UCL Institute of Education

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN TRANSITION: AN INVESTIGATION OF FEMALE LEARNER IDENTITY IN A SAUDI CONTEXT

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I, Kathleen Mary Al-Johani, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed _____

Abstract

This one-year qualitative, multiple case study investigates identity as constructed by four Arab women attending the preparatory programme of a Saudi English-medium university and then moving on to their freshman year. From a broadly poststructuralist perspective, constructions of identity are investigated in two different ways: firstly, from a longitudinal view, continuities and changes in participants' big narratives are examined and secondly, subject positions which emerge in selected small stories are analysed in more detail.

Interpretation and analysis were guided by a second language learning theoretical framework which views the learner as integrated in their learning context. However, in order to reach a more nuanced understanding than narrative inquiry studies of identity which focus on extracting themes in terms of the individual learner, self-presentation, performance/positioning devices, the interactive accomplishment of talk and the wider social context were also examined.

Shifting identity positions problematized continuity which created a complex picture of EL2 learner identity. Subject positions emerged in interaction which linked participants' wider social identities to their investments in language learning and their imagined selves. In positioning themselves as members of social groups, participants developed voices of resistance to contest institutional and patriarchal discourses and to create agentive spaces. Thus, through the use of an innovative methodology, this thesis contributes to an understanding of language learner, gender, language and religious identities in the Saudi context.

It also makes a contribution to the understanding of transition into English-medium higher education in Saudi Arabia. Transition is seen as a destabilizing stage in a learning career and as a renegotiation of identity in order to engage with new learning practices and groups. Post-transition identities were constructed in escape narratives and performances of critical turning points. Only one participant performed a transitional narrative identity which indicated social, linguistic and academic engagement with her new learning/discourse community.

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank my four participants, Alex, Sandra, Nour and Nevine who opened windows for me onto a world which I thought I knew well. I have enjoyed our interactions immensely and feel privileged to have been part of their lives. I only hope that, in my presentation here, I have been able to do justice to their accounts of learning and living in this particular local context. Their stories of aspiration and determination form part of a much bigger story: that of Saudi women (and non-Saudi Arab women) seeking and claiming, sometimes in quite subtle ways, a more significant and fulfilling role for themselves as female citizens or residents of the country.

I am indebted to the longstanding, invaluable advice and support of my supervisor, Dr Amos Paran, who gave generously of his time in order to keep me focused and on-track at each stage of the research process. He often steered me away, perhaps unknowingly, from the solitary bouts of despair that are an inevitable part of producing a PhD thesis. Through a strategic balance of praise and criticism, Amos helped me maintain a belief in myself as an academic researcher and thesis-writer. Thank you Amos for your constructive, professional supervision and your personal encouragement.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my family who understood the importance to me of completing my thesis and patiently allowed me the space and time to carry out my work. I especially thank Abdullah and Ghaith for their invaluable Arabic support, to Nyel and Hanadi for their generous computer assistance, to Alya and Sam for their emotional support and to my sister, Josie Blackmore, for continually reminding me that there is life beyond a PhD thesis.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the loving memory of my mother, Mando Mattina, and to my grandchildren, Sam and Haya. Hopefully they will meet opportunity and fulfilment along the paths of their imagination, their learning and their lives.

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List of acronyms

ACS   Advanced Critical Skills

AL1   Arabic as a First Language

APS   Advanced Presentation Skills

CS   Computer Studies

DPP   Director of Preparatory Programme

EAP   English for Academic Purposes

EL2   English as a Second Language

ELLU   English Language Learner and User

EMI   English Medium Instruction

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

FN   Field Notes

GELL   Good English Language Learner (sheet)

PE   Physical Education

PP   Preparatory Programme

SLA   Second Language Acquisition

SLL   Second Language Learning

SS   Semi-Structured (interview)

TESOL Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Glossary of Arabic words

ʿabāyah[1]	loose-fitting long robe worn by women in Saudi Arabia
al-ḥamdulillāh	thank God
ʿawrah	female intimate parts (that should be hidden)
ḥadīth	report of sayings and deeds of the prophet Muhammad
khalāṣ	that's enough, it's finished
ḥalāl	it's allowed
ḥarām	it's forbidden, sinful
inshāʾAllāh	God willing
maḥram	male guardian
māshāʾAllāh	may Allah be pleased, God Bless
ṭarḥa	a scarf, usually black, which covers a women's hair
ʿulamāʾ	religious scholars
yaʿnī	I mean, you know

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[1] For romanization of Arabic see APA-LC table in Appendix J.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

...identities are about questions of using the resources of history,
language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being...
(Hall, 1996)

1.1 The research journey

The journey to this investigation of identity has taken me through different EFL landscapes. As an EFL teacher of Saudi female students I deemed the low level of English among Saudi high school graduates embarking on a pre-university foundation course as mainly due to their ineffective use of learning strategies. My initial objectives were to help Saudi female students become more independent, 'autonomous' learners of English by investigating language learning strategies in use, by raising their metacognitive awareness in order to encourage their evaluation and modification of current strategies and then to assess the transfer of strategies to the content-based, academic context of university.

