's two seats,
> One this way
> And two this way,

Facing each other.

I think that woman was from Australia,
And she was sitting there,
My sister went
And sit beside her
And me, and my friend,
We were sitting in front of her
And we were talking.

She was really okay
Before we sit on those chairs
So, she's suddenly
She had a scarf on
She start covering her nose,
Like this
She just covered her nose
Like this,
And started looking outside of the windows,
So, it was painful for us,
We are also human.

The next time also
We thought maybe,
Maybe the first time
Maybe she is sick?
Or maybe
She has flu
And she don't want that
To catch others.

So, the next time
That woman was sitting there
And my sister went there
And me and my friend sat opposite to them,
So, again,
She did the same
With covering her nose
Looking outside of the windows
Making faces,
We caught that she don't like us.

Yesterday we also saw her in the bus
There was the same place,
The seats around her
But we didn't sit there,
We went in the back and stood there.

Excerpt 4.13 Halima, Interview 1, pp.16–17

The focal point of Halima's narrative was her internal suffering in response to the social interaction that she experienced on the bus. Riessman (2008, p. 113) describes an

enactment or replay as something into which listeners can empathetically insert themselves, which is what Halima accomplished as she detailed the way that the interaction was experienced and subsequently internalised. In doing so she revealed the dehumanising experience of the prejudice she had faced, and the '*painful*' reaction it provoked. As discussed previously in this section people are taken along different life paths as they live their experiences, and they make sense of them and respond to them in correlation to the emotions that arise in them (Maturana & Bunnell, 1999). Although Halima and her friends were positioned as 'other' by the woman on the bus, she contested this positioning, where she said, '*We are also human'*. In this instance, adapting was driven by the pain that emerged in response to the experience recounted. This interpretation is revealed by the three women deciding to stand up in the face of prejudice attitudes and behaviours of others, rather than sit on the empty seats as they had done on previous occasions.

Halima's account revealed the participants' experience of a condition of living in-between languages and cultures, whereby in being perceived as transgressing from the mainstream they frequently experienced being positioned as 'other'. Being positioned in this way influenced not only their emotions, but also the way they responded in the social interaction. Experiences such as Halima's confirm that those who are 'visibly different' refugees (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006), including those who wear a hijab, face discrimination and disadvantage as the result of an anti-Muslim sentiment that is prevalent in pockets of Australian society (Williams et al., 2019). In Excerpt 4.14, speaking further about the experience on the bus, Halima conveyed that, for her, adapting involved self-reflecting:

> I was treated like that
> Maybe because of my scarf?
> Maybe because of my dress?
> It came many times
> In my mind
> That I should
> Stop wearing a scarf.
>
> I should be like people around me,
> Who are different,
> Who look different,
> Who has different dressing style to me?
>
> I wear hijab,
> I wear scarf,

It is who I am,
I won't change myself
Just because of them.

Still comes in my mind
To stop like dressing,
The way I am now
But I think,
In a cool mind,
And no.

Why should I change for them?
They are just
Who came and went,
So, I won't change myself for them.

Excerpt 4.14 Halima, Interview 2, p. 14

In reflecting on experiences of facing prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, Halima's narrative revealed that adapting involved an internal self-reflective and reflexive process in coming to her resolve to maintain wearing a '*hijab*'. Halima's reflexivity was located in her self-questioning, which arose in response to encounters such as the one on the bus (see Excerpt 4.13) and is evidenced in her resolution not to change herself because of the prejudices of others (see Excerpt 4.14). With self-awareness, Halima consciously contemplated adapting by conforming to the mainstream style of dress, to '*stop wearing a scarf'* because of the way that she was received socially. This shows that she was considering her experience from outside of her own perspective. Halima's reflection on facing prejudicial attitudes in the wider Australian community stands in contrast to the sentiment in Arezzo's account (see Excerpt 4.12). Arezzo, in adapting to Australian society, also experienced a sense of self-questioning and reflexivity before resolving not to wear a hijab in public on particular occasions, in order to navigate her trajectory. Arezzo and Halima both narrated a sense of being 'othered' owing to wearing a hijab and their '*looks*', which they described as directly affecting their education-to-employment experiences. In positioning themselves reflexively in their narratives they revealed their self-positioning despite the contrast in their resolutions about wearing a hijab. This suggests that for Arezzo and Halima, adapting across their education-to-employment trajectories was intrinsic to their ongoing process of growing, which evolved in connection to the experiences they had along the way. Accordingly, they were adapting to the in-between space (in and between their two or more languages and

cultures) in which they resided, a space in which they received multiple, and at times, contradictory messages, and expectations of who and how they ought to be.

Anzaldúa's (2012) understanding that those who live in two or more linguistic, cultural, and social worlds simultaneously have a heighted capacity for self-awareness and awareness of the linguistic, cultural, and social worlds in which they live, highlighted throughout this section, resonates with Kramsch's (2011) notion of 'intercultural competence'. Intercultural competence, which captures the capacity of those who speak multiple languages and live in multiple cultures to reflect on and consider how they speak and act, can be used by them to make meaning at the same time as creating and strategically enacting their identities. This complexity was revealed across the participants' accounts as they revealed their ongoing self-questioning, critically analysing what was going on in social interactions and considering what they would do next in light of this. This is an important dimension of their experiences and reflections on them in the present, as their self-questioning indicated the development of reflexivity resulting from self-reflection. As they moved in-between their languages and cultures with self-awareness, they were adapting to the languages, cultures, and social contexts in which their education-to-employment trajectories were unfolding. These dynamics of adapting reflect the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of their experiences. As they were developing the capacity to live, learn, and work in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously they were living their realities interculturally, growing in-between two or more linguistic and cultural frames of reference.

The excerpts throughout this chapter thus far have highlighted the presence of adapting that was involved in growing as the participants evolved in light of their experiences along the trajectory from education-to-employment. Each participant was adapting in relation to the languages, cultures, knowledges, social contexts, and interactions with others that they experienced across their trajectories. This is because the languages, cultures, social interactions, and the internal reflective and reflexive processes that unfold within an experience influenced the ongoing evolution of their sense of self, and their understandings of their trajectories. As they made their trajectories they did so in multiple and often dissonant linguistic, cultural, and social worlds, which included experiences of interactions with others who held prejudicial attitudes, forcing them to self-question. In turn, their developing self-awareness fostered in them a heightened sense of self-reflection, reflexivity, and the ability to move skilfully in and between

multiple languages and cultures simultaneously. Having illuminated how the participants' narratives revealed that for them, growing involved adapting in the face of an intercultural reality including in their social exchanges with others, I now consider the second subtheme, 'contributing'. The participants' accounts revealed that growing involved adapting, and this process of evolution included the development of their desire to contribute to the wider community through their employment.

4.2 Contributing

Contributing — the desire to give to, and to belong to, the community in which they lived — was a driving force behind participants' motivation in education and work. Collectively, their narratives revealed their aspirations to occupy roles in fields of work that provided them with opportunities to serve beyond the self. In this way, employment was perceived as a means of contributing to the community and accessing a sense of belonging within it. The theme 'contributing' appeared in my analysis in the participants' description of growing as applying in their work the knowledge that they had developed across their histories of lived experiences. This included the wherewithal to live, learn, and work in and between multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices. I identified contributing in the analysis as a dimension of the theme 'growing' because the participants routinely described their aspirations to apply their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities in their education and employment. These knowledges developed as they were growing in and through their experiences of living, learning, and working in and between two or more languages, cultures, and ways of knowing, simultaneously. Moreover, their aspiration to contribute was growing in tandem with them as they lived their intercultural experiences of living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that was not their own, while living this experience in the social category 'refugee'.

Contributing was a motivating force in the participants' aspirations to be in roles in which they were able to integrate the experiential knowledge that they had developed across their lived experiences of adapting to living in multiple languages, cultures, and social realities. Contributing involved their desire to ameliorate the life challenges experienced by others, in many cases in the helping professions, or in roles in which they could be of service of the wider community. Through contributing, they anticipated

acquiring a sense of meaning, purpose and belonging to the community in which they were growing. The so-called 'helping professions' are broadly conceived here as professions that nurture the growth of individuals and communities, contributing towards improving the physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional or wellbeing of others. For the participants, contributing was largely about ameliorating the social conditions experienced by others, and in many instances, the conditions of migrants and refugees who had had lived experiences similar to theirs. For some, contributing included helping others who had also arrived in Australia as refugees, whereas for others it was about contributing positively towards the benefit of the broader Australian community.

I now turn to Latif's account to show that, for him, contributing was a primary source of motivation in his current role (see Excerpt 4.15). Latif came to Australia as an asylum seeker from Iran with his family in 2012 at 21 years of age. Although he was not working in what is traditionally thought of as a helping profession, contributing to the wider Australian community was paramount for him. At the time of the study, Latif was working full-time in his family-owned café. In response to questions about his education-to-employment experiences, he emphasised the role contributing to the community played in the service that he and his family offered:

> It's very different story
> We have in this place,
> It's not about making money,
> I will work about 12 hours a day,
> Not just me,
> My family members,
> All of them
> Every day.
>
> We are five people in the family
> But the reason
> We decided to do this kind of business,
> Working really hard,
> It's all about contribution
> To the community
> At the same time improving.
>
> We work,
> To be a part of the community
> And we found that this
> Was the only way
> All of my family can be that,
> Part of the community.

And the other way was like,
Improving,
And make a living in this country
And it's been two years now,
Everyone is working,
It's going well
We are covering all the costs
Of the living
And everyone enjoys coming here.
(Int. 1, p. 7)

I think,
One of the reasons
That keeps us doing this hard work
Is being part of the community
By contributing to the community.
(Int. 2, p. 11)

Excerpt 4.15 Latif, Interview 1, p. 7 and Interview 2, p. 11

As Latif reflected on his work in the family's business, he explicitly named contributing as a driving dimension behind his motivation to work. Latif positioned himself and his family as hardworking. He underscored the hours they all worked, which for them was not about making money but rather about '*contributing*' to the Australian society to which they were seeking to belong. Latif's use of repetition, juxtaposed with his emphasis on his experience as a '*very different story*', captured his desire to convey how hard he and his family worked in the café. In doing so, Latif revealed his motivation to be, and to be seen to be, '*contributing*' to the community, to access a sense of acceptance and belonging within it. This is a significant point because employment is widely recognised as fundamental to successful resettlement for people who have had a refugee experience (Hebbani & Khawaja, 2018; Khawaja et al., 2019). Latif's account highlights that, for him, employment was not only a means to make a living, but also as an avenue for him to fulfil his desire to access a sense of connection and belonging in the South Australian community that was now his home.

Latif's narrative gives the impression that he has what Riessman (2008) describes as 'strategically' positioned himself in his account. Through emphasising the hard work that he and his family put into running their café he gave an impression of his desire to demonstrate that they are hardworking — not for financial reward — but for the sense of community and belonging that they access doing it. This reading of Latif's account is further supported by his desire to contribute to '*change the conversation*' (see

Excerpt 4.16) in discourses about refugees and asylum seekers that he has encountered in the wider Australian community:

> I don't want to hear any more
> Negative comments,
> Which affect my business,
> Which assault my family
> Which assault the way I came.
> negative discourses regarding being categorised as an
> How much of the hard work,
> I have done
> And my family have done,
> They are all going to be affected
> By people's comments.
>
> So that's how I feel,
> I am doing my best
> To do a bit of
> I don't call it education,
> 'Cos that's a big word but,
> Educate people to work out
> Asylum seekers' knowledge.
>
> The asylum seekers are human,
> They are not criminal
> I have tried to change the stereotype
> Of asylum seekers.
>
> When you walk in the street
> You see people,
> And say you are an asylum seeker
> They look at you with bigger eyes
> Because they think
> That you are not a normal human being,
> It's like saying
> 'I am a drug dealer
> I'm a criminal',
> They are not the same,
> Asylum seekers are still human.
>
> They came here,
> Not because they have done something wrong,
> They left their country for sake of safety,
> For seeking asylum,
> The name
> It defines who you are.
>
> It's very worrying story
> We are working hard,
> The reason why we work hard
> Is like to show that
> Na, still we are human

We wanna be part of this community'
Working against it,
To change,
To be a good example.

That is the main purpose
Of working hard for me,
Talking about the asylum seekers
Sharing my story,
That is the main purpose,
To change that conversation
Change that stereotype,
Changing that interpretation of asylum seekers.

Excerpt 4.16 Latif, Interview 1, pp. 20–22

Latif underscored his desire to contribute towards disrupting the negative discourses around being an asylum seeker within the context of Australia; he emphasised that he was compelled to work hard because of the prejudice that he and many others like him in the community had faced. This indicates how the interactions he has had with others were internalised, and in turn, influenced his response. In this example, Latif's response to prejudice was to work hard '*to be a good example*', to maintain his humanity, echoing the sentiment in Halima's account (see Excerpt 4.13) when he said, *'still we are human*'. In striving to be a part of the community, Latif experienced prejudicial attitudes and behaviours as an '*assault*' upon himself and his family. In being received by others in interaction as a '*criminal*' because he was categorised as an '*asylum seeker*' developed his desire to '*work hard*' to '*change*' community perceptions. Looking beyond the literal and conscious meanings embedded (Riessman, 2008, p. 124) in Latif's account, carried on the back of his words was a sense of responsibility. He was working hard not only for the family business and to become a part of the community, but he was also striving to disprove the negative stereotypes that he had encountered in being categorised and stereotyped as an '*asylum seeker'.* This is a crucial feature in Excerpt 4.16 because it reveals an emphasised sense of effort to seek to belong in the community and to disprove stereotypes of asylum seekers. If he were not defined as such, he would have to work so hard '*To be a good example*'.

Latif's account, like Halima's, suggests that they were, as Latif described, '*working hard*' in circumstances where they were forced to struggle for their sense of humanity and to experience being valued members of the Australian community. Latif and Halima's reflections on facing prejudice not only reveal their own experiences, but also

provide a window into the broader sociohistorical context in which these young people's education-to-employment trajectories were evolving. This includes facing prejudicial attitudes and behaviours related to discourses circulating in the wider society — which, as Fleay et al. (2016, pp. 74–75) argue, are perpetuated by the media and many politicians — labelling asylum seekers as 'illegitimate', 'illegal', and 'queue-jumpers'. Latif's account demonstrated how, as he was growing in the face of reductive social categorisation, '*contributing*' to the community was a means not only of accessing a place in the community, but also of contributing to disrupting the negative discourses around being identified as a refugee within it.

Latif's emphasis that work was more about contributing to the community than for monetary gain (see Excerpt 4.15) is echoed in Roland's account (see Excerpt 4.17). In reflecting upon his position as a residential care worker Roland highlighted that he was also driven in employment to contribute to the community rather than for financial reward:

> You know a lot of people
> They used to say
> 'Aged care
> God
> I don't like
> You know
> Just cleaning people.'
>
> For me I am happy with that
> ′Cos, I used to tell them
> 'Money that goes into my account
> Doesn't smell anything
> What I am doing there
> I cannot smell anything
> What I smell there,
> I only can smell peace
> That's what I can smell.'
>
> I go there
> To help people,
> If they don't have the people
> To support them,
> I'm thinking,
> For the next ten years
> Or 20 years,
> Maybe even 30
> To 40,
> Who's not going to support me?

If you are not supporting people today
And this is like a payback,
You know,
When you are getting old
You are like a kid,
You need someone to look after you
And do a lot of things.

So, I wish I was working for my mum
But she's not here anymore
So, let me just pay back
The community
And people appreciate
For the work
That I am doing for them,
Not because of money
Because I am happy.

Excerpt 4.17 Roland, Interview 1, pp. 25–26

Roland emphasised that he endeavoured to be of '*support*' and to '*pay back*' to the community through his employment. Through his use of direct speech, for example '*They used to say / 'God / I don't like / You know / Just cleaning people*' ', Roland demonstrated how other people perceived his decision to work in aged care. In doing so, Roland illustrated attitudes he had experienced amongst the wider Australian community to low-status, low-paying employment such as residential care work in which he and another participant, Mya, were employed at the time. This aligns with current research (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Fleay et al., 2016, p. 74) in fields concerned with refugee employment that argue refugees tend to have a 'particular place' in the labour market, performing jobs considered undesirable to the local population. In explaining his motivation in doing residential care work, Roland's account captured the sense that work was more about contributing than just making a living, in the same way that Latif (see Excerpt 4.15) emphasised in his accounts.

Where Roland said, '*Not because of money, because I am happy*', he suggested that he was motivated by his desire to support others, which was further emphasised in his use of the words '*pay back*'. The sense of giving back that Roland's narrative revealed portrayed a desire to give back to the wider community in which he lived and worked. Roland perceived that '*supporting people today*' would be returned to him in the form of '*appreciation*' and '*support*' from other people in the future, hinting at the possibility that he held a sense of social reciprocity. What he did for others today would be returned to him in some way in the future. Roland's history of lived experiences was

also integrated into his desire to support those that he was caring for at work. This is indicated by his reflection that not being able to care for his own mother was another reason that he found that this work gave him access to a sense of being '*happy*' in and through his work. The emotion of happiness that Roland described experiencing in being of service to others in the community was a driving force in his employment in aged care.

Aadhil's account (see Excerpt 4.18) demonstrates that his desire to contribute to the community was directed towards alleviating the challenges of others who had arrived in Australia as migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. In reflecting upon his previous role at the reception desk in a local migration firm, Aadhil emphasised the role of his experiential, linguistic, and cultural knowledge played in 'contributing':

> I have to do things that can help me,
> In the future in order to change this,
> change the conversation.
>
> Whatever people are talking about,
> Like you can't do that,
> But I think I can,
> Because I have got this support,
> I have got this amazing opportunity.
>
> I think my language
> And my lived experience
> Was a huge contribution
> Towards that company.
>
> A lot of their work
> Was work
> To deal with a lot of
> Asylum seekers
> And refugees.
>
> But they did not have that mentality
> Of the culture differences
> And they were not sure how,
> Exactly to approach them,
> How to talk to them,
> And for me
> Being in the reception
> The first
> Contact point,
> I think that there was
> A lot of changes.

I worked there
I think, two and half or three years,
But they changed a lot of stuff
And everyone was so supportive,
Everyone was so good
And so that had meant sharing the stories.

Excerpt 4.18 Aadhil, Interview 1 pp. 8–24

Aadhil's account suggests that, for him, having experienced living in-between languages and cultures meant that he held an understanding of difference that was associated with diverse social realities. Through such understandings, he had developed experiential linguistic and cultural knowledge that he was able to draw upon in his position in the firm he worked for. In so doing, he was contributing to the developing understandings and expertise of his colleagues. Accordingly, '*changes*' occurred, resulting from the contribution of his linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge in a context where his colleagues did not have his awareness of '*of the culture differences*'. This experience of having his understandings of linguistic, cultural, and social difference recognised as being of value meant that his knowledge was recognised as a form of expertise. Drawing on his languages, cultures, and lived experiences in working with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including asylum seekers and refugees gave Aadhil a strong sense of making a '*contribution*'. '*Sharing stories'* in order to bring about change in his workplace was evidence of the experiential resources that he contributed through his work. Working in an environment where '*everyone was supportive*' and changes were made as a result of his contribution, demonstrates that having his experiences, languages, and cultures recognised in this way tapped into his unique capability to live, learn, and work in and between languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and social practices. This suggests that acknowledging the participants' unique perspectives, experiences, knowledges, languages, and cultures as resources through which they can, and in many cases do contribute in educational and employment contexts, creates opportunities for them to participate meaningfully in the wider Australian community.

In the cases of Aadhil (see Excerpt 4.18) and Roland (see Excerpt 4.17) identified contributing as being of service to the wider Australian community. Aadhil also highlighted his desire to contribute towards ameliorating the social conditions faced by refugees and asylum seekers through, what Latif described as '*to change that conversation*' (see Excerpt 4.16). Karla's account (see Excerpt 4.19) shows that she also

held this desire to contribute towards broader social change. She explained that as a cultural awareness adviser, her role involved contributing to change within the wider Australian society, echoing Aadhil's sentiment (see Excerpt 4.18). In Excerpt 4.19 Karla discussed her current casual position in a not-for-profit organisation that provides settlement support services for newly arrived communities and individuals who have had a refugee experience, and contributing to the community:

> I tell my story.
> I will talk about
> My story,
> How I came to be
> An asylum seeker,
> A refugee,
> Coming to Australia,
> Settling in.
>
> Adapting.
>
> Challenges,
> Success,
> I always like to focus on successes,
> Because we deal with
> So many challenges,
> But people need to know
> That people can be
> Successful
> And succeed,
> And go through that process
> And come out you know,
> Citizens who can participate
> And contribute to the community.
>
> **Excerpt 4.19 Karla, Interview 2, pp. 15–16**

Like Aadhil, Karla's role involved sharing her '*story*', through which she was contributing to the wider society by sharing her experiential knowledge of being a refugee. This involved what she described as '*Coming to Australia / Settling in / Adapting*' and as involving both '*Challenges*' and '*Success*'. Through emphasising '*success*' rather than the '*so many challenges*' that Karla and others who have had a refugee experience faced, she was contributing to what Latif and Aadhil referred to as changing the *'conversation*' (See excerpt Excerpts 4.16, 4.18). She was not only contributing through telling her story, she was also promoting awareness that those who arrive in Australia as refugees and asylum seekers can, and often do, participate in and '*contribute to the community*'. In focusing on the '*successes*', Karla was contesting

deficit views of refugees and asylum seekers in the wider community. She acknowledged the many challenges, yet it was what she and others who have had a refugee experience have to contribute to society that she accentuated. Karla and Aadhil's accounts (see Excerpts 4.19,4.18) of sharing stories at work illuminated that for them, sharing their narratives was not only a way to contribute to the community, but also a channel through which they could participate in it. As they were growing, they were developing experiential, linguistic, and cultural knowledge, which they sought to contribute to their roles and fields of work. This knowledge was developed through growing across their histories of lived experiences, and involved living, learning, and working in and between multiple languages and cultures.

As captured throughout this section, for Karla and Aadhil, contributing involved working towards ameliorating refugee and asylum seeker experiences in the wider Australian community through their work. Echoing the sentiment behind Latif's hard work, they were each driven to support the development of more positive perceptions of refugees in the wider community as well as highlight the possibilities for '*success*'. For the participants, contributing involved drawing across the experiential, linguistic, and cultural knowledge that they had developed through their own refugee experiences, including living in and between multiple languages and cultures cultures skilfully. Aadhil's account captured a consciousness that through his work he was creating societal awareness that refugees contribute positively to Australian society through their employment. In Excerpt 4.20 he conveyed that others recognised his knowledge was valuable in his role at the migration firm:

> And one thing that she said,
> To me is that
> 'You are a very crucial
> part of this company
> And because you are helping
> You are doing this
> You have got the ability to fill out forms
> You have got the ability to interact
> You have that knowledge
> Of cultures from Middle Eastern culture.'
>
> Mainly their clients
> Were from those countries
> that I am quite aware of their culture
> and their traditions,
> Language is the other thing,
> So, she thought

‘No
you are a crucial part of the company
We would love you to stay
As long as you can.’

Despite that I wasn’t getting
As good money
As the other place that I was working,
And I said
‘That’s important thing for me
′ ’Cos if I’ve got a value,
Money’s not everything.’

The value,
You know,
Having that acknowledgement
Of you being important in that place,
That sort of encouraged me
To be more honest to the company
To be more open,
To work harder.

So that was the something
That really stuck with me
And I have still a lot of respect
For that company,
Having that value
I think it is important.

Excerpt 4.20 Aadhil, Interview 2, p. 11

Aadhil emphasised the role of his linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge in his role at the migration firm where he noted that his ability to interact across languages and cultures was considered an asset in his workplace. He mentioned that ‘*language is the other thing*’. This suggests that Aadhil had an awareness that his linguistic, cultural, and experiential understandings were intrinsic to his contribution at work. Employing direct speech, he positioned himself as being received as ‘*a crucial part of the company*’. In appropriating his boss’s voice (Riessman, 2008, p. 112) in this manner, he could claim with credibility that he was a valued worker in the firm. Aadhil’s account resonates with those of Latif (see Excerpt 4.15) and Roland (see Excerpt 4.17) — being valued for what he was contributing in terms of his experiential, linguistic, and cultural knowledge through his work was more valuable than money.

Aadhil experienced fulfilment in having his role valued in the workplace. It was a source of motivation to work hard and continue contributing to the company. Through this acknowledgment of his contribution, he felt encouraged and experienced a sense of

being a valued member of society. Zahra's account, like Aadhil's and Karla's, also captures that contributing to alleviating the struggles faced by refugees and migrants in resettling was a motivating force in her employment aspirations. Zahra, who arrived in Australia as an Afghan refugee in 2006, aspired to become a social worker and interpreter. Like Aadhil and Karla, she hoped to contribute to alleviating the struggles faced by others through drawing on her experiential, linguistic, and cultural knowledge. At the time of the study, she was in the first year of her degree in social work. In discussing her aspirations to be a social worker (see Excerpt 4.21), Zahra described her desire to contribute to social 'change':

> Australia has so many immigrants
>
> I'm sure like you know
> I'll change,
> Not my generation
> But the next.
>
> There will be other generations
> That will sort of like probably,
> Go through the same sort of thing
> And you know,
> They will need someone to
> Like make them understand that,
> 'Hey look
> I know you don't have education
> That you didn't have education
> but I will teach you a little bit.'
> Like you know
> 'This is what your child is going through.'
>
> That's sort of what
> What my goals are.
>
> **Excerpt 4.21 Zahra, Interview 1, pp. 10–11**

For Zahra, like Aadhil, the 'contributing' dimension to her experiences of growing was motivating her employment aspirations to become a social worker so that she could be of service to others who with a refugee or migrant experience. She expressed her desire to contribute towards ameliorating the social conditions of other refugees and had a sense of trajectory that was involved in pursuing this path, where she said, '*I'll change … Not my generation … But the next*'. Zahra's employment '*goals*' involved contributing by being a conduit for other people's life-world learning, to support them through drawing upon her own lived experiences, languages, cultures, and the knowledge that she had developed through these as she was growing. Zahra's account

revealed her awareness that her experiential, linguistic, and cultural knowledge were fundamental to her current and future contribution to the community. As she continued (see Excerpt 4.22), Zahra reflected on the role of her experiential knowledge, including her languages and cultures, during her work placement as a social worker for a local not-for-profit organisation committed to supporting youth from migrant backgrounds:

When I was on my work placement
I would have like Afghan people come in
And you know,
Rather than speaking English
I could just speak my own language
And make them understand
And you know,
It felt good.

I also felt
Because it's a place
Where only younger people come
And you know,
I felt like I was such a big role model.

Like when Afghan kids came in
Like you know,
I paid attention
And analysed the way
They were,
You know,
Looking at me or,
You know,
Talking to me,
You know,
It made me feel good,
Because
I felt like a role model to them.

I could help a lot,
I remember,
This lady she would come in all the time
And you know,
And throughout my placement,
Like every time she would come
She would thank me so much
Because she was like
'Oh
you speak my language'
You know,
'It was really hard
Because no one here
Understood me.'

You know,
It just made me feel really good
That I could help someone
And you know,
The fact that they appreciated it
And I appreciated that they,
You know,
They were so humble,
You know,
Towards what I do.

So, like when someone
Doesn't speak English that good,
Like I went to the doctor with her
And you know,
Even though the translator was there
As a social worker like,
You know,
Support her a lot,
Like, I sort of mentioned other things
For the doctor,
That they could have done for her,
And you know,
She was really thankful for that.

The fact that I can use my language,
In my career,
I want to go do a diploma
In interpreting
And eventually become
An interpreter as well,
Because I think
It will be really useful
For my job,
It will make me more
Like more professional.

Excerpt 4.22 Zahra, Interview 1, pp.10–11

Zahra used direct speech in her work-placement narrative, appropriating, as Riessman (2008, p. 112) describes, the voices of those who were involved in the experience. This enabled her to compellingly position and portray herself as '*appreciated*' by others because of the expertise that her lived experiences, languages, and cultures and associated understandings afforded. By drawing on this expertise, she contributed to alleviating the struggles in the lives of others, for which she was '*appreciated*'. In turn, resonating with Aadhil's account (see Excerpt 4.20), Zahra was motivated to pursue a career in social work, working with migrant communities for the sense of fulfilment this work provided. She emphasised that being able to draw upon her multiple languages,

cultures, and experiential knowledge in the context of her employment made her feel '*good'*. Through her use of repetition Zahra illustrated the emotional resonance that arose in connection to contributing at work. It gave her a positive feeling; she reiterated throughout her account that her role as a social worker made her '*feel good*'. These positive feelings that arose in interaction at work drove her desire to pursue work in which she was able to continue to contribute her experiential, linguistic, and cultural knowledge to the society in which she lived. In this way, Zahra's account captured the influential role of emotions across her trajectory. Zahra's narrative illustrates that she was contributing her developing knowledge that evolved as she grew, in and in-between multiple languages and cultures in her employment.

In Vincent's case, having arrived in Australia with his family in 2004 when he was nine years old, as a refugee from Sierra Leone, contributing was about drawing on his history of lived experiences of being a young refugee struggling to pursue his dream to become a professional soccer player (see Excerpt 4.23). At the time of the study, Vincent was employed in a full-time position as a multicultural development officer for a local soccer association. In reflecting on the struggles that he had faced in pursuing his own dream to play soccer professionally, Vincent's account captured his desire to contribute to the refugee and migrant community in South Australia:

> I really struggled
> Trying to get more involved
> Into soccer,
> You know.
>
> Like finances was one
> On its own,
> You know,
> Lack of parental support,
> And you know,
> Parents attending games
> Was another one,
> Transport was another one.
>
> But those three things
> Especially were
> Very big barriers,
> And eventually
> Sort of stumped my progress,
> Because it just came to the point where,
> I needed a little bit more money
> To really progress to the next stage.

It was frustrating
Disappointing,
A little bit deflating,
All that experience
And all those emotions
And all those things
That were happening
Happening at the time
Has helped me to arrive
At that place that I am now.

And has also helped me to
See a much bigger picture
Of this game of football
Helped me to just see,
A lot more past the elite side of things,
And the professional side of things
And be able to understand,
You know,
The impact
That it can have,
How it can be used in conjunction
With many different other things
For example,
Education.

The pathway I had access to,
In the end
Required some funds to go,
Which would have allowed me
To go overseas
And study
And play as well.

Couldn't muster that on my own
So, couldn't go through that,
So, I guess with
Just understanding that
And going back,
Going through that,
Is what drives me,
And you know,
What really drove me to
Pursuing that
That particular job.

Excerpt 4.23 Vincent, Interview 2, pp. 11–12

For Vincent, like Zahra, Aadhil, Karla, and Latif, contributing involved being of service to and alleviating the struggles of others, which for him focused on assisting those who had also had a migration experience. Vincent's reflection on his lived experiences in the

present revealed how he made sense of the past over time and how struggles and barriers faced in pursuing his dream to play soccer professionally were transformed into experiential knowledge. This knowledge was then transformed into a source through which he could contribute meaningfully through his role and fields of work. Vincent's role as a multicultural officer included helping young people and their families from migrant backgrounds to access and engage with soccer. Accordingly, his lived experiences were directly applicable to those for whom he was providing a service. Drawing upon his lived experiences provided Vincent with a channel through which he could contribute to the community and fostered his understanding of what soccer can bring to the lives of young people beyond the '*elite side*' of the sport. Vincent highlighted the emotions that arose from the struggles he had faced as an aspirating professional soccer player, describing how he felt deflated, frustrated, and disappointed. He explained that these feelings led him to where he is now. Emotions are significant, as seen in how his emotional response to experiences of not achieving his dream to play soccer professionally developed his drive to pursue the work that he now occupied.

Each of the participant's accounts captured a sense of contributing through their current and future employment. For some, such as Latif and Roland, contributing was generally discussed as being about serving the wider community at large, whereas for others, such as Vincent, Aadhil, Karla and Zahra, the emphasis was on ameliorating the social conditions faced by other migrants and refugees in particular. Their desire to contribute was bolstered in instances where they experienced what Aadhil referred to as being '*appreciated*' or '*valued*' by employers or clientele in their employment. Vincent's desire to contribute through his role as a multicultural officer grew from his own experiences and challenges in engaging with and pursuing a career in the sport that he loved. These experiences were transformed into knowledge that he could draw upon to alleviate similar challenges faced by others. In Excerpt 4.24, Vincent further described his desire to contribute as he reflected upon a new position that he was about to commence:

> Like the whole reason
> Behind you know,
> Me seeking employment with
> With the Department of Education,
> Is just putting myself in the position
> Where I can
> Really,

Just help kids
To just thrive
And to just
Identify opportunities,
And also help them
To be able to grasp those opportunities,
That I haven't had in my life.

And just help them to develop,
Whether that's
Emotionally or physically
In whatever way I can.

And helping,
You know,

Helping people to
Achieve those dreams.

Excerpt 4.24 Vincent, Interview 2, p.15

As his current employment came to an end, Vincent reflected on the position as a school social worker that he was about to commence for the Department for Education. He explained his motivation was to '*help*' young people achieve their dreams and access opportunities that he did not have growing up. In doing so he illustrated how his past was formative in the roles that he pursued in employment. Vincent's experiences as an aspiring soccer player were a part of his life-world learning — and what he learned became experiential knowledge through which he was contributing to the community by helping other young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Like Zahra, Aadhil, and Karla, Vincent was aware that his lived experiences had fostered understandings that he was able to draw upon and contribute through his current and future positions of employment. In this sense, these young people's pasts became meaningful in their employment, not only motivating them to be of service to others with similar life experiences, but also equipping them with the knowledge to do so.

Through discussing the excerpts drawn upon throughout this section I have considered how contributing was an integral dimension to the participants' experiences of growing in and between multiple language and cultures across their trajectories. I have shown that their accounts of their aspirations to contribute to both the wider Australian community and to the lives of other refugees and migrants reveal that they were growing in education and employment. In general, they considered their experiences and aspirations relating to their education and employment to be about contributing all

that they had come to know and understand through their own refugee experiences. The participants' knowledge was developed through their experiences of living, learning, and working in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously and the various challenges they faced in resettling and pursuing their dreams and aspirations across their trajectories. Each of the participants' accounts revealed their desire to contribute their knowledge to their current and/or future employment, which for them, was about being of service to others within the community in which they lived, learned, and worked. This means that their past experiences and their reflections on them in the present, including the challenges and the successes, and the interactional and emotional dimensions involved, together shaped their employment aspirations, and shaped their knowledge and capabilities.

4.3 Conclusion

The participants' accounts revealed that, collectively, they perceived themselves as growing across their education-to-employment trajectories, a perception that was captured through their use of structural metaphors. The metaphors they employed to describe their experiences and reflections across their trajectories conveyed their understandings that they experienced biological processes like those experienced by phenomena in the natural world, such as seeds, trees, and flowers. Through their use of such structural metaphors, their narratives captured an understanding of themselves in an evolutionary process as individuals unfolding in relationship to their lived experiences and their reflections on them in the present. As their experiences and reflections unfolded, so did their anticipations and aspirations for the future. I identified this complexity as 'growing' because, in discussing their trajectories, their accounts revealed their experiences — the interactions and emotions that arose in them — as influencing their evolving sense of self and their roles in and the domains of work they occupied or aspired to in their futures.

In this chapter I have discussed that two interrelated dimensions together constituted this evolutionary process of growing. The first dimension considered was adapting, which involved learning to live, learn, and work in and between multiple languages, cultures, and social contexts. As the participants made their trajectories, they were forced to adapt to not only a new language and culture, but also different ways of knowing and social worlds in which they frequently experienced divergent social

expectations and prejudicial attitudes. As they did so, they learned to navigate two often contrasting languages, cultures, and social realities simultaneously, a process through which they developed their heighted capacity for reflection and reflexivity. They developed the ability to hold multiple perspectives, as they, according to Bashar, (see Excerpt 4.10), expanded their knowledge.

In discussing the second dimension to growing, contributing, my analysis of the participants' accounts revealed that they were driven by their desire to contribute to society in their education-to-employment experiences. For them, contributing involved drawing across their histories of lived experiences, including living, learning, and working in-between multiple languages, cultures, and social worlds, while seeking a sense of acceptance, of being of value, and of belonging in the wider community. Thus, for them, the value of learning and working was as much for the broader aim of serving beyond the self to improve the social conditions faced by others, as it was for their own personal satisfaction or means to make a living. In this way, the participants' narratives revealed that they perceived their educational, employment, and life-world experiences as essential to their contribution in and to the wider society and their communities. The mind is cultural—it is shaped by language and experience (Van Der Kolk, 2014) and thus, learning itself is a linguistic and cultural activity (Dewey, 1938/1997). What this means then, is that the young people were growing as they were learning through their emerging knowledges, linguistic and cultural repertoires, and related conceptual systems—which was occurring in multiplicity—in a between place. The accumulation of their experiences influenced the course of their education-to-employment trajectories. As their expertise and capabilities were evolving, so too were their education-to-employment pathways, aspirations and the roles that they occupied, or sought to in the future.

In the next chapter, I explore how the participants made sense of their education-to-employment trajectories as a process of pathfinding in and between their two or more languages and cultures.

5 Pathfinding

'Pathfinding' emerged in the participants' accounts in their description of their educational and employment realities and aspirations as transforming in light of their lived experiences and the interactions that they had with others within those experiences. Pathfinding captures how the participants navigated their own education-to-employment trajectory, their life-world, and sense of self in-between their two or more languages and cultures. As such, pathfinding was a multilingual and intercultural process, a development that was shaped in and by the ongoing accumulation of their past experiences in the present and the interactions that they had within them, and what they came to understand in light of them. The development in their understandings that was occurring simultaneously in multiple languages and cultures guided them along their trajectories in particular ways. Their pathfinding from education-to-employment was accomplished in interactions with peers, colleagues, teachers, friends, family, and the wider community, and it is through this that they came to understand their experiences, themselves, and others.

The interactional dimension of their trajectories was experienced and influenced externally and internally at the same time, largely as experiences of intercultural exchange. In other words, the participants' experiences, and related encounters with others, in and in-between their multiple languages and cultures, influenced their inner worlds, how they understood themselves, and what they experienced and aspired to in their education-to-employment trajectories. I have called this process 'pathfinding' because in describing their trajectories the participants employed conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) related to taking a voyage to make sense of and navigate their education-to-employment experiences. These metaphors included conceptualising their trajectories as involving taking a '*step*', a '*journey*', a '*pathway*', a '*road*', a '*river*', and a '*destination*'. These structural metaphors were employed by the participants in ways that conveyed they experienced pathfinding holistically, as they did not dissociate their education-to-employment trajectories or aspirations from their broader life-world experiences. For them, their broader life-worlds were intrinsic to their education and employment experiences, expectations, and aspirations.