My reading of the literature on sociocultural and critical approaches to research on language learning strategies influenced my thinking considerably: rather than focusing on individual strategies which might improve language learning and make learners more 'autonomous', I became more interested in researching how learners are influenced in their learning by their cultural contexts, both the 'small culture' (Holliday, 1999) of the classroom and the wider social and cultural environment. I moved on to a research focus on how use of strategies might be derived from participants' individual and cultural beliefs about language learning and how these might influence their classroom participation.

Considerations about how I would identify and access participant beliefs about language learning in interview data became somewhat of a stumbling block: would I count only participant statements of belief in my analysis? How would I know if the belief statement corresponded to what the participant really thought and felt? How could I tell if a different belief statement denoted a change in beliefs or a different self-presentation? Rather than focus on what might be, in the end, an inaccessible psychological construct, I considered investigating language learner identity, in which I could examine not only what participants

say about themselves as language learners in their social context but also how they construct, present and perform their language learner identities.

A significant influence on my thinking was (and still is) Lucia Thesen's (1997) study of student transition to university in South Africa, a country which was going through rapid sociopolitical change at the time. Thesen emphasises the discrepancy between conventional identity categories ascribed to students and their self-descriptions in interviews as they made sense of their transition to university. What stand out here are the dynamism and complexity of student 'voices' as they locate themselves in the wider 'discourses' of their past and present learning and literacy.

This resonated with me in that Saudi Arabia is also a country in transition, as it is rapidly moving from a conservative traditional society to a more globalized, modern economy and competing ideological discourses impact on EL2 learner identity. As students move to undergraduate English-medium study they experience a social-linguistic transition after which they are expected to develop an academic, institutional identity if they are to succeed. Finding out from the students how they make sense of themselves in their new environment, the identity work they undertake in order to adjust and the ways they position themselves within discourses will, as Thesen (1997) argues, create new educational understandings of learner identity in its social context.

1.2   My research context

During my years of teaching in Saudi Arabia I have experienced situations which have made me aware of difficult circumstances faced by some Saudi female EFL learners. Here I am not referring to problems of a linguistic nature. There was the enthusiastic, intermediate student who kept her hair covered even in the all-female classroom and who announced half way through the course that her father would no longer allow her to study English. Another young Saudi woman who was top of her class missed the final exam so she was not awarded a certificate. When I phoned to find out why she had not come, she explained in a polite and resigned tone of voice, that she lived on the other side of the city and

there was no one to bring her. I remember also the emotional presentation of a Saudi student in an advanced class who had chosen to speak about her reasons for learning English: as a young Muslim woman in Saudi Arabia, she felt that no one wanted to hear or understand her personal interpretations of the religion so she intended to go to Britain where it was more likely that her spiritual message would fall on sympathetic ears.

These three situations have something in common: the thwarting of women's choices to develop themselves and to have a voice in their society. In my experience, however, most young women, whether Saudi or non-Saudi Arab, enjoy classroom opportunities to talk and discuss their opinions on a wide range of personal, social, educational and professional topics in English. They enjoy interacting with the teacher and with each other, to tell their stories and share a joke with the class. As a TEFL trained teacher, I encourage an interactive, communicative classroom in which learners can feel engaged and relaxed. I would often begin a class with my own story, related to the class topic, which prompted students (on intermediate and advanced courses) to tell their own anecdotes and stories. The epistemological and methodological approach of my research emanates from these young women's stories in which they related their experiences as young women living and learning in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Placing my study in the field

Scholars in the field of applied linguistics continue to investigate the complex relationship between language learning and identity ever since Norton Peirce (1995) first laid the foundations for research of the language learner as embedded in their learning context. Norton (2013: 45) defines identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future". Much work has been done on the interactions between immigrant language learners and target language speakers (e.g. Norton, 2000; Menard Warwick, 2009) and on international students in Anglophone countries (e.g. Morita, 2004; Kim and Duff, 2012). Still working within Anglophone settings, identity studies of language learners in globalising contexts (e.g. Higgins, 2011;

Preece, 2016) view the learning of additional languages in new intercultural, multilingual contexts as providing new opportunities for identity formation.

There have been fewer studies on language learner identity in EFL contexts in which English-medium university education is becoming more prevalent. But as the 'social turn' (Block, 2003) continues to gain momentum, studies in second language and foreign language learning have moved further afield to explore language learners and their worlds in Asian and African local contexts (Darvin and Norton, 2015). For example, Gu (2010) investigated the discursive construction of identity in the sociocultural context of female undergraduates in China and Norton and Williams (2012) conducted a study of the impact of digital literacies on secondary school student identity in a rural village in Uganda. Considering future identity research, De Costa and Norton (2016) recommend greater cross-disciplinary research, more studies on emergent identity in local contexts and the use of innovative methodologies in order to illuminate the negotiation of identity. I have taken on all three recommendations in my research.