The process of pathfinding captured in the participants' accounts involved two interconnected subthemes, *uncertainty* and *playing catch-up*, which emerged as the participants described their trajectories from education-to-employment. The first subtheme, *uncertainty*, surfaced in the participants' accounts where they described the sense of questioning that was invoked as they faced what Vincent termed '*the unknown*' (see Excerpt 5.3). Facing the unknown prompted a sense of questioning as they met their changing education-to-employment realities and aspirations. This is a significant dimension of pathfinding, as both the global (Bakhshi et al., 2017) and local (Abkhezr et al., 2015) employment contexts are in an atmosphere of structural change and insecurity. Key factors influencing these changes and the atmosphere of uncertainty include increasing societal inequality, political uncertainty, globalisation, demographic change (Bakhshi et al., 2017, p. 12), and post-industrial work contexts (Abkhezr et al., 2015, p. 73), which are changing the landscape of the world of work. Currently, the uncertainty of employment is increasing amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having a devastating impact on economic growth and labour market in Australia, especially for migrants and refugees (AMES Australia, 2020b). AMES Australia highlights that the gap in employment rates between those born in Australia and migrants and refugees has increased significantly in the past two years.

In July 2020 the unemployment rate for people born overseas was 8.5%, while for Australian-born people it was 7.2% (AMES Australia, 2020b). In 2019, the estimated youth unemployment rate in Australia was at 11.84% (O'Neill, 2022), suggesting that many young people experience a sense of uncertainty as they seek to fulfil their education-to-employment aspirations. Consequently, young people who are categorised as 'refugees' and 'youth' experience an increasingly complex tension across their education-to-employment trajectories. Moreover, the uncertainty participants in the present study faced was accentuated, as they were at the intersection of these two vulnerable groups and they were living, learning, and working in-between their two or more languages and cultures.

The second subtheme, *playing catch-up*, emerged as each of the participants' narratives revealed that, as they were pathfinding, they did not have equal positioning with their Australian-born, English-speaking peers and colleagues in education and employment contexts. This is significant because, as Norton (2016, p. 476) explains, language is a social practice in which identities and desires are constituted in complex and often

unequal social relationships, which is the reality for the young people in this study. For the participants, living, learning, and working in linguistic, cultural, and social diversity in an additional and dominant language and culture that was not their own, produced the conditions in which their first languages, cultures and previous knowledge were not recognised or valued. In what was for them a new language, culture, and social worlds, they had to start from what Latif described as '*the beginning again*' (see Excerpt 5.10), in their education and employment. In considering the theme 'pathfinding' that emerged from the analysis, I address, in turn, each of these subthemes that together constitute pathfinding as described here, while providing some related theoretical insights and making connections to current research to contextualise my analysis.

5.1 Uncertainty

A sense of uncertainty was prominent across the participants' narratives as they routinely revealed a sense of questioning. This was emphasised by Karla, who questioned what lay ahead for her in her education-to-employment trajectory. In response to being invited to visually express her education-to-employment trajectory to date in the group workshop, she used acrylic paint on paper to paint what she described as a '*river*' with a '*murky mixture of everything*' (see Excerpt 5.1, Fig. 5.1). At the time of the interview, Karla was employed part-time to cover a colleague's workload on maternity leave. The temporary position involved coordinating a youth program at the local not-for-profit organisation that provided support services to refugees, where she was already employed on a casual basis as a multicultural awareness officer. Karla had been struggling to secure more paid work, as she was only working two days a week, and needed more income to cover her living costs. She was worried about how she was going to manage financially once her colleague returned from maternity leave.
Excerpt 5.1 reveals Karla's experiences of pathfinding from education-to-employment. As she reflected on her trajectory, she discussed that her experiences involved having to learn '*a whole new language*' and the sense of uncertainty this involved for her.



Figure 5.1: Karla, group workshop

Murky mixture of everything,
It's like education
Connecting
With work.

I'm studying
But,
I'm also working,
I'm loving where I am
Right now
On both sides.

But this blue
Going all around,
Is the uncertainty,
Which is the common thing
They both have.

For work
I'm only there for my contract
For you know,
The next half of the year
So, what happens after that?

For education
What happens after this?
What comes up next year?
So, it's the questions.

Again, the mixture of emotion,
'Cos, I see all this as my emotions,
And it's sort of like a mixture of emotions really,
Throughout the whole journey.

Excerpt 5.1 Karla, group workshop, pp. 18–19

Karla employed a structural metaphor, describing her trajectory as being a '*journey*' that involved education and employment. In describing her trajectory in this way Karla revealed that she had identified education and employment as being held holistically. As Karla put it, '*It's like education connecting with work*', suggesting that for her each of these spheres — education and employment — were held together. Karla's use of the words, '*murky mixture of everything*' is indicative of the reality that she experienced her education-to-employment trajectory and broader life-world in multiple languages and cultures that were mixed together, shaping her knowledge, understandings, and influencing her emotional world. The connection that Karla identified between education and employment revealed that for her they were progressing simultaneously and involved a mixture of emotions, including a feeling of uncertainty. Karla's questioning of her future emphasised the uncertainty that contemplating her trajectory had for her, juxtaposed with the significance of her emotions. Her precarious work situation provoked a sense of instability in her life, prompting her to question her position.

In employing an ontological metaphor, '*a murky mixture of everything*', to describe her education-to-employment trajectory to date, Karla conveyed that she conceptualised her experiences as substances that were '*connecting*'. Additionally, she conceptualised her feeling of uncertainty metaphorically as the colour '*blue*'. Through these ontological metaphors, Karla's account revealed that she made sense of her trajectory from education-to-employment as occurring in-between multiple languages and cultures. As Karla expressed, the emergence of the spectrum of colours were employed to convey her emotions that living, learning, and working in-between languages and cultures generated a sense of facing an uncertain future. This interpretation of Karla's narrative is further supported by the reiterating of her questioning '*So, what happens after that? /*

For education, what happens after this? / What comes up next year? So, it's the questions'.

Halima's account (see Excerpt 5.2) shows that she too experienced a sense of questioning as she was pathfinding from education-to-employment. Like Karla, Halima reiterated her sense of questioning. At the time of the study Halima was in Year 11 at a local senior college and considering several career pathways, including becoming a lawyer, a reporter, a sports person, or joining the army. In response to being invited to express her education-to-employment experiences to date in the group workshop, Halima employed chalk pastels on large white paper, drawing what she described as herself in a landscape beside a river (see Fig. 5.2).



Figure 5.2: Halima, group workshop

A river,
It flows
Everywhere.

A person,
In his or her life
Doesn't know
Where I am going?
What I am going to do?

Where the life
Is going to take me?
What way I'm going?
What way the life
Is going to take me?

Is the way
Going to be
Difficult?
Or easy?

Excerpt 5.2 Halima, group workshop, pp. 9–10

In her account Halima emphasised her sense of uncertainty through her questioning of what the future might hold for her in terms of work. The repetitive questioning in Halima's words underscores that for her, pathfinding involved facing the unknown in her education-to-employment trajectory. She explained that she made sense of her lived experiences as pathfinding in a climate of uncertainty, as revealed in her questioning, '*Where I am going? / What I am going to do? / Where the life Is going to take me? / What way I'm going?*' Halima, like Karla, employed a structural metaphor to convey how she experienced and understood of her trajectory, however, rather than describing her education-to-employment experiences a '*journey*' as Karla did when reflecting on her image of a river (see Excerpt 5.1), Halima described her trajectory as a '*river*' which '*flows everywhere'*. Halima's deliberation that her river '*flows everywhere*' suggests that she experienced her trajectory holistically. She did not understand her educational, employment, and life-world experiences as disconnected spheres of experience. Rather, they were held together in her narrative as a river through which she was making sense of her trajectory, pathfinding with a sense of questioning. This sense of questioning that reverberated across Halima's account was also evident in Karla's narrative (see Excerpt 5.1), revealing of a sense of uncertainty. As Halima asked, '*Is the way going to be difficult? Or easy?*'.

Vincent's account (see Excerpt 5.3) also captured uncertainty and the interconnected nature of education and employment across his trajectory. In response to being invited to visually express his education-to-employment experiences to date in his first interview, Vincent employed coloured pencils on A3 white paper, depicting himself as a figure on a road, which he explained represented his '*life*' (Fig. 5.3).

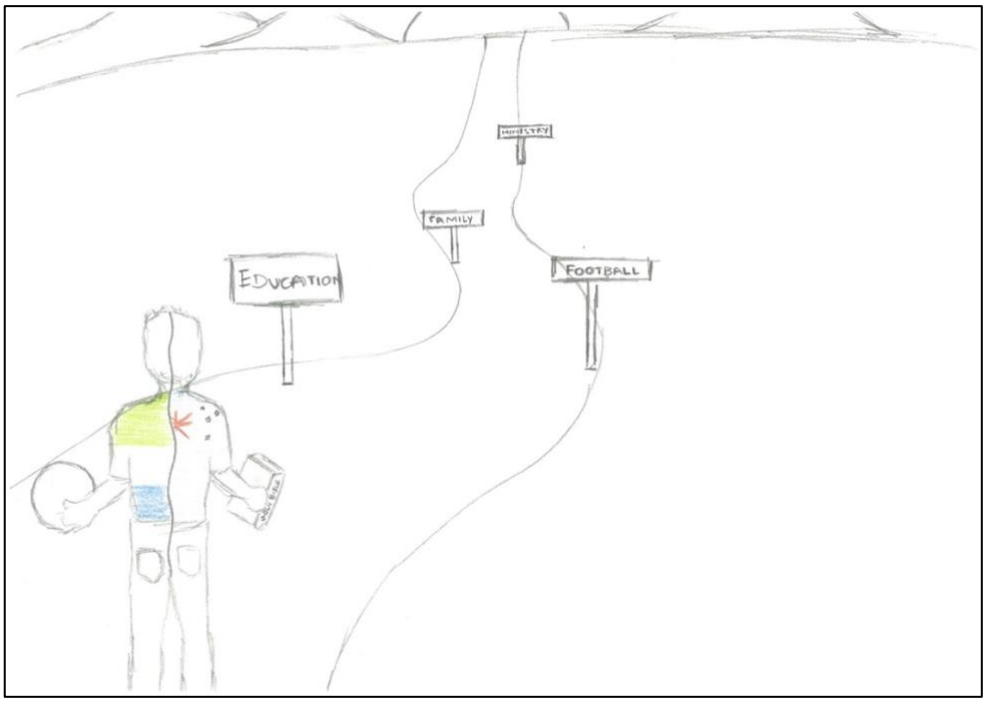

Figure 5.3: Vincent, Interview 1

That's the road
And that's my life,
I made it end
A little bit bendy,
Because my life
Hasn't always been
Straight forward.
There's been lots of
Twists and turns,
The horizon
That's where I'm going,
Into the horizon.

Into the unknown.

Education
From primary
Onwards
Football as well,
Which came in the middle
Of my education,
Towards the tail end of it.
And then family
I'm now married,
It's changed along the way
And then afterwards
Ministry,
Which is the next aspect of life
That I'm currently going through.

Career could go somewhere in there
And maybe towards the end,
At this point
Is where I am starting
The road right there.

Excerpt 5.3 Vincent, Interview 1, pp.13-14

Like Karla and Halima, Vincent employed a structural metaphor of life as journey to convey how he made sense of his trajectory. Vincent explained that he saw his life as a '*road*' that involved uncertainty as he was pathfinding from education-to-employment in the context of multiple languages and cultures. In defining his life experiences as a '*road*' that included '*twists and turns*' as he travelled into '*the horizon*', which was where he was going — '*into the unknown*' Vincent revealed a sense of uncertainty. Vincent's account reveals that he held an awareness of the notion of trajectory in terms of his career, as he underscored the '*end*' and '*starting*' points of his '*road*'. Vincent signposted what he distinguished as significant milestones that had marked his life and those he anticipated in his future, indicating that they were all interconnected dimensions of the same '*road*' or trajectory. This signifies that he too, like Karla and Halima, considered his trajectory holistically, which suggests that for them, their educational and employment experiences, together with their broader life-world, influenced the '*twists and turns*' as they made their way into the '*horizon*', into the '*unknown*'. In other words, as they live their trajectories, they are pathfinding in the sense that, although they do have passions and aspirations that they are pursuing or guided by in terms of their career paths, a sense of uncertainty prevails in their narratives. They are moving into an uncertain future, into the '*unknown*', as they make their varying trajectories from education-to-employment.

The different experiences across each participants' trajectory, in and out of education and often, but not always, tenuous, low-level employment, contributed to the development of their knowledge and capabilities, as discussed in Chapter 4. They lived their trajectories in the context of change, as indicated in Vincent's account (see Excerpt 5.3). Their capacity to do so reveals what Maturana and Bunnell (1999, p. 60) describe as the flexibility of people to participate in changing behaviour, relations, and contexts as circumstances evolve. This sense of change was underscored in Aadhil's account (see Excerpt 5.4). Aadhil explained that all his experiences, including both the successes and

the failures, were intrinsic to his learning and guided him in different directions in his education and employment:

> You always learn
> From experiences,
> Whether if you fail
> You know you will learn,
> You will succeed
> Because you failed,
> Because you know
> What went wrong.
>
> And it's the next time,
> You will try differently
> You will try,
> In a different direction,
> So, a different pathway
> So, you will succeed
> In that particular task.
>
> **Excerpt 5.4 Aadhil, Interview 2, p.4**

Aadhil's statement, '*And it's the next time / You will try differently*', captures the transforming nature of pathfinding. As Aadhil learned and developed his understandings by experience, he would change his approach to *'particular tasks'*. His description of learning from both his successes and failures highlights that although he applied himself to particular educational and employment endeavours, he held an awareness of uncertainty. He explained that in the face of failure he would take *'In a different direction, So a different pathway'.* The sense of changing pathways Aadhil describes suggests his trajectory involved trial and error, which he viewed as intrinsic to finding a pathway to success.

Zahra's account (see Excerpt 5.5) illustrates that, for her, the uncertainty involved in pathfinding was related to the changing nature of her '*dreams*'. At the time of the interview Zahra was in her first year of a degree in social work and casually employed as a social worker for a local not-for-profit organisation providing services to young people from migrant backgrounds. In reflecting on her trajectory to date, Zahra explained how her focus was changing along the way:

> When I was a kid
> I used to have big dreams,
> As I got older
> It sort of went vague.

The things I went through
In life,
Like study
Wasn't so much
my focus anymore.

I stopped thinking
About education
I didn't have that,
Aspiration
To like you know,
Just continue studying.

It took me four years
To come to uni,
After Year 12
I graduated
And then I came and did foundation
At UniSA.

But then I just didn't feel it
I just wasn't going through
A time,
Where I wanted to study,
So, I just took that time.

And then last year,
I did a community services case management diploma,
I went and did the work placement
And I really enjoyed it,
I looked into the social work.

So, I basically
Took another step
For my education
And came to uni.

Excerpt 5.5 Zahra, Interview 1, pp. 5–6

Evoking a structural metaphor to make sense of her lived experiences, Zahra was not merely describing, but conceptualising her education-to-employment trajectory as taking steps. In doing so, she established a sense of taking steps along a path that was changing along the way, along with her changing dreams and focus. A sense of uncertainty is evidenced in Zahra's account. She explained that her dreams for education and employment started off as '*big*', before becoming '*vague*', suggesting that like Vincent, there was constant change as she took steps along the way. Zahra described a range of phases that she had experienced, including times where she was not motivated to study and took a year off. Zahra's account captures that each experience

reflected upon has led her to where she is now, which conveys the holistic nature of her education-to-employment trajectory**.** All of her experiences are contributing to her pathfinding as she moves towards what Vincent (see Excerpt 5.3) called '*the horizon*' and '*the unknown*'. Living in two cultures and their related social worlds, going through periods of studying and not studying, Zahra discovered what she desired in her future employment, as captured in Excerpt 5.6

> It was just one-year diploma
> I only did it last year
> And the other three years,
> I wasn't doing anything.
>
> I did go to work for a year
> I went to work at Subway
> But I didn't really enjoy that,
> It just wasn't something
> I wanted to do,
> I really didn't do much.
>
> I was just trying to
> Figure things out,
> I came back to education
> Because you know,
> I just told myself,
> 'If I don't get an education
> I'll just have to keep living
> Like every other Afghan woman
> Be a housewife,'
> And that's not the lifestyle
> That I want to live.
>
> **Excerpt 5.6 Zahra, Interview 1, pp. 5–6**

Zahra's account evidences Ricœur's (1984, 1984/2012) understanding that as experiences are lived and subsequently reflected upon, they are integrated into people's sense of understanding. Taking time off from study and working in a casual position in a fast food/hospitality job that she didn't '*enjoy*', and not doing '*much*' for a time before re-enrolling into university altogether, contributed to her '*figuring things out'*. '*Figuring things out'* demonstrates Zahra's sense of uncertainty as each new experience built upon the past, and influenced her desires for the future, which were changing along with the manner in which she was reflecting on the past (Ricœur, 1984, 1984/2012). Employing direct speech, Zahra's account captures an impression of her personal inner dialogue concerning her trajectory and the internal thought processes that guided her pathfinding. The use of direct speech reveals important messages about who the individual is, and

their self-positioning (Riessman, 2008). In this case, Zahra portrayed herself as someone who is actively pursuing education as a pathway to employment in social work.

Captured in Zahra's words are hints of the wider social and cultural structures (Riessman, 2008, pp. 14–15) in which she was living, learning, and working. She references social and intergenerational shifts in which she was playing an integral part. These social and cultural shifts were intertwined with the high value attached to education (Baker & Irwin, 2021; Stevenson & Baker, 2018). As Zahra emphasised, she held a desire not to live the '*lifestyle*' of '*every other Afghan woman*', revealing she was navigating her trajectory in two cultures and their associated values and practices. Zahra was navigating social change as she was living, learning, and working in a context of linguistic and cultural diversity. In other words, these changes were occurring because Zahra's trajectory was unfolding in-between multiple languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices — those of her home languages and culture and that of the wider Australian society. Significantly, Zahra was one of the first women in her family to access higher education.

Zahra's account illustrates that she regarded education as a pathway to meaningful employment and, consequently, to a better life. Arezzo, who had recently left school part way through Year 11 and was planning to train to become a police officer echoed this perspective (see Excerpt 5.7). Arezzo's account, like Zahra's, captures how she was navigating life in-between her home languages, culture, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices and those of the wider Australian society.

> If I get into the police?
> If I don't get it?
> Maybe
> I have three or four children
> Sitting at home.
>
> That's what basically
> Hazara people does,
> The women don't work outside.
>
> And then if I don't get job
> Basically,
> I am going to stay at home
> and have children.
>
> **Excerpt 5.7 Arezzo, interview 1, p. 14**

At the time of the interview Arezzo was a casual worker in a local Afghan supermarket, being paid below the minimum wage, as well as completing the SACE part-time at TAFE and helping her mother at home. Arezzo's sense of uncertainty was revealed in her the sense of questioning: '*If I get into the police? If I don't get it?*' What will happen for her in her pathfinding if she does not get into the police force? In considering what the alternative to pursuing her aspiration to become a police officer would amount to, Arezzo expressed her desire not to do what she perceived as '*what basically Hazara people does*'. This reflection suggests that, like Zahra (see Excerpt 5.6), Arezzo was at the edge of social change. Anzaldúa (2012) describes this sense of social transformation as a space between worlds — between what once was and what is coming. Arezzo's and Zahra's accounts capture that education and employment involves navigating a space between worlds, which includes living, learning, and working in an in-between space between their multiple languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices. They emphasised that, for them, meaningful work took place outside of the family home in roles that involved being of service to the wider community. They both described their desire to find fulfilling employment outside of their responsibilities in the family home as being diverging from the cultural expectations within their family contexts. Nevertheless, even in instances where they set out with aspirations about what they would like to do, be, and achieve, their pathfinding from education-to-employment often led them to vocations they did not necessarily intend. This was the case for Latif, who aspired to one day become a professor of electrical engineering but was currently busy running his family-owned café (see Excerpt 5.8; Fig. 5.4).

Latif's account in his second interview (see Excerpt 5.8) captured a clear sense of uncertainty in his pathfinding as he reflected upon his education-to-employment experiences to date. At the time of the interview, Latif had recently made the difficult decision to forfeit a humanitarian scholarship that he had been granted to continue his studies and pursue a pathway to his dream of completing a PhD and become a professor of electrical engineering. He was currently on what is known as a bridging visa, which permitted him to stay lawfully in Australia while either making arrangements to leave, finalise immigration matters, or wait for an immigration decision. As a consequence, his working life had turned towards investing all his time and energy into his family's business, a local café. The official term for this visa is Subclass (050) Bridging visa E

and the government does not provide support for holders of this visa to those who pursue higher education. in his second, arts-based interview, Latif was invited to express his education-to-employment trajectory to date using art materials. Using coloured markers on white paper, he depicted his '*River of success*' (See Fig. 5.4).

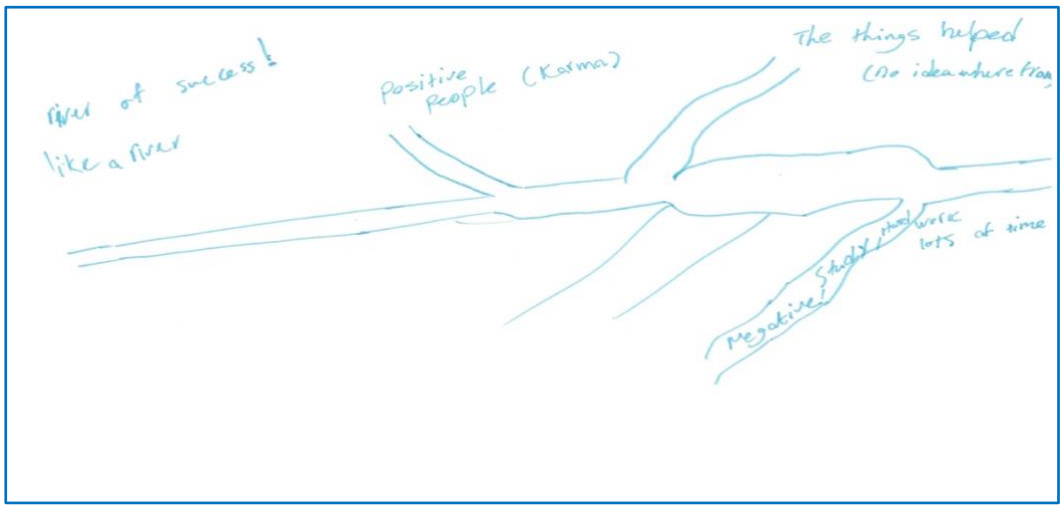

Figure 5.4: Latif, Interview 2

I'll call it
The river of success,
If you look at it
Like a river,
This is me
I am going through
A little space
In my life.

The other rivers
Adding up to that
And making it bigger,
Wider,
Stronger.

The other rivers,
One,
Two,
Three,
Making it smaller.

But at the end of the line,
Which is now I think,
It's a lot bigger
Than what it was

Before.

That's how I want to describe it,
The one,
Which added to the volume
Of the main river,
Which is me,
Could be the people
The karma
Positive people.

The things happen,
I don't even know where from
And they were the things,
Which made me richer.

I needed to sacrifice
A couple of things,
To get through,
For example
My studies,
Spending lots of time,
Or even some negative people
On the way.

That's where I am now
I got better at some stage,
Worse at some stage,
But end of it
Was very good thing.

It's the up and down of the life
The way rivers are treated,
Usually, human beings
Drain the water,
Like those ones
Are making it smaller,
These two are draining the river
They are making it smaller.

That's study
Hard work,
I sacrificed
The study
For my work,
Which could be
A wrong decision,
But at the time
I thought it wasn't.

I couldn't have studied
At the same time,
When I was running the business.

Excerpt 5.8 Latif, Interview 2, pp. 7–9

Like Halima and Karla, Latif employed a structural metaphor of life being a river to explain how he made sense of his education-to-employment experiences. By conveying his trajectory as embodying the same attributes as a '*river*' he revealed the evolving and uncertain nature of his pathfinding from education-to-employment so far. Latif explained that his river was connected to several other rivers, which he described as representing different experiences and people that directly impacted his '*river of success*'. This explanation of the shaping force that the varying influences upon his river had, revealed that he was aware that his educational and employment experiences were impacted by the significant events in his life, such as being forced to leave Iran. He also held an awareness of the influence others had upon the way in which his trajectory unfolded. He explained that in some instances the river is made '*bigger*' in consequence of the '*positive*' interactions with others, and it is made '*smaller*' in correspondence with the '*negative*' people and experiences that he had.

For Latif, pathfinding from education-to-employment did not unfold according to the plans that he set out: '*I needed to sacrifice a couple of things / To get through / For example / My studies*'. The sense of '*sacrifices*' required in Latif's account indicates how, for him, pathfinding was not straightforward. Like Vincent (see Excerpt 5.3), Latif held an awareness of the notion of trajectory: *'That's where I am now / I got better at some stage / Worse at some stage / But end of it / Was very good thing / It's the up and down of the life'*. He hinted at a sense of uncertainty where he pointed out, '*The things happen, I don't even know where from*', indicating that for him, the experiences and interactions that '*happen*' along the way have influenced his pathfinding in unexpected ways. He experienced being forced to relinquish his humanitarian scholarship to undertake his electrical engineering studies in South Australia with a sense of uncertainty, questioning whether this was the right decision or not. It is important to note here that at the time of the interview, Latif was paying up front to do one or two subjects a semester. This suggests that he had not abandoned his dream of becoming a professor of electrical engineering altogether, and exemplifies that pathfinding is a continuing and emergent phenomenon. As the lives of these young people unfolded, their education-to-employment pathways were evolving and their plans for their futures were changing. Consequently, pathfinding was imbued with a sense of uncertainty, as is captured in Excerpt 5.9 from his second interview:

I experienced a couple of things
I've got a plan in my life,
Right now,
Which is changing.

This business changed my future plans,
As I mentioned
My dream was to become a professor at uni.

Now
Still, I would like to do that
But what if I do an MBA?
And become a businessperson?
Which could work well,
'Cos, I have done this with my family
From scratch,
From zero,
And we are getting somewhere.

Excerpt 5.9 Latif, Interview 2, p.16

As Latif considered possibilities for his future, he described how his own '*plans*' were '*changing*' in relation to the circumstances of his work and broader life-world. Latif alternated his use of personal pronouns between '*I*' and '*we*', suggesting that for him, his pathfinding was not only related to his sense of self, his dreams, and aspirations for his future career, but also connected to those of his family. The '*changing*' direction of his '*future plans*' had shifted from studying engineering and becoming a professor at university, to running the family business. Resonating with the '*twists and turns*' located in Vincent's' account (see Excerpt 5.3); Latif underscored that '*changing*' in his education-to-employment trajectory was occurring in relation to his lived experiences. Latif's perspectives about what he could pursue — his pathfinding — were changing, and included possibilities such as studying an MBA and becoming a businessperson. As Latif himself put it, '*I've got a plan in my life / Right now / Which is changing*'.

As discussed throughout this section, the participants' accounts revealed that they were navigating their trajectories in-between their two or more languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices as they were pathfinding. As they did, they questioned the possibilities for their education and employment as they met the '*unknown*', which was changing in relation to the contexts of their lives, significant events, and interactions with others. Living in-between, their sense of questioning, meeting the unknown, and experiencing various changes across their trajectories created a sense of uncertainty. Furthermore, the opportunities that they encountered and

perceived emerged in connection to the interactions they had with others in their experiences. As such, the participants' accounts showed that the accumulation of their personal experiences and their understandings of them influenced their sense of self, their aspirations, and their outcomes. Having discussed the sense of uncertainty that the participants reflected in their narrative accounts, I turn to discuss playing catch-up, the second subtheme of pathfinding.

5.2 Playing catch-up

Pathfinding emerged in my analysis of the participants' accounts as involving a sense of what Karla labelled '*playing catch-up*'. The notion of playing catch-up is inherently connected to the structural metaphor of life as a journey that was ubiquitously employed by the participants, as evidenced by their descriptions of their trajectories as involving '*taking steps*', '*changing pathways*', and '*changing directions*'. Like Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), Kövecses (2010, p. 4) explains that conceptualising life as a journey is deeply ingrained in the conceptual systems of speakers of English. For example, in the life is a journey metaphor, which is embedded in the English language and many others, establishes the conceptualisation that life is a trajectory that has a beginning, middle, and end, with events that mark the routes taken.

Playing catch-up emerged from the participants' accounts as they reflected on the reality that as they made their trajectories in South Australia — as they were pathfinding — their lived experiences, languages, cultures, and knowledges, including their previous education, were routinely ignored. The sense of playing catch-up also implies a sense that the participants experienced constant comparisons to the norms of the wider mainstream society languages and cultural knowledges. Even though they came with their home languages, cultures, and knowledges, which for some, such as Latif, included their prior education, the participants' accounts portrayed having to start their pathways from education-to-employment '*from the beginning again*' (Latif, see Excerpt 5.10). Playing catch-up involved starting from '*the beginning again*' because they were not at the same point on the mainstream trajectory as their Australian-born, English-speaking counterparts in their local linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge or educational and employment experience. Not only did they have to learn an additional language, but they also had to learn how to navigate Australian culture and society in social contexts where their prior languages, cultures, knowledges, education, and

intercultural expertise were not recognised. Owing to this reality, they were forced to continuously interact in-between languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practice. This is a characteristic of the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of their experiences, which remained largely unacknowledged in educational and employment contexts.

To give an example of playing catch-up as identified in the analysis, I turn to Latif's account. In his first interview, in response to being invited to visually express his education-to-employment experiences to date, Latif drew what he described as '*my journey'* with biro on white paper (see Fig. 5.5). Reflecting on the meaning of his visual representation, he described playing catch-up as '*a drop down*' and having to '*start from scratch*' (see Excerpt 5.10).

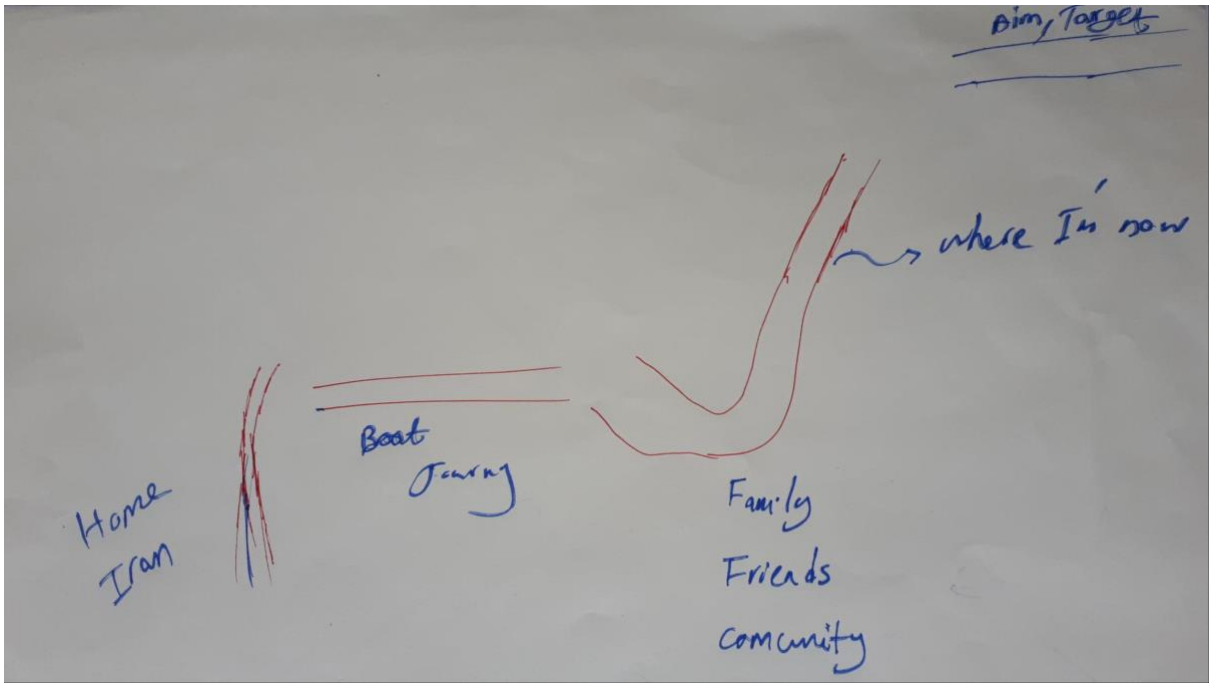

Figure 5.5: Latif, Interview 1

I have done electrical engineering
In one of the top universities,
Back home.

And I've done the same course here
From the beginning again,
A drop down,
I start my life
From scratch here.

Studying hard
Working hard,
Getting through the café,
And everything
And I am continuing,
Hopefully,
I reach to my aims and targets.
(Int. 1, pp. 8-23)

When I came here,
I started my journey,
To start it again
From the scratch,
From the first subject,
Which I have passed
Two years ago.

Sitting in a class
Everything is repeated,
You have to sit for the test,
Which you have done it already,
Which you have waste time for it,
Which you aren't keen anymore.

It's very hard
It's very hard,
To keep yourself motivated.
(Int. 2, p. 10)

Excerpt 5.10 Latif, Interview 1, pp. 8-23; Interview 2, p. 10

Latif's understanding that he had to start '*from the beginning again*' underscores that he experienced a sense of playing catch-up across his trajectory. Latif had studied to be an electrical engineer '*in one of the top universities back home*', yet his '*aims and targets*' had been changing along the way, as discussed in the previous section. As he reflected upon his visual representation Latif demonstrated that his trajectory involved an immense disruption, including being forced to leave Iran, take a boat journey, and start his education '*from scratch*'. In the context of South Australia his previous education was viewed by others as worthless. Starting '*from scratch*' meant having to repeat subjects that he had already completed, which he emphasised through repetition.

For people who have arrived in Australia as refugees and migrants, the lack of recognition of qualifications obtained overseas in education and employment has been recognised as a systemic barrier to achieving employment aspirations, frequently resulting in downward occupational mobility (Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018b; Khawaja et al., 2019). This reality faced by many is reflected in the Latif's experience, forced to

start his electrical engineering degree from '*the beginning again*', even though he had already completed a significant portion of the degree in Iran. In shifting pronouns from the first person '*I*' to the second person generalised '*you*', Latif indicated that he understood that playing catch-up involved having to repeat everything, something that was not unique to his own experience; rather, it was shared with others who had similar life experiences to him. A sense of playing catch-up was also stressed in relationship to what Latif called a '*delay*' in pursuing his plan to become a professor, as captured in Excerpt 5.11.

> The reason I started this,
> Engineering,
> I was planning to become
> A professor,
> To get my PhD.
>
> There was a bit of delay on that
> At the moment,
> I am on hold on that
> But, eventually
> I will hopefully,
> Get to that point as well.
>
> So, that is what I am doing,
> But the life experience
> I don't say this distracted me
> From what I wanted to do,
> But it put me in a different direction.
>
> **Excerpt 5.11 Latif, interview 1, p. 9**

Latif's understanding of his experiences as involving both a '*delay*' and being put in '*a different direction*' shows that he considered that his trajectory involved different pathways located across the '*journey*' of his life in Australia. His account captures his understanding that his trajectory was a journey, as he described his experiences in relation to the '*map*' that represented his life. Latif's account of his map shows that his plans and aspirations for the future were transforming in light of his life's unfolding circumstances and the constraints that he faced in pursing his dreams. The varying experiences that Latif encountered influenced the '*direction*' of his education-to-employment trajectory, which included a '*delay*' indicating that his journey involved playing catch-up as his dream to become a professor was '*on hold'*. In his case, playing catch-up was largely related to not having his prior studies recognised in Australia and having to delay pursuing his dream, whereas for others it was connected to the fact that

they did not have the language skills or the same level of schooling as their Australian-born peers.

In her account (see Excerpt 5.12), Karla explained she experienced playing catch-up from having arrived in Australia with little knowledge or understanding of the English language and with limited prior schooling. This is the case for many young people who have had a refugee experience in Australia (Hartley et al., 2018; UNHCR, 2020). Excerpt 5.12 reveals that what Latif referred to as '*starting from scratch*' in his education (see Excerpt 5.10), Karla, referring to learning English, called '*playing catch-up*':

> It's like playing catch-up,
> So they start with ABCs
> Connecting words to letters
> Of the alphabet.
>
> Then slowly work your way up
> To a grade 4 level
> In a six-month period,
> Which doesn't work
> Because you can't speak English anyway.
>
> So, it's pretty much just going
> 'We will just throw you in there
> And you get what you can
> And then next year
> You go to Year 5.'
>
> It's playing catch-up.
>
> **Excerpt 5.12 Karla, Interview 1, pp. 3–4**

For Karla, '*playing catch-up'* involved starting school in a monolingual context where a linear model of uninterrupted schooling was expected, while not yet having a grasp of the English language and not being on the same learning trajectory as her peers (Abkhezr et al., 2015, p. 72; Beadle, 2015, p. 17). Karla described her initial years of education in Australia as being '*thrown in*' and being expected to follow a pathway developed for a homogenous, monolingual group of learners who had followed the same educational trajectory from kindergarten onwards. As Ndhlovu (2015, p. 402) highlights, pedagogical practices in Australia are predominantly founded on the implicit assumption that students are a homogeneous group — that they all grow up with the same social positioning, language, and culture. Karla's account reveals a social and cultural reality experienced by many. Karla was '*playing catch-up*' because she was

expected to work at the same level of linguistic, cultural, and social knowledge throughout primary school as her Australian peers, while the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge that she did have remained overlooked.

In Excerpt 5.13, reflecting on a job interview she had when seeking casual employment while completing Years 11 and 12, Karla explained that '*playing catch-up*' persisted in employment contexts.

> One of the ladies
> Was doing the interviews,
> From one of the retail shops
> She goes through my resume
> And she goes,
>
> 'Oh wow
> I see that your schooling starts in 2007,
> In Year 5.'
>
> I said
> 'Yeah
> I came to Australia in 2007
> And I learnt English from there.'
>
> And she goes,
> 'Wow, so English is not your first language?'
> And I said,
> 'No'
> And she goes
> 'Okay
> Unfortunately
> We do need someone who is more fluent
> And can speak the language well
> And you know,
> Write well.'
>
> And I'm going,
> 'I wouldn't be here,
> Written my resume
> And written my cover letter
> If I couldn't write and speak the language.'
>
> **Excerpt 5.13 Karla, Interview 1, pp. 7–8**

In her job interview narrative, Karla revealed that she she felt the employer positioned her as inferior as inferior because she did not speak English as a '*first language*'. Although Karla had been positioned in this way by the woman who was interviewing her, in her narrative she was what Riessman (2008) refers to as contesting this positioning. As Karla narrated the event, she gave an account of her internal dialogue

that occurred in response to the interaction with the woman who was interviewing her. Karla challenged the woman's preconception that she would not have the language skills required to fulfil the role because English was not her first language, explaining that she thought to herself, '*I wouldn't be here / Written my resume / And written my cover letter / If I couldn't write and speak the language*.' Karla's account, like Latif's, demonstrates that even though they had and are developing unique expertise, including diverse linguistic, cultural, and life-world knowledge, these often go unnoticed and remain ignored within the structures of not only education, but also employment. In employing direct speech, Karla enacted the voice of the employer, illustrating an experience of discrimination on the basis of linguistic and cultural difference. Karla was denied employment based on the assumption that because she had learned English as a second language in her primary school education, she would be unable to fulfil the requirements of the position with the proficiency of someone whose first language was English.

Experiences such as Karla's in Excerpt 5.13 reveal the broader presence of a monolingual bias (May, 2014) or 'ignored lingualism' (Ndhlovu, 2015a) within the social structures of Australia, including in educational and employment contexts. Being received in this way fails to consider the 'plurality of consciousness' (Anzaldúa, 2012; Ndhlovu, 2015) that develops in those who routinely operate in more than one language and culture as part of their everyday experiences. Karla experienced her linguistic, cultural, and knowledge repertoires as invisible, and in turn, she was excluded from opportunities for employment. Ndhlovu's (2015a) notion of 'ignored lingualism' highlights that the plurality of the participants' languages and cultures was intrinsic to their evolving knowledges, including their acquisition of the English language and learning to navigate Australian society. Although there were occasions where the participants' linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge was recognised and valued in educational and employment contexts, it was persistently ignored by others, such as employers in Karla's case. Not only did the participants have to '*start from the beginning again*', experiencing a sense of playing catch-up, including having to learn an additional language, but they also developed the capacity to live in two or more languages and cultures simultaneously. Yet, this development of their capacity to live, learn, and work in and between multiple languages and cultures remained largely unacknowledged in educational and employment contexts.

As Karla narrated her experience and reflections on the job interview (see Excerpt 5.14), she revealed that she questioned whether having learned an additional language was in fact an achievement or a hindrance:

> No matter how much
> You've learnt,
> You've studied,
> You've read,
> You got to this point
> Where you are qualified for the job.
>
> 'Cos they weren't asking for experience
> It's something that you go in,
> And you learn,
> And you do.
>
> But the fact that you have had
> To learn another language,
> And you want to apply for a job,
> So, it sort of got me a little bit sad.
>
> I used to think of,
> you know,
> Learning English,
> It's an achievement.
>
> You know,
> It was like
> When I talk to my friends,
> 'I learnt English in the last ten years',
> And they will be like,
> 'Oh wow
> Congratulations
> That's really awesome.'
>
> But then,
> When that happened,
> You know the lady said
> 'Oh sorry
> You just learnt English ten years ago,'
> I sort of went
> 'Is it an achievement?
> Or is it a hindrance?'
>
> **Excerpt 5.14 Karla, Interview 1, pp. 7–8**

Karla reenacted the interview using direct speech to describe how she was denied access to employment because English was an additional language for her. This generated a sense of self-questioning. Karla reconsidered whether learning English was in fact an achievement based on this interaction with the potential employer. In her pondering

whether learning English was in fact a hindrance rather than an achievement, as she had thought, there is a sense of playing catch-up. Despite having studied and learned and become '*qualified*' for the casual retail position, she was positioned as inferior, lacking or developmentally behind in comparison to her native English–speaking peers, with whom she was perpetually '*playing catch-up*'.

Karla's job interview narrative illustrates the wider social conditions of her employment-seeking. As Riessman (2008) points out, the narrative of one individual can reveal the wider social structures in which their lives are embedded. Karla's experience was saturated with what Clyne (2005, p. 18) describes as 'deficit thinking on bilingualism'. This notion refers to the persistent perceptions among individuals and communities that monolingualism is the norm. This includes the concept that native English is the desired form of language, and bilingualism detracts from children's education and causes people to be intellectually inferior (Clyne, 2005, p. 118). Karla's self-questioning of whether having learned a whole new language was an achievement or a hindrance shows that assuming monolingualism as the 'norm' has negative consequences on the life chances of those who speak English as a second language (Ndhlovu, 2015).

Arezzo's account reveals that for her playing catch-up involved being positioned as other based on visual markers of difference that set her apart from the mainstream. Arezzo described facing prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, revealing that her self-understandings and what she could achieve in her education-to-employment trajectory were realised in relation to the social structures that were in place within an organisation, and the interactions she had with others within them. At the time of the interview Arezzo had recently left high school partway through Year 11 in response to experiences of '*bullying*', as portrayed in Excerpt 5.15.

> Sometimes even teachers,
> They don't like us,
> They call us terrorists.
>
> When I go to school
> Some of those students
> Like calls me
> 'Old Auntie'
> 'You are old.'

And then some of them like go,
'Why are you guys wearing like hijab?
If you want to wear a hijab,
Just go back to your own country.'

When we go and complain about them
Like,
'These people are bullying us
And like saying wrong things to us.'
And then they will say like,
'Okay we will investigate that,'
And then they do nothing after that.

It's really hard to like study here,
Because I am different person,
Like my culture
My background is different
Than the other people in the school.

People has been, like bullying, so a lot,
So, I stopped going to school now.

Excerpt 5.15 Arezzo, Interview 1, pp. 3–13

Using direct speech Arezzo reenacted moments in which she experienced being '*bullied*', showing me what was said and how this was experienced by her. Riessman (2008, p. 112) describes an enactment or replay as something that narrators employ in their accounts to make it easier for listeners to insert themselves into their stories empathically. Accordingly, Arezzo's account enabled me to closely comprehend her experience of facing racist and discriminatory language from both students and teachers at a local high school. Arezzo's account revealed the ways in which racism and discrimination were embedded in the institution in which she was learning, and in turn, how this was internalised. Her experience of being identified through a lens of difference produced the conditions in which she was playing catch-up, as she was not on an equal playing field with her native English–speaking, Australian-born counterparts and teachers. Arezzo's words also captured her consequent social suffering and the impact of interactions with others on her sense of self, her self-regard: '*I am different person / Like my culture / My background is different / Than the other people in the school'*.

Through her choice of pronouns Arezzo revealed how others positioned her, and in turn how she was (re)positioning herself. In referring to the teachers and students who were '*bullying*', Arezzo moved between '*they*', '*those*', and '*them*'. In referring to her own

positioning, she shifted between '*us*', '*we*', and '*me*'. These subtle shifts in pronouns suggest that Arezzo was speaking on behalf of others who also came from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and had experienced '*bullying*' at her school. Her choice of the word '*bullying*' in her account is significant. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation (2018, p. 2) refer to it as a term widely employed in institutions of education and employment throughout Australian society to define the ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical, and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. In Australia, close to 25% of school students, or an estimated 910,000 children, report experiences of bullying throughout their education (p. 1). People who identify or are identified as culturally and linguistically diverse are at increased risk of experiencing bullying (p. 2).

Arezzo appropriated the language of the institution (Riessman, 2008, p. 118) in which the experience, '*bullying*', arose. As Riessman highlights, drawing on the work of Bakhtin (1981), a given word is engrained with ideology and meanings from preceding usage; words carry their history with them, from the past into the present. What Arezzo described as '*bullying*' were clearly experiences of racism and discrimination by both teachers and students. This significantly and negatively impacted her pathfinding, setting her apart from and behind her mainstream Australian peers. Yet, within the context of her high school, such experiences were not addressed as racism and discrimination; they were simply ignored. For Arezzo, a hijab — a marker of external difference — yielded non-acceptance in her high school experience, which took place in an environment where she was received and positioned as 'other' within the dominant mainstream Australian culture. It has been established that the way in which issues of discrimination and conflict are addressed in education and employment contexts impacts individuals' sense of belonging, wellbeing, and education and employment outcomes (Pittaway et al., 2016). As a result of her experience, Arezzo left high school prematurely. Stories provide windows into people's lives, revealing the social phenomena that they face within them (Riessman, 1994, 2008). Arezzo's story underscores the reality that there are persistent discourses surrounding the notion that there is a 'Muslim problem' in Australian society (Williams et al., 2019), including in educational institutions. In turn, as evidenced by Arezzo's experience of pathfinding as playing catch-up, such discrimination leads to unequal social footing. Being positioned

as other on the basis of a visual marker of difference (a hijab) and her physical features negatively impacted her success in navigating and completing high school successfully.

For both Arezzo (see Excerpt 5.15) and Karla (see Excerpt 5.13), living, learning, and working in-between languages and cultures involved facing prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, which negatively impacted their education-to-employment experiences and outcomes. For Arezzo, such experiences were related to visual markers of difference, including wearing a hijab, whereas for Karla they were related to having an accent different to that of the wider society, or being a 'non-native speaker' of English. Owing to their experiences in facing prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, their trajectories involved playing catch-up on an unequal playing field. They were positioned as other in relation to their 'native' English-speaking counterparts and where their prior languages, cultures, and knowledges either set them apart from the mainstream or remained overlooked. However, it is important to note Participants did not always experience such a monolingual mindset (Clyne & Jupp, 2011). At times, the participants also experienced their '*difference*' as an '*advantage*' in their pathfinding from education-to-employment, as in Razi's case (see Excerpt 5.16). Razi arrived in Australia alone at 11 years of age, as an Afghan refugee from Pakistan. At the time of the study, Razi was working in two customer service roles. In reflecting upon the role of his multiple languages and cultures in obtaining his current employment positions, Razi explained that he considered them an '*advantage*':

> Now that I look back at it,
> I went through five or six interviews,
> I think that was one of the assets that I had,
> Like one of the advantages
> That I had over other kids.

Excerpt 5.16 Razi, Interview 1, pp. 4–5

In contrast to Karla's experience (see Excerpts 5.12, 5.14), Razi found his multilingualism to be an '*advantage*' that helped him successfully obtain employment in retail. This indicates that in some contexts, employers held an awareness that the participants' linguistic and cultural knowledge could be drawn upon and applied in broad fields of work as expertise. The experiences of Razi and Karla show how the structures within an organisation, and their interactions with others within the organisation, profoundly shaped their employment outcomes and in turn influenced how they came to perceive their own multilingualism. Razi saw his multilingualism as an

'*advantage*' that he had over others, whereas Karla saw her prior languages and cultures as potentially holding her back, forcing her to '*play catch-up*' with her native English–speaking counterparts.

Vincent's narrative parallels Razi's. He too revealed that his prior languages, cultures, lived experiences, and knowledge were an '*advantage*' in obtaining employment. Vincent's experience of '*advantage*' was revealed where he reflected on his work in the 'multicultural' sector in Excerpt 5.17:

> So right now
> I am employed,
> As a multicultural development officer.
>
> My role is working with schools
> Working with local government,
> And working with community organisations
> To develop and deliver football programs.
>
> The target market is people and communities
> From new arrival backgrounds.
> Coming from a new arrival background myself,
> Has definitely been able to help me slip into the role
> And it gives me another level of understanding.
>
> Because I've gone through
> What our target market are going through
> And faced a lot of the challenges,
> That they have had as well
> In getting involved in sport.
>
> Unfortunately
> There is a lot of barriers,
> So,
> It helps
> It helps
> To have a bit of understanding.
>
> I think first of all
> Being a person of colour,
> When I walk,
> When I'm speaking
> Or meeting with community members
> It gives me a bit of an advantage.
>
> When I go into that environment
> I'm one of them
> So, that
> Helps me a lot
> I understand their circumstances

I am able to,
On the organisational side of things
I am able to communicate those across
Then come up with strategies.

Excerpt 5.17 Vincent, Interview 1, pp. 6–8

Vincent's language suggests he had appropriated the language of his workplace (Riessman, 2008, p. 118), where he worked closely with *'new arrival*' clientele in educational contexts. This is evident in his use of terminologies such as '*barriers'*, '*target market*', and '*develop and deliver*'. Through having a sense of shared identity with the client base he was working with, Vincent perceived that he held an '*advantage*' in accessing opportunities to work in the so-called '*community sector*'. Being '*one of them*', that is, '*a person of colour*' with firsthand understanding of their circumstances, contributed to his sense of having an '*advantage*' over those who did not have the experiential knowledge he had developed across his trajectory. This '*advantage*' was being able to understand and '*communicate across*' difference. Like Razi, Vincent viewed his multiple languages and cultures as an asset giving him the ability to live, learn, and work in and between languages and cultures, a condition that was intrinsic to his role. The '*advantage*' that both Vincent and Razi identified in their experiences relates to the notion of playing catch-up, similar to the frequent description that arose in these interviews that, in their education and employment, their pathfinding was often on an uneven playing field or unequal footing. In contrast Latif and Karla, who viewed themselves as playing catch-up with their counterparts, Vincent and Razi saw themselves as having a lead or advantage in the knowledge required to obtain and fulfil their roles of employment.

Vincent's account (see Excerpt 5.17) revealed that he held an '*understanding*' developed through his own lived experiences of pursuing his '*dream*' to become a professional soccer player. He had firsthand experience of the '*barriers*' involved. This is indicative of the crucial role that his experiential knowledge played in his role at work. Yet, the label and role of being a '*multicultural officer*' is significant, as it was predominantly in the '*community sector*' where the participant's histories of lived experiences, languages, cultures, and experiential knowledge were described as being valued by others in their education or employment. Razi's account (see Excerpt 5.16) is the exception here, as he was the only participant who described experiencing his languages and cultures as an asset outside of the '*community sector*'. In Excerpt 5.18,

Karla raised this point in explaining her struggle to obtain employment outside of this 'employment niche' (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Her words capture a sense of playing catch-up in obtaining retail or hospitality work, which she perceived as being '*the open door*' to employment for young people in Australia.

> Unless I am working
> With people from the multicultural community,
> Other than that
> If we are looking at
> Corporate jobs
> Or retail jobs
> Or that kind of stuff,
> I don't think it's something
> That's seen as a skill set
> An advantage.
>
> I mean with ARA it's perfect,
> I can talk to clients
> And be able to see them
> And to translate
> And work through that,
> With clients.
>
> I can visit schools
> And talk to some of the kids
> That need some help with speaking
> But outside of that sector,
> No.
>
> It's sort of always
> The criteria,
> When some of the jobs we apply for,
> Especially young people,
> Going through you know
> Retail work,
> That's like the open door
> To jobs in Australia
> For young people,
> Retail work
> Hospitality.
>
> You know the criteria
> When you are applying
> It's you know,
> 'Must have good language skills'
> English
> Writing skills
> English
> You know,
> It doesn't say
> 'Fluent in other languages

It is welcome'
Or,
'Intercultural skills
Are welcome.'

No,
None of that are written
On the criteria.

Excerpt 5.18 Karla, Interview 1, pp. 6–7

According to Karla's account, unless the roles in employment that she applied for involved working within the '*multicultural community*', her linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge were ignored. Through repetition, Karla emphasised that '*the criteria*' did not include being '*fluent in other languages or intercultural skills*', although this suggests she held an awareness that her ability to speak multiple languages, move between them, and interact across different cultures was a form of expertise. However, in her experiences, outside of roles that involved interacting with or assisting others from her own community or other migrants and refugees, these capabilities were not seen as valuable, or even acknowledged at all.

Karla revealed that her experiences of looking for work as a young person who arrived in Australia as a refugee involved struggling to access opportunities to work in retail, customer service, or hospitality, which her native English–speaking, Australian-born counterparts appeared to access with relative ease. Although Karla had applied for many casual jobs in these sectors that she identified as typically available for young people as they complete high school and attend university, she had only ever been granted access to employment in the *'community sector*' and only on a casual or temporary basis. As indicated by her use of terms such '*skill set*', Karla's language, like Vincent's, reveals appropriation (Riessman, 2008, p. 118) of the language of the education and employment spheres in which she worked.

Karla's use of the personal pronoun '*we*' indicates that she was speaking not only for herself, but also on behalf of other young people who have had similar experiences living in the face of linguistic and cultural diversity in a dominant social order, that she had witnessed others facing the same struggles to access the '*open door'*. That Karla employs the structural metaphor of '*the open door*' in referring to opportunities for employment indicates that she conceptualised her experience of being denied work in hospitality and retail as not having equal access to the same '*open door*' into the labour

market as other young people in the community. This is indicative of the sense of playing catch-up that reverberated across her account, from having learned English as a second language and having an accent that distinguished her from the idealised native speakers of English (Derivry-Plard, 2011, 2013).

For Aadhil (see Excerpt 5.19), accessing what Karla termed '*the open door*' to jobs for young people meant having '*low expectations*' and engaging in volunteer work as an undergraduate.

> You have got low expectations
> Right,
> I am still an undergraduate
> I am 19
> Or 20
> Or 21,
> I am doing this,
> Because this is the pathway
> That I can go to my career.
>
> Getting that volunteering
> You do those things,
> Because you are not a graduate student
> In that time.
>
> But once you graduate from uni
> It has a bit of involvement
> From my education
> Because what I did was
> When I finished high school,
> I did a lot of things
> In terms of volunteering jobs.
>
> So, people seeing me
> What I was doing,
> They thought
> 'Yep'
> I have got that knowledge,
> That potential,
> That able to work
> In those environments.
>
> They have asked me to work
> It has a bit of involvement
> From my education,
> Because what I did
> Was when I finished high school
> I did a lot of things,
> In terms of volunteering jobs.

Excerpt 5.19 Aadhil, Interview 2, pp. 22–25

Aadhil's account of his '*pathway*' into his career reflects a sense of playing catch-up in that he set out with '*low expectations*' and engaged in a lot of volunteering roles. This suggests that he was operating in a context where he may otherwise not have had access to the opportunities that became available to him. He revealed that he purposefully engaged in unpaid volunteer work in local not-for-profit organisations with the aim of gaining experience, which he believed would equip him with the knowledge required to fulfil a range of roles in substantive employment. This suggests that he was aware that he would gain experiences though such participation, developing his capabilities while being noticed, and in turn access paid employment. This is significant because it shows that his experiences and his understandings of them came into being in relation to others; he did not experience his trajectory as an independent entity. His experiences were always connected to others in the social contexts that influenced his unfolding pathway into his career. This is an important consideration because as Aadhil explained, it was through others seeing him that that he experienced opportunities for employment. Aadhil was conscious that people seeing what he could accomplish in his volunteering created possibilities for his (future) employment.

Halima's account reveals that, for her, pathfinding in the face of her changing circumstances involved facing difficulties along the way, which is indicative of a sense of playing catch-up across her path from education-to-employment. As she reflected on her visual representation of her education-to-employment trajectory to date in the group workshop (see Excerpt 5.20, Fig. 5.2), Halima explained that she was aware of the varying influences that would impact her trajectory. In conceptualising her trajectory through a structural metaphor of a journey that included facing both positive and negative forces along the way, Halima revealed that playing catch-up involved having courage to go ahead:

> I haven't drawn myself
> Alone,
> I have myself drawn
> With the shadow,
> Means negativity.
>
> So,
> All these clouds
> And that sun
> Are on me

And giving me shine,
Light and energy.

The sun
The clouds
They are giving sky,
Those are giving energy
The courage
To just leave all the negativity
Behind myself
And just go ahead
With my future
And with positivity
And not with negativity
With pleasant thoughts.

That's giving me courage
To go ahead,
I know that
I have to achieve my goals,
And this is land
And these are some stones,
Some difficulties.

I have shown these stones
As some difficult times
And some difficulties
That I might face
In my future.

I know that
It's not going to be
Too much easy for me,
To achieve my dreams
To achieve my goals
To reach my destination
It's not going to be easy.

So, I have a bag
Or maybe a box
I have put it this side
Of the river,
It's my destination.

I have to achieve this
I have to get it,
And I have difficulties
This side of the river
I have to just cross this,
These difficulties,
To get my goals
My wishes,
My dreams,

It's all in this bag
Or maybe box.

So, I have just to pass
All things,
Now
And then
After that
The sky
Of clouds
And sun.

They are
My family members
My teachers
My friends
Who encourages me,
To work
And to study well
And to go well.
And who wishes me
A good luck,
Who help me
With everything,
They are giving me courage
And whenever I see them
I feel happy
I feel
I see
I see sun
I see these kinds of clouds,
I feel happy.

And those all give me courage,
To go ahead
And just don't care about
The problems
I will get out of that
Crossover.

Excerpt 5.20 Halima, group workshop, pp. 3–4

A sense of playing catch-up was revealed in Halima's account where she described her ability to move through her experiences, both the negative and the positive, and coordinate her pathfinding to reach her '*dreams*' despite the anticipated difficulties. She noted that this process was shaped in relation to significant people in her life. These included family members, friends, teachers, and the shadow that she does not name. In clarifying that she had drawn herself not '*alone*', but '*with the shadow*', she implied that the shadow, or the obstacles that held her back, were the experiences of being met by

others who displayed prejudicial attitudes and behaviours (described in her two individual interviews and discussed in Chapter 4).

Halima drew on a range of structural and ontological conceptual metaphors to convey her inner thoughts and feelings in relation to her education-to-employment experiences to date and explain how she made sense of her lived experiences. These included ontological metaphors such as the personification of the '*sky*', '*clouds*', and '*sun*' as her family members, teachers, and friends. These were then further conceptualised through more ontological metaphors as she described the people who were significant to her experiences across her trajectory as entities that provided substances such as '*shine*', '*light*', and '*energy*'. She conceptualised her goals, wishes, and dreams through a structural metaphor as a destination in the form of a '*bag*' or '*box*'. She used an ontological metaphor of '*stones*' as '*difficulties*' to explain that the way was not going to be easy, capturing a sense of playing catch-up. Yet, despite Halima's sense that it was going to be difficult to reach her goal of meaningful work, she remained positive that through her courage and support from others, such as family and friends, she would.

Halima emphasised the significance and influence that she attributed to the feelings that accompanied her unfolding pathfinding: '*And whenever I see them / I feel happy / And those all give me courage /To go ahead'*. This indicates that Halima's emotions had a significant influence upon her pathfinding and ability to meet the difficulties along the way that atrributed to the sense of playing catch-up she experienced. Maturana and Bunnell (1999, p. 5) describe this influence of emotions as a process through which people live change in connection to the availability of their developing knowledges and changes in their capacity for flexibility. Different emotions take people along different paths, and they live different histories according to their emotions (p. 3).

In her exploration of what bilinguals' autobiographical writings can contribute to current understandings of the relationship between bilingualism and emotion, Besemeres (2018, p. 39) asks: are specific ways of speaking conducive to particular ways of feeling? Drawing across a range of bilingual memoirs, including Eva Hoffman's (1989) *Lost in translation: A life in a new languag*e, Besemeres (2018, p. 41) suggests that when an individual uses a particular emotion word to convey their feelings, that word helps to shape that feeling. In turn, the choice of word affects how the person perceives and interprets their emotion, and hence how it is subsequently

experienced. Halima's account shows how her propensity to meet difficulties as she was pathfinding was facilitated by choosing to focus on the positive interactions, people, and forces in her life, which in turn nurtured a sense of '*courage*'.

Ibro's reflection on pursuing his employment aspirations stands in contrast to Halima's experience. Where Halima was given '*courage'* to go forward through her interactions with others, Ibro was compelled to change his dream in the face of others' discouragement. Ibro came to Australia as a refugee from Iraq in 2008 with his mother and younger brother when he was 14 years of age. At the time of the interview, Ibro was enrolled in, and was soon to commence, Foundation Studies at university. This was a step towards commencing a degree in business. For him, playing catch-up involved being told by those around him that he would not be able to achieve his dream because his English language skills were too '*low*' (see Excerpt 5.21).

I changed my dream
Because of my family,
They said like,
'It's too hard for you.'
'You cannot do it.'
Some people tell me like
'You can't do this Ibro
Because your English is so low
You can't do this.'

My friends as well,
They said,
'It's too hard,'
Then I said
'I can do it.'

But they said
'Na, you can't do it,'
I said,
'Okay I'm gonna change my mind.'

So, because other people
I changed my mind.

So, then I didn't,
Because it's my goal,
I want to be a nurse,
Because I want to help other people
And I want to share with them,
I want to care about them,
I like that.

My family
They say like
'You cannot do it
It's too hard for you.'

Then I had to change my mind
To do business now,
I couldn't do nursing
I can,
But my family
They didn't want me to be
Like a nurse.

Some people from my country,
They think like the nurse
Is for only females,
Not males.

Excerpt 5.21 Ibro, Interview 2, p. 1

Ibro's experience of pursuing his dream to become a nurse involved confronting the others' assumptions that his English was '*so low*' that he would not be able to achieve this dream. In addition, he was also met by expectations from his home culture that were based on gendered work roles in society. Ibro's initial response to the discouraging voices of family and friends was to contest their positioning of him. However, after repeatedly experiencing interactions with others who positioned him as unable to follow this dream, based on their linguistic and cultural assumptions and expectations, he changed his mind. Ibro described an ongoing internal and social struggle in his aspiration to become a nurse, but he finally yielded to the voices and expectations of his family and friends. It is essential to note that, as for each participant involved in the study, Ibro's story did not end here, as his trajectory were continuing. Ibro later indicated that he may yet pursue his dream of becoming a nurse. In his account he highlighted that other people's beliefs influenced his sense of what was possible. This had significant implications for his pathfinding across his trajectory. For Ibro, the consequence was that instead of following his dream to become a nurse, he was about to commence a business degree.

Ibro explained that he changed his plan for his career pathway in response to conversations between himself and significant people in his life, such as his family and friends. He was conscious that it was interaction with others that influenced him to change his mind: '*So, because other people, I changed my mind*'. Ibro's account connects to the conception that people live in networks of conversations, and the

possibilities and realities they live are achieved in interaction with others, in and through language (Maturana & Bunnell, 1999, p. 63). Even though he dreamed of becoming a nurse, the voices of '*others'* reverberated in his inner world; consequently, he changed his pathway into employment. Both Ibro's account (see Excerpt 5.21) and Halima's (see Excerpt 5.20) show that playing catch-up involved internalising the voices of others, which influenced their sense of what was possible in their pathways from education-to-employment. In Halima's case, through encouragement and support, playing catch-up was met with the sense that she would achieve her '*goals*' and '*wishes*', whereas Ibro, who was discouraged by others, '*changed his mind*'. This shows how the interactions that they had with others held implications for their education-to-employment pathways, influencing their sense of what was or was not possible. This illustrates the work of Phipps (2019, pp. 8–9), who explains Bakhtin was not the only one who conceptualised that people are created in dialogue with one another. Phipps draws on a Xhosa expression '*Umntu ngumtu ngaabantu'*, which translated into English means '*a person is made by other people*' to underscore that as people live their lives, who and what they do and become is achieved in relationship to others.

Throughout this section I have discussed that a sense of playing catch-up was involved in the participants' pathfinding. Playing catch-up encompassed experiences where their prior education was not recognised in Australia, which meant that they had to start from the beginning again, even if they did already have prior relevant training. Their learning and employment experiences were frequently recounted as comprising experiences in which their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge remained ignored, and this included their capacity to live, learn, and work in and between multiple languages and cultures. Instead, the focus remained upon the reality that their accent and physical appearance were different to that of the majority of dominant mainstream society, unless they were seeking work or employed in the so-called '*community sector'*. In turn, they experienced their trajectories from education-to-employment on an unequal playing field where they were not on the same point as their Australian peers and colleagues who spoke English as a first language. It is vital to note that the participants also recounted experiences in some instances of having a sense of '*advantage*'; however, this was predominantly the case in work that provided services for other migrants and refugees.

5.3 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have discussed that the participants' accounts revealed that as they lived their trajectories, they were pathfinding from education-to-employment. I have shown how their use of structural and ontological metaphors in recounting their narratives captured that they experienced their trajectories as journeys that they travelled by way of their varying and changing pathways. I have discussed that the accumulation of their experiences across their lives, and the way in which they reflected upon them in the present, influenced their current realities, as well as what they were (re)imagining for their futures in terms of education and employment.

Taken together, the participants' accounts show that pathfinding involved navigating their education-to-employment trajectories in-between their two or more languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices. Moving towards their educational and employment aspirations in a nonlinear progression, they took various pathways in '*unknown*' and changing conditions, stimulating their sense of questioning. As such, they faced uncertainty with a sense of playing catch-up in a context of linguistic and cultural diversity and disparity. In this sense, pathfinding captured how each of the participants described their trajectories as involving experiences and interactions with others that influenced and changed the direction of their education-to-employment trajectories. In sum, pathfinding was a processual development that was shaped in and by the ongoing accumulation of the intercultural exchanges that they had with others and what they came to understand in light of them. The events and related encounters with others in their social realities influenced their inner worlds. Their experiences and interactions with others were synthesised into their self-reflections and self-understandings, creating the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of their emerging trajectories and what they aspired for in their employment. In the next chapter, I explore how the participants made sense of their trajectories by facing obstacles as they were living, learning, and working, in and in-between their two or more languages and cultures.

6 Facing obstacles

'Facing obstacles' emerged in the participants' accounts where they described experiences of encountering and anticipating adversities across their education-to-employment trajectories. They characterised adversities in various word forms, including '*difficulties*', '*limitations*', '*hardships*', '*disadvantages*', and '*challenges*', as well as through structural metaphors to communicate their understandings of and meaning accorded to them, such as '*obstacles*' and '*barriers*'. In juxtaposition to adversities, their accounts also revealed experiences of opportunities. Although I focus on the obstacles, I do take note of the reality that the participants also narrated occasions of accessing opportunities that provided them with a sense of accomplishment, meaning, and purpose through which their dreams and aspirations were growing. On many occasions they described encouragement and support received from others in the community as serving an important function as they met difficult circumstances across their trajectories. Nevertheless, they described being repeatedly denied opportunities to fulfil their desire to participate in and contribute to their desired fields and roles in work or to sustain their livelihoods outside of employment 'niches' that are occupied disproportionately by migrants and refugees (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Stevenson & Baker, 2018).

Paradoxically, the participants described adversities and opportunities as being reconciled with the same response. The participants' accounts capture that they understood both as opportunities for self-reflection and for building upon their evolving knowledges that they could draw upon in their current and future roles and fields of work. Although their accounts shared experiences of opportunities, I foreground the obstacles that they described. This is because, having arrived in South Australia as refugees whose languages, cultures, and knowledges did not fit the local 'norms' or 'standards', they frequently experienced being socially positioned as what Candlin and Crichton (2011) term 'deficient'. This is important to consider, given that it is well established that those who are categorised as refugees face profound disparity in both educational and employment contexts (Baker, 2020). Each of the participants were categorised as either a 'refugee' or an 'asylum seeker', and were living, learning, and working in multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices.

Considering the inequality that these young people experienced, it is helpful to draw on the work of Weedon (1997) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), who explore questions related to language, culture, society, subjectivity, and power. Weedon, like Bourdieu and Passeron, underscores that identity is socially constructed, that is, it is constituted by the social structures in which one is situated, imposed by mainstream others. Norton & Toohey (2011) describe this process of socially constituted formation of identity as multiple and individually struggled for. They point out that recognition of the positioning of individuals that reflects the socially given and the individually struggled for nature of identity has been important in many studies of language learning (p. 418). The authors highlight that all individuals have complex identities that are continuously changing across time and space, and are constructed based on the socially given, and the individually struggled for (p. 420). The understanding that identity is socially ascribed by others and individually strived for sheds light on the way in which participants involved in the present were channelled into particular fields of employment. They frequently experienced restrictions in contributing all that they wished to through their employment, to the broader Australian society. They were constrained as to who, how, and what they could be and do.

Two primary, interrelated subthemes together constitute facing obstacles: *rising above*, and *surviving*. The first, *rising above*, emerged where the participants employed structural and what I have identified as a synthesis of ontological and orientational metaphors to convey how they experienced difficulties in education and employment, and beyond, in their broader life-worlds. For instance, their accounts captured that they conceptualised themselves metaphorically to be '*rising*' and '*flying*' as they encountered the various difficulties described. Together, these metaphors invoked a sense that the participants viewed the challenges that arose across their trajectories from above, revealing that they held a heightened capacity to reflect upon obstacles — to self-reflect, viewing obstacles as opportunities to evolve.

The participants also described themselves and their experiences through ontological metaphors related to phenomena found in the natural environment that exist orientationally or grow upwards from or above the earth's surface, such as '*seeds*', '*birds*', '*trees*', and the '*sun*'. By employing metaphors such as these, the participants conveyed that they perceived themselves as sharing qualities that are present in these phenomena. For instance, they conceived that they possessed the facility to grow

upwards, to fly above and in turn reflect upon that which resided below them, which in this instance were the various obstacles encountered in education, employment, and beyond in their broader life-worlds. Their structural, ontological, and orientational metaphorical descriptions of themselves, their experiences, and their understandings of them produced a panoramic viewpoint of their trajectories. They revealed where they positioned themselves, how others positioned them, and the way in which obstacles were often met by rising above them through self-reflection, self-belief, courage, and encouragement from others. Yet, it cannot be ignored that there were also times where the participants' accounts reflected a sense of resignation as they experienced restrictions in pursing their aspirations based on how they were interactionally received and positioned by others.

The second subtheme, *surviving*, captures how the participants described facing obstacles across their trajectories as facilitating an internal transformation. As they reflected upon encountering obstacles, they frequently described integrating those experiences into their evolving knowledges, ways of knowing, and self-understandings — their strengths and what they were capable of. What could have been perceived purely as obstructions to accessing opportunities in educational and employment contexts, they understood to be developing in them '*strength*', '*understanding*', and '*knowledge*'. They perceived meeting adversities as intrinsic to their evolving strengths, understandings, and knowledges that could be drawn upon in educational, employment, and personal life-world endeavours. In this sense, the obstacles the participants faced were not always perceived as hindrances to their success. Instead, obstacles often became a channel through which they developed their ability to live, learn, and work in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously, and to be of service to others in the community in their (aspired for) work.

In considering the theme 'facing obstacles', I address each of the subthemes, 'rising above' and 'surviving', while providing some related theoretical insights. I do this to contextualise how each participant experienced and made sense of their trajectories living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own.

6.1 Rising above

Current research has identified significant obstacles in education and in accessing employment for young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees (Pittaway et al., 2016; Stevenson & Baker, 2018). Structural barriers include learning:

- in an environment organised around the assumption of a homogenous group of learners (Ndhlovu, 2015)
- in what is for them a new language and culture (Bigelow et al., 2017)
- in a monolingual context in which their lived experience, languages, cultures, knowledges, and understandings are ignored (Ndhlovu, 2015), and
- on a linear progression throughout education into employment (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Beadle, 2015).

For people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, the unemployment rate is well above the national average, and for those who are in work, it is mostly low-status, low skilled, and precarious (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Stevenson & Baker, 2018). The participants in the present study described their education-to-employment experiences as embedded in monolingual environments. Their lived experiences, languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, and understandings were frequently ignored and rendered invisible, or in contrast, marked by these characteristics as visible 'others' in educational and employment contexts. They frequently encountered others across their trajectories who held prejudicial attitudes and behaviours; consequently, many struggled to access employment outside of what Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) term known employment 'niches'. Despite this reality, to conceptualise and convey how they responded internally to their external, socially situated circumstances, the participants described facing obstacles as rising above them. That is to say, in their accounts, the participants revealed the internal reflective and self-reflective processes in their inner worlds as they faced obstacles of being negatively received in social exchanges. In turn, these internal processes, which occurred in response to their relational experiences, influenced how they came to understand themselves, others, and the wider world around them.

Roland, reflecting upon the image he had created (see Excerpt 6.1, Fig. 6.1) in response to the invitation to express his education-to-employment experiences to date, narrated a sense of rising above. At the time of the study, Roland was working casually as a

residential care worker. On being invited to reflect upon his education-to-employment experiences to date, Roland drew an image, using lead pencil on white paper, depicting what he described as a cob of corn and a seed. Drawing on this metaphor, which I have identified as being both ontological and orientational, Roland described how he viewed himself in his education-to-employment experiences:

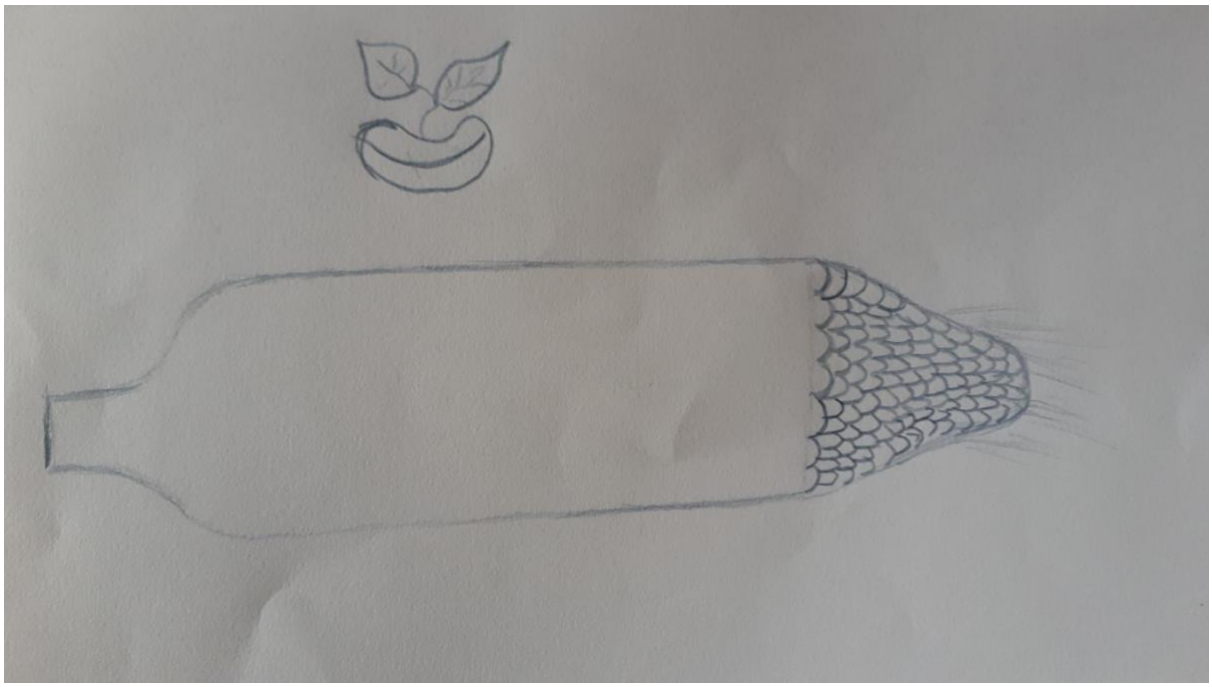

Figure 6.1: Roland Interview 1

> My life is like a seed,
> Everywhere you plant me
> Means like I can come up and rise,
> No matter where you are going to throw me
> One day I will be up.
>
> **Excerpt 6.1 Roland, Interview 1, p. 21**

Roland's account captured that he conceptualised himself as a '*seed*'. His reflection on his visual representation captures that he held a sense of rising above the various obstacles he faced as he was growing in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity. Roland's self-conceptualisation of his life being like a '*seed*' included that no matter where he was planted, he '*can come up and rise*', reveals an orientational dimension to his metaphor. Through his seed metaphor, Roland highlighted his self-belief that he was able to adapt to any educational or employment environment into which he was

inserted: '*No matter where you are going to throw me, one day I will be up*'. Roland's use of the word '*throw*' suggests a randomness or an uncontrollable nature to his educational and employment circumstances. This suggests that although he knew that he did not have control over the difficult conditions of his education-to-employment trajectory, he saw himself as self-equipped to rise above them, no matter what his circumstances were.