This longitudinal study investigates the language learner and student identities of four young Arab women at a Saudi tertiary institution as constructed in their oral accounts in interviews and conversations. I am interested in finding out how they make sense of their learning experiences, how they position themselves in terms of social categories and cultural discourses and how they perform individual and group identities. As they transition from a preparatory programme (PP) to university, how do they construct their feelings, doubts and difficulties and how do they enact their struggles and present their novice university student identities in interaction with me and others? I employ a narrative-positional-performative methodology, drawn from social science, education, discursive psychology and sociolinguistics, which aims to reach understandings of my participants' identity work as they cross over into new linguistic and educational contexts. My specific research questions can be found in the final section of Chapter 3.

Norton's (2013) construct of investment in language learning and her use of Anderson's (1991) construct of imagined communities are important to my investigation: while globalisation and modernization impact on women's lives in Saudi Arabia and fuel their desire to be multilingual, well-educated, mobile and cosmopolitan, family, tradition and religion are constraining influences which set limits on my participants' presentations of past, present and future selves. Darvin and Norton (2015:36) write about the "increasingly deterritorialized and unbounded" spaces in which language acquisition takes place which have led to more fluid and complex identities. However, considering prescribed restrictions on female social and geographical mobility and the patriarchal delineation of female spaces, one might wonder how relevant these new globalized, mobile identities might be to young women in Saudi Arabia. Certainly satellite television and online interactions have had a huge impact on the way young Saudi women see their relationship to their world. However, as far as they claim a national, ethnic and familial identity, Saudi women still remain bound by conservative and religious discourses (Doumato, 2003) and by the power of a patriarchal state (Al-Rasheed, 2013).

Preece (2016), citing Blommaert (2006), takes account of restrictive factors in the identities which people choose, or 'inhabit', for themselves. These factors which may constrain the negotiation of identity are: people's access to social spaces and relations and ascribed identities which position individuals and may limit their rights to participation and material resources. In order to gain an insight into how my four participants position themselves and are positioned by the social, cultural and ideological discourses of the Saudi context, I analyse the content, the context and the discourse of their narratives-in-interaction. In Preece's (2016:3) words, I have sought to bridge the gap between "the microlevel of the individual and the macrolevel of the social order".

1.4 Myself as researcher

On a more personal note, I am multilingual, middle class and Anglo-Greek by nationality. I have lived in the United Kingdom most of my life and my university education was in Modern Languages, Psychology, Education and Classical

Studies. I did a TEFL course on my return from a twelve month overland journey through Central and South America and then taught English in London until the TEFL trail beckoned and I moved first to Spain and then to Greece. When my daughter was three I moved to Saudi Arabia with my Saudi husband where I obtained a diploma in TEFL and a teaching position at the local public university. I have lived and worked in Saudi Arabia for more than thirty years. Although conversant in Arabic, my literacy skills lag far behind. I would describe my teaching approach as communicative: I encourage my students to express their views in English and allow use of Arabic as a class meta-language. I find that positioning them as multilinguals, as I position myself, helps to create a positive dynamic in the classroom.

With my thirty years' experience of living and working in Saudi Arabia, my role is that of both insider and outsider to the cultural and educational context. I am an insider researcher in the sense that I am familiar with many aspects of Saudi social and cultural practices, educational systems, learning contexts etc. Also, my family connections are strong and consequently I have a sense of loyalty and commitment to our Saudi relatives and friends, the country and its people. Generally, I enjoy taking part in Saudi social occasions in which there is a great sense of solidarity among the women. Although I believe I know much about the Saudi context, I often feel alienated from it and cannot say that I generally share assumptions, beliefs and opinions with Saudi people. I am an outsider in that sense.

My teaching of English Language and English Literature at an international school, EAP at a Saudi state university and EFL at a private university as well as EFL at the British Council, has given me the opportunity to interact with a large number of Arab, particularly Saudi, female students. I have mostly derived a great deal of satisfaction and enjoyment from teaching them and getting to know them individually as women and human beings. Indeed, an understated aim of my investigation is to 'carry' their voices and their meanings to a Western audience.

My intention was that my participants' stories would go some way in challenging and even dissipating ideological stereotypes of Saudi women which emanate from inside and outside the country. Abu-Lughod (2013) argues that traditionally women of the Orient have been depicted either as downtrodden victims or as excessively sexual beings and that even today mass-market paperbacks published in the West conjure up graphic scenes of violence and sexualized abuse which have the effect of rallying Western feminist support for their Muslim sisters. While these are not academic texts, they lend weight to stereotypical views of Saudi women's lives. Contrastingly, Almutairi (2007) argues in her study of Saudi women learning English that Saudi women are generally perceived and valued in Saudi society as "emotional, passive, submissive, dependent, and non-assertive" (p.10).

While seeking