Roland's orientational seed metaphor conveys that he conceptualised himself as being planted in the panorama of his life. As a seed, he is rooted in the landscape, and will push through the earth's surface and rise above it. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) and Kövecses (2010) point out, upward orientation tends to go together with positive evaluation and downward orientation with a negative one. As I touched upon in Chapter 3: Methodology, speakers of English and other languages tend to conceptualise 'up' as more and 'down' as less. 'High status', for instance, is 'up' and 'low status' is 'down', 'good' is 'up' and 'bad' is 'down'; thus, users of English say things such as 'she will rise to the top' and 'she fell in status' (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Roland's account captures that he saw himself as rising above difficult circumstances or events that were situated downward, or below him, while he was moving upward, above them, towards his success.

Roland's ontological and orientational metaphor of viewing his life and himself as a '*seed*' hints at a holistic sense of his trajectory; he did not render his education-to-employment experiences as discrete from the broader setting of his life. Even though I asked questions specifically related to his education-to-employment trajectory, he never divorced his broader life-world from his education-to-employment experiences. Each dimension of his life influenced the others. This is important, because the participants' education, employment, and broader life-world experiences, together, shaped their trajectories, which were achieved in relation to the circumstances of their lives and the contexts in which they were embedded. As Roland continued (see Excerpt 6.2), he reiterated his sense of rising above:

> I used to define myself in two ways
> That's what I believe in myself,
> I know people who have different beliefs.
>
> I am like a seed
> Any place that I can go,

I know how to live the life
And how to make the other people happy,
'Cos the seed anywhere you're going to plant,
It is going to go up,
And its gonna get the fruit.

I always define myself like an eagle,
you know
It's always the eagle,
Just fly high
That's how I am
I fly high.

Excerpt 6.2 Roland, Interview 1, pp. 21–22

For Roland, rising above was connected to how he '*defined'* himself. In defining himself as a '*seed*' and as an '*eagle*', Roland was drawing upon ontological metaphors involving personification with an overlap of orientational metaphor. By employing these two ontological metaphors, he revealed that he perceived himself to have the qualities characteristic of a '*seed*' and an '*eagle*'. In doing so, he also orientated himself from above in the panorama of his trajectory of lived experiences related to education and employment. In other words, as a '*seed*' he was growing above the earth's surface and he would '*go up*' and '*get the fruit*', and as an '*eagle*' he had the ability to '*fly high*', located in his experiences from above. In conceptualising himself as an '*eagle*', Roland's account suggests that he held a bird's-eye view or panoramic perspective, locating him above the obstacles that existed below him upon the earth's surface. His words reveal that he held an understanding that he would continue rising above despite any obstacles, unfavourable experiences, or interactions that he has had, or may have across his trajectory. Roland's self-definition indicates a heighted sense of self-awareness. His account reveals that he did not merely experience his education-to-employment trajectory, but he was also observing himself within in it. His account shows that rising above occurred in his inner world in response to the obstacles endured in the external circumstances and social contexts of his educational and employment experiences, as well as his broader life-world. Roland did not explicitly name the obstacles in this reflection. However, what he did articulate was his inner sense of self, how he defined himself, and the meaning that he accorded his experiences. He hinted at how he understood others perceived him, where he said, *'I know people who have different beliefs'*. These words point to a consciousness of how he was responded to by others in interaction. They capture his self-awareness, his capacity for self-reflection,

and reflexivity, as he added, '*I know how to live the life, and how to make the other people happy*'. This statement suggest that he was cognisant of how he was being perceived by others, whether positively or negatively, and recognised that he could adjust himself in social interaction in a way that pleased others.

It should be noted that, although Roland saw himself as rising above in facing obstacles — in this instance, in the form of those who did not view him in a positive light — he remained in tenuous employment. At the time of the study, he was employed in residential and individual care work and dreamed of one day becoming either a social worker or a registered nurse. Excerpt 6.3 from Roland's account highlights, his external social reality of facing obstacles in the form of struggling to access to paid employment in his initial years of resettling into Australia. When asked about his experiences of transitioning from education-to-employment, he described his willingness to take on '*any type of job*' while he was in high school.

> At that time
> I was just looking for any type of job,
> I didn't even care.
>
> As long as I had that work
> And supporting people back home
> That was my aim.
>
> But at that time,
> I was looking for factory work,
> I didn't get a work.
>
> I started working,
> It was 2015 or 2016,
> 'Cos through high school,
> I was looking for work
> But I didn't get it.
>
> That chance,
> Every time like,
> I send my resume
> I've been
> Declined,
> Declined,
> Declined.
>
> Until,
> I went to Workskills
> And they had some program,
> That was running around,
> And I end up getting a job through Ingham,

Ingham chicken factory.

From there I get a job
And I was hard working,
Work,
Work,
Work hard.

Excerpt 6.3 Roland, Interview 1, pp. 16–18

Despite Roland's willingness to work, he was persistently '*declined*' access to employment in his early years of relocation to Australia. Roland indicated his sense of desperation, through the use of repetition, recalling that he was prepared to do '*any type of job*' as a means to secure a livelihood for himself and for his family, for '*people back home*'. It has been identified in current research and literature that financially supporting people from one's country of origin, as well as family in Australia, is a common experience of refugees (Hartley et al., 2018). It was through Roland's engagement with Workskills, an employment services provider, that he eventually secured work in an abattoir. Abattoir work, as well as aged residential and individual support care work, have been identified as low-income employment niches that are disproportionately occupied by refugees (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). These are niches where labour shortages exist (Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018). Roland's account reflects the reality that he was both prepared for and desired to work, yet he struggled to access the '*chance*' to do so, particularly outside of fields where labour shortages exist in the Australian workforce (Charlesworth & Isherwood, 2020; Colic-Peisker, 2009; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Although Roland had not yet secured access to roles outside of these fields of work that offer little in terms of occupational standing or upward mobility, he was rising above his obstacles. His sense of rising above was located in the fact that he struggled to access employment outside of these fields, yet remained optimistic. Roland's aim was to work, and he succeeded in this goal, and from there he saw himself as '…*hard working / Work / Work / Work hard*'.

Roland's sense of rising above reverberated across his trajectory as he reflected on finally succeeding in securing work in an abattoir in Excerpt 6.4. Once he had secured this employment, Roland explained that he was '*working hard*' in his position, yet, owing to what Roland referred to as his supervisor's '*jealousy*', he was fired:

And from there,
The supervisor was jealous,
And he went to say something through our manager,
Like I did this and that,
which I didn't do it.

Then the manager
he decided to fire me.
And I asked like,
'What's the reason? What I have done?'
Then they didn't say.

'No, just go.
And if you want to apply again, after three months.'
Like it's okay,
Then I decided to like,
Then I left job like that.

The experience was good,
'Cos me,
If you push me away from the work
It doesn't mean I want it back.

Like 'na',
I know that I am a good,
Regardless of what happened
I just take that in a positive way
And know like I am stronger than that.

'Cos the way I was yesterday
And today,
I am totally different,
So, it means
I have to push myself so hard
And then from there,
I become a better person.

Excerpt 6.4 Roland, Interview 1, pp. 15–18

Roland's account revealed rising above meant pushing himself hard in the face of obstacles, which in this case was being fired. His words illustrate the effortful striving he needed to apply in facing obstacles across trajectory. Initially, he was willing, and actively striving to '*push*' himself to access employment. Roland explained that he chose to perceive his experience of being fired through an optimistic lens, as he said, '*I just take that in a positive way, and know like I am stronger than that*', which conveys his sense of rising above in the face of adversity. Roland saw his experience of being fired as an opportunity for self-reflection, and to respond reflexively, which contributed to the development of his strength and sense of self(knowledge), as he pointed out, '*Cos*

the way I was yesterday / And today / I am totally different'. This reflection shows that Roland integrated his experiences and reflections on them into his evolving sense of self, revealing the significant role of self-reflection and reflexivity involved in 'rising above'. He considered who he was in the past, who he was now, and who he was becoming, in relation to his experiences of facing obstacles such as being repeatedly denied opportunities to work and subsequently being fired once he was in employment. The evolving sense of self over time captured in Roland's account, connects to the work of Ricœur (1984, 1984/2012), who conceived that people employ narrative not only to represent themselves, but also to bring a sense of order to their lives, which are reconstructed across time in light of each new experience.

Roland emphasised 'rising above' in relationship to accessing and maintaining ongoing employment in his initial years of resettling in Australia. The same concept emerged in Aadhil's recounting of the struggles he had in accessing higher education in Australia because he was categorised as an 'asylum seeker' (see Excerpt 6.5). At the time of the interview Aadhil was working part-time as a social worker in a local high school, working predominantly with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and their families. He was also in his second year of a double degree in a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and International Relations. He had worked in various roles with diverse responsibilities, ranging from working in a fast food chain to working in administration at a migration firm.

In his first interview, Aadhil revealed (see Excerpt 6.5) that as an asylum seeker in Australia, he did not have access to financial support to pursue education after he turned 18 years of age, which was a significant obstacle for him.

In employing reported speech, Aadhil was what Riessman (2008) refers to as enacting the voices of others, in this case the elderly couple in his narrative. In doing so, Aadhil revealed how he was positioned by them, and how he was situated in the broader, inequitable social context of the experience being recounted. Aadhil was denied the right to government support that his counterparts in the wider community had access to. He wove his story in a way that conveyed and contextualised his experience of facing obstacles presented by government policy and practice that denies people who are seeking asylum equal access to tertiary education. His account revealed the wider social

and structural inequalities that he faced across his trajectory, along with many others who are categorised as asylum seekers in Australian society.

I don't have any assistance from the government
Doing tertiary education,
Finishing high school.

Luckily,
I found a private sponsor,
A couple
It was one of my volunteering stuff that I did.

It was 400 people in the room
I had a speech,
I said about what asylum seekers are facing,
It was refugee week.

I said,
'Well, this is how the obstacles
This is what they are facing,
This is what is happening right
And it's injustice.'

I came and sat down,
I sat next to
Elderly couple
And then we had a small chat
And the guy said,
'Oh, can I have your email?'
And I'm like
'Oh, why?
Why would you need it?'
But at the same time not to be rude
I said,
'Yeah sure.'

2-3 weeks later
They invite me saying
'Hi, we want to catch-up with you,'
I was quite shocked
But like yeah
Let's go and meet them.

I said
'That's fine.'
We had a chat
They asked me a lot of questions,
The same thing happened I think,
Two or three weeks later
And the same
I went to them
A deeper conversation.

I think the fifth time
They said,
'We have observed
That you really want to go
And do education,
If you want to go to uni,
We are happy to pay your fee,'
Which is an international fee
'We are happy to support you
Until you finish uni.'

'Well, do you know how much it costs?'
They said,
'Yes, we have done the study,
We know how much it costs
And we are happy for you to go,
And we can pay for your tuition fees.'
I am like,
'Are you serious?'
And they said,
'Yes,'
I couldn't believe they said,
'Yes'.

I think I am the first person
In my family to go to high school
Or to come to uni,
So, kind of break the cycle.

Excerpt 6.5 Aadhil, Interview 1, pp. 5–13

Education is a basic human right (UNHCR, 2020), a right that Aadhil, like many others, was denied. Yet, his reflections captured that he was 'rising above' as he met this obstacle; he persevered. He continued to involve himself in and contribute to the wider Australian community. He did volunteer work for numerous not-for-profit organisations, including guest-speaking at events engaging with and contributing to the community in which he did not experience the social justice of having equal access to education. 'Rising above' in this way was the catalyst for his interactions with the elderly couple who became his higher education sponsors.

Aadhil's account demonstrates that he made sense of and accorded meaning to his experiences across time (Ricœur, 1984/2012). His encounter and ongoing interactions with the elderly couple were a significant turning point, or what Riessman (2008, p. 84), citing Labov (1972), calls a complicating action. In composing his narrative by weaving in an 'end point' (Ricœur, 1984/2012), which was '*breaking*' the intergenerational '*cycle*' of his family's not having access to education, Aadhil transformed a string of events into one 'meaningful whole'. As Ricœur (1984/2012) points out, the connecting act of assembling events in such a way that the story is both followable and meaningful affords a deep understanding of how Aadhil made sense of his experiences across time, and the personal significance that they held for him. The philanthropy of the elderly couple in his narrative highlights that the interactions that he had with others profoundly shaped his trajectory. In this instance, his exchanges with the elderly couple enabled him to surmount an immense obstacle — accessing the financial means to pursue his dream to complete a university degree and to '*break the cycle*' of poverty through education.

Aadhil highlighted the positive encounters with others as helping him to rise above obstacles faced in the form of government policy that denied him equal access to education. For Latif (see Excerpt 6.6), rising above was related to facing obstacles in the guise of negative comments made by others about him and his family on an online social media platform.

> I can remember
> We had an interview
> With the ex-premier,
> With Jay Wetherill,
> Here at the café

That went online.

I was reading the comments
Nine out of ten were negative,
But that didn't mean no one liked it.

I can say,
Maybe thousands of people watched that video,
Nine hundred of them loved it,
And the other hundred people who didn't
They started writing the negative.

No one was talking positive
Because the positive people
Think they don't need to say
'I agree with this'.

Excerpt 6.6 Latif, Interview 1, pp. 16–18

Latif's account of others' responses to the interview his family had with the then Premier of South Australia about their café reveals that the obstacles they faced were prejudicial attitudes and behaviours. Latif and his family were invited to do the interview because the café was doing well, and the local government wanted to showcase the positive contribution that the family were making in the community after arriving in South Australian from Iran as refugees. He reconciled this experience with a sense of rising above, where he expressed that despite the overwhelming percentage of negative comments, the actual instance of positive responses was greater — '*I was reading the comments / Nine out of ten were negative / But that didn't mean no one liked it*'. Latif chose to see the prejudice of others that pervaded the online responses to the interview as not being the only views of the wider Australian audience. His asylum seeker categorisation created significant obstacles for him in the form of prejudicial responses to the interview. His narrative not only captured his own experiences of rising above as he met such obstacles, but also revealed the reality that refugees and asylum seekers are frequently faced with prejudicial attitudes and behaviours that circulate in social and political domains, on television and online social media platforms (White, 2017, pp. 1145–1147).

Even though Latif had experienced such negative reactions from others in the wider Australian society, through reflection and reflexivity he chose to believe that those who held positive attitudes were more prevalent. In other words, he reflected on experiences such as that described in Excerpt 6.6 as less prevalent or impactful than the positive

experiences he and his family had with others in the wider community — experiences that inspired them to keep '*working harder*' (see Excerpt 6.7). This understanding is captured in Latif's response to questions in his second interview about how he was received at work in the cafe, as he emphasised the impact of acceptance and being welcomed by others:

> So, how did the community react[ed]?
> It was very friendly
> And accepting
> And welcoming.
>
> That was one of the reasons
> We keep doing the business,
> Like keep working harder.
>
> When you see people,
> Like you,
> People enjoy coming here,
> Gets out
> And has a chat with you
> All of those welcoming,
> You see the positive.
>
> Most of our customers
> They love us,
> They love my dad,
> They love my mum.
>
> It's very little things
> But that changes so many things,
> So many barriers.
>
> Like when you are here as a migrant,
> As a newcomer[s],
> As like a person who is new here,
> Doesn't know anyone,
> When you see those kinds of reactions,
> 'Wow'
> People are accepting you,
> This is a very big impact.
>
> **Excerpt 6.7 Latif, Interview 2, pp. 18–19**

In giving his account of being accepted and welcomed by the Australian community, Latif employed the personal pronoun '*we*', indicating that he was speaking not only on behalf of himself, but also his family. He referred to me, the interviewer, as '*people, like you*', aligning me with the customers of the café, whom he signalled by employing the personal pronoun '*they*'. Partway through this excerpt Latif made a subtle shift in

personal pronouns from '*we*' to the generalised third person '*you*', suggesting that he held an understanding that his reflections on experiences of being '*accepted*' and '*welcomed*' were shared with other '*newcomers*'. Latif stressed the '*big impact*' that such interactions had, highlighting that receiving positive reactions from the community '*changes so many things*, *so many barriers'*. The barriers that he and his family had experienced, such as negative comments, were alleviated by being accepted and welcomed, fostering their motivation to work harder — *'That was one of the reasons / We keep doing the business / Like keep working harder'*. Latif's emphasis on the '*love*' that the café customers had for his parents reveals the significant role of emotions in shaping his employment experiences. In this instance, the sense of love that his family received from their customers motivated them to keep working to contribute to the community in which they were seeking and receiving acceptance and belonging. This captures a sense of social reciprocity. That is, receiving a sense of '*love*' promotes their desire to '*keep doing the business*' and helps them to continue rising above the obstacles, or what Latif termed '*barriers*', such as encountering discrimination related to being an asylum seeker.

In the group workshop Halima underscores the role of emotions in the development of her experiences of rising above, echoing the significance of the sentiment of 'love' that Latif emphasised. Similar to Latif's experience, Halima's account (see Excerpt 6.8, Fig. 6.2;) shows that a sense of rising above emerged in choosing to focus on the positive encounters with others. Rather than the obstacles they encountered, including frequent interactions with people who held prejudicial views and displayed discriminatory behaviours, Halima and Latif chose to focus on instances where they were accepted. When invited to express her education-to-employment experiences visually, Halima created an image using acrylic paints on white paper. In reflecting on her pre-verbal expression, Halima underscored that she was able to surmount the difficult circumstances of her educational and employment experiences because of the '*love*' and '*peace*' that arose in her interactions with her loved ones.



Figure 6.2: Halima, group workshop

The white colour is me
And the black colour
It has been known as a symbol
Of sorrows,
And all difficulties.

So, it's around me
And you can see that here,
It's dark
And it's getting lighter
And lighter
And lighter,
Here there is no colour of black.

So, it's any difficulty
Any problem that I had,
It was dark
But it has been coming slowly
To an end.

It has come
It is to an end
And there is love,
Peace and my friends.

Get to these three colours,
As my friends,
Family and my support,
At school has been encouraging me,
Coming out of this circle
And this red here is showing love.

I am trying to explain that love,
Love and positivity
That's more,
More valuable
And more positive
Than sorrows and problems.

So, here these three colours
That's showing my supports
My family members,
My friends,
All teachers and other help,
Supporters,
Who have been encourages me.

And it's all family members,
All three colours,
With red colour
And white colour
Coming together
Heading together.

And stars flying
And it changes in this one
Which is again me,
Good wishes and good lucks
From my family members
And friends
And trying to fly
And it's the end of the day.

There are stars in the sky
I am very near to all those dreams
And wishes that I have,
That I can,
That I think,
That I can.

And I am going towards it,
And I am getting it.

This black colour
Is showing all that I made it for,
Everything in my life,
Whether that's employment
Or whether that's for education.

This red is love,
Has come out as peace,
As my success in my education.

Excerpt 6.8 Halima, group workshop, pp. 16–17

Halima drew upon an aggregation of structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors to portray her education-to-employment trajectory to date. Taken together they portray

her sense of rising above '*any difficulty*' or '*problem*' that she had faced. For instance, Halima portrayed both herself and the obstacles she met as colours in an illustration of ontological metaphors — '*the white colour is me*' and the '*sorrows*' and '*difficulties*' as '*the black colour*'. By employing colour to convey how she conceptualised her experiences Halima revealed that the black was becoming less prevalent in her life: '*And it's getting lighter / And lighter / And lighter*'. She revealed that it was the white — herself — that was becoming more prominent than the difficulties she experienced. Using a structural metaphor, Halima explained that her '*dreams*' and '*wishes*' were '*stars*', located above her representation of the panorama of her trajectory. The fact that the stars — her '*dreams*' and '*wishes*' — were located high above her reveals that she was also employing an orientational metaphor, as her goals and dreams were positioned high above her. She clarified, '*There are stars in the sky / I am very near to all those dreams / And wishes that I have / And I am going towards it*'. She described her educational and employment '*dreams*' and '*wishes*' as being above her as she was *'trying to fly*' towards them. This is revealing of a sense of rising above. It involved effort on her part as she reached upwards towards the '*stars*', which were positioned above her. Reaching or shooting for the stars is a structural metaphor frequently employed by speakers of English to conceptualise experiences of striving to reach one's highest hopes and dreams. Engaging this metaphor denotes that Halima viewed herself as having high or ambitious dreams, which she sensed she would reach. As she explained, '*There are stars in the sky / I am very near to all those dreams / And wishes that I have / That I can / That I think / That I can*'.

Halima's ontological metaphorical descriptions, captured in her use of colour to convey herself and her emotions, highlight the significance of the internal thoughts and feelings that arose in response to being encouraged, supported, and positively received. It was experiences of such interactions with others that prompted a sense of '*love*' and played a pivotal role in rising above her difficulties. When she defined the red in her image as '*love*', she reiterated that '*encouragement*' and '*support*' from others fostered feelings of '*love*' and '*positivity*' that enabled her to rise above as she met '*sorrow*' and '*difficulties*'. In the face of obstacles such as prejudice as she moved towards her educational success, Halima emphasised that '*love*' was more influential than '*sorrow*'. This suggests that for her, like Latif, facing obstacles involved focusing on the '*love*'

experienced in interaction with others. This highlights the profound force of emotions across their trajectories.

Taking a psychological constructionist approach and echoing the work of applied linguists such as Besemeres (2018) and Wierzbicka (2009), other researchers – Lindquist, MacCormack & Shablack (2015) and Lindquist, Satpute & Gendronc (2015) — highlight the influence of language upon emotional experience. The idea here is that the language individuals employ to conceptualise or to speak about their experiences influences their emotional responses to their them, including their realities and inner worlds. As Besemeres (2018), like Wierzbicka (2009) argues, the connection between language and emotional experience goes further still. Mapping emotional experience based solely on English language terms neglects the variable nature of emotion across languages and cultures.

The fact that different languages and cultures have variable emotional concepts available to speakers of a given language (Besemeres, 2018; Wierzbicka, 2009) points to the reality that the language individuals apply to their emotions, or which they employ in reflecting upon them, influences how they experience and understand them. For instance, Besemeres (2018) highlights the influence of language upon cultural norms in expressing and experiencing emotion. She highlights that the way in which one moves between languages and cultures in everyday life is not simply a verbal adaptation but also a moving between significantly different conceptual and emotional worlds.

Wierzbicka (2009, p. 3) uses an example of semantic differences between English and Russian to explain this reality. She points out that Russian does not have an exact equivalent of the English word ‘sad’, although it has two words usually translated into English as ‘sad’, each with a somewhat different meaning. Language is typically understood to depict human emotions; however, language does not only convey people’s embodied sensations and their emotional perceptions of and reactions to experiences. Rather, as Wierzbicka recognises, it shapes how they actually experience their emotions (Lindquist, Satpute, & Gendronc, 2015; Lindquist, MacCormack, & Shablack, 2015). Taking this understanding that language guides how people experience their emotions and their related experiences a step further, Maturana and Bunnell (1999) highlight how emotions concentrate people’s attention, thus shaping the particular paths

they take, modulating their (in)action. This shaping force of emotions is captured in the participants' accounts. For example, for Halima and Latif, it was through emotions such as '*love*' that they experienced a sense of rising above, as they described consciously choosing to focus on the positive experiences and interactions they had had, as well as those that they imagined and anticipated in the future.

As Lindquist, Satpute, and Gendronc (2015) and Lindquist, MacCormack, & Shablack (2015) consider, language supports people to acquire conceptual knowledge and then use it to make meaning of their experiences and perceptions. Those authors not only point to the role of language in 'emotion concept' acquisition, but also, how language shapes emotional experiences and perceptions. Simply put, language structures how people experience their emotional world, and this is accomplished over time through binding emotion concepts available in their languages to their bodily/internal experiences and sensations (Lindquist, Satpute, & Gendronc, 2015). In turn, this dynamic between language concepts, or categories of language, shape the ongoing processing of sensory information from the body and the world to create emotional experiences and perceptions (Lindquist, MacCormack, & Shablack, 2015). This is crucial to consider, because even though Halima and Latif reported facing obstacles in the form of prejudicial attitudes and others' behaviours in interaction, it was through reflection and reflexivity that they determinedly chose to rise above such encounters. It was through drawing upon positive interactions with others in which the emotion of 'love' arose that they experienced a sense of rising above, even though such social exchanges may have been less prevalent than the number of prejudiced sentiments encountered.

In her first interview, Halima gave an account of the role of '*encouragement*' from others in her educational experiences to date, and in pursuing her employment aspirations for the future (see Excerpt 6.9). For her, learning in an additional language in an unfamiliar culture and society was '*not easy*'. Halima underscored the vital role of others in facilitating in her a sense of rising above the obstacles that she confronted along the way, including learning and pursuing her educational and employment aspirations in an environment where everything was '*hard*'. On being invited to reflect upon her education-to-employment experiences, Halima employed lead pencil on white paper (see Fig. 6.3), depicting two figures that she explained represented herself and family members who were *'supporting*' her to follow her dreams and to achieve them.

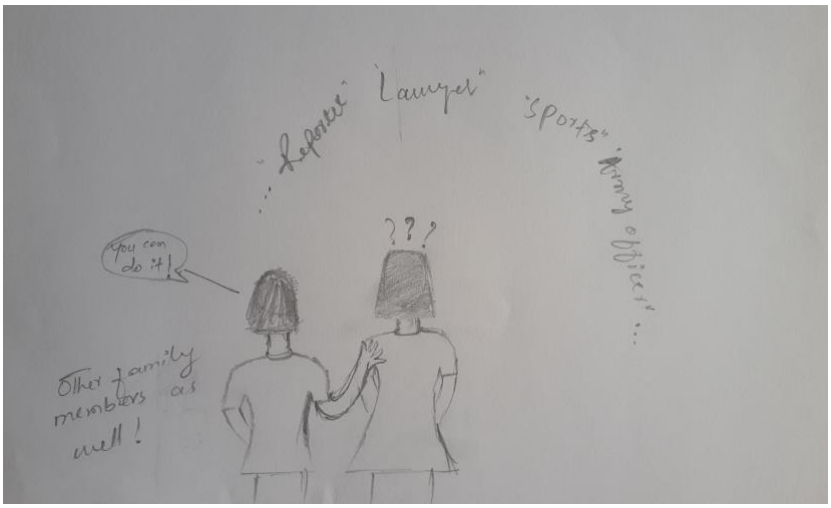

Figure 6.3: Halima, Interview 1

This is me,
Thinking
What to do?

And this is my mother,
Who is putting her hands
On behalf of my other family
members,
Putting her hands on my shoulder
And making me relax
And making me understand,
You can do it,
You can.

They really support me
And to know
That I have them,
Supporting me
In anything.

If I am doing sports,
If I am studying,
If I am thinking of doing law
Or if I am thinking about being a
reporter,
They always say that,
'Do what you want'
And,
'Do what you are interested in.'

So that's,
For following the hands,
I'm sad,
That figure
Is making me understand.

It's okay,
It's hard,
Everything is hard
But you can do it,
It's never give up.

That figure is encouragement,
Like that hand on my shoulder
That's encouraging me
To follow my vision,
To follow my dreams
And to achieve them.

It gives me self-confidence,
It gives me belief,
To do that
To walk on that track
And to go
And follow my dreams
Achieve my goals.

Excerpt 6.9 Halima, Interview 1, pp. 12–14

Halima emphasised the presence of her mother and wider family across her trajectory as giving her confidence and self-belief to be able to pursue her dreams in a context where

'*everything is hard*'. This reflection on her visual representation captures the influence of being supported and receiving '*encouragement*' from others in helping her to access a sense of rising above. Through encouragement she relaxed and came to her understanding that she could achieve all that she wished to even though '*it's hard*'. Halima described the emergence of emotions such as sadness that arose as she pursued her '*dreams*'. At the time, Halima was partway through Year 11 and aspiring to go to university to study either law, journalism, or a career in sports, and had not yet decided which path to take. With encouragement and support, she gained confidence and consequently the sense that she could rise above any obstacles, such as the uncertainty of her education-to-employment pathway; and experiences of sadness, discrimination, and learning in the context of an unfamiliar language and culture. She accessed a sense that she could '*walk on that track*' and '*achieve*' her '*goals*'.

In contrast to Halima, who described drawing on the encouragement and support of her family to rise above her difficulties, Aadhil's account shows that he was self-motivating. In his first interview (see Excerpt 6.10), Aadhil also described encountering challenges in learning and pursuing his aspirations in the context of what was, for him, an additional language amongst those who held prejudicial attitudes. As he reflected upon his trajectory, which included a wide range of employment experiences as well as his dream of working for the United Nations, Aadhil described facing obstacles in the form of what he called '*language issues*'. He revealed that he met such '*issues*' with a sense of rising above, as he did not think such obstacles were a barrier to his educational and employment success:

> Even though I've got a lot of language issues,
> Like you know writing
> And reading books,
> Things like that
> I'm getting better,
> But that's an obstacle for me
> But I can
> I don't think that can stop me.
>
> **Excerpt 6.10 Interview 1, p. 15**

Aadhil's trajectory, like that of each of the participants involved in this study, involved learning to speak, write, and read in English, which they described in the previous chapter as playing catch-up. Aadhil described this reality as an '*obstacle*', and this has previously been established in current research to be the case for migrants and refugees.

For instance, research within the Australian context has established that limited English and literacy has been identified as a significant obstacle for many humanitarian migrants in the Australian labour market (Beadle, 2015; Sherrell, 2017). Although Aadhil experienced what he called '*language issues*', he revealed that in pursuing his dream to work for the United Nations he was rising above this '*obstacle*': '*I don't think that can stop me*'. This suggests that his self-belief enabled him to continue pursuing his dream even though there were significant obstacles along the way. Those obstacles would not stop him from achieving his aspirations, which included breaking the cycle of limited education that his family had experienced intergenerationally, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Mya's account (see Excerpt 6.11) reveals that for her, obstacles were not only associated with the challenge of learning in a new linguistic, cultural, and social context, but also with difficulties in her home life, including struggling to make ends meet. Mya came to Australia in 2014 by herself as a refugee from Sierra Leone at 18 years of age. At the time of the interview, Mya was in permanent, part-time paid work as a residential aged care worker. In giving her account of her educational experiences Mya disclosed that her home life during Years 11 and 12 was fraught with difficulty. She struggled, yet it was through encouragement and support from others that she was able to meet the obstacles she faced, including financial adversity. She described her experiences of doing Year 12, looking for a house, and doing Certificate III and IV in Community Services and Disability simultaneously, at a time in her life when *'everything was full-on*':

> Tough
> Really hard
> I always cried every day.
>
> Sometimes,
> Some friends encourage me,
> It came to a time where,
> I was always absent at school,
> I was always absent,
> It was really tough for me.
>
> There's a teacher,
> The coordinator for the teachers,
> She always call me
> To make sure,
> She check on me,
> She always tell me to

‘Stand up’.
She always tell me to
‘Get over all the challenges’
That I have been through,
And make sure I finish my Year 12.
Because it got to a time
Where I was thinking of dropping from school,
Looking for any job
Because it was too hard for me.

It was very hard
Even to have a food,
Before I used to beg from places
And some social workers as well,
They always make sure I am in school
I finished Year 12.

Excerpt 6.11 Mya, Interview 1, p. 6

In reflecting on her time in education, Mya emphasised, repeatedly, that it was really ‘*tough*’ and that she struggled to attend school at the time. Owing to the challenges she faced, including struggling to afford food, which she needed to seek from charity, and difficulties in her home life, Mya was attending school only sporadically. It was the encouragement of friends, a teacher, and social workers that enabled her to access a sense of rising above in facing these obstacles — what she termed ‘*challenges*’ — to complete Year 12. Mya’s account of getting ‘*over all the challenges*’ draws upon orientational metaphors to conceptualise and convey her experiences. The challenges she experienced were located downwards and her success upwards, something Mya underscored where she narrated the voice of her teacher, who ‘*…always tell me to / “Stand up”/ She always tell me to / “Get over all the challenges”* ’. To stand up is to be in an upward motion; to get over something is to be above something that is below. Mya’s account captures her sense of rising above and the powerful influence of her teacher’s encouraging voice.

Mya’s words captured her desire and her need to earn a living to support herself, revealing a sense of desperation and destitution. They resonate with Roland’s account (see Excerpt 6.3) where he said, ‘*I was just looking for any type of job, I didn’t even care*’. Mya was also prepared to do ‘*any job*’. Consistent with Riessman’s (2008) understanding of the function of a reenactment in narrative construction, Mya reported what her teacher said, and revealing not only what was going on at the time, but also how she was received and supported by her teacher. Mya’s words reveal how her

interactions with her teacher influenced her educational experiences and outcomes, how she made sense of her those experiences as they happened, and how she understood and made sense of them in the moment of narration. As such, Mya's narrative captures the significant impact of the support and encouragement she received from her teacher, demonstrating the critical role that others played in helping her to access a sense of rising above in experiences involving obstacles.

Together, the accounts of Mya, Halima, and Latif discussed throughout this chapter demonstrate the powerful role of encouragement from family, teachers, and other people in the community, such as friends, and social workers, in their experiences of facing obstacles. Illustrated through their accounts is the shaping force of '*encouragement*', helping them to meet the various obstacles across their education-to-employment trajectories with a sense of rising above. For some (e.g., Mya and Roland), obstacles came in the form of economic hardship and struggling to find employment, whereas for others (e.g., Aadhil, Latif, and Halima), they were related to struggling to learn in an unfamiliar language and culture in a context where they frequently experienced discrimination based on linguistic and cultural difference. Yet, in each case, despite the nature of the obstacle, it was through drawing on their positive encounters, such as being encouraged, and the related emotions that arose within them, that they were able to achieve their sense of rising above. As Mya continued to reflect upon her experience of completing Year 12 (see Excerpt 6.12), she reiterated that the encouragement of others had a fundamental impact on her capacity to rise above obstacles that occurred across her trajectory:

> Because if not for the encouragement
> And also,
> If not for me finishing my education
> Because I am still going up,
> If not for me finishing Year 12,
> I don't think I can have a job
> Because they will ask you,
> 'What level of education you have?'
> To list them when you are applying for a job.
>
> **Excerpt 6.12 Mya, Interview 1, p. 21**

Importantly, for Mya, it was through encouragement that she believed she was able to complete Year 12, which she perceived as fundamental to her accessing employment at all. Mya's words captured a sense of rising above in her use of an orientational

metaphor — '*Because I am still going up*' — to define how she understood herself and her education-to-employment experiences. Because the ground is perceived in human experience as downward and the sky as upward, Mya's account reveals that she made sense of her experiences of successfully accomplishing Year 12 and beyond into higher education metaphorically as rising above. Mya's account echoes the orientational metaphor located in Roland's account earlier in this section, which has reverberated throughout the participants' accounts. That is, the sense that upward orientation is conceptualised with a positive connotation, and downward orientation with a negative connotation. Mya's use of the metaphor '*going up*' to describe her experiences captures her understanding of following her aspirations as reaching towards something above her. Her sense of rising above correlates to that which emerged in the accounts of Halima and Roland. Halima described flying towards her '*dreams*' and '*wishes*' that were located high above her and Roland reiterated '*Just fly high / That's how I am / I fly high*'. Where Halima and Roland described themselves as flying, Mya, employing the metaphor '*going up*', also situated herself in the panorama of her trajectory as rising above the challenges that had surfaced in her experiences. Not only did Mya see herself as surmounting immense challenges in and out of education, but she also considered that, '*If not for me finishing Year 12, I don't think I can have a job*', denoting that it was through her education that she was able to be '*going up*'. Mya's words underscore the high value that she placed on education and the role that it played in rising above her obstacles, as she explained that it was through her educational successes that she was able to access employment at all.

The excerpts throughout this section have illuminated how the participants' self-understandings, and what they perceived was possible for themselves and their education-to-employment trajectories, emerged in relationship to others. How they were received in social exchanges influenced how they saw themselves and what was possible for them in terms of their education and employment prospects. The various obstacles that they experienced across their trajectories included:

- struggles in living, learning, and working in what was for them an additional language in an unfamiliar culture, way of knowing, value system, and social structure
- difficulties in accessing and maintaining employment
- financial and personal life-world struggles

- lack of government support to pursue higher education
- being received through a lens of difference that set them apart from the wider mainstream community.

Although the participants faced this myriad of obstacles, they persistently chose to focus on experiences and encounters with others where they were accepted, welcomed, and encouraged, and the related emotions, such as '*love*', that emerged in within them. In turn, this focus on what the participants characterised as the '*positive*' in their experiences fostered their self-belief and courage, supporting them to access a sense of rising above the obstacles encountered. On the one hand, being encouraged and supported by others facilitated them to rise above the obstacles that surfaced in their experiences. On the other hand, the obstacles themselves were often experienced in relationship to how the participants were received and positioned by others who displayed prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, which were produced in (and not prior to) interaction. This means that the way the participants made sense of themselves, their experiences and their possibilities for future employment was always in process, or what Block (2014, p. 22) calls an ongoing joint project. Who, how, and what they could be and do in their education and employment, was individually struggled for in relation to other people and wider linguistic, cultural, and social contexts (Kramsch, 2009; Norton, 2016) in which they were living, learning, and working. The participants' accounts of obstacles revealed that not only were they rising above them, but they were doing so with a sense of surviving, to which I now turn.

6.2 Surviving

The obstacles that the participants met emerged in the context of their living, learning, and working in two or more languages, cultures, knowledges, and ways of knowing, which, in turn, they were surviving and incorporating into their experiential learning. In other words, the participants' narrative accounts portrayed that they met many challenges across their education-to-employment trajectories, yet they were not overcome by them. Rather, as they were rising above the obstacles they faced, as considered in Section 6.1, they were surviving them. Their experiences of facing obstacles included:

- difficulties in accessing and succeeding in education in a dominant language and culture that was not their own
- challenges in learning to speak, read, and write English
- struggling to find and retain work and to make connections within, and establish belonging to, the Australian community.

The participants considered each of these obstacles they faced as a means through which their knowledges, understandings, and strengths were developing. This reality suggests that they were surviving the obstacles, as they either already were, or anticipated applying their developing knowledges and experiential understandings, including their diverse languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, and strengths to their roles and fields of employment. Accordingly, the participants' accounts suggest that they made sense of facing obstacles as a means for their personal evolution, as it was through facing obstacles and surviving them, that they were developing their '*strength*', '*understanding*', and '*knowledge*'. Upon reflection on their experiences of facing obstacles, they integrated all that they had come to learn, know, and understand. In doing so, they were reflexively responding to the circumstances of their lives, applying their developing knowledges, understandings, and strengths to their roles, or aspired for roles in employment, and beyond in their broader life-worlds.

Karla, who was halfway through a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and seeking further employment, as she was only casually and tenuously employed, described the rationale behind her decision to enrol in Certificate III in Community Services (see Excerpt 6.13). Karla was struggling to secure more employment to support herself as she completed the degree and had consistently experienced being denied opportunities to work in retail and hospitality. Importantly, it is well established in current research that young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees generally tend to have increased difficulty finding employment in fields where they are skilled or prefer to work, and are underemployed (Abkhezr et al., 2015, p. 74). In the face of such difficulty, Karla was surviving, and hoping that, in doing Certificate III in Community Services, she would have opportunities to draw upon the '*strengths*' that she had developed across her lived experiences in her employment:

> I'm hoping that,
> If I get that qualification
> That will open more doors

To work
In the community sector,
That plays out my strengths,
Which is you know,
Working in the multicultural community,
Helping out.

That is something that I do well,
Might as well use that strength
You just get knocked down
And just have to get back up again.

Excerpt 6.13 Karla, Interview 1, pp. 22–23)

Karla's account captured that she was planning to access further employment in the '*community sector'* and in the '*multicultural community*', in which she anticipated that she could continue to draw upon her '*strengths*' in her roles at work. Karla's understanding that one of her '*strengths*' was the ability to work with the '*multicultural community*', '*helping out*', is significant as she had not yet been granted access to opportunities for employment outside of this sector, which is a known refugee 'employment niche' (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Karla had only ever experienced recognition of her linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge as being of value in a specific sector, which for her was the '*community sector*'. Outside of this sector she was yet to be successfully employed or have her linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge acknowledged or considered beyond deficit views.

Karla's words point towards a sense of surviving, as she described being able to draw upon the *'strengths*' that she had developed through her personal experiences of being a refugee living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that was not her own. Moreover, for her, a sense of surviving was also related to facing obstacles in accessing opportunities for employment outside of the community sector. Karla's account of repeatedly being denied work outside of the '*community sector*' captures what is often referred to, in the literature concerned with refugee experiences in the context of Australia, as resilience (Abkhezr et al., 2015). In considering how she faced experiences of being denied employment in retail and hospitality, she pointed out, '*You just get knocked down, and just have to get back up again*'. In describing being declined work in this way, Karla was drawing upon the metaphoric concept of being '*knocked down'*, conveying that such instances were negatively experienced and involved a downward orientation. In response to being '*knocked down*', Karla explained that she would '*get back up*'. '*To get back up again*' involved an ascending orientation, which

suggests a positive appraisal of her positioning or sense of self following such experiences, despite the difficulties involved, thus illuminating her sense of surviving.

For Karla, surviving was related to instances where she had faced difficulties, such as being denied work based on linguistic and cultural discrimination as captured in Chapter 5 (see Excerpts 5.12, 5.13, 5.14), which she conceived as developing her knowledge, experiential understanding, and strength. This involved living, learning, and working as a refugee in the face of linguistic and cultural diversity in a dominant language and culture that was not her own, and struggling to access employment outside of the '*community sector*'. Similarly, Halima, who was currently doing Year 11 and yet to be employed, also associated surviving with the understanding that facing obstacles was making her '*strong*'. In response to the invitation to express her education-to-employment experiences so far in her second interview, Halima created an image depicting herself between two trees, using lead pencil on white paper (see Fig. 6.4). In Excerpt 6.14, in which she verbalised the meaning of her visual representation, Halima addressed her inner self-reflection and the confliction that arose in the face of encounters with people who held prejudicial views, revealing how she reflexively resolved to give more power to the positive experiences:

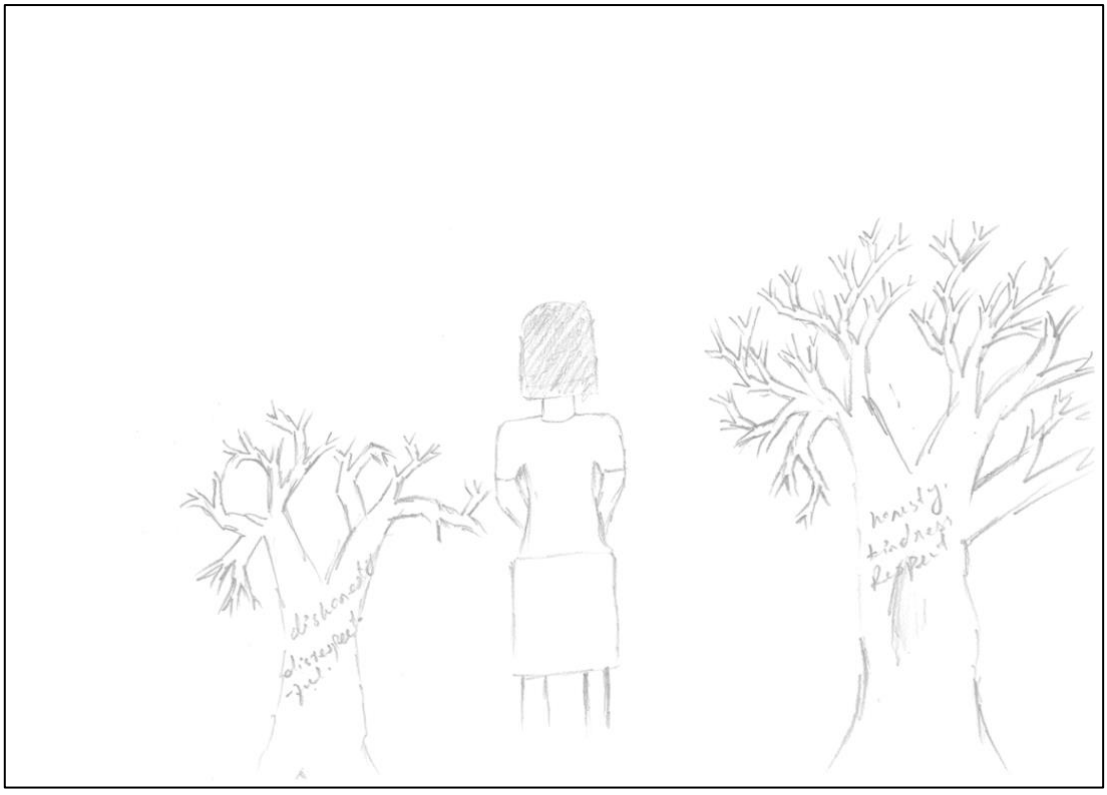

Figure 6.4: Halima, Interview 2

The figure is me.

I have shown my experiences
And reality,
As two trees.

I am closer to the smaller tree
And the bigger tree,
Is a bit away from me.

According to my experiences,
People with weird faces,
Bad behaviour,
Giving different looks,
Judging me,
Not on the basis of my ability,
Honesty
Kindness
And other things.

They just judge me
According to my outlook,
Religion,
And other things.

So, I think that there's dishonesty,
Being insulted,
Being treated by other people
Not respectful way,
It doesn't matter how much
I am close to that.

But the honesty,
The kindness
That I receive,
By other people,
That has more value,
That has more role in my life.

Both have effects.

The bad treatment
Has more effect,
It discourages you
It can make your confidence get low.

Maybe tomorrow
Maybe after a month,
That can affect me,
Very badly.

So, making me strong
And making myself strong

I am giving more power
To the positive things.

Excerpt 6.14 Halima, Interview 2, pp. 9–11

Halima expressed that she had drawn herself closer to the '*smaller*', '*negative*' tree, yet it was the '*positive*' tree that was '*a bit away*' from her that had '*more role*' in her life, revealing that she was consciously choosing to survive in the face of obstacles. Halima pointed out that '*the bad treatment*' has '*more effect*', yet it was the experiences of being received positively, encouraged, and supported by others that she gave more '*power*'. Her words highlight an internal process of self-questioning that occurred when reflecting on prejudicial interactions that she had experienced. This can be seen where she explained that when people judged her based upon her cultural and religious identity, she made a conscious effort to reconcile these negative interactions by choosing to give more value to the positive encounters that she experienced. This internal process is telling of her sense of surviving as she faced these experiences. She survived by responding with self-reflection and reflexivity, actively deciding to draw on these experiences in order to make herself '*strong*'. She reflected on how being received in a '*not respectful way*' impacted on her sense of self, taking note of how such experiences discouraged her and reduced her confidence over time. As such, she was cognisant of and reflexively drew from past experiences of '*respect*', '*kindness*' and '*honesty*' to '*give*' her '*confidence*', despite the higher prevalence of experiences of '*people with weird faces*' and '*bad behaviour*'. Her reflexively is reflected in purposely choosing to view facing obstacles in the form of '*bad treatment*' as contributing to her evolving sense of self — making her '*strong*'. In describing her inner process of reflection and reflexivity in this way, Halima revealed that she was facing obstacles in the form of discriminatory reactions to her cultural and religious identity across her education-to-employment trajectory. In doing so, she also signals the contrasting and significant role of being received positively in interaction with others in supporting her to survive in the face of such obstacles.

Razi's account illustrates that, for him, surviving was related to focusing on the positive experiences in an approach similar to that captured in Halima's account. Razi, like Halima, narrated a sense of actively and purposefully choosing to integrate the obstacles he faced into his developing sense of self, knowledge, experiential understanding, and strength. In response to the invitation to visually express his education-to-employment

experiences to date, Razi drew a landscape depicting a tree, two birds, a sky with clouds, and two figures, using biro on cream-coloured paper (see Fig. 6.5). Razi held a Bachelor of Aviation, a field in which he had no interest in pursuing a career at the time. He was casually employed in two customer service positions, one in a leading supermarket chain and the other in a multinational technology company. He had held several positions throughout high school in fast food chains and he had been a facilitator of cultural camps for a prestigious private school visiting Aboriginal communities. In reflecting on his visual representation (see Excerpt 6.15), Razi revealed his internal thought processes and related emotions, and in turn, how he came to apply meaning to the circumstances of his education-to-employment trajectory:

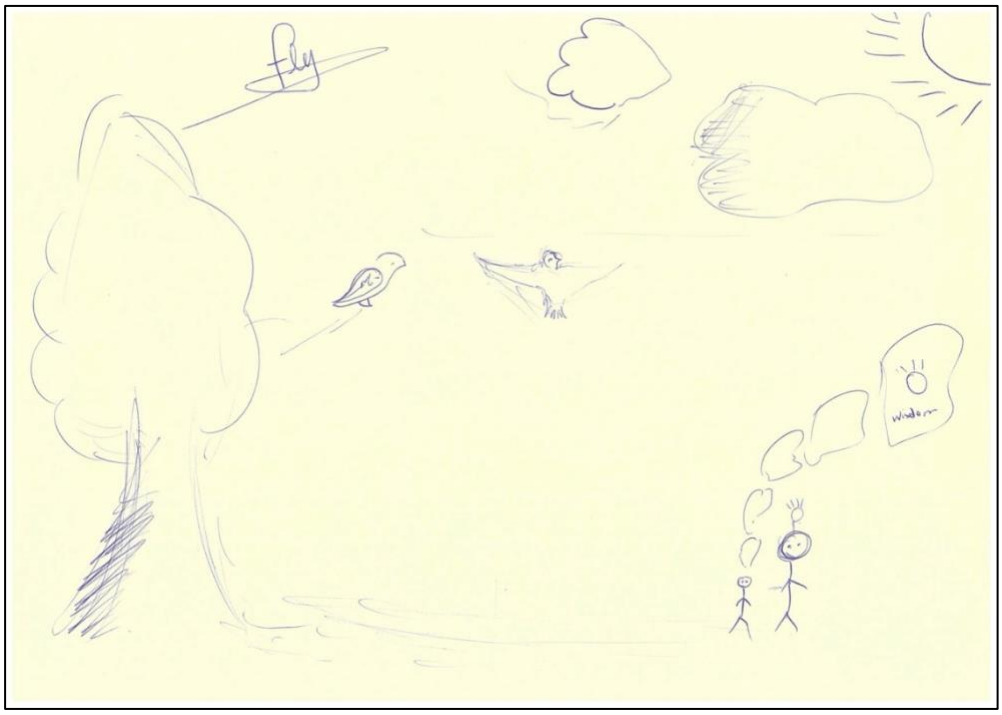

Figure 6.5: Razi, Interview 1

It's FLY
It means like,
In order for you to achieve something
You have to first understand yourself,
You have to know yourself,
Then most importantly
Comes with the word FLY,
Is first love yourself.

Just like anything in life
First you gotta have your bad days,
You've got your challenging days

Some days it's cloudy skies,
I think if you keep up
Keep up thinking positive,
Keep looking at the positive side,
It's got to make an accumulative affect,
So, if you keep being positive
One day when it storms,
It clears out everything.

All those positives
It comes success
So, like of course
Like always,
Got to look at the positive
Sunny days.

Excerpt 6.15 Razi, Interview 1. p. 15

Razi's account suggests that he actively endeavoured to be self-reflective. He explained the need to observe himself with a sense of conscious self-awareness: '*You have to first understand yourself, you have to know yourself*'. In spelling out '*FLY*' and explaining that it was an acronym for '*first love yourself*', Razi revealed the prevalent impact of emotions in facilitating him to get to the '*positives*' and '*come to success*', which for him involved self-love. As Maturana and Bunnell (1999) explain, emotions move people into action with decisive influence, defining the contours of their life. This is captured in Razi's reflection where he emphasised the need to know and love himself. Latif and Halima's accounts (see Excerpts 6.7, 6.8) highlighted that, for them, it was by drawing upon the love experienced in interaction with others that they were able to face obstacles. In contrast, Razi, explained that for him, self-love was crucial in his experiences of surviving the storms that arose across the landscape of his life.

Razi reflected on '*challenges*' as being key to coming to his '*success*'. As he faced obstacles, he met them by focusing on the '*positive*', and in turn, made sense of them as building his self-knowledge and understandings, capturing his sense of surviving. Although Razi did not explicitly name the obstacles he faced — what he termed '*challenges*' — he revealed his belief that his life's adversities were intrinsic to his trajectory, something that '*you gotta have*'. To capture how he made sense of his trajectory, Razi depicted a landscape with changing weather conditions and a flying bird, an amalgamation of structural and orientational metaphor which together capture that he viewed his educational and employment experiences from a panoramic perspective. He described obstacles through a structural and orientational metaphor as

'*storms*', which he deemed necessary to enable him to get to the '*positive*'. The storm concept that Razi employed to convey how he experienced challenges reveals that he experienced turbulence across his trajectory, an intrinsic characteristic of a storm. Yet, he viewed '*storms*' not only as representing challenges, but also as creating opportunities to '*clear out everything*', indicating that he experienced a sense of calm after a '*storm*'. Employing '*storms*' as a metaphor for his '*challenges*' implies orientational qualities, because as a storm arises in the natural word, it is directional. Razi pointed out, '*Some days it's cloudy skies*', suggesting he had a sense of facing obstacles that were above him, yet they would pass with the changing weather conditions. This structural and orientational metaphor of '*storms*' to convey '*challenges*', and the sense of '*clearing out*' that follows once storms have passed, suggests that Razi viewed obstacles as occasions for building upon his evolution. In other words, as he was surviving, he was coming to what he referred to as '*success*', which was achieved by looking at the positive dimensions of challenging experiences.

For Razi, surviving was related to both knowing himself and perceiving all his life's experiences as necessary in achieving success in his education and employment. Mya's account (see Excerpt, 6.16) shows that she too, like Halima and Karla (see Excerpts 6.13, 6.14) reflected on the obstacles that surfaced as she was completing high school as supporting the development of her knowledge, experiential understanding, and strength. As Mya reflected upon all that she had been through in struggling to complete Year 12, including facing financial destitution and troubles in her home life, a sense of surviving emerged:

> I see myself
> I am comfortable,
> I can defend myself
> I can stand up for myself,
> I can even empower,
> I can even encourage some people
> Who have been down like me before,
> I can support them.
>
> **Excerpt 6.16 Mya, Interview 1, p. 14**

Mya's reflections on facing obstacles reveal her self-awareness, her capacity for self-reflection, and her reflexivity as she pointed out, '*I see myself*'. Mya's account captures the significance of self-reflection in surviving, as she was aware that she could '*defend*' and '*empower*' herself and others, and she understood she could do this because of the

circumstances of her past experiences. Her words indicate that, through facing obstacles, she was now equipped with the ability and experiential knowledge and understandings to be of support to others going through experiences similar to those she had. Employing an orientational metaphor, Mya explained that she could '*stand up*' for herself and support '…*some people, who have been down like me before*', revealing that she conceptualised herself as ascending from a downward orientation in an upward direction. As was the case for Razi, surviving was related to Mya's capacity to self-reflect, to integrate difficult experiences into her evolution and the development of her experiential knowledge, and thus, see them as necessary.

It is through self-observation, that is, describing oneself in language, that conscious awareness of self manifests (Maturana & Varela, 1980). This means that the descriptions people employ to describe themselves are repeated until the self-observer undergoes an internal change, after which what they say and do will be altered (pp. 8–11). This is an ongoing process that lasts while individuals are alive, as they integrate their internal responses to their external realities into their developing (self-) understandings (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Maturana et al., 2016). Maturana et al. (2016), building upon earlier work (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2008), explain this dynamic as 'autopoiesis'.

Taking a cultural–biological perspective, as discussed in Chapter 4, Maturana et al. (2016, p. 632) explain that, in response to their environments and the interactional exchanges that they have within them, every individual human life evolves as a succession of changes in who and how one is. Maturana (2000) describes autopoiesis as an epigenetic process capturing the reality that living beings are molecular organisms that arise in nature as part of nature, and that those that happen to have a nervous system, such as humans, experience and transform relationally through their multisensorial incarnation. Consequently, whatever one experiences in interaction triggers shifts in the internal world. Mya's account (see Excerpt 6.16) captures this process that each of the participants experienced in their individual ways. Mya underwent such an internal change — what Maturana et al. (2016) refer to as autopoiesis — as she observed that through facing and surviving obstacles, she was now '*comfortable*'. She could '*defend*' and '*stand up for*' herself, and even '*empower*' and '*encourage*' others. In this way, Mya demonstrated her awareness of her evolutionary changes across time and that reflection, and her developing self-awareness fostered in

her the ability to support others in her personal life and in work, thus revealing her propensity to act reflexively. Thus, she understood surviving obstacles as crucial to her sense of self, what she could do, and how she could be of service to others in the wider community in her work and in her personal life.

Aadhil's account (see Excerpt 6.17) reveals that he experienced surviving in his lived experiences as meeting the many '*obstacles*' and '*disadvantages*' that arose across his education-to-employment trajectory. Parallel to Mya's (see Excerpt 6.16) and Razi's (see Excerpt 6.15) accounts, Aadhil perceived that his lived experiences had become resources to develop his experiential learning, along with his understanding and a strength that he could apply to his roles and fields of work. As Aadhil reflected upon facing obstacles such as learning in the context of an unfamiliar and dominant language and culture that was not his own, he revealed that he perceived such experiences as developing his strengths and capabilities:

> Sometimes I think
> That kind of leaves you
> In a uniqueness place.
>
> ′Cos the lived experiences
> That I have had in my life
> And of course, there are a lot of obstacles
> Of course, there are a lot of disadvantages
> But at the same time
> When it came to,
> Like in a classroom
> Where you sit,
> I would say
> I have got far more understanding,
> Of differences
> I would say.
>
> I think the more challenges
> And obstacles you face in your life,
> I think the more stronger,
> If you think positively or be positive
> That kind of gives you more strength,
> And leaves you in a more advantaged area
> Because you have faced those challenges
> And you know you have the resource
> And you have that capability of facing them
> And explore ways to deal with those hardships,
> Or those obstacles.
>
> Because I have been left out sometimes,
> And I think

And I know
The message
And I know the understanding,
Feeling of how you feel,
When you have been left out,
How you feel when you imagine

A life so in being excluded,
That has come from the lived experience that I have.

Excerpt 6.17 Aadhil, Interview 1, pp. 17–19

Aadhil described developing '*strength*' and '*understanding*' from facing '*obstacles*' and '*disadvantages*' across his education-to-employment trajectory, and he perceived this as positioning him in a '*uniqueness place*'. As he integrated his past experiences into his evolving sense of self as experiential learning, he was surviving and, in turn, developing his knowledge and understandings that he could draw upon in and through his education and employment endeavours. Notably, Aadhil stressed the significance of emotions through his use of repetition, emphasising that the '*feeling*' he had experienced in being '*excluded*' was a part of this developing knowledge and understandings, leaving him with a '*uniqueness*', an understanding of difference and the many challenges involved in living, learning, and working in the context of two or more languages and cultures while categorised as a refugee.

As I have previously suggested, emotions are fundamental to what happens in all the experiences of a human being (Maturana & Bunnell, 1999). They are not experienced merely physiologically. Emotions are constituents of the way in which people come to understand their reality, guiding them towards their interpretations of their experiences. Aadhil captured this clearly in his account, when he recognised that the feelings that arose in the face of '*hardships*' and in '*being excluded*' directly shaped the development of his strength. As he explained, by way of reflecting upon his history of lived experiences, '*...you have that capability of facing them, and explore ways to deal with those hardship*s'.

The excerpts throughout this section have illuminated how the participants' accounts revealed they were surviving as they faced obstacles that came in various guises in educational and employment spheres. These include what Aadhil termed '*language issues*' — not having their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and their capabilities and understandings valued or recognised outside of particular fields of

work; and unequal access to opportunities in employment, involving linguistic and cultural discrimination and prejudice. In having faced and survived such obstacles, they reflected on those experiences and on what they came to understand through those reflections. They reflexively developed their repertoires of knowledge and understanding, which they perceived as strength and capabilities that they could draw upon in educational and employment endeavours. In other words, I have shown that the participants' accounts revealed that they were surviving, which involved reflecting upon obstacles faced and reflexively integrating their developing understandings into their repertories of knowledge. They experienced and understood their trajectories from education-to-employment in and through two or more languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices, which shaped the internal transformations that they underwent. The participants did not reflect upon obstacles as mere obstructions, but integrated them as opportunities for their evolution, through which they developed their strength, experiential knowledges, and understandings. They were developing the wherewithal to live, learn and work multilingually and interculturally, and this reality remained unacknowledged in educational and employment contexts and beyond.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how the participants' narratives revealed that they conceptualised their trajectories through a panoramic perspective, as upon reflection, they were viewing themselves as rising above and surviving the adversities that they had encountered. They revealed their understandings, self-understandings and positionings by portraying panoramic perspectives of their experiences. These were conveyed through structural, orientational and ontological metaphors that depicted their trajectories as landscapes and themselves as phenomena found in the natural world. These phenomena characteristically exist or make an ascent above the earth's surface. As such, their metaphors captured that the participants saw themselves as located above, or reflecting upon the myriad of challenges from above, which were metaphorically conceptualised as being located below them or upon the earth's surface. Facing obstacles in this way involved a process of self-reflection, whereby they consciously integrated through internal processes all that they had learned experientially from the difficulties they encountered. This means that they perceived and faced obstacles as opportunities to further develop their knowledges, experiential understandings, and

personal strength, which could be purposefully engaged in educational and employment contexts and beyond, in their broader life-worlds.

All that the participants experienced, reflected upon, and understood about themselves and what was possible for their education and employment was achieved interactionally. Because their trajectories were experienced in-between their two or more languages and cultures, their accounts revealed the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of their everyday realities. As such, rising above and surviving the obstacles they faced was accomplished in intercultural interactions with others in the wider community, which included being encouraged and supported by educators, employers, family, friends, and peers. In contrast to experiences of encouragement and support from others, they also frequently encountered obstacles in the form of interactions with those who held and displayed prejudiced attitudes and behaviours based on linguistic and cultural difference. Despite this reality, the participants largely chose to focus and draw upon the interactions that they recalled as involving '*encouragement*', '*support*', '*positivity*', and '*love*' from others.

Encounters with others who displayed these sentiments were remembered as having more '*power*' and were thus a more influential force for them in education, employment and beyond. Furthermore, it was through drawing on such interactions that they were supported to face obstacles, including those that were in the form of social, linguistic, and cultural discrimination and disadvantage. Thus, facing obstacles in this way was not a passive process. Rather, the participants were actively and consciously operating and interacting multilingually and interculturally, and in doing so were rising above adversity and, in turn, surviving obstacles. This was achieved by reflecting upon themselves as they faced obstacles, and reflexively integrating their reflections into experiential learning. It was through this process that they underwent internal transformations, developing their personal strengths and capabilities.

6.4 Concluding synthesis of themes

This is the last of three chapters in which I have explored how the participants experienced, reflected upon, and made sense of their education-to-employment trajectories, in and between their two or more languages and cultures. In these chapters I have considered the three chief themes and related subthemes that emerged throughout

my analysis of the participants' narratives. In these chapters I have discussed each theme separately however, it is crucial to reiterate that in the participants' accounts these themes were not held independently. Rather, they were held together and interrelated. Together, each of the themes and subthemes captures the holistic nature of the participants' trajectories, how they experienced and subsequently reflected upon their educational and employment realities.

My analysis has shown that they made sense of themselves and their experiences through three interconnected processes — *growing*, *pathfinding*, and *facing obstacles*. To summarise, the first theme, *growing*, involved *adapting* to living in the borderlands, the space in-between their two or more languages and cultures. Because they were forced to live, learn, and work in the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2012), which involved facing others' prejudices based on linguistic and cultural difference, they developed the facility to hold multiple perspectives simultaneously, and to routinely move in and between often contradictory or dissonant linguistic, cultural, and social worlds. In turn, living in-between their two or more languages and cultures has equipped them with a heightened capacity for self-reflection and reflexivity. They were forced to continually observe themselves with sensitivity to multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices in social interactions. Owing to this reality, they were navigating their trajectories multilingually and interculturally, as they were living, learning, and working simultaneously in two or more often contrasting languages, cultures, and social realities. Growing also involved *contributing*, which was a driving force in their educational and employment endeavours and aspirations. They were contributing, or anticipating contributing, by drawing upon their languages, cultures, and experiential knowledge, including their capacity to live in-between linguistic, cultural, and social worlds in their roles and fields of employment. For them, employment was concerned primarily with contributing to amelioration of the social conditions experienced by others, and in some cases, other migrants — refugees in particular.

The second theme, *pathfinding*, was also imbued with a sense of *uncertainty* and *playing catch-up*, as the participants' linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge remained largely unacknowledged in educational and employment contexts. Their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge was rendered invisible in the context of

the mainstream society as their prior education, and their capacity to live, learn, and work in and between multiple languages and cultures simultaneously was ignored.

The final theme, *facing obstacles*, which was considered in this chapter, included *rising above* adversity in the form of social inequality in various guises. These included restricted access to employment and not having their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge recognised or valued outside of particular fields of work, namely, aged and residential care and the '*community sector*'. Rising above comprised reflecting on themselves positively, and actively choosing to focus on experiences in which they were received positively, and encouraged and supported by others, rather than the more routinely experienced negative instances in which they were received with prejudicial attitudes and behaviours. Facing obstacles also included a sense of *surviving*, which involved a process of reflecting upon obstacles and reflexively integrating them into their internal worlds, thus facilitating internal transformations that were seen as developing strengths and capabilities that they could apply to their educational and employment endeavours. Collectively, the excerpts included in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 captured the influence of the participants' internal responses to their external realities, signalling the significant role of their emotions as they navigated their trajectories. The role of emotions is meaningful, because they were a guiding force in the experiences of each of the participants. They were fundamental to how the participants were coming to understand their experiences, shaping how they saw themselves, what they did, and what they wanted to do in their educational and employment undertakings.

Having given a summation of the three chapters that considered the principal themes revealed by my analysis of the participants' narratives, I now discuss the key findings of the study, showing how these themes come together to reveal how the participants experienced and understood their education-to-employment trajectories multilingually and interculturally in South Australia.

7 Findings and Discussion

In investigating the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience and are living, learning, and working in linguistic and cultural diversity in South Australia, I chose to employ an arts-based narrative approach. Twelve young people between 18 and 25 years of age, all of whom had arrived in Australia as refugees, participated in extended interviews involving art-making processes. Two of the 12 participants also took part in a one-off arts-based group workshop. I took this approach because narratives offer an opportunity for participants to contribute directly to current understandings and awareness of the opportunities, challenges, needs, issues, hopes, and desires that they face through their own perspectives and in their own terms Riessman (2008). Moreover, adopting art as way of knowing (Allen, 1995) in the research interview process creates conditions that make possible different ways of reflecting upon, understanding, and relating to one's experiences (Leavy, 2015).

As 'experts by experience' (Phipps, 2019, p. 6), the participants' voices and perspectives offered insights into the evolution of their understandings, which are ever-evolving in relationship to their experiences of living, learning, and working in-between multiple languages and cultures. Incorporating an arts-based dimension in the interviews created opportunities for those involved to tell their stories in different and novel ways. Rather than giving their accounts in language alone, the participants also gave their narratives through visual means, including drawing and painting, through which the internal dimensions of their experiences became more readily accessible for them to describe using words. In doing so, this study accessed insights into the ways in which these young people, from their own viewpoints, both in relation to their externally experienced realities and their internal personal worlds, reflected upon and responded substantively and emotionally to events across their trajectories.

In this chapter, I discuss three major and interrelated findings that emerged from the analysis. Firstly, young people who have had a refugee experience develop multilingual and intercultural capabilities as they live, learn, and work in two or more languages and cultures, acquiring a distinctive expertise that includes their primary linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges. I highlight that this distinctive expertise remains largely unrecognised and unharnessed in educational and employment contexts and beyond.

Secondly, they seek dignity in education, employment, and beyond, in the face of prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices. Thirdly, employing art as a way of telling and knowing in research studies can facilitate access to insights into participants' internal worlds and tacit knowledge. In the final section, I discuss how the findings come together, highlighting the need for a re-imagining of the current situation faced by young people who arrive in Australia as refugees. In turn, the Australian community might move towards creating social conditions where everyone has equal access to educational and employment opportunities in the world of work, and benefit from the distinctive expertise that refugees bring and are further developing across their trajectories.

In bringing together the findings of my analysis I acknowledge that the participants' accounts can be understood in multiple ways. Furthermore, I recognise the uniqueness of their experiences and do not wish to erase this. They are not a homogenous group. Rather, they came to this study with their personal attributes, diverse life histories, languages, cultures, knowledges, understandings, values, and practices. However, in considering their personal accounts, I have synthesised their experiences and reflections to make sense of the phenomenon in question, which is how such young people experience their education-to-employment trajectories. Sitting side by side, these young people's individual narratives created a collective narrative. In turn, this larger narrative connects with other stories of making the trajectory from education-to-employment in the face of linguistic and cultural diversity as a young refugee.

This study invites multiple audiences, including but not limited to the participants themselves, who have generously and courageously shared their stories with me; others who have been categorised as refugees and who may read these accounts as a way of further considering their own situation; those who are working within the research community, who are interested in the educational, employment, and life-world experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience; and importantly, those who are working in social policy and practice in educational and employment contexts and beyond.

In essence, the participants' perspectives and understandings captured here contribute to knowledge concerning the challenges and opportunities faced by young people who have had a refugee experience and who are living, learning, and working in a dominant

language and culture that is not their own. This is profoundly important, considering the disparity in access to employment opportunities experienced by many young people who arrive in their host countries as refugees. Moreover, such people bring diverse languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values and practices that frequently remain on the periphery in educational and employment contexts in the dominant mainstream society.

7.1 Finding 1: Developing multilingual and intercultural capabilities: distinctive linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges as expertise

The first finding of the study was that young people who arrive in South Australia as refugees develop distinctive linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge across their life trajectories. Their distinctive expertise is multilingual and intercultural knowledge, understanding, and capabilities that come from their primary socialisation in their home languages and cultures, and through living, learning, and working in a dominant language and culture that is not their own. Because their trajectories are characterised by such complex linguistic and cultural diversity, they routinely interact in and in-between multiple languages, cultures, and social worlds. As a consequence, they develop the ability to expertly navigate between their multiple languages and cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices with a heightened sensitivity to diverse perspectives. In other words, the participants had knowledge of their home languages and cultures, which is a knowledge that would otherwise not be available in Australia, and they had also developed knowledge of the dominant language and culture — Australian English. Having these diverse linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges, they were developing multilingual and intercultural knowledge and capabilities. These included their prior languages and knowledge brought with them from their home cultures and life-worlds, and the ongoing development of their intercultural capabilities, including the expertise to mediate their everyday lives, which involved navigating their trajectories in-between languages and cultures.

The participants' multilingual, intercultural, and experiential knowledges were developed through their routine encounters with tensions that arose while living, learning, and working in-between diverse languages and cultures simultaneously. As I

considered in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, as they were growing, pathfinding, and facing obstacles across their trajectories, their knowledges, understandings, and sense of self were being shaped simultaneously by two discourses: that of the dominant society within which they were living and those of their home languages and cultures, and the related societal expectations. In this way, their knowledge, understandings, and sense of self was constructed in what Anzaldúa (2012) refers to as a space 'in-between' diverse and often dissimilar languages and cultures, in interaction with others in the wider community, such as family members, peers, colleagues, teachers and employers. Anzaldúa's (2012) ideas in *Borderlands/la frontera: The new mestiza* connect with the participants' accounts, as they conveyed that they experienced a reality located in-between their multiple languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices. It was through living such an in-between reality that they were developing their distinctive knowledge and capabilities.

Anzaldúa (2012, p. 7) theorises that people who are exposed to multiple social worlds, constituted by languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values and practices, and further diversities, such as social classes and sexualities, develop the capability to navigate monolingual and monocultural conceptions of reality. She highlights that the spaces in-between are 'crossings' that form sites in which distinctive ways of knowing, understanding, being and doing emerge as diverse languages and cultures come together in different ways to that of the mainstream. Anzaldúa's borderland theory, that people who live in multiple languages, cultures and societies experience a sense of occupying an in-between space, was developed through her philosophical reflections on her own life. Yet, as touched upon in Chapter 4, Anzaldúa saw that this reality was not exclusive to her own history of lived experiences. The wherewithal to live, learn and work in the 'borderlands' is what I have identified as these young people's distinctive capabilities, an expertise they have developed owing to inhabiting and moving in-between multiple linguistic, cultural, and social worlds.

The reality of living 'in-between' involves being in a system, but outside it, a space at the intersection between borders where a cross-pollination occurs, creating hybrid forms of language, culture, and identity everywhere, states Anzaldúa (2012, p. 7). Anzaldúa's concept of 'borderlands' provides insights into how the participants of the present study construed that being the 'other' was a space where their sense of self and what they imagine for themselves was constructed through a dichotomy between belonging and

not belonging. 'Crossing' occurs in both physical and inner spaces, for example, at the borders between countries, economies, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, or literary disciplines. Those who inhabit these sites develop the facility to move between the contradictions and tensions found in linguistically, culturally, and socially diverse settings. This is a space of 'hybridity' where people engage with and occupy multiple languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices, facilitating the development of an enhanced flexibility in their ways of knowing and being. The participants in the present study were living such a reality, thus they were developing knowledge that included a heightened social, linguistic, and cultural awareness in understanding themselves, others, and the spheres in which they were living, learning, and working.

It is through living in this 'in-between' reality where 'crossing' (Anzaldúa, 2012) multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values and practices was routine that the participants developed their distinctive expertise, which remained largely unrecognised by the dominant mainstream society. This multilingual and intercultural expertise that they were forced to develop in the face of living in multiple languages and cultures is characterised by several dimensions:

- the interactional nature of their experiences and the mediating role of language and culture
- a heightened capacity for self-reflection and reflexivity, and a strength, arising from continual self-questioning caused by living in-between languages and cultures
- the ability to hold multiple perspectives simultaneously
- the facility to move in-between languages, cultures ways of knowing, doing and being and to recognise and appreciate difference.

These dimensions of their distinctive expertise developed as they interacted in their educational, employment and broader social realities that were located in the 'borderlands'. They continually drew upon these resources, or anticipated doing so, across their trajectories from education-to-employment. In the coming paragraphs I consider the interconnected features of these capabilities as identified in their narrative accounts.

The interactional nature of the participants' experiences and the mediating role of languages and cultures significantly shaped the way in which their sense of self was

formed. Their experiences were always had in relation to their interactions with others. In this way, the participants were reciprocally making sense of and creating meaning through their interactions in living, learning, and working with others such as educators, employers, colleagues, family, and peers, who were implicated in their (self-) understandings (Block, 2014, p. 22). In other words, it was in interaction that they were transforming, or what I identified as 'growing' in Chapter 4, and so too were their (sense of) possibilities for reflection and (self-)understanding. This is owing to the reality, highlighted by Maturana (2001, 2005), that internalisation of external experiences shapes the processes of thinking, feeling, and understanding in every sphere of life. These experiences of transformation can be better understood through drawing upon the concept of autopoiesis (Maturana et al., 2016; Maturana & Varela, 1980; Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2008) because as the participants were in interaction, they were evolving and behaving in relationship to how they were received in interaction.

Maturana et al. (2016), building upon earlier work, (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2008), explain that the concept of autopoiesis captures their observations that every individual life occurs as a series of changes in behaviours that arise in response to their environment and interactions that they (Maturana et al., 2016, p. 632). In other words, autopoiesis is an epigenetic process. Maturana (2000) explains that living beings are molecular organisms that arise in nature, as part of nature, and those who happen to have a nervous system, such as people, experience relationally through their multisensorial incarnation. Consequently, whatever individuals experience in interaction in their being and doing triggers shifts in their internal worlds, revealing their capacity for flexibility in social interaction. This process is also understood as neuroplasticity. This is because, unlike molecular organisms that do not have a nervous system and which are changed only in chemical and physical interactions, people undergo experiences through internal shifts that are triggered through their multiple senses, through which they experience their outer reality.

Maturana (2002) underscores that a feature that distinguishes people from other molecular systems is that people exist and operate in language. People live together and coordinate all their doings in language. Thus, as people interact, in their experiences their perspectives are formed in response and in relationship to language. As people experience, they are distinguishing what is going on through language, which in turn

shapes how they relate to and understand those experiences. Maturana (2001) explains this where he points out that:

> Although I say 'I walk' from one side of this stage to the other, I don't make the walking. The walking arises in my interaction with the floor. If you were to hang me from the armpits and I moved my legs in the air, I wouldn't be walking. For walking to take place, an interaction with the floor must take place. So, walking is not what I do, it is what arises in interacting between the floor and my doing certain movements with my legs. Yes, we say that we behave, but in fact our behaviour arises in interaction.

As the participants lived their trajectories, they were continuously in a process of growing as they were (re)creating themselves in social interaction. This occurred interactionally, with(in) the world, and in interacting in conversations with other people in language/s and culture/s.

For the participants, this process of development that I have identified as encapsulating autopoiesis (Maturana et al., 2016) was emerging in the context of two or more languages and cultures, which as I have discussed above, equipped them with the knowledge and capability to live, learn, and work in a space in-between them. Accordingly, as the participants were living their trajectories, they were transforming in a continual process of evolution. They were (re)creating themselves in interaction with others, located in a space in-between their multiple languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices. In interaction, internal shifts were initiated in their (self-)understanding and (self-)knowledges in the present, as well as their anticipations and aspirations for their future. It was in interaction with others that they experienced growing, pathfinding, and facing obstacles across their trajectories. They were living in multiple languages and multiple cultural and social worlds and so were forced to continually (self-)question. This induced in them an ongoing process of reflection and reflexivity, and the development of their personal strength.

The participants' self-questioning was often related to elements of their social selves, such as what they needed to change or do more of in adapting to the linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions of their educational and employment contexts. For instance, both Arezzo and Halima, in facing prejudice, questioned themselves: Why am I being treated in this way? What's wrong with me? What can I do differently? Such questioning arose from their living in-between two or more languages and cultures and being received as 'other' based on their visible difference, such as their cultural attire, which included

wearing a hijab. In turn, this continual questioning, experientially, developed in them a heightened understanding of the nature of the social, linguistic, cultural, and structural arrangements in both worlds. This was accentuated in Karla's account of growing (see Excerpt 4.1), where her internal self-questioning was heightened in the face of her experiences of being 'other', based on linguistic difference. She reflected on learning a '*whole new language*' and learning about what she needed to do or not do to navigate her trajectory successfully. The participants' awareness that they were required to '*change*' as they were growing in this way is indicative of their ability to self-reflect and to respond reflexively, whereby they consciously and continually adapted to the multilingual and intercultural nature of their experiences. Their encounters with others who received them with prejudice were transformed into '*strength*', as Latif, Halima, Roland, Mya, and Aadhil all described in their experiences of surviving (see Excerpts 5.8, 6.4, 6.14, 6.16, 6.17). Each in their own way made a conscious self-reflective and reflexive effort to focus on the positive experiences and gestures of others they had encountered. With a concerted effort, displayed in their behaviour and attitudes, they continually self-reflected and reflexively viewed their experiences. This included the obstacles they faced, which upon reflection, they considered intrinsic to developing the wherewithal to navigate multiple linguistic, cultural, and social worlds accumulating it into what they saw as their strength.

The participants achieved a heightened capacity for reflection and reflexivity through observing themselves in social contexts, both internally and externally, and as both insiders and outsiders, simultaneously. Here, reflexivity refers to the concept that in experiencing and reflecting. One experiences and reflects upon oneself, and in doing so, creates a sense of self-awareness (Ricœur, 1984/2012, 1988) that is followed by an alteration of ways of knowing and being in the social worlds in which they live. Ricœur's (1984/2012) notion of reflexivity highlights that life experiences are interpreted through reflection, and how people come to understand themselves is achieved interactionally. Maturana (2005, p. 10) describes these dynamics of reflection and reflexivity as 'the ability to release what one believes or thinks, and to metaphorically step outside of that to consider it'. Maturana postulates that taking such a 'double look' has a profound effect of emancipation. This is because it fosters flexibility to see, think, feel, and act in accordance with the availability of multiple perspectives, creating a fulcrum for the development of meta-awareness — a process of

coming to know how they know. Maturana and Varela (1992, p. 24) describe this as being like 'asking an eye to see itself'. Through the participants' self-questioning, their pre-existing assumptions and practices generally became conscious. In turn, they were developing multilingual and intercultural expertise through which 'the borders between self and other were explored, problematised, and redrawn' (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 29).

Moving like this, in-between ways of understanding, knowing, and subsequently being, was possible because the participants had experiential knowledge of and capabilities to flourish in multiple linguistic and cultural worlds. As already discussed, the expertise to live in multiple linguistic and cultural realities is developed through living in-between, because wherever there are boundaries, people are forced to live at the edge or in what Anzaldúa (2012) refers to as the 'borderlands'. Yet, living a 'border reality' also creates opportunities for the activation of what Anzaldúa describes as dormant areas of consciousness. Anzaldúa (p. 276) describes being in-between as '*Nepantla'* — a Nahuatl word describing the space between two worlds, a restricted space, a space of transition and transformation between multiple identities. For those involved in the present study being in-between was, as Anzaldúa described, 'uncomfortable' — yet it also provided them with the possibility of accessing a heightened capacity for reflection, reflexivity, and the integration of obstacles faced into strength and experiential knowledge. For some, this was realised more consciously, whereas, for others, this was known tacitly.

Other studies that have investigated the employment experiences and outcomes of refugees in Australia (Charlesworth & Isherwood, 2020; Colic-Peisker, 2009; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018a; Wood et al., 2019) have highlighted that 'visibly' different refugees, particularly those from African and Middle Eastern countries, are more likely to experience discrimination and underemployment. The present study adds insights into how experiences of prejudice were internalised (as revealed in the cases of Arezzo and Halima), capturing through the participants' firsthand perspectives how they responded to and resolved discrimination and prejudice. Their ways of enacting their personhood were pronounced as they were continually observing both themselves and others, because they were received as '*different*'. Arezzo and Halima were, as Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, p. 132) describe, standing back from their experiences and reflecting on how they were making meaning from them while

maintaining a 'centre' (Anzaldúa, 2012), and consequently learning to hold and move between multiple perspectives simultaneously. Importantly, although this was the case for most of the participants, it was not always so for all of them. For some, there was a sense of meeting linguistic and cultural assumptions and expectations and subsequently integrating them unquestioningly into their sense of self and what was possible or not for their pathfinding from education-to-employment. For example, as captured in Excerpt 5.21, Ibro's experience of pursuing his dream to become a nurse involved confronting the assumptions of others. These assumptions included that his English was too '*low*' to pursue this dream, and cultural expectations around the gendered nature of professions, such as being a nurse '*is for only females, not males*'. For Ibro, the consequence was that, instead of following his dream to become a nurse, he was about to commence a business degree. This reveals that rather than questioning and challenging linguistic and cultural assumptions, he had yielded to the linguistic, cultural, and social expectations he faced.

In highlighting the hybridity that occurs where people's reality is characterised by the co-presence of diverse social, linguistic, and cultural differences, Anzaldúa (2012, p. 7) illuminates the unique perspectives developed in those who live at the borders of these spaces. Living in the borderlands — the space between languages and cultures — creates the conditions for developing this ability to hold multiple social perspectives. Thus, for the participants involved in the present study, living in-between involved a stepping back from their perspectives in a process of self-questioning. This is a process that Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) explain as coming to understand that all people are shaped by their experiences, knowledges, languages, and cultures and acknowledging the diverse ways that meaning can be made within them. The participants' linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities were internal, made visible at least in part through their narratives, evident in the ways in which they developed the wherewithal to navigate living in-between multiple languages and cultures. At the same time, their knowledges and capabilities were external, evidenced in ways they displayed their expertise in interaction in personal, educational, and employment contexts, in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously.

Although it was generally not acknowledged or valued by others, their knowledges and capabilities involved holding multiple perspectives simultaneously, affording them the facility to move in and in-between languages, cultures, ways of knowing, doing, and

being in their everyday lives in education and at work. Being able to hold multiple perspectives simultaneously is an intercultural capability that they have had to develop across time, as they were forced to be acutely aware of how they are received in interaction by others, by self-questioning, reflecting, and adapting to their circumstances with reflexivity. It is through this process of self-questioning, ongoing reflection, and reflexivity in social interaction that their expertise to navigate two or more linguistic and cultural worlds simultaneously emerged. Some consciously realised this. Such was the case for Bashar (see Excerpt 4.10), where he described reconciling tension and dissonance located at the intersection between his languages and cultures as involving a process of balancing the multiple views available through them. Bashar appeared to have an awareness of this consciousness; he explained, '*And that's what gives you more knowledge, expands your knowledge*'.

Others described the obstacles faced in living in-between languages and cultures as being what gives them '*...far more understanding, of differences*' as captured in Aadhil's reflection (see Excerpt 6.17). For these young people, living in two or more linguistic, cultural, and social systems produced knowledge that required being able to hold multiple perspectives simultaneously, while developing understanding through the challenges that this involved. For instance, challenges in adapting to the new language and culture frequently included experiences of prejudice and limiting stereotypes, and facing what Aadhil described as being '*excluded*' in social and professional contexts. Yet, as I have indicated, others such as Ibro experienced living, learning, and working in-between with less developed consciousness. This is not to say that Ibro did not have any awareness of the in-betweenness of his experiences. Rather, he did not articulate that he had seen that his ability to live, learn, and work in multiple languages and cultures was facilitating him to navigate his trajectories while holding multiple perspectives simultaneously.

In his self-reflecting memoir on living in Australia as a Chinese Singaporean, Wong (2007, p. 78) explains that an outsider norm can go against an insider value. This tension can, and often does, flow both ways — being an insider and an outsider — in two different linguistic and cultural worlds contemporaneously. This complexity was underscored throughout Chapters 4, 5, and 6, where the participants frequently described their inner self-questioning in relation to others and the social structures in which they were living, learning, and working. This tension was accentuated in the

accounts of Arezzo and Halima because, as young women who wear the hijab as part of their everyday religious, cultural, and social practice, their visibility was pronounced. Accordingly, they were frequently forced to consider how to respond to being '*different*' in each of their linguistic, cultural, and social worlds. Arezzo's account (see Excerpt 4.12) captured the way in which she strategically chose when to wear and not wear the hijab, a decision made in response to prejudicial reception from others at school and difficulties in finding employment. At school she was called a terrorist by students and teachers alike, and in seeking casual work she felt that the hijab was restricting her opportunities to find employment. Yet, when she did not wear a hijab, she was criticised by her mother and the wider Afghan community.

The dissonance between the participants' languages and cultures and their social realities led them to an inner self-questioning — and in the case of Arezzo (see Excerpt 4.12) to not wear a hijab at times to navigate her trajectory, revealing of her propensity to hold and navigate two contrasting social perspectives simultaneously. In contrast, Halima (see Excerpt 4.14) decided to continue wearing a hijab after going through an internal process of self-questioning. She considered not doing so in response to prejudice based on her cultural and religious attire, for example on the way to school where she came to her resolve, '*... I won't change myself for them*'. These examples show that because they were forced to continually self-reflect and act reflexively, which for them was essential to navigate the complexities of their everyday life, they had developed the capacity to observe multiple perspectives. This dynamic was particularly pronounced in facing obstacles, such as in encounters with prejudices in educational and employment contexts, and in their experience of moving between their two or more languages and cultures in interactions with others.

The participants' narratives capture that it was because they had developed the facility to move in-between languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices that they were able to recognise and appreciate difference. Being open to new perspectives and being able to hold multiple perspectives makes it easier for them to move between linguistic and cultural difference, which is a significant dimension of their distinctive expertise. In many cases, as they learned to navigate the obstacles involved in living in-between, they did not necessarily describe their knowledge of their home language and culture or their lived experiences of living in-between as developing expertise. Rather, they demonstrated their willingness to adapt and to connect across

linguistic and cultural difference, and to resolve to view obstacles as an opportunity to develop what they collectively described as their '*strength*'. This was captured throughout Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in instances where these participants responded to being positioned as other, through a process of self-questioning and consequently adapting, and choosing to focus on the positive interactions despite ongoing experiences of prejudice. This does not only indicate that they held a desire and capacity to adapt and to forgive; it also reveals their ability and willingness to connect across difference, which was conscious and purposeful. They were motivated to engage in both education and employment, to pursue their aspirations, and to contribute to and belong in the wider Australian society.

For those who worked in the so-called '*community sector*', their distinctive expertise that they could draw upon in their employment was particularly visible not only to themselves, but in some instances, also to their employers. For example, as seen throughout Chapters 4, 5, and 6, Aadhil, Karla, Zahra, Vincent, and Halima described being able to, or anticipating, drawing on their distinctive expertise in their employment. This was particularly the case for Aadhil, as revealed in Excerpt 4.18 where he described drawing upon the expertise that he had developed from living in-between languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices in his role at a migration firm. Aadhil was cognisant of contributing to the development of his colleagues' intercultural expertise, as '*changes*' were inaugurated in light of his knowledge. Having a heightened awareness of what he termed the '*culture differences*' and having experienced being '*excluded*' meant sharing his stories was a practical and tangible contribution to his workplace and was understood as being distinctive expertise by both himself and others there. His expertise was brought into play in his roles at work assisting others in dealing with circumstances similar to those he had faced himself, and fostering intercultural awareness and understanding in his colleagues.

The participants who were employed in both the aged care and community sectors saw that their work created opportunities for them to draw upon what I have identified as their multilingual and intercultural capabilities. They also saw their work as an opportunity to apply all they had learned experientially, from their lived experiences, as well as their personal attributes and values, such as compassion and the desire to support others who faced obstacles in their own lives. This was accentuated in Roland's account, where his history of life-world experiences guided his sense of purpose in his

role as a residential care worker. He longed to be able to care for his mother but, owing to the historical circumstances of their lives, he was unable to do so. The fact that he could not care for his mother became a conduit for his desire to give back to support others, to be a valued and contributing member of the community in which he lived and worked. However, many of the participants did not have such a conscious awareness of their distinctive expertise, nor was it recognised or identified by educators or employers. Consequently, their potential to contribute to their educational and employment endeavours using their distinctive expertise — their ability to recognise and appreciate difference owing to the multilingual and intercultural development of their experiential knowledge and strength — frequently remained unrecognised.

As I have discussed in this section thus far, through the participants' reflective accounts, the current study accessed insight into the substantive expertise that was their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge, including their multilingual and intercultural capabilities. Some had not fully recognised this, whereas others were acutely aware of the diverse perspectives and personal strengths that they brought with them to their work. For those in the so-called '*community sector*' this was clear, in part because it was also recognised by employers and evidenced in the work that they were doing with others who live in multiple languages and cultures and who have experienced migration. In other fields of work their expertise was generally unacknowledged, with some exceptions, thus it remained invisible both to themselves and their employers. Yet, in some cases in the broader labour market their expertise was recognised, revealing that when recognised and valued, their capabilities can be harnessed. In such instances, young people who have had a refugee experience, such as those involved in the present study, may have access to opportunities to contribute all that they have and desire to offer in employment and beyond, in the broader communities in which they live. Razi's narrative illustrates this point (see Excerpt 5.16). Razi, who was working two casual customer service positions, experienced his multilingualism as an '*advantage*' in obtaining employment in a multinational technology company and his employer viewed his ability to move in and between diverse languages and cultures as an asset. Razi's experience indicates that in some employment contexts outside of known refugee labour market niches (Colic-Peisker, 2006), employers do hold an awareness of their capacity to expertly live, learn, and work in-between. In such cases their unique perspectives, are recognised as expertise that can be drawn upon and applied in broad fields of work. In

instances where they were able to draw upon their distinctive knowledges and capabilities, their past experiences were transformed into expertise that they could contribute to the community and be of service to others. It was through this understanding that the participants understood adversity as an opportunity to further develop their distinctive expertise, which, importantly, included their personal strengths.

The present study has highlighted that young people who arrive in Australia as refugees generally add value to the wider community through their contributions in education and employment. Furthermore, they have a strong desire to contribute meaningfully to society in these domains and beyond, through their expertise. Engaging their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities as expertise in educational and employment contexts and beyond, when given the opportunity to do so, helped them to access a sense of fulfilment, acceptance, and belonging. This is profoundly important considering that contemporary social worlds are increasingly diverse, and many young people who have lived a refugee experience continue to experience educational, economic, and wider social disparity. Knowledge of diverse languages, cultures, value systems, and social practices developed through living, learning, and working in-between are a distinctive expertise. This expertise is valuable. The contemporary world continues to increase in linguistic and cultural diversity, creating ever more need for multilingual and intercultural awareness and understanding in all spheres of society. When this reality is recognised, what young people who have had a refugee experience, such as those involved in the current study, have to offer may be better harnessed, while also presenting opportunities for them to contribute meaningfully to the society in which they live.

In the next section, I consider the second major and interrelated finding. I discuss that the trajectories from education-to-employment of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees reflect more than the development of distinctive expertise. They are also seeking dignity in the face of prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices in both educational and employment contexts, and in the wider community.

7.2 Finding 2. Seeking dignity amongst prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices

It is commonly recognised by settlement service providers and policymakers that employment is crucial in the settlement and wellbeing of all migrants across the fields of research (Colic-Peisker, 2009). Being gainfully employed is important to successful settlement. It provides income, access to goods and services, and crucially, opportunities to engage with Australian society (Australian Government, 2016, 2017). The present study highlights that the latter is of utmost significance. The participants emphasised the importance of engaging with the community in which they live, in and through their employment, irrespective of the fields or roles that they occupied or to which they aspired. Their accounts captured the holistic nature of their trajectories, contributing insight into how they perceived work not only as a means to engage in society, but also to access a sense of dignity in the face of living in linguistic and cultural diversity in a dominant language and culture that was not their own. Taken together, the participants' accounts underscore that, for them, employment is about being valued as a human being who can and does contribute and add value to the society in which they were living, learning, and working. They do not view employment simply as a means to make a living, crucial though this is. They also view employment as a way to serve beyond the self, to contribute to the community, and to access a sense of being valued and accepted, and belonging.

Many of the participants' accounts revealed that work and aspiring to work is about being valued for their contribution to society. Yet, it is important to reiterate here that not all the participants were conscious of their distinctive expertise. What they did all share was a deep desire to engage in employment, to be of value, and to be valued in the wider society in which they now lived. The participants seek dignity in education, employment, and beyond in their broader life-worlds amongst prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices. Despite this reality, they continue to involve themselves in and apply themselves to their education, employment, and aspirations, through which they experience or strive to access a sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfilment. This is largely because they see that it is through their employment that they could participate meaningfully and legitimately in the community in which they lived.

In the same way that Schumacher (1974) theorised in his discussion on economics, the participants saw employment as a means not only to develop their faculties, but also to overcome egocentricity by joining others in contributing to a common task and a common good. Schumacher was writing in the 1970s from the view that the concern of economics should be people rather than goods, and yet his work has relevance today. Schumacher emphasises that 'If the nature of employment is properly appreciated and applied, it will stand in the same relation to the higher faculties as food is to the physical body. It nourishes and enlivens ...' (pp. 45–46). It has been established, however, that people who arrive in Australia as refugees are often channelled by structural and institutional forces into employment niches where labour shortages exist (Charlesworth & Isherwood, 2020; Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018), presumably because locals largely do not wish to undertake such low-status work that has little possibility for upward mobility.

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) point out that refugees are concentrated in employment niches such as cleaning services, aged care, meat processing, taxi driving, security, building and construction, settlement services, cross-cultural social work, and assistance. Two predominant employment niches that the participants in the current study occupied, and that some were studying for or contemplating as future vocations, were aged care and what Karla coined the '*community sector*' (see Excerpt 6.13). The participants who were occupying roles in these fields experienced contentment in their work for the sense of purpose it gave them, which echoes the findings of Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (p. 220). However, as those authors highlight, a significant drawback with working in these roles is that they are often part-time or casual, modestly paid, and insecure. Notably, this was not always the case, as Vincent was in full-time employment as a multicultural officer and Mya held a permanent part-time position as a residential support worker. Yet, these were still 'supporting' roles.

As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the participants' accounts captured that in their trajectory from education-to-employment, they needed to apply concerted effort to consciously draw upon the positive interactions in their lived experiences at school, in work, and in the wider community. These were generally less prevalent than being met with prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices; nevertheless, they continued to seek a sense of dignity in their educational and employment endeavours, rising above and surviving in the face of linguistic and cultural discrimination. This involved

consciously focusing on experiences in which they were received positively in interaction, such as being '*encouraged*', '*supported*', and acknowledged for their value at school and contributions at work. In this way, interactionally, they were able to access a sense of dignity, in instances where others, such as employers, clientele, and teachers, '*acknowledged*' and valued them. Those others appreciated what they had and desired to contribute through employment, irrespective of their roles or fields of work. Those who were not yet in work aspired to accomplish this sense of dignity, anticipating they would contribute all they had to offer. For some this included their expertise—their ability to live, learn and work in between two contrasting linguistic and cultural social worlds, their heightened capacity for reflection and reflexivity, and their distinctive perspectives that this equipped them with, as discussed in Finding 1 in Section.2. For them, being valued for who they were and what they brought to their roles and field of employment was of paramount importance.

All the participants stressed how important it was for them to contribute positively to the lives of others through their work, and the sense of fulfilment that this cultivated in them. It was their desire to contribute meaningfully to their workplaces and be valued by others for their contribution that motivated their participation in employment. Meaningful work involved drawing upon their histories of lived experiences, which for many included their home languages and cultures, and related knowledges. This was accentuated across the participants' accounts where they described the sense of meaning that work gave them, particularly in instances where they were overtly valued at work by others. For example, where their employers, colleagues, or those for whom they were providing a service explicitly expressed the value of their participation in work, this evoked a sense of dignity in them, and this emerged in interaction.

The participants' accounts capture their desire to contribute to the wider Australian community through their work, even in the cases of those who were not yet employed. In their accounts they emphasised the sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfilment that being of service and of value in and to society facilitated in them. For instance, Roland, working in aged care, explained that his motivation at work resided in his desire to support others, to pay back the wider community, and to be appreciated for his hard work (see Excerpt 4.17). Even in the accounts of those who were in roles that are not customarily recognised as 'caring roles', achieving a sense of dignity by contributing and making a positive input to Australian society through work was prominent. For

example, in Latif's account he described the work that he was doing in the family café as being about contributing to the community as part of the community. What this suggests is that, for the participants, contributing was about reciprocity.

As they participated in society through employment, they at times experienced a sense of being valued by others for their contribution. This generated a sense of dignity, which in turn created the conditions in which they felt connected to the broader society and were able to access a sense of belonging within it. However, this was not always the case. The participants also recounted the impact of facing prejudice and being received as 'other' based on linguistic and cultural difference. Such was the case for Arezzo (see Excerpt 4.12), who encountered openly prejudicial attitudes and behaviours at school by both teachers and students, and Karla (see Excerpt 5.13) who was denied employment based on having English as a second language. In such instances, the participants questioned themselves, and came either to consider that they were required to adapt and change themselves as they were growing in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity, or to contest others' positioning of them as having nothing to contribute. In either case, what they came to understand about themselves, what was possible for their education-to-employment trajectories, and whether they experienced a sense of dignity or not, was achieved interactionally.

The reality that it was in interaction with others that the participants experienced their contribution at work as meaningful or not, connects to ideas put forward by Palmer (2004). Reflecting on his life's work as a teacher and writer, Palmer considers from a pedagogical perspective how individuals in organisational settings support or hinder one another in fulfilling their potential. He highlights that both education and employment operate in relation to others, and the outcomes for those involved depend on what people are able to evoke from each other (p. 109). For the participants in the current study, their sense of being valued in educational and employment contexts depended upon their interactions with others with whom they were learning and working. For example, as seen in Excerpt 5.13, in seeking employment in retail, Karla's accent and the fact that she had learned English as an additional language were perceived by an employer as a problem. In the '*community sector*', however, she was overtly valued for her contributions, and experienced being valued (see Excerpt 6.13). In Mya's case (see Excerpt 6.11), it was through drawing on the encouragement and support of a teacher and her social workers that she could '*get over all the challenges*' and finish high

school, Certificates III and IV in Community Services, and become a residential support worker. Being able to access opportunities and a sense of dignity in education and employment was in a reciprocal relationship with how others and how they received the participants in interaction.

As I have highlighted through this thesis, it is no new revelation that people who arrived in Australia as refugees tend to be overrepresented in low-status, low-paying jobs situated in the 'secondary labour market'. Here, there is little or no room for upward mobility (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Fleay et al., 2016; Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018; Nunn et al., 2014), and the occupations available are those that 'locals' tend to avoid or are positions created by the settlement and educational needs of their own communities (Colic-Peisker, 2009; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). What the present study contributes to this knowledge is insights into how employment in these fields, and beyond, is experienced and understood through the firsthand perspectives of young people who arrive in Australia as refugees. They valued employment for the sense of meaning, purpose, and sense of fulfilment it gave them. Moreover, it was through their participation in both learning and working, and through their roles and aspirations for employment — in interaction — that their sense of dignity was fostered, over and above supporting their livelihoods, whether in known refugee 'employment niches' or not (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006).

Although the participants generally reported being happy to be employed in any role or field of work, they frequently experienced restricted access to the wider fields of employment available, and this significantly influenced their occupancy of positions in certain fields of work. This restriction was a result of their experiences of being received, interactionally, through a lens of difference based on their linguistic, cultural, and visible distinction, such as their style of dress, physical features, and accent. The sense of restriction experienced by the participants is a product of living a border reality, as discussed in Finding 1. Living in-between languages and cultures (Anzaldúa, 2012) frequently involves being met with discourses of deficit (Candlin & Crichton, 2011). Being received in this way significantly shaped the education-to-employment experiences and outcomes of the participants. This reality set them apart from the mainstream. They were often categorised as 'deficit' based on assumptions in educational and employment contexts, which Candlin and Crichton explain are

discursively realised in connection to prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices that limit their options for work.

The participants were perceived as deficit because they arrived in Australia categorised as refugees and do not fit the local standards or norms in their physical features, style of dress, accent, lived experiences, knowledges, languages, and cultures. Consequently, they were forced to strive to maintain their sense of dignity, driven by their deep desire to contribute through employment across their trajectories, in environments where they were frequently positioned by 'modern forms of racism' (Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2006, p. 653). As Tilbury and Colic-Peisker explain (p. 653), present-day racism tends to be cultural and symbolic rather than biological or essentialist. The authors describe this as 'politics of difference', which is adopted to legitimise dominant cultural practices through a hierarchy of values and behaviours and structured around neo-liberal attitudes of 'individualism and productivity'. Being received through a deficit lens, including having restricted access on the grounds of linguistic and cultural difference, did not support their sense of human dignity.

The notion of deficit discourses (Candlin & Crichton, 2011) is taken up in the current literature that investigates refugee experiences, yet it is based mainly in educational settings (Baker, 2020). For example, in their review of current research on the experiences of students with refugee backgrounds aged from 7 to 24 years, Miller et al. (2018) emphasise the social impact of discourses of deficit. They highlight that deficit views based on assumptions that the majority's experiences and practices are considered the 'norm' position students who have alternative life histories as 'other' or 'lacking'. When such students are not viewed as individuals with diverse backgrounds, they are perpetually positioned as deficit in a context where their learning is expected to sit within a predefined structure that hides the strengths they bring to it, such as resilience and independence. Yet, Miller et al. also report a trend in the current literature to focus on the resilience and strength of refugees, instead of the deficit view that marked earlier work (p. 351). The focus on barriers refugees face is progressively being replaced by illuminating the structural inequalities that create and perpetuate them. The present study contributes to this emerging literature by highlighting the way in which discourses of deficit (Candlin & Crichton, 2011) are structurally embedded in society, making it difficult for young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees to access employment outside of known 'employment niches' (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006).

Furthermore, this study shows that for the participants, being received in this way not only reduces their chances for employment in the broader world of work, but also limits their access to experiencing a sense of dignity.

As I have discussed throughout this section, the participants' accounts show that they were regularly viewed as 'different' in interaction, in the contexts of overarching social and institutional expectations of a linear progression throughout schooling, followed by entry into employment. These expected transitions throughout and between education and employment were held alongside the assumption of monolingualism as the 'norm', meaning that they were not recognised for the value that they aspired to and could bring to their roles at work. Being positioned as deficit in the dominant language and culture resulted in the participants frequently being received as only able to learn, and not being able to fulfil roles in employment that their Australian-born counterparts accessed with relative ease. It was owing to the social perception of them as different that the young people involved in the present study faced restricted access to employment, with a sense of what they described as playing catch-up.

The concept of playing catch-up is also discussed by Hebbani and Khawaja (2018, pp. 921–922) and (Öztürk, 2017) who established that refugees and the general population do not start off on the same level playing field. Refugees commonly experience not being at the same point as most of their peers in their pathfinding from education-to-employment and being perpetually behind their monolingual Australian-born counterparts, leaving them unrecognised for what they do have and desire to contribute to society. The sense of playing catch-up that arose for the participants in instances where their varying life experiences, previous education, languages, and cultures were ignored, captures that they experienced 'ignored lingualism' (Ndhlovu, 2015a). As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, Ndhlovu highlights that what is needed is recognition and use of all the linguistic, cultural, and experiential resources that such people bring to their learning. The present study has shed light on how such recognition is also needed in employment contexts beyond known 'refugee employment niches' (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). This may allow young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees opportunities to access both employment in the wider world of work and a sense of dignity, as they participate in and contribute meaningfully as equal members of society**.** In a move towards social justice for all, such young people must be acknowledged for their participation in and contribution to the wider society. They

should be seen not just as a commodity of expertise suitable for fields of work, but rather, as young people who aspire to and who are able to and do add value to broader fields of work through their employment. Furthermore, they should be seen as people who have a right to do so, with a sense of dignity equal to that of their mainstream counterparts.

Throughout this section, I have described the second major finding that emerged from my analysis of the participants' narratives. I have shown that as the participants made the trajectory from education-to-employment, they were not only developing distinctive expertise that includes linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities, as discussed in Finding 1; they were also seeking dignity in the face of prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices. In doing so, I have underscored that it was their interactions with others in educational and employment contexts and the wider society, and how they were received by those others, that contributed to the construction and emergence of their dignity. This reality highlights that it is essential to question how the experiences of being positioned as other shape the production of opportunities in employment. Accessing opportunities in employment contributes to the construction and emergence of the dignity of those who arrive in Australia as young people who have had a refugee experience, living their trajectories in linguistic and cultural diversity in a dominant sociolinguistic context. I now consider the third and final finding, which is related to the methodological approach adopted in undertaking the study.

7.3 Finding 3. Art is access: insights into the internal worlds and tacit knowledge of research participants'

Employing art as a way of telling and knowing created opportunities for these young people, who had arrived in their host country as refugees and were making the trajectory from education-to-employment, to talk about and reflect upon their experiences in ways that have not previously been accessed in current understandings about this group. This is in part owing to the over-emphasis on rational thought, coupled with the mind/body oppositional dualisms pervading 'Western' language and thought (Anzaldúa, 2012), which often leads to the polarisation — or separation — of the arts and science. This dualism that legitimises some ways of knowing and not others, contributing to the replication and domination of particular forms of knowledges (Leavy, 2015, p. 303).

This is significant because different metaphors can create different realities (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Ricœur ,1984/2012), which is crucial given that some ways of knowing are more dominant and privileged than others. Thus, employing a visual arts-based modality to elicit the accounts of the participants in this study opened possibilities towards (re)claiming different channels for the production of knowledge through different ways of reflecting, (re)telling, knowing, and coming to another understanding. An arts-based approach created opportunities for the participants to access and articulate their experience in ways that were personal and meaningful to them. This included insights into the shaping force of their emotions in how they experienced and came to understand their past and present realities and what they anticipated and aspired for in their future life and work prospects. For example, in many instances the participants spoke of how they metaphorically overcame obstacles such as facing prejudice and discrimination.

Through various metaphors, including trees, birds, rivers, and other phenomena found in the natural world, they describe themselves as rising above challenges, contesting negative categorisation, and surviving painful experiences. They explain that they drew upon those who were a positive force in their lives, such as those who encouraged and supported them and who evoked emotions such as love in their lives. As such, they revealed that they not only developed linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities that facilitated their living, learning, and working multilingually and interculturally, but they also developed their inner personal strength. They perceived that surviving obstacles had equipped them to be of support to others. They described contributing through drawing upon the strength they had developed in facing those obstacles. As such, their strength was intrinsic to their expertise in their current and aspired-to employment roles.

The arts-based narrative approach that I implemented in the present study asked participants to either draw or paint in response to my questions about their trajectories and subsequently reflect on the meanings of their visual representations. In the group workshop those present also engaged in a short free-form poetry writing exercise. As Anderson and Braud (1998, p. 1) point out, the modality people employ to represent their internal worlds is both constrained and made possible by the particular form of representation. This means that through juxtaposing verbal and nonverbal creatively

expressed narratives, it was possible to access an expanded view of participants' lived experiences.

Drawing on Riessman's (2008) work, O'Neill (2020) suggests that narrative inquiry is not a particular method that reaches a single meaning, nor does it invoke themes that lead to a universal reality. Rather, 'it is an increasingly valued approach which brings together the study of individual experience within the context of particular social worlds' (p. 89). Arts-based approaches are being adopted more and more in narrative research; however, as Riessman suggests, it is necessary to consider that each mode of expression in narrative research has affordances and constraints. In this study, the artefacts were not analysed by me as researcher; rather, they were texts to be read and interpreted by their makers. However, I did not ignore them, as I included images created by the participants representing the corresponding data excerpts. This is important, as I was seeking insight into their perspectives and their understandings of their lived experiences, not my own interpretation of either the excerpts or their creative expressions. Yet, it cannot be ignored that I was not only audience to the images themselves, but also witness to their emergence in the art-making process. Mitchell, et.al., (2011), suggest that artistic products are texts that can be interpreted by self and others, including researchers, but the use of drawing as a research method often involves more than making drawings. The art-making process often entails participants' drawing and talking or writing, which is followed by the researcher's analysis of these artefacts (p. 19). In the present study, however, I purposefully avoided imposing my own interpretations of their images because my intention was to hear them though their own voices.

In their discussion of the construction of refugee identities, Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil, and Turner Baker (2008) highlight that people who have had a refugee experience already find themselves regularly analysed as informants in research and/or spoken about in the media. The authors point out that one issue with studies of refugee identity is that they frequently investigate how others speak or write about refugees, and the portrayal of these identities is rarely presented as refugees themselves would construct them. This is partly a consequence of their limited and infrequent opportunities to assert their identity in public (p. 188). For this reason, it was crucial that I listened to what the participants revealed of their experiences and themselves in reflecting on the meanings of their visual representations. I have included the poems that were written in the group

workshop in the closing of this thesis without prompting the participants to provide further interpretation. This is because employing poetry as a medium of expression directly accessed the participants' artistic use of language in portraying their reflections and I wanted these words to speak for themselves without being filtered through my own interpretation of them.

The elicitation of the narratives through an arts-based process involved the participants actively engaging with their reflections through a creative exploration with the available art materials, including paints, markers, pencils, pastels, and paper. As Dewey (1934) saw, what is possible in one medium may not be possible in another. This means that what people can express depends upon the medium of expression. All forms of representation provide a means to express and share the contents of the mind — the inner and bodily experience of human beings, thus, it must be considered that as the participants gave verbal explanations of their art-based representations, certain dimensions of their preverbal visual accounts may have been lost. In creating and applying language to their visual articulations, they reflected upon their experiences in noticeably different ways than when they remembered in language alone.

As the participants spoke of the embedded meanings in their visual creations their language became increasingly metaphoric and self-reflective, revealing some of their inner thoughts and emotions. Accordingly, in inviting the participants to express themselves visually before reflecting upon their visual representations, I accessed insights into their internal worlds and tacit knowledge that would not have surfaced without the arts-based modality. The visual representations offered a channel through which participants were able to tap into different ways of constituting their own narratives, because as Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) suggest, engaging in art-making creates the conditions for different metaphors to emerge. Thus, different ways of describing and potentially understanding their own experiences surfaced than when they used language alone. This made way for the holism of their experiences to come through in the telling of their narratives. It was not only their descriptions of their experiences that emerged in reflecting upon their visual representations, but also what was going on for them in their internal worlds — how they were responding to the external events and interactions that formed their experiences.

At this point, it is crucial to acknowledge that the metaphors the participants used to talk about their trajectories highlight some dimensions of their experiences while obscuring others (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Dewey (1934) also states that different metaphors and different media both highlight and hide certain dimensions of experience. For example, both of Halima's accounts (see Fig. 6.2, Except 6.8) and Razi (see Fig. 6.5, Excerpt 6.15) refer to the sun as a metaphor for the positive forces in their lives. Although the sun does give warmth and is a life-giving energy force that is intrinsic to the growth and sustenance of the biological world on planet Earth, it can also have negative effects. For instance, if one is exposed to too much it can burn. Further still, the sun is involved in the production of extreme weather conditions such as damaging fires. Thus, the metaphor of sun as a positive life force as in the accounts of Halima and Razi hides the reality that the sun may also induce negative effects and events. To give another example, in Excerpt 6.15, Razi explained that '*One day when it storms / It clears out everything*' conceptualises that despite the difficulties that he had faced across his trajectory, he was preoccupied with the clarity that comes after the storm. He does not address any turbulence in the environment that a storm necessarily entails. This demonstrates that certain dimensions of the participants' experiences that were may have been significant were obscured by the way that they employed metaphor in their accounts.

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) consider, to produce metaphor is to perceive and to highlight resemblances between different phenomena, and as Ricœur (1984/2012) points out, in narratives, history is often recounted by way of innovative forms of metaphoric representation. Yet, Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), like Ricœur (1976, 1984, 1984/2012), argue that making metaphors is not only about being perceptive of semantic or conceptual resemblances; it is also about unveiling similarities in things, objects, and experiences that initially seem distant. The change in distance in what is usually perceived as logical or rational space is the productive imagination (Ricœur, 1984/2012, p. x). This is significant because the language that the participants employed influenced the way they made sense of their own trajectories and thus also what I came to understand about them as a researcher. In the remembering and retelling of experiences, people are reinterpreting their own lives as they reorder, reconsider, reconfigure, and internally edit their memories over time (Mercurio & Scarino, 2004).

Through their use of metaphors, the participants revealed how they were conceptualising, organising, and applying meaning to their experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003) in a way that was 'whole'. To illustrate this point, several of the young people in the present study employed metaphors related to rivers to describe their trajectories, and these would not have emerged if language was used alone to elicit their narratives. This is not because the metaphors that they employed were not already located in the participants' languages and cultures. Rather, it was because without the preliminary visual mode of expression, such metaphors were not surfacing in the research interviews. Even in the many instances where the metaphors the participants drew on are already located in everyday use of language, culture, and thought, as Lakoff and Johnson (2003) suggest, they engaged them in personalised ways. Their artwork revealed the unique way they used metaphors to give meaning to their own experiences, and how those experiences shaped their developing understandings.

Ricœur (1976) states that metaphor moves people to the transcend their bodily form as they conceptualise, dream, and imagine something more or something different in the future, with different understandings bringing forth different possibilities of reality. As previously mentioned, several of the participants employed river-related metaphors to describe their trajectories. These would not have emerged if language alone was used to elicit their narratives. In speaking about their images of rivers, participants revealed the varying ways they individually applied meaning to their metaphoric construction of their reflections on their experiences. For example, Latif explained that he conceptualised his life metaphorically as a '*river of success*' (see Fig. 5.4, Excerpt 5.8), as discussed in Chapter 5. Through reflecting upon his image, he was able to tap into multiple dimensions of his trajectory, including his inner thoughts and feelings. He described the obstacles he faced, how they affected him emotionally, and how he was able to navigate them. Karla's river, also captured in Chapter 5 (see Excerpt 5.1, Fig. 5.1), represented two interconnecting yet discrete entities, education, and work.

Through the use of the river image Karla was able to describe how she held these two domains of experiences as whole in a way that would not have been possible if she employed language alone. For example, describing her river as a '*murky mixture of everything*' captured a quality of her experience made possible through her engagement with an art-making process and subsequent verbal reflection. Through metaphor, she was able to reveal in a profound way her internal experiences of the external realities of

education and employment. These two examples taken from the accounts of Karla and Latif show that although the metaphors that arose in their accounts were at times universal, the ways in which they applied meaning to them were distinctive to their unique and individual perspectives and experiences. Without the visual expressions to reflect from, such metaphorical descriptions of their experiences may not have arisen.

Insights into the participants' internal worlds and tacit knowledge surfaced because, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) highlight, an art-centred experience — both within the context of research and in life more broadly — inspires different ways of reflecting, relating to, interpreting, and perceiving the self and lived experiences. Leavy (2015) and McNiff (2013) also emphasise in their approaches to employing art as a way of knowing in social research, that through privileging creative processes, what could have remained unspoken and unknown can emerge. The relevance of the metaphors the participants used in their images surfaced once they engaged in the art-making process and spoke about the personal meanings of their visually created representations. We moved from a question–answer dialogue to a more fluid, internally reflective, metaphorical, and (self-)reflective re-rendering of their accounts. This is because in creative processes, such as visual expression, people's internal worlds and tacit knowledge is often more readily accessed, allowing different insights into the phenomenon under investigation to come to light. For example, in Chapter 6, as Halima reflected on her painting in the group workshop, she explained that '*the black colour / It has been known as a symbol / Of sorrows / And all difficulties*' (see Fig. 6.2, Excerpt 6.8). The participants' use of such metaphorical language to conceptualise their personal symbolic meanings of experiences did not surface when I invited the participants to respond to questions in language alone. Evidently, taking an arts-based narrative approach the accounts of the participants in this study has contributed towards the transformation of knowledge production. What and how they remembered and spoke about through reflecting on their visual representations provided insights into dimensions of their experiences that would otherwise have remained unspoken, and consequently unknown to me as researcher.

Several of the participants said they had not drawn since they were children, and many described reflecting upon their experiences through drawing as something they had never done before. Yet, in some cases, participants who were at first apprehensive about the visually expressed modality told me that they enjoyed the experience, and that it had

supported them to view their experiences in ways they previously had not. For example, Karla, speaking about her experience of creating and reflecting upon her drawing in the second interview (see Fig 4.2), said, '*I don't think about that stuff, it's amazing what your brain can hide from you*'. Additionally, in the second interview, Karla commented that '*Oh, I feel really good, I don't normally feel like that, I don't, like you know, don't normally sit down and like think of it you know like that, you know, this is so good*'. Thus, it was not just me who noticed that expressing their experiences through an arts-based modality and subsequently reflecting on their creations verbally transformed the way some of the participants reflected upon their experiences, enabling insight into their tacit knowledge. However, the arts-based modality did not always provoke such a positive response.

Some of the participants found expressing themselves visually to expose them in a way that their verbal expressions did not. Perhaps this is because people routinely use talk to express themselves in their daily lives, whereas experimenting and playing with art materials to express themselves is something that they engaged with less frequently, or in a space reserved for private expression before any kind of public consumption. For example, Aadhil found that the experience of engaging with the art materials initially prompted a sense of inadequacy in his ability to express himself through drawing. In his case, although insights into dimensions of his experiences that may have otherwise remained unspoken came to light, he was unsure of himself. However, even in such instances, with reassurance from me that there was no right or wrong way to express themselves through a visual means, and that it was not about making a beautiful image, the participants did engage with the process.

Anzaldúa (2012) describes creative approaches as inviting the integration of the imagination, cognition, emotion, subconscious, conscious feeling, and reason to emerge collectively:

> An image is a bridge between evoked emotion and conscious knowledge; words are the cables that hold up the bridge. Images are more direct, more immediate than words, and closer to the unconscious. Picture language precedes thinking in in words; the metaphorical mind precedes analytical consciousness. (p. 91)

The participants' visual representations evoked metaphors that enabled them to convey how they conceptualised their inner experiences, and the role of their thoughts and emotions in their trajectories. As Ricœur (1984, p. xi) suggests, semantic innovation,

which is understood as the creation of different meanings through innovative application of language and metaphoric language, affords deeper insights into the sensory and emotional, as well as the cognitive and intellectual. Through art, hegemonic discourses can be dismantled, because creative processes give rise to different ways in which experience can be reflected upon, told, and understood that are personal and meaningful to those being researched. That is, narratives can be told and heard in ways that privilege the unique phenomenological experiences of those being researched. Accordingly, the metaphoric use of language that emerged as the participants reflected on their visual representations created different possibilities for understanding their experiences and what is privileged as knowledge.

The participants' contributions in this study through the art-making process, and their subsequent reflections upon them, were taking part in a process of coming to understand their own education-to-employment trajectories in transformative ways as young people who arrive in South Australia as refugees. As Ricœur (1984/2012, pp. 6–11) observed, in life, moments pass and are replaced by others, yet the same event, known historically, survives in the present through memories and stories. Ricœur's words reiterate that the modality employed to reflect upon an experience has the capacity to transform people's usual and habitual ways of narrating their experiences and thus constructs different ways of knowing them — and in turn, what can be understood about them. As an example, Razi explained that his image of a landscape (see Fig. 6.5, Excerpt 6.15) conveyed his understanding that any obstacle faced across his trajectory was a storm. Through reflecting on his image, he was able to convey his sense of rising above and surviving and how he conceived this as necessary to developing his strength in his life's growing and pathfinding. In reflecting upon his image, he conveyed its embedded meaning, and in doing so, he offered insights into his internal world, capturing how he made sense of the challenges he faced. These insights would not have emerged if the art-making modality had not been adopted as part of the interview process.

The participants' metaphorical use of language reveals what Ricœur (1984, p. x) defined as capabilities in constructing different meanings and categories, despite the persistence of current categorisation of a given language and culture. In such instances the participants revealed that the 'categories' that they ascribed to themselves, and their own experiences, acted as a form of contesting pre-established understandings of what it means to be a young person who arrived in Australia as a refugee and make the

trajectory from education-to-employment. Identities, or subjectivities, are dynamic and fluid, changing across time in relation to context and interlocutors (Norton, 2016); Weedon, 1997; Miller & Kubota, 2013). Identities are always embedded in a context imbued with relations of power; they change in the flow of living and are always sites of struggle (Miller & Kubota, 2013).

Identity is not an individually established phenomenon; it is socially and historically constructed and construed within the discourses of a given language and culture. As Miller and Kubota (2013, p. 230) explain, because identity is constructed in relationship to discursive practices (meaning among individuals, collectives, and wider societies and their institutions), *everybody* is implicated in the range of identities available to 'minority' groups and individuals. Therefore, in taking an arts-based narrative approach this study has revealed that these young people were imagining new positionings for themselves, challenging the restrictive and devaluing categorisations. For example, Karla's account (see Excerpt 5.13) of resisting being received as deficient because she had learned English as a second language, and Halima's account (see Excerpt 4.14) of not changing her style of dress because she was visibly different to the wider society.

Anzaldúa (2012), who describes the significant role of language in (re)shaping people's sense of identity, experiences, social realities, concepts, and possibilities for knowledge, encourages a shift in conceptualisations surrounding the production of, and what counts as knowledge. Doing so will help challenge dominant discourses, so that different (forms of) knowledges, ways of knowing and values than those of current Westernised models that dominate throughout the world. In holding the ideal of academia as a means for working towards social change, equity, and justice, I needed to 'hear' in a way that allowed participants to enter dominant discourses in their own genres and on their own terms. It was with this point in mind, and the idea that I could learn to better understand them though inviting different ways of expressing and of knowing, that I chose to adopt an arts-based approach. Had I not invited an art-based modality in the interview and workshop processes, the participants' metaphors, which revealed profound insights into their internal realities and tacit knowledge, were less likely to have emerged.

Young people who have arrived in Australia as refuges have a right to communicate their ideas and knowledge in the context of academia and beyond, and I have a responsibility to listen and to seek to understand them 'through engaging in new acts of

becoming', moving beyond the idea of giving the voiceless a voice (Krog, 2011, p. 384). Accordingly, the present study has contributed to a re-imagining of the narratives of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, by employing art as a way of telling and knowing. The present study contributed to emerging understandings of the transformative potential of employing art in qualitative research with young people who have had a refugee experience (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2019; Nunn, 2020).

Throughout this chapter thus far, I have discussed the three key findings of the present study. I now bring this chapter to a close with a brief discussion of how these insights, which emerged from the participants' voices, contribute to emerging understandings of the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees.

7.4 Discussion

This study has accessed insights into the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who arrive in Australia as refugees, underscoring the intersection between the personal, the social, and the significance of language, culture, and understandings of what counts as knowledge. Taken together, the participants' accounts revealed that they experienced and reflected upon their trajectories as comprising three interconnected and contemporaneous processes: growing, pathfinding, and facing obstacles. These principal processes were revealed through the use of an arts-based narrative approach that created possibilities for those involved to tell their stories in different ways that unveiled their internal worlds and tacit knowledge. As such, the arts-based narrative accounts of the participants in the present study captured that, for young people who arrive in Australia as refugees, living, learning, and working in and in-between multiple languages and cultures forces them to develop linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities that frequently go unnoticed. In living, learning, and working in-between, they develop a heightened sense of reflection and reflexivity, enabling them to hold multiple perspectives and ways of knowing simultaneously, and to understand and connect across difference. These complexities involved in their living, learning, and working in more than one language and culture are frequently omitted in both social contexts and current research that emphasises the significance of learning English and adapting to the social structures of Australian society. Because young people who arrive

in Australia as refugees live their trajectory in contexts where their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities are rendered invisible by prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices, they frequently struggle to access a sense of dignity in education, employment, and beyond.

For the participants, education, and employment were a means to participate in and contribute to the society in which they live, and in turn access a sense of belonging within in it. Furthermore, whether in education and yet to enter the work force, or already in work or looking for work, they considered employment a primary means of attaining a sense of meaning and purpose in their broader, holistically conceived life-worlds. Their whole-of-life experiences, in and out of education and employment, were shaping their aspirations and their sense of what they had to bring to the world of work. In other words, what the young people have accomplished, anticipated, and aspired for in the future in their education and employment was contingent on their histories of lived experiences, holistically conceived. That is, the participants did not experience their trajectories from education-to-employment as disconnected from their broader life-worlds. Correspondingly, the participants' narratives exemplify how they were integrating their experiences from across their trajectories into their sense of self and how they were positioned by both others and themselves in the context of a dominant language and culture that was not their own.

For the purposes of and for understanding this research, the notion of autopoiesis (Maturana et al., 2016; Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2008; Maturana & Varela, 1980) has been helpful. Following the idea of autopoiesis, all people and the social systems that they live in are in an ongoing process of evolution or continuous historical transformation. The participants' experiences, their reflections on them and how they came to understand them were achieved in relation to others, as their social positions were created interactionally, in-between their multiple languages, cultures, and knowledges. This means that their positionings were always relative to others in particular social contexts, such as with educators, employers, and the wider community. As Maturana (2001) highlights, people think, behave, communicate, and perceive themselves not as independent entities, but always in relation to others and the contexts in which their experiences unfold.

Focusing on the interactional dimension of experience, Maturana (2001, 2005) utilises the idea of autopoiesis to show that people make sense of the present through what he calls 'structural coherences'. During their lives, people are constantly integrating different structural coherences into their being as they encounter what, for them, are new experiences in new domains. Making sense of and explaining things that people come to understand is socially established in and by their structural coherences, which are made possible through language (Maturana, 2001). Similarly, as people from diverse linguistic and cultural life-worlds relocate into a dominant language and culture that is not their own, their structures for meaning-making are evolving. They bring with them their home languages, cultures, and knowledges, and as they learn to navigate their new environment, which involves learning a new language, culture, and way of life, they adapt by amalgamating them.

The interactions of the young people involved in this study were always occurring as intercultural exchanges as they navigated their trajectories in-between their two or more languages and cultures. Interacting in their everyday lives, in and out of education, required them to bring together from two often contrasting social realities, the understandings and perspectives that had emerged in connection to the realities in which they lived, learned, and worked. This is the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of their experience. These insights — into how young people who arrived in South Australia as refugees make sense of their trajectories in two or more languages and cultures — are important, considering that such people experience faced increased challenges in education (Abkhezret al., 2015; Beadle, 2015; Olagookun & White, 2017) and attaining employment (Hebbani & Khawaja, 2018; Khawaja et al., 2019).

As discussed in Chapter 1, in Australia, humanitarian entrants experience amplified socioeconomic disadvantage compared to other migrants, particularly in the labour market, with 38% of humanitarian arrivals still unemployed three years after settlement (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019). For young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, unemployment is well above the national average (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019), and for those who are in employment, the work is primarily low-status, low-skilled, and performed under precarious conditions (Abkhezr et al., 2015; Fleay et al., 2016; Khawaja & Hebbani, 2018) in the context of a segmented labour market (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). For the most part, the employment experiences and employment aspirations of the participants in the present study were not located in

the mainstream. Through their firsthand perspectives, this study sheds light on how young people who arrive in Australia as refugees are required to be more attentive and apply more effort and nuance in their encounters in and out of education and employment than those who are less 'visible'.

The participants' accounts highlight that they were forced to take notice of and continually question how they were being perceived and positioned as linguistically and culturally different. Being received in this way has significant implications for their education-to-employment experiences and outcomes, because their knowledge and capabilities frequently remained unacknowledged beyond the fact that they were different from the mainstream. In turn, their dignity as equal members of society remained unrealised. They were routinely denied equal access to opportunities outside of known employment niches, based on prejudicial attitudes that rendered their distinctive multilingual and intercultural capabilities and strength invisible. Yet, for them, having employment in these sectors or being employed at all was an accomplishment, as they had successfully completed the relevant certificates and diplomas and were in paid employment. They experienced fulfilment in their work for the sense of purpose, acceptance, belonging, and sense of dignity it afforded them. Yet, there remains a dilemma. Facing limited forms of employment in particular niches fails to harness all they desired to contribute to the broader fields of employment available in the Australian workforce. Considering this reality, bringing the participants' narratives to light affords opportunities for their voices to be heard by stakeholders in the education and employment spheres, and beyond in the wider community. In turn, it fosters community awareness and, with it, an opportunity to re-imagine the current situation and work towards social, educational, and economic equity for all.

Throughout this chapter I have shown that weaving together the participants' stories has constituted a production of knowledge that has emerged through their own voices. As such, this study offers insights into how young people who arrive in South Australia as refugees experience and make sense of their trajectory from education-to-employment in their own words. Considering the mediating role of language and culture in the participants' experiences has thrown light on the influential role of their interactions with others in shaping their trajectories, including their access to a sense of dignity as equal and contributing members of the community. How they viewed themselves, how they experienced, understood, and experienced their trajectory from education-to-

employment, the work that they were in, and the work that they aspired to, was always accomplished interactionally in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity.

The findings that I have discussed in this chapter indicate that receiving young people who arrive in Australia as refugees through a lens that recognises their distinctive expertise and personal strengths better harnesses what they have and desire to contribute to the wider society. In turn, this facilitates their sense of belonging and, with it, their human dignity. Accordingly, the participants' accounts in the present study offer an opportunity for rethinking understandings about what it means to make the trajectory from education-to-employment as a young person who arrived in Australia as a refugee. Rather than focusing on their visible, linguistic, and cultural 'difference' through a lens of deficit (Candlin & Crichton, 2011), the lens can be turned towards recognising their multilingual and intercultural capabilities. In turn, this will nurture wider societal awareness of the reality that they have developed the ability expertly navigate their education-to-employment trajectories in-between languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, value systems, and social practices.

As revealed throughout the participants' accounts, juxtaposed with my investigation of the current literature monolingual perspectives pervade current refugee education-to-employment narratives. In turn, language and culture continue to be considered predominantly in light of their 'insufficient' English language proficiency and lack of local experience and cultural understanding (Rizwana, Onsando, & O'Dwyer, 2017). Such 'monolingiual bias' and 'monolingual habitus' May (2014) serves to maintain discrimination and disadvantage faced by many because, in taking such a view, the linguistic and cultural backgrounds, experiences and capabilities of migrants and refugees remain concealed. Discrimination and disadvantage that refugees face across their trajectories is inadvertently perpetuated by this reality, a phenomenon understood here as 'ignored lingualism' (Ndhlovu, 2015a), whereby the value of linguistic and cultural diversity is concealed by monolingual perspectives and social structures. Although research is often geared towards educational and economic justice, the languages, cultures, and knowledges of those who come from diverse backgrounds, such as young people who have had a refugee experience, remain on the periphery of all spheres of social life including, significantly education and employment. Accordingly, I take up Pennycook's (2021) suggestion that, to be effective in research such as the

present study, some kind of activist agenda is needed, using applied linguistics to deal with what are inherently social and political issues.

In this study, an 'activist agenda' has included my approach in analysing the participants' accounts, which were created in qualitative arts-based interviews and a group workshop. These provided opportunities for gaining alternative and additional insights into their trajectories and their reflections on them. An interdisciplinary approach integrating the work of theorists from both the Global South and the Global North enhanced the development of my understandings of the complexities of their education-to-employment experiences. Yet, I am aware of some of the challenges involved in employing dichotomising terminology such as North and South. Mignolo (2007, 2011, 2017) urges a delinking from the 'rhetoric of coloniality', encouraging those, such as myself, working in academia and beyond, in implementing policy and practice, to change the terms of the conversation. In doing so different forms of knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and economic realities than those of current westernised models that dominate throughout the world will be made possible. More specifically, in changing the terms of the conversation, different discourses will be legitimised in a shift from uni-versality to pluri-versality (Mignolo, 2007, 2011, 2017).

Building upon the work of Ibal Quijano who introduced the concept of 'coloniality' in the 1980's, Mignolo (2007, p. 451) illuminated the linked 'coloniality of power' in economic spheres with the 'coloniality of knowledge', emphasising that if knowledge is 'colonised' one of the tasks ahead is to 'de-colonise knowledge'. The control of knowledge leads to the control of politics, and thus the control of subjectivity—and with the control of subjectivity comes the creation of hierarchies within the population (Mignolo, 2017). Turning to the work of Pennycook & Makoni (2020), it is important to be attentive to the point that, from Global North perspectives, the Global South may refer to underdeveloped and emerging economies—whereas from perspectives of the Global South, they may refer to what Mignolo (2011) described as 'epistemic places where global futures are being forged by delinking from the colonial matrix of power' (p. 184). Stepping outside of the framework of geographical divides, such as North/South, East/West, is needed, because such polarising lines do not capture the multiple ways of knowing that exist in the world, nor do they capture the complexities and pluralities of what it is to know, and what counts as knowledge, and its interpretation and production.

The congregation of multiple, and at times divergent, theorisations has afforded multiple and contrasting ways of knowing to exist side by side, providing an opportunity for multiple views to be considered in light of the young people's narratives. In turn, this study was designed to contribute to the dismantling of the structural inequalities that characterise societies across the world (Anzaldúa, 2012; Mignolo, 2005, 2007, 2011a, 2011b, 2017). Had I not invited an art-based modality in the interview and workshop processes, and drawn upon scholars who have lived a 'border experience', the findings of this thesis may have not emerged. Referring to Anzaldúa's (2012) 'borderlands', Mignolo (2011, p.xxi) explains that there are different ways of experiencing the 'colonial wound' by those whom Anzaldúa described as living a 'border experience'. This is the experience of the young people who are living 'betweenness' across their education-to-employment trajectories— they are (re)creating themselves, relationally, in their multiple languages and cultures—which together are shaping and guiding their experiences, and accordingly the roles they (aspire to) occupy in their work.

There is a myriad of expressions that have been employed to capture experiences of 'betweenness', and the awareness that comes with it, including; 'immigrant consciousness', 'double consciousness', 'mestiza consciousness', 'mulatto consciousness', 'inter-cultural consciousness', and 'maroon consciousness' (Mignolo, 2011, p. 109). Mignolo conceptualised this consciousness as an awareness of one's own coloniality of being, of being out of place in the set of regulations, which encompasses all those places throughout the expansion of Western civilization (p. 201, p. xxi) that began in the 16th century with the colonisation of the global North (Mignolo, 2017). Anzaldúa described this conceptual geographical space as 'where the third world grates against the first and bleeds' (p.25).This is a space that embodies the experiences of people who are located in the 'borderlands' and the consciousness that emerges with it as 'border thinking'. Thus, the 'activist agenda' advocated by Pennycook, has been a crucial consideration in making sense of the young people's expressions and presenting them as the body of this thesis. In this study, the activist agenda has been to foreground the voices of participants', acknowledging them as 'experts by experience' (Phipps, 2019), while highlighting and nurturing multiple and diverse knowledges and ways of knowing.

As Lorde (2007, p. 4) states:

> For those of us who write, it is necessary to scrutinize not only the truth of what we speak, but the truth of that language by which we speak it. For others, it is to share and spread also those words that are meaningful to us. But primarily for us all, it is necessary to teach by living and speaking those truths which we believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth. (p. 43)

In light of Lorde's call to take part in 'growth', the participants' experiences of living in-between, through which they are growing, pathfinding and facing obstacles invites different ways of knowing to be acknowledged in the realm of academia and beyond, in educational domains and in the world of work.

Contemporary narratives of deficit (Curry, Smedley & Lenette, 2017, p. 2) that currently permeate research into refugee educational and employment experiences highlight the prevalence of discrimination and disadvantage that migrants and refugees encounter in accessing equity in education and employment. I maintain that this discrimination and disadvantage is maintained implicitly by the monolingual views of language and culture that dominate in present research, policy, and practice. In sum, emphasising refugee and migrants' need for English and local cultural knowledge conceals their multilingual and intercultural realities, knowledges, and capabilities, and contributes to the inequity they face in educational and employment contexts. The linguistic and cultural resources that such people already possess are thus precluded from the discussion, concealing multilingual and intercultural experiences and capabilities and in turn driving the continuation of refugees' disadvantage and failing to harness their multilingual, intercultural, and experiential knowledge and capabilities. Considering this fact, a multilingual and intercultural stance is needed in investigating the experiences of those who have arrived in Australia refugees. This is because, as people acquire additional languages, they are learning to navigate the world in different and multiple ways, creating what Blommaert (2013) describes as 'the simultaneity of contrasting interpretations' (p. 195). As they live their trajectory from education-to-employment, they are moving in and between multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, value systems, and social practices.

Through foregrounding the multilingual and intercultural experiences and capabilities of young people who have had a refugee experience, this study offers further insights into what has been previously established in the literature concerning the trajectories of such people. If such an approach were to replace the view of refugees' languages and

cultures solely in terms of their need to learn English and acculturate to Australian society, their multilingual and intercultural realities and capabilities may cease to be overlooked. Instead, their expertise may be recognised as a potential asset in broader fields of work. Crucially, this is expertise that may otherwise not be available at all in Australia.

In the next and concluding chapter, I bring this thesis to a close. I reflect on key ideas that emerged from the analysis in connection to considerations of the literature discussed, in terms of implications for the participants themselves and the broader societies in which they experience their trajectory from education-to-employment.

8 Conclusion

The aim of this study was, through arts-based narrative accounts, to better understand the lived experiences of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, along their education-to-employment trajectories. My endeavour was to offer those involved an occasion to contribute directly through their own perspectives to the developing understandings and awareness of the opportunities, challenges, needs, issues, hopes, and desires they face. This is important, as these trajectories are consequential at both individual and societal levels (Fleay et al., 2016; McMichael et al., 2015). The education and employment experiences of this group of young people is a significant area for research as they frequently encounter discrimination and disadvantage. Furthermore, they face heightened complexities across their trajectories as they live, learn, and work in-between their multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, and practices. Hearing the participants' firsthand perspectives was essential to access direct insights into the dynamic constellation of the personal, the social, and the influence of diverse languages and cultures on the trajectories of these young people.

It is important to take note of the unique insights afforded by this study. A significant contribution lies in the fact that my interests and aims were not to take a theory and apply it from the onset of the study, but rather, to start with the experiences and first-hand perspectives of the participants. I did not have a theory in mind 'a priori', but instead theorised from what the participants' arts-based narrative accounts revealed about their own experiences and how they made sense of them in their terms. My aim was to take notice of how their perspectives connected with the literature. Therefore, I considered the applied linguistic literature, which until the relatively recent multilingual turn has been persistently monolingual, oriented in the context of educational perspectives, alongside the work of multilingual scholars such as Anzaldúa and Maturana. I turned to the writing of those who had experienced the margins themselves, because I wanted to stay close to the participants' experiences. This involved purposely focusing on multilingual scholars—people who afforded alternative knowledges, expanding insights into what it means to live, learn, and work in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously. I drew on the work of people who would deepen

understandings of the participants' narrative accounts, because they too come from perspectives at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2012).

Literature in the employment space is beginning to consider the multilingual and intercultural capabilities of young refugees, highlighting what Ndhlovu (2011, 2013, 2015a, 2015b) explores regarding expectations to acquire the normative linguistic and cultural repertoires of the wider society. Ndhlovu —like Ortega (2014a, 2014b), May (2014) and Lo Bianco (2014), who have written extensively on the need for a holistic and multilingual orientation in both education and applied linguistic research— invites researchers to go more deeply into recognising and explicitly acknowledging the different forms of linguistic and cultural capital that refugees bring with them. However, consideration of the need to take such a holistic multilingual and intercultural orientation is not yet explicitly explored in current research that investigates the education-to-employment trajectories of young refugees.

Some studies in the refugee employment space, also recent, (see for example Harvey & Mallman, 2019) have begun to look at the linguistic and cultural diversity that these people bring to their education and the world of work. Yet, the authors come from a critical race theory lens, applying Bourdieu's perspectives to glean insights into what they term 'alternative forms of social capital'. As much of Nhdlovu's (2011, 2013, 2015a, 2015b) work stresses, the authors argue that there is pressure on refugees to shift to the normative forms of language and culture to successfully navigate their education and employment and broader life -worlds. In terms of the education-to-employment experiences of young refugees, to date, there is little said about their linguistic and cultural repertories and the mediating role that this dimension of their realities has in shaping their trajectories.

Through adopting an arts-based narrative approach this study has involved the co-creation of alternative understandings of what it means for young people who have had refugee experience, and are living, learning, and working in diverse languages and cultures. Employing art as a way of telling and knowing, has highlighted the need for a collective re-imagining of current narratives surrounding the realities of young people who have had a refugee experience. This re-imagining begins by receiving, responding to, and recognising their capacity and desire to contribute to the wider society through their participation in education and employment. They not only have a right to

experience equality in their education and employment, but they also have much to offer as others in the communities in which they live, learn, and work, including their distinctive expertise. To this end, their sense of dignity, their value, and their contributions in educational contexts and in the world of work will be better harnessed. Young people who have had a refugee experience need to be valued in broad fields of employment available in Australia, outside of known refugee 'employment niches' (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Furthermore, there is a need to address the prejudicial thinking and practices related to their languages, cultures, and categorisation as refugees, as such an environment impacts their transitions into employment and impedes their access to broader fields of work and, subsequently, their sense of dignity.

From living in-between, in the space between their two or more languages and cultures, they have developed distinctive expertise. This expertise is largely unrecognised and untapped, yet increasingly needed in the context of growing linguistic and cultural diversity in both social and professional settings. As this study has revealed through the personal accounts of the participants, young people who have had a refugee experience are adept at living in-between multiple linguistic and cultural worlds simultaneously. Consequently, they have developed the ability to expertly participate in intercultural interactions with diverse others. In part, they have developed this expertise because, for them, living, learning, and working in multiple languages and cultures creates the conditions in which they question everything they do and say. Nothing is a given. Everything requires reflection, self-reflection, and reflexivity.

As captured in Chapter 6, the participants developed their distinctive capabilities in the face of obstacles because they chose to view adversities as opportunities, including encounters with those who hold and display prejudicial attitudes and behaviours. They actively chose to perceive adversities as opportunities to foster their developing understandings and strength, which they could subsequently apply to all that they set out to do across their education-to-employment trajectories. In the face of obstacles, including prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, they were forced to consider multiple perspectives simultaneously, a process which equipped them to be aware of, understand, and connect across linguistic and cultural difference. Accordingly, the findings of this study show that for the participants, obstacles were not merely obstructions to their educational and employment outcomes. Rather, facing obstacles as they were growing, and pathfinding was intrinsic to the development of their distinctive expertise. Some

realised this consciously; others did not. It is important to note that some were not aware of the development of their own distinctive expertise because they were living, learning, and working in the context of inequality, where they are having to operate and navigate a life in-between (Anzaldúa, 2012). If their linguistic, cultural. and experiential knowledges and capabilities remain unrecognised by both themselves and the broader society, their distinctive expertise will continue to remain largely inaccessible in the wider world of work.

The linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities that such people do have — including their capability to live, learn, and work multilingually and interculturally, and their prior education, training, and employment — were largely ignored in the social structures of the wider mainstream society. This was found to be a result of the monolingual views that highlight refugees' need for English and acculturation to the structures of the Australian social systems, inadvertently hiding the value that their distinctive expertise could have. Although some did reflect a sense of the inequity experienced, they continued to be driven in their education and employment by their desire to contribute to and to be a valuable and valued member of society. Through their educational and employment endeavours, they were effortfully seeking to access acceptance, and a sense of community and belonging within the wider South Australian community. Their diverse home languages and cultures, their unique histories of lived experiences from across their lives, and their personal attributes were not something they could leave behind. Their home languages, cultures, and related knowledges, and their past and present experiences and anticipations for the future were always present in their everyday interactions. In these interactions, they were persistently reminded that they were not on a level playing field in terms of their education and access to and outcomes in employment.

In this final chapter, I bring my response to the research question to a conclusion. First, I summarise the key findings, considering the contribution to what is already known of the trajectories of young people who arrive in Australia as refugees, living in the face of linguistic and cultural diversity. I then discuss policy and practice implications arising from the findings. I follow with a brief discussion acknowledging the limitations of this study and directions for further research. Finally, I conclude with a personal reflection.

8.1 Summary of the key findings

Through taking an arts-based narrative approach, and in my subsequent analysis of the data, the significant themes emerged as three interrelated processes. These were *growing*, *pathfinding*, and *facing obstacles*, which were identified largely in the participants' use of metaphors to describe their experiences. Using Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) in my analysis, the participants' use of metaphors revealed how they experienced, internalised, and made sense of their social realities. The three key findings are as follows:

1. Young people who have had a refugee experience are developing distinctive linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge across their whole lives. This is expertise that remains largely unacknowledged in educational and employment contexts, and in mainstream scholarly discussions about refugee education and employment.

2. Young people who have had a refugee experience seek dignity in their experiences and related interactions in education, employment, and beyond in the wider world, in the face of prejudicial attitudes, behaviours, and practices.

3. Art can facilitate access to insights into the internal worlds and tacit knowledge of participants when conducting applied linguistic research.

Taken together, the findings established that the participants' experiences of living their trajectories in the context of two or more languages and cultures created the conditions in which they were developing the expertise to live, learn, and work in two or more languages and cultures simultaneously. They have their primary linguistic and cultural knowledge, and they have also developed linguistic and cultural knowledge of the dominant society in which they were living, learning, and working. These knowledges, which have evolved across their histories of lived experiences in educational and employment contexts and beyond, in their broader life-worlds, come together as a distinctive form of expertise. This expertise, which they expertly implemented as they navigated their trajectories, is understood as knowledge of and the capability to live, learn and work in-between multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, value systems, and social practices. Accordingly, they have developed multilingual and intercultural capabilities, which includes the ability to hold multiple perspectives

concurrently. Because living in-between involves an internal process of ongoing self-questioning, the participants are able to think and act with a heightened sense of reflection and reflexivity, indicating that they are not only developing expertise, but they are also being continuously transformed in social interaction.

The participants' accounts demonstrated that they have an immense propensity for flexibility in social interaction as they recognise and connect across difference and are open to new perspectives. From their positioning in and between their multiple languages and cultures they have developed social, linguistic, and cultural awareness in understanding themselves, others, and the spheres in which they live, learn, and work. Furthermore, their aspirations for and engagement in work were about what they could contribute through their roles by drawing upon these linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities, and in turn, access a sense of belonging to the community in which they live. Hence, education and employment were not only a means to secure a vocation or to support their livelihoods, but also of creating a more equitable world in which to live and work.

Their engagement in both educational and employment spheres was also a channel through which they were seeking dignity as human beings who meaningfully participate in and contribute to what is for them a new society in which they now live, learn, and work. Yet, who, how, and what they could do, be, and achieve was always achieved interactionally. This is profoundly important to consider because in education and employment, their opportunities, and outcomes, including their sense of dignity, were contingent on how they were received by others, such as educators, employees, peers, colleagues, family, and friends. Because young people who have had a refugee experience encounter ongoing discrimination in education and employment it is vital to understand how others are implicated in their continued disadvantage in these domains. The understanding that the participants were living in-between languages and cultures and the heightened sense of consciousness that they develop has been foregrounded by drawing upon Anzaldúa's (2012) borderlands concept and Maturana's (2000) theory of autopoiesis.

Drawing on Anzaldúa's (2012) borderlands notion has highlighted that these young people's trajectories were experienced in the space between their two or more languages and cultures. It was through residing in these spaces (as defined by Anzaldúa, 2012) in-

between languages and cultures that the participants developed their unique and distinctive multilingual, intercultural, and experiential capabilities. Taking into consideration Maturana's (2000) theory of autopoiesis, alongside his coauthored works with Varela (1980) and with Dávila Yáñez and Ramírez (2016), the analysis has shown how the participants developed their distinctive expertise in their internal worlds in response to interactions with diverse others. Shifts in their understandings of themselves, which were always embedded in languages and cultures, were initiated in interactions with others and the world around them. As they lived their trajectories in and in-between multiple languages and cultures, they were evolving in connection to their experiences of interacting with others across linguistic, cultural, and social worlds (Maturana, 2000; Maturana & Varela, 1980; Maturana, Dávila Yáñez & Ramírez, 2016). They were developing linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities, characterised by their ability to expertly live, learn, and work in two languages, cultures, ways of knowing, values, and social systems simultaneously. The participants became experienced and skilled in operating multilingually and interculturally, a reality that has been given scant attention throughout the world in research concerned with the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience in Australia and beyond.

The present study has foregrounded that living, learning, and working in-between languages and cultures is not without obstacles, as discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. This has been previously identified in current research into refugee experiences in educational and employment contexts (Curry et al., 2018; Miller, Ziaian & Esterman, 2018; Ndhlovu, 2015). As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, and as observed in the analysis throughout Chapters 4, 5 and 6, experiences of discrimination such as those faced across the participants' trajectories are frequently foregrounded in contemporary studies (Abkhezret al., 2015; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006; Khawajaet al., 2019). Although these studies highlight the ongoing disadvantage faced by many refugees in education and employment, they continue to focus on language and culture purely in terms of English language and the mainstream Australian culture.

Unfortunately, as highlighted in the work of Ndhlovu (2015a, 2015b) the prevailing focus on their English proficiency and acculturation to Australian society renders invisible the role and potential value of their home languages and cultures in both learning in educational contexts and within the world of work. Although such research

does focus on highlighting the value of multilingualism and diversity, for those who arrive in Australia as refugees what they have to offer continues to be largely ignored (Blake et al., 2018; Harvey & Mallman, 2019). This is because taking a monolingual view when investigating the role of language and culture in migrant and refugee education-to-employment experiences neglects to take into account the applied linguistic research that has emerged over the past three decades. Taking a multilingual and intercultural view of the role of language and culture in their education, employment, and broader life-worlds brings to the fore their capabilities. These include their ability to live, learn, and work in two or more languages and cultures, and their personal strengths. Currently, many people in educational and employment contexts, such as teachers and employers and others in the wider community continue to remain fundamentally blind to such people's linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and their capabilities, leaving the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of their everyday lives unacknowledged. It is for this reason that multilingual and intercultural views in research into the experiences of young people who have had a refugee experience is paramount.

Taking a multilingual and intercultural view has enabled me to access insights into the participants' implicit and tacit multilingual and intercultural realities and knowledge and how they manifest in particular linguistic and cultural contexts in dynamic social processes in interaction with others (May, 2014; Ortega, 2014b; Pennycook, 2021; Scarino, 2020) across their education-to-employment trajectories. The findings of this study have demonstrated the need to take a holistic view of the lived experiences of such young people and the multilingual and intercultural reality of their educational and employment experiences. At present there is little research that takes a multilingual and intercultural stance to examine the education-to-employment experiences of those who have had a refugee experience.

This study demonstrates the need for taking a multilingual and intercultural stance, because young people who have had a refugee experience are living, learning, and working in linguistic and cultural diversity, in a dominant language and culture that is not their own. As such people make their trajectory they do so in multiple languages and cultures simultaneously, in what Shohamy (2006) describes as deeply personal and creative ways. This highlights the pressing need for a multilingual orientation in studies that focus on the experiences across the education-to-employment trajectories of those

who have arrived in Australia as refugees. Currently, even though linguistic and cultural diversity is continually increasing in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017), monolingual perspectives in research, social policy, and practice continue, maintaining social structures that facilitate the dominance of a 'monolingual mainstream' (Clyne, 2008). This study has unearthed insights into the education-to-employment trajectories of young people who have had a refugee experience, foregrounding the role of their multiple languages, cultures, and lived experiences and their implications for policy and practice, to which I now turn.

8.2 Implications: policy and practice

Although this study was conducted in the Australian context, the experiences of the participants exemplify a worldwide phenomenon. Their voices connect with other stories of young people who have experienced forced migration, displacement, relocation, integration, and change throughout the world, and the role that education and employment plays for them in this process. Today, more than ever before, millions of people are being forced to flee their homelands as refugees, struggling as they seek to find another place to survive (UNHCR, 2017). Young people who have had a refugee experience, such as those who participated in the present study, arrive in a new country with diverse languages, cultures, knowledges, ways of knowing, values, practices histories of lived experiences. As the present study has established, this linguistically, culturally, socially, and experientially diverse reality has implications for the trajectories of such people, which they experience in the context of a dominant language and culture that is not their own. Because refugee youth are such a heterogeneous group, awareness needs to be assigned to understanding their education and employment through their own perspectives. Significantly, education and employment policy and practice play an important role in facilitating positive resettlement experiences of such young people (Correa-Velez et al., 2017; Fleay et al., 2016, p. 64).

The capabilities of young people who have had a refugee experience to live, learn, and work in the spaces in-between two cultures and languages is an expertise that is largely overlooked and undervalued in the wider world of work. There needs to be recognition by educators, employers, and others in the wider community that such people bring and add value to the wider community, beyond merely 'recognising', 'celebrating', and 'including' them. Firstly, as established throughout this study, the development of

knowledge, language learning, and life-world learning more broadly is mediated through the individual's framework of prior languages, cultures, knowledges, values, and social practices. People's linguistic and cultural frameworks are not merely a part of their 'background'; rather, they are composed of the interpretive resources through which they make sense of their learning (Scarino, 2014b, p. 290) and mediate meaning across their trajectories. As such, young people who arrive in Australia as refugees bring with them diverse knowledge, which is meditated through their primary languages and cultures and may have value in broad fields of employment. Secondly, the value of foregrounding their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities it is their whole lives, including their education-to-employment trajectories, are mediated by two or more languages and through the lens of multiple cultural realities. Thus, their education-to-employment experiences are had, and made sense of, multilingually and interculturally, which is an expertise and a reality that has received little focus in research or in policy recommendations or implementation.

As the findings of this study suggest, the capabilities of young people who have had a refugee experience are developed across their whole lives. These capabilities are expertise that may not otherwise be available to all in Australia, and they continue to remain on the margins of existing scholarly discussion, policy, and practice. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognise and respond to the prejudicial thinking and practices that constrain the educational and employment opportunities and outcomes of those who have arrived in Australia as refugees. This makes it necessary to consider current legislations that influence the development and implementation of policy in the world of work. There continues to be a general lack of sensitivity in employment contexts to the languages, cultures, knowledges, and broader life-worlds of young people who arrive in Australia as refugees. Yet, as this study has highlighted, there is value in focusing on their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities through adopting a multilingual and intercultural stance in place of the current monolingual vies that permeate well-intentioned legislation, policy, and practice.

The social structures that are currently in place have been established in light of policies that were created within monolingual views of the world. Significantly, these structures affect how people understand learning, and working participation, processes, and outcomes. Consequently, in both policy and practice, there is a continued absence of

recognition of, or value attributed to, the role of the multilingual and intercultural capabilities of young refugees. It is not only the omission of the mediating role of their home languages, cultures, and experiential knowledges that limits understandings of their trajectories, as well as their participation, outcomes, and opportunities across them. It is also the lack of awareness of, and value ascribed to the in-between nature of their realities, or the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of their everyday lives in and out of education and employment.

Drawing on the recommendations of AMES Australia (2020), a leading settlement agency that supports newly arrived refugees and migrants, the Economy and Infrastructure Committee (2020, p. xxi) of the Parliament of Victoria, emphasises that facilitating into employment disadvantaged jobseekers, such as young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees, can be a difficult process. In response to research, discussion papers and in direct submissions to consultations with government, opposition, and departmental representatives, AMES Australia (2020, p. 26) has prepared policy positions in several key areas of refugee settlement including employment services, youth, and education. In its inquiry into sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers, the Committee (Economy and Infrastructure Committee, 2020) suggested that challenges are specific to particular groups. For those who are categorised as refugees, these challenges, which affect their employability, include disrupted education and poor English proficiency, as well as poor literacy and numeracy generally.

The Committee recommended (Economy and Infrastructure Committee, 2020, p. xxi) the need for a 'holistic approach' that takes into consideration individuals' unique personal circumstances; nevertheless, their emphasis upon these 'barriers' (e.g., lack of English language skills and disrupted education) perpetuates the lack of recognition of the distinctive expertise of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees. Understanding of the barriers to success in education and access to employment, then, needs to include that the knowledge and capabilities of young people who have had a refugee experience are not being recognised in either educational or employment contexts, because emphasis is placed upon what they do *not* appear to have that those from the dominant language and culture do have. This particular emphasis conceals their distinctive expertise and simultaneously denies them access to their dignity as fully

participating, contributing members of the wider community in which they are seeking acceptance, belonging, and a sense of fulfilment in and through their employment.

To illustrate the way in which current legislation, policy, and practice conceals the distinctive expertise of those who have had a refugee experience, it is useful to refer to Australia's current Multicultural Statement (Australian Government, 2017). The statement was inaugurated by the federal government in 1985 to establish and maintain 'harmonious and socially cohesive communities', the need for 'equality of opportunity for all', 'celebrating' and recognising 'diversity' while simultaneously encouraging 'integration'. The statement was developed in response to the reality that Australia is what is referred to as 'multicultural society', including Indigenous peoples and people from all over the world. In responding to this diversity, the statement sets out an agenda of 'shared values', 'rights', 'responsibilities' and 'national identity', proclaiming that 'Australia is the most successful multicultural society in the world, uniting a multitude of cultures, experiences, beliefs, and traditions' (Australian Government, 2017, p. 7).

Through the voices of government figures, including Malcom Turnbull, who was the Prime Minister of Australia at the time of the most recent publication of the statement, racism and discrimination are deplored, while notions such as 'inclusion' are implored. Economic and social participation of new arrivals is encouraged, with a nod towards 'harnessing the advantages' of 'diversity'; however, English remains at the centre of issues surrounding language and such participation. For instance, it is stated that:

> English is and will remain our national language and is a critical tool for migrant integration. At the same time, our multilingual workforce is broadening business horizons and boosting Australia's competitive edge in an increasingly globalised economy. (Australian Government, 2017, p. 13)

Evidently, although language and culture are considered in legislation and in the implementation of policy and practice, it is done through a monolingual orientation that foregrounds English while placing the value of 'diverse' languages on their usefulness as assets to business and commerce. Emphasising the value of linguistic and cultural diversity on business terms fails to recognise the mediating role that languages play in all spheres of all people's lives and reflects an absence of intercultural awareness and understanding. The multicultural statement does refer to a need for what is termed 'inter-cultural dialogue' to minimise tensions, reduce prejudice, and move towards social harmony and cohesion, and enhance belonging and trust (Australian Government,

2017, p. 15). Yet, there is no mention of the interculturality (Scarino, 2020) of the experiences of those who are from what is commonly labelled 'linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds' (CALDS).

Similarly, the Australian Government's (Australian Government, 2021) addition to the United Nations Human Rights Council's 2015 review of human rights recommends supporting new arrivals to actively become part of and contribute to Australia's economic and social development. Still, there is only one mention of 'intercultural', which is made in relation to 'building interfaith' and 'intercultural understanding' through institutions, including in sports, in classrooms, community-driven programs and outreach. The annex places emphasis on language in terms of English language training to support pathways from education into employment, and as positive factors in supporting access to work and participation in society. As such, what young people who have had a refugee experience have to offer remains unacknowledged and under-utilised in broader fields of employment. The expertise provided these young people by their multiple languages, cultures, knowledges, and their experiences of living, learning, and working in-between them has not yet entered the discussion in a manner that does sufficient justice to them, the potential value they could have in broader fields of work, or their dignity.

Where the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge of such people is beginning to be acknowledged it is mainly addressed as their value in the workforce by providing services to others from their own communities. For example, in its publication, *Australian employers' guide to hiring refugee*, the Migration Council of Australia (2019) makes recommendations for policy and practice for businesses to provide employment, mentoring, internship, and work experience opportunities to refugees, included are initiatives for employers to develop and share best practices in refugee employment. Yet, there is no consideration of the multilingual and intercultural reality or expertise of refugees, and little mention of their own languages, cultures, or knowledges being valuable beyond their advantage in the workforce in servicing their own communities.

The guide outlines that cultural and linguistic links to refugees' communities are created through their recruitment (Migration Council of Australia, 2019, p. 24). In addition, the recommendations indicate that staff who work with refugee colleagues experience

personal growth and empathy from gaining a better understanding of their life experiences (p. 21). In the present study, the participants' personal accounts revealed that they were largely denied employment outside of the '*community sector*'; instead, they tended to work with others who came from their own communities, or who had also had a migrant or refugee experience. Yet, the participants' narratives suggest that their expertise may offer more to the broader community beyond being of service to others who share their linguistic, cultural, and migrant 'background' or opportunities for their colleagues to experience 'personal growth'. As evidenced in Aadhil's account, such young people can support the development of their colleagues' own intercultural expertise. In Excerpt 4.18, Aadhil's account highlights that his colleagues were developing multilingual and intercultural awareness and understanding through the particular expertise and knowledge he brought to his employment. Likewise, Karla's position as a cultural awareness officer for a local not-for profit organisation that offers services and support to people who have had a refugee experience, included promoting intercultural understanding in organisational contexts (see Excerpt 4.19). Yet, her work, like Aadhil's, remained in the '*community sector'*. Although such work nurtured their sense of dignity, which, the Charter of the United Nations (1945) states is a basic human right, their distinctive expertise remained largely unacknowledged. They met restricted access to opportunities outside of known refugee employment niches, therefore, their distinctive capabilities that are of potential value in broader fields of work remained under-utilised.

As observed in Excerpt 5.13, Karla experienced discrimination because she had learned English as a second language and as a result was unable to access employment in retail or hospitality. Even though she had grown up in Australia after arriving when she was ten, and had completed high school in Australia and was in her second year of her degree, she had not accessed work outside of the '*community sector*'. Those who wore a hijab wore a marker of cultural identity that differentiated them from the wider Australian community. This was evidenced in the accounts Arezzo and Halima (see Excerpts 4.12, 414, 5.15, 5.15). They were frequently discriminated against by others, including teachers and peers both at school and in the wider community. Such emphasis on what such young people do not have, such as a local 'Australian' accent, that others from the dominant mainstream do tend to have, reveals that Australian society is structured in a way that privileges those from the dominant language and culture. Thus,

those who do not fit the pre-established 'norms' or 'standards' do not experience equality in their education or employment. This reality is generally elided in current policy and practice and has significant implications for such people's education-to-employment trajectories.

In both federal and state legislation of antidiscrimination laws designed to protect all, there is an omission of the significance of issues related to linguistic and cultural discrimination. In a socially unequal world, young people who have had a refugee experience must work harder than most of their peers in education and employment, where they are playing catch-up in the framework of a linear trajectory throughout education and into employment. As examples, Latif had to start his training as an electrical engineer from the 'beginning again' (see Excerpt 5.10), and Aadhil (see Excerpt 6.5) did not have access to government assistance to finish high school or tertiary education after he turned 18 years of age.

Although federal legislation (*Racial Discrimination Act 1975*; 8, 9 & 10**)** considers the Charter of the United Nations (Purposes and Principles: Articles 1 & 2) which is designed to promote respect and observance of human rights based on the principles of dignity and equality, issues related to language and culture are not addressed. In the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA) (Vn 20.9.2021) for South Australians in the workplace, there is no mention whatsoever of language or culture, let alone the intercultural reality of many Australians, including young people who have had a refugee experience. As the personal experiences of those involved in the present study suggest, discrimination based on linguistic and cultural difference is frequently encountered in both education and the world of work. For instance, for some, having an accent different to that of the majority of the wider Australian community, or being viewed as culturally and visibly different created barriers to participant in both education and employment.

The Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs has recently published two guides for policy and practice, with recommendations encouraging employers to recruit those who have had a refugee experience: *A social entrepreneur's guide: boosting refugees' economic participation* (Office of the Coordinator-General, 2022) and *An employer's guide to working with refugees: unlocking new sectors of Australia's workforce* (Refugee and Migrant Services Advisory Council, 2022). Each of these

guides highlights the economic and commercial benefits to business of employing refugees, suggesting advice for best practice, and showcasing the experience of employers that have done so successfully. Intending to open economic pathways for refugees in Australia, the guides refer to research conducted by the Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services, examining characteristics of refugee job seekers and barriers they face in the labour market. These documents also share research into what works to support refugees and humanitarian entrants to overcome barriers and access economic opportunities. Yet again, there is no mention of language beyond referring to their English language abilities and training, with complete omission of the intercultural nature of their realities.

The findings of this study indicate that policy and practice in both education and employment need to acknowledge and effectively harness all the linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges that such young people bring to their learning and employment. As this study has shown, they have and are developing distinctive expertise, which is their linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and the development of their ability to navigate their trajectories in-between two or more languages and interculturally. Acknowledging and harnessing may yield their significant and diverse knowledge and capabilities, while recognising the value that they add through their contribution in these spheres, and to society more broadly. It is essential to move towards harnessing their linguistic, cultural, and experiential resources in a shift away from a monolingual mindset (Clyne, 2005) and all its pervasive effects (Ndhlovu, 2015a; Scarino, 2014b), such as being denied opportunities to work because of visible difference or accent. What is needed is institutional and community-wide recognition that young people who arrive in Australia as refugees are more than their migration classification suggests. Accordingly, rather than receiving these people homogenously, in categorical terms such as ‘refugee’, ‘asylum seeker’, ‘English as a second language learner/worker’ or ‘affected by disrupted schooling’, it is necessary to bring into focus their distinctive expertise and dignity as fully participating and contributing members of the Australian society.

In this section I have considered the implications of the study. I have indicated that current legislation, and recommendations for policy and practice concerning the education-to-employment trajectories of young refugees, does not adequately address the role of their languages, cultures, and knowledges or the interculturality (Scarino,

2020) of their everyday realities. To address this deficiency, I have outlined the need for a move towards integrating a holistic approach within a multilingual and intercultural orientation in place of current monolingual views that pervade research, legislation, policy, and practice, in order to recognise that young people who arrive in Australia as refugees bring with them and are developing linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledges and capabilities, constituting their distinctive expertise. I now turn to consider the limitations of the study.

8.3 Limitations of this study, and directions for further research

A limitation of the design of the study was that not all participants could maintain their participation in all three phases of the data collection. There was an attrition in participation in the second interviews and the group workshop for various personal reasons, including family and work commitments. Only seven of the 12 young people participated in a second interview and only two were able to participate in the group workshop. Despite the attrition rate, the first interviews of the five young people who did not participate in the second interviews yielded a significant contribution of insights. Although only two of the young people participated in the group workshop, it, created opportunities for participants to consider similarities and differences amongst experiences, thoughts, feelings, and reflections in a group context. During these processes the young people contributed their accounts, through which I was able to investigate the intersecting influences of being a young person who arrived in Australia as a refugee, living in linguistic and cultural diversity, and their education-to-employment experiences.

This study represents the experiences and perspectives of a relatively small sample of participants in a specific location, namely Adelaide, South Australia. Future studies could benefit from involving a larger cohort of individuals, as this would present a broader and more diverse range of experiences and perspectives. Further patterns across a wider range of accounts could create additional insights than what has been possible in this study. Yet, it is important to note here that rather than viewing a small sample as a limitation, Riessman (2008) highlights the immense value of even a single case study. The author argues that the narrative accounts of just one individual can provide in-depth, detailed understandings of a given social phenomenon. International studies would be of great benefit as exploring the trajectories of young refugees in different

geographical locations could afford opportunities to conduct comparisons and observe the impact of local policies in the different contexts. Different countries are governed in different ways, and policy settings impact the education-to-employment trajectories of all people, including young people who have had a refugee experience. By observing both the differences and commonalties in diverse international contexts deeper insights into the opportunities, challenges, needs, issues, hopes, and desires related to the trajectories of young refugees may come to the fore.

In a step towards what Phipps (2019) refers to as 'working harder', further studies would benefit from having more voices from those who are the 'experts by experience'. The prevailing Western practice and the prestige of the printed word, predominantly in English and other colonial languages, are a part of what Phipps (p. 6) refers to as 'the flattened-out hegemony of a text-based literacy', where oral language and other forms of representation, such as the arts, broadly conceived, are relegated to the periphery. There are multiple epistemologies, ways of knowing, and avenues to take to determine the constitution of knowledge that already exists in the world, including through literature, story, poetry, music, and the performing and visual arts. Future studies in this field could be enhanced by improvising and devising different ways of approaching and implementing research as a social practice by drawing on any number of these multiple ways of telling, hearing, and knowing that resonate with those involved, the 'researched' (p. 7). In doing so, opportunities may be better captured to create knowledges that uphold the granularity of the way those involved in research name their own worlds and lived experiences (p. 7).

The analysis of the participants' arts-based narrative accounts presented opportunities for gaining in-depth and detailed insights into their understandings. Yet, in the one-to-one interviews the arts-based component was relatively brief in comparison to the interactive exchange. I recommend further research that adopts a narrative arts-based approach. Future studies would benefit from expanding the repertoire of arts-based modalities and approaches as there is no singular approach in adopting art as a way of knowing. As this study has shown art-making processes are a deepening modality in conducting applied linguistic research. Other studies could benefit from employing art as a way of telling and knowing by subjecting the arts-based responses to more comprehensive questioning to tap into the participants' internal worlds and tacit knowledge, as this affords access to a deepening understanding of the phenomenon

under question. Further still, it would be greatly beneficial as part of my own and other people's academic practice to conduct arts-based narrative interviews multilingually. As Phipps (2019, p. 10) understands, this would involve trial and error, and likely many failures, yet, through the coalescing of people's first or preferred languages and their preferred mode for conveying their phenomenological insights, will come the openings for creative practice and an expanding and transformative research endeavour that may create opportunities to disrupt structural inequalities about what counts and what doesn't count as knowledge. Racial disparities within the field of applied linguistics run deep (Pennycoook, 2021), and, research must be undertaken to facilitate improvement of the quality of life for the oppressed, marginalised, stigmatised, and ignored, to facilitate healing, reconciliation, and restoration between the researcher and the researched (Krog, 2010, p. 133).

I recognise that the participants as narrators were not only interpreting their experience but also making sense of who they understood themselves to be (Riessman, 2008). This perspective allowed me as a researcher to enter their worlds amid their trajectories with the understanding that their lives did not begin the day that I interviewed them, nor did they end as I left. Their lives continue, and as such, their accounts, my analysis of them and the consequent findings can only reflect their phenomenological understandings at a particular point in time across their evolving trajectories. From this viewpoint, the experiences of young people who have arrived in Australia as refugees would be better understood if data were collected and collated, documented and analysed in a longitudinal study. A longitudinal investigation of their perspectives of their trajectories would provide more nuanced insights into the patterns of their trajectories and how they come to understand them over time.

Having brought together the research findings, implications, limitations, and future directions I now turn to give some final personal reflections, which I include before presenting the poems that were written in the group workshop, and that bring this study to a close. These personal reflections are an important consideration as the sharing of narratives is an entirely relational process, between teller and hearer. Accordingly, as Riessman (1994, 2008) highlights, as the researcher in the relational process of collecting arts-based narrative data, I cannot be ignored in what and how the participants' narratives came to form. My presence, my questions, and my responses, both intentional and unintentional (e.g., subtle shifts in facial expression, bodily

movements), influenced the way in which the young people told their stories. This process is almost like a kind of dance between the participants as narrators and me, as researcher. We were constantly both influenced and influences of the co-creation of their narratives. Considering the co-creative nature of narrative, it would have been valuable to return these narratives to the participants to capture their perspectives on my account of their accounts. However, owing to logistical constraints (e.g., time), it was not possible to do so in this study.

The questions I asked and the way that I asked them influenced what was distinguished in their telling. My voice is foregrounded in these closing words because, although I have foregrounded the narrative accounts of the participants to access insights into how they understood the phenomenon under question in their own terms, their stories were filtered by and through me as researcher. The understandings that I have brought to bear upon their accounts were constructed across time and space, changing along the way with each read through of the developing chapters. With each new insight that I forged through adopting different theoretical material, the data have reflected a different hue, a different quality, and a different sliver of vision and understanding.

8.4 Closing self-reflections

In taking this final personal and self-reflective stance as researcher I was informed by the work of Riessman (2008), Anzaldúa (2012), and Phipps (2019), (among others), who have been foundational in my own thinking throughout the formation of this study. Although writing from their unique personal standpoints and in various research orientations, each of these scholars writes herself closely into her work with an acute sense of self-awareness and reflexivity. They acknowledge the shaping force of their presence, positioning, situatedness, theoretical lenses, and words upon the emergence of the knowledge that their work constructs. Separately and differently, each underscores that in research, coming to an understanding of and about others and the linguistic and cultural worlds that shape and envelope their lives can be achieved only through the researcher's own linguistic, cultural, and social perspectives, positioning, and subjectivities. What follows is a brief coda that brings the present study to a close on a personal note, signifying my own relationship to the processes involved.

I set out to do this study because I can see that we live in an unequal world. Why are some lives valued more than others? The places where we are born, the colour of our skin, the languages that we speak, and the culture and religion by which we may live our lives should not influence our life chances. Contemporary societies comprise individuals and communities that reflect a diversity of languages, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, values, and practices. Yet, some continue to dominate while others exist on the periphery of the collective imagination. This raises the question: why should some lives be more privileged than others? Why do the borders between geographical spaces and the dividing lines made by people between languages and cultures represent a surplus of rights for some, but the border for others (Khosravi, 2007)? Maybe I could be less loaded and avoid these ideas that Khosravi presents to us so poignantly and personally in his book, '*Illegal' traveller*, based on his own narrative account of being a refugee from Afghanistan. I could have avoided drawing on Anzaldúa's (2012) work around the concept of the borderlands, because she uses particularly strong and emotional language. I considered it. Yet, like Pennycook (2021, p. 7), I am led towards the question, why are women of colour, indigenous scholars, and many others not being cited in academia? Pennycook (2021) points out that:

> … White people feel so comfortable in this field: And this ties to the colonial roots of linguistics, and the separation of language from all that it is part of: Bodies, lives, stories, histories, articulations of the past, the present, and the future. It has been a White applied linguistics that makes it possible for people in the field to avoid their own complicity in maintaining White Power. (p. 8)

Pennycook (2021) explains that epistemological racism — the dominance, normalisation, and continued reference to white Eurocentric forms of knowledge — is deeply entwined in applied linguistic knowledge practices. Certain peoples, worldviews, and forms of knowledge are favoured over others (Kubota, 2019). Motha (2020) calls for a movement towards uncovering the plethora of ways in which applied linguistics has acted as an important and effective vehicle for white supremacy and indirectly the empires, with the core of the discipline related to 'racial inequalities and racial hierarchies' (p. 129).

As a white woman positioned in academia, I wanted to feel the work that I was doing. I wanted to tap into the thoughts and feelings of those who have lived in the social borderlands so that I can feel their realities in my own bones. My own heart. I wanted to be open to the capacity of compassion that resides in the human heart. In my human

heart. I didn't want to shy away from the pain. So, alongside the voices of other theorists and academic scholars, I invited the theoretical voice of Anzaldúa (2012), as she represents the voice of one who has lived and felt the pain. So that people such as me, who have not lived it, can glimpse it. Taste it. Even just for a moment. This matters to me, because I look around and I see the injustices of the world, and I look at my own life and those of my children. Although we have our difficulties, they cannot begin to compare to the plight of those who have left and arrived. I cannot speak of what happened before they left, for that is not where my line of inquiry lies. But I can speak a little about what happens once they arrive.

They arrive open. Brave. Strong. Loving. Ready to adapt. To contribute. To give back. To belong. To forgive. But how are they received? They are received. Taken in. But not their whole person. Just parts of them. Other parts cast aside, ignored, unnoticed. Told to forget. Your languages, your cultures. Your knowledge.

They cannot leave their pasts behind. Or their bodies, or the culture that holds them to the earth, or the language on their lips and in their souls. They can't forget them. And they must not, for this is who they are as human beings. And with their openness, their open hearts, and minds, with their willingness to contribute, and with their desire to belong, they have much to offer.

And finally, I close this study, constituted by participants' stories, and filtered through my analysis, as a lens through which their narratives were understood, with three poems. These poems were written as part of the data collection in the group workshop for the present study. I have included these at this juncture as I did not scrutinise them in the analysis. For this reason, I wanted the words that constitute each of these untitled poems to speak for themselves as a poetic statement of what the moment of writing the pieces meant to each of the authors. The first two were written by the two participants who were present for the group workshop, and the final piece was written by me.

Untitled #1

Feelings teaches to live
Feelings teaches to fly
Feelings can finish a life
Feelings can make everything beautiful
Feelings can put everything to an end
But try not to let any feelings put anything to an end
Show the feelings your way
To bring the courage and love up
And rule over everything and everyone.

Halima,
Group workshop, p. 15

Untitled #2

Yes, I am free
Yes, I can breathe
Yes, I am strong
Yes, I can see
I am brave
I can break
I am confident
I can fall
Happiness is journey
A choice
An opportunity
Fall
Get up again
Break
Fix it
Smile
There is no better accessory
Cry
There is no better relief
Love
Why else are we here?

Karla,
Group workshop, p. 16

Untitled #3

I can't speak for you
But I can hear you
From where I stand
I can take the words so generously shared
And put them in the sky
So they can be stars
Shining light on shadowy paths
I can come with an open heart
And listen
I can hear you
But I cannot speak for you
What would you have me say?

Dashielle,
Group workshop, p. 15

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Appendix A Information Sheet



Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences
School of Creative Industries
Research Centre for Languages and cultures
Principal supervisor: Assoc. Professor Angela Scarino is Director of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures (RCLC) and has extensive experience in directing and conducting research in the areas of languages and education, interculturality and linguistic and cultural diversity. Contact: Ph +61 883024775 Mobile: [redacted] Fax +6183023024396 email Angela.Scarino@unisa.edu.au

Co-supervisor: Dr Fiona O'Neill is a member of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures (RCLC). Her research expertise is in the areas of languages and the professions, interculturality and linguistic and cultural diversity. Contact: Ph +61 830 24649 email Fiona.O'Neill@unisa.edu.au

Researcher: Dashielle Amber Allain Contact: Ph [redacted] email dashielle.allain@mymail.unisa.edu.au
PhD Candidate
BA, Honours
BA, Languages and Intercultural Communication

Research Study Information Sheet

Education to employment trajectories of youth living as refugees in South Australia: an arts-based narrative study

My name is Dashielle Allain (dashielle.allain@mymail.unisa.edu.au) and I am undertaking a research project as part of my doctorate (PhD) in applied linguistics in the field of sociolinguistics. This study will include a group of up to 12 individuals between the ages of 18-24 who are living in South Australia as refugees. You are invited to take part in this research study. Participation is voluntary and although you may not directly benefit from your involvement, your input would be most valuable in contributing to the developing knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced by linguistic and cultural minorities, such as refugee youths living in Australia. The following information is provided so that you may decide whether you would like to participate in the study.

This project will investigate the following question:

How do young people living in linguistic and cultural diversity as refugees, experience moving out of education into employment in South Australia?

Please be aware that, should you feel distressed at any time during any part of the study, you are free to stop the interview(s) or leave the workshop at any stage. Likewise, you do not need to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable responding to and you do not have to contribute to any group discussions if you do not feel comfortable taking part in.

Participants are free to stop the interview(s) or leave the workshop at any stage if they find the experience distressing. In the case of any participant becoming distressed the session will cease until participant indicates that they wish to either continue or discontinue and I will personally assist them to access relevant support services.

What is the study about?
Some of the most important issues facing youth with refugee backgrounds in South Australia are related to education and employment. Education is an important pathway through which people may enter into and fulfil employment goals, improve quality of life, gain access to income, access a sense of meaning or achievement with opportunities to actively participate in Australian society establishing a sense of self and home. This study will investigate how youth from refugee backgrounds experience moving out of education into employment and how they negotiate their identities as they learn, seek employment and enter the work force. Supported by the participants' own voices and creative expressions my aim is to develop understandings of the opportunities and challenges faced by young people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds living as refugees in South Australia as they (prepare to) move out of education into employment.

University of South Australia

What does participation involve and what questions will be asked?
Participation in this study includes writing, talking and creatively expressing your history of experiences in relation to your education to employment journey and the role language and culture plays in those experiences. You will be invited to write or talk about your education to employment journey followed by two interviews roughly 8-12 weeks apart, which will include your creative expressions based on your education to employment experiences. You will also be invited to take part in a group creative-expression workshop where you may creatively express your lived experiences of your education to employment journeys in a collaborative environment. The creative expression parts of the study will involve using a selection of mediums to express your responses to questions about your experiences of moving out of education, into employment including paints, pencils, textas and clay. Once you have made your artworks you will be invited to share what you make of your creatively expressed representations and how they relate to your lived experiences of moving out of education into employment and the role language and culture plays in this journey.

Questions will be asked about where and with whom you speak your languages, and what role your languages and cultures play in your education, seeking employment and/or being in employment. You will be asked about memorable experiences you have had in education and employment as you have made or prepared to make the move out of education into employment with consideration of the role language and culture plays in this transition.

Each interview will go for up to one hour; the creative expression workshop will be around 3 hours. I will audio-record and transcribe these interviews before analysing them. Any artworks that you create will be photographed. Participants can withdraw from the study at any stage and can request their data be excluded up until such time as the audio transcripts are completed. Withdrawing from the study will not affect your relationship/position with any of the following organisations: University of South Australia (UniSA), the Australian Refugee Association (ARA) or Thebarton Senior College (TSC).

All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information that could lead to identification of any individual will be released, unless required by law. All participants will be de-identified with pseudonyms in the analysis and presentation of data. All participants taking part in the workshop focus group session will be asked to maintain the confidentiality of group discussions and preserve the anonymity of workshop group participation. Given the public nature of focus groups, however, this cannot be guaranteed. The information collected will be analysed, and a summary of findings will be sent to participants upon completion of the study.

The data (audio recordings, photographs and other research related documentation) will be accessed by the researcher only, and a copy will be securely stored (password protected) in electronic form on the UniSA server for a period of 5 years, after which it will be removed according to relevant legislation. Please note that non-identifiable data collected in this project may be used as comparative data in future projects, for which ethics approval will be sought.

How will participants benefit from the study?
The participants will not directly experience benefits themselves, although a better understanding of their education to employment trajectories will contribute to developing knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced by young people living in Australia as refugees. Participation in the study has the potential to be a positive experience for participants as they have the opportunity to engage in sharing their stories through verbal, textual and other creative mediums in a supportive environment.

For further information regarding the study please contact me (the researcher, Dashielle Allain) via e-mail: dashielle.allain@mymail.unisa.edu.au

Participant Rights
The University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au'.

University of South Australia

Participants or third parties who wish to lodge a complaint about either the study or the way it is being conducted should contact the Executive Officer of UniSA HREC in the first instance, email: humanethics@unisa.edu.au or tel: 8302 3118.

If participants find discussing their experiences during the interviews or group workshop distressing several support services are listed below, which are available to help.

Life Without Barriers (LWB) SRAS SA
Street address: 89-92 South Terrance, Adelaide, SA 5000
Phone number: (08) 8193 9400

Mercy House of Welcome, SA
Street address: 43 Le Hunte St (opposite St Brigid's Church), Kilburn, SA 5084.
Phone number : 0423 093 032
Opening hours: 10am-4pm Mon-Thurs
Email: mhw@mercy.org.au

Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS)
Street address: 81 Angas Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Phone number: (08) 8206 8900
Email address: sttars@sttars.org.au

Welcome to Australia
Street address: 100 Drayton Street, Bowden AND The Welcome Room, Mary Street, Salisbury
Phone number: 0408 346 306
Facebook: WelcomeCentreAdelaide

Appendix B Research Study Consent Form



Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences
School of Creative Industries
Research Centre for Languages and cultures

Research Study Consent Form

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: humanethics@unisa.edu.au

SECTION 1: CONTACT AND PROJECT DETAILS	
Researcher's Full Name:	Dashielle Amber Allain
Contact Details:	dashielle.allain@mymail.unisa.edu.au Phone: [redacted]
Supervisor's Full Name:	Angela Scarino
Contact Details:	Angela.Scarino@unisa.edu.au Phone: 8302 4775
Protocol Number:	200838
Project Title:	Education to employment trajectories of youth living as refugees in South Australia: an arts-based narrative study

SECTION 2: CERTIFICATION

Participant Certification

In signing this form, I confirm that:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the nature and the purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand that I may not directly benefit from taking part in the project.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped and that any art works I produce as part of this research will be photographed during the study.
- I understand that the tape(s) and photograph(s) will only be accessed by the researcher, and that a copy will be securely stored (password protected) in electronic form on the UniSA server for a period of 5 years.
- I grant the University the exclusive and royalty free right to reproduce and use in its ongoing activities, the non-identifiable photographs of artefacts produced in the course of the project.
- I understand that the University shall not be required to make any payment to me arising out of its exercise of this right.
- I understand that while information gained during this study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential, unless as required by law.
- If I chose to be involved in the workshop session, I agree to maintain confidentiality of all workshop group discussions and preserve the anonymity of the workshop group participation.

Participant Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

Researcher's Certification

I have explained the study to subject and consider that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
	Dashielle Amber Allain	

Appendix C Interview questions

I have included the prompts that I brought with me to each of the initial interviews below. These were grouped and delivered in nuanced ways in response to the fact that each of the participants were at different phases along their trajectories.

First interview

Overarching question: What has been your experience of making the trajectory from education-to-employment to date?

Prompts regarding educational experiences

What role does/has language/s and culture/s play/played in your educational experience/s?

Can you see how your languages and cultures may add value in your educational experiences? For example, gaining educational opportunities? Or being denied access to opportunities?

Can you describe an experience of a time when you noticed the role language and culture plays/played in your education?

In education did you notice what was going on with your languages other than English? For example, note taking in other languages although in English learning context?

Do you/have you identified with others in educational settings? If so, with whom? If not, why do you think you don't/haven't?

Can you tell me any stories about experiences in education that you will never forget?

Why were they memorable?

How did you manage the experience/s?

What did you come to understand from the experience/s?

How did it influence you to re/imagine/anticipate the future?

How did you feel about the experience at the time when it took place? And how do you feel about the experience now, upon reflection?

How have your language practices changed along the way?

In moving from education-to-employment, where do you see yourself now?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years from now?

Prompts regarding employment experiences

What role does/has language/s and culture/s play/played in your employment experience/s?

Can you see how your languages and cultures may add value in your employment experiences? For example, gaining employment l opportunities? Or being denied access to opportunities?

Can you describe an experience of a time when you noticed the role language and culture plays/played in your employment experience/s?

How have been received by employers? How have you experienced being treated? How have your linguistic repertoires been considered asset or hindrance?

Do you/have you share/shared your capabilities, knowledge, perspectives, linguistic and cultural histories of lived experiences with others (i.e., employment interviews, employers, co-workers) in employment/seeking employment settings? (i.e., language as a resource; histories of lived experiences as knowledge, language/s and culture/s as assistance or hindrance.).

If so, how have these been received?

Do you/have you identified with others in employment settings? If so, with whom? If not, why do you think you don't/haven't?

Are you or do you see yourself attaining your employment goals/aspirations? If so, what do you attribute to this success? If not, what do you attribute to not realising your goals/aspirations?

Do you consider that your C.V. adequately describes your capabilities?

Can you tell me any stories about experiences in employment/anticipating employment/seeking employment that you will never forget?

How did you manage the experience/s?

What did you come to understand from the experience/s?

How did it influence you to re/imagine/anticipate the future?

For each experience how did you feel about the experience at the time when it took place? And how do you feel about the experience now, upon reflection? Why were they memorable?

How do you describe the relationship between education and employment?

Can you describe a connection/relationship between your educational experience/s and your employment aspirations/experiences?

How do people respond when you use your own languages? I.e., on the phone, when they hear your accent?

What does culture mean to you?

In inviting each participant to express their experiences through non-verbal expression including painting and drawing I prompted them by asking them to use the art materials provided to express their response to the question *'how have you experienced their education-to-employment experiences to date?'* Upon completion of their creative expressions, I asked them to explain the verbal meanings of their visual, symbolic representations. Their reflections on their creative expressions provided further narrative insights, which were elicited by what they said in relation to the meanings of their pre-verbal creative artefacts.

I have included the prompts that guided the second interviews below. These were grouped and delivered in nuanced ways in response to the fact that each of the participants were at different phases along their trajectories. During the second interviews, the arts-based process was introduced in the initial stages of the interview. I prompted each participant by inviting them to use the art materials provided to express their response to the question *'Can you express the interactional or relational quality of your transitional experiences from education-to-employment to date?'* To clarify this

question in instances where a participant was uncertain about how to respond, I elaborated upon the question. For example, '*as you have lived the transition from education-to-employment what has your relationship to others and your environments been? How have you been received? How have you received others? What importance has language and culture held in these experiences?'* Upon completion of their creative expressions, I then invited the participants to explain the verbal meanings of their symbolic representations.

Second interview

Overarching question: What has been your experience of making the trajectory from education-to-employment to date, with consideration of the interactions that you have had in these two domains?

Do you perceive your expertise (linguistic, cultural, life experience, knowledge) as being significant in your educational, seeking employment or employment experiences?

Does your prior knowledge, (including capabilities, linguistic cultural or otherwise), count in your educational/employment/employment seeking? In the past? In the present? And in the future, will it count?

Can you recall a time when your expertise was drawn upon in an educational, employment seeking or employment setting?

How did others respond to this? Was it experienced as assistance or as hindrance?

How do/did you see yourself as meeting the expectations of others in education, seeking employment or in employment?

Are/were the expectations you hold/held of others in education or employment seeking or employment met? If so how/ if not, how so?

Have you experienced personal fulfilment of your educational, employment seeking or employment goals/aspirations?

How have you experienced being facilitated or hindered (i.e., held back) by others in education, employment seeking or employment to achieve these goals/aspirations?

How do you see your future in education/seeking employment/employment now? How has this been shaped by your past experiences?

Can you tell me a story of a memorable relational experience in education, seeking employment or employment?

How did you manage the experience?

What did you come to understand from the experience?

How did it influence you to re/imagine/anticipate the future?

How did you feel about the experience at the time when it took place? And how do you feel about the experience now, upon reflection? Why was it memorable?

In/when you were in education how did you imagine your experiences to be in seeking/obtaining/being in employment?

Are you where you want to be on your education-to-employment journey?

How do you see your future in employment now? How has this been shaped by your past experiences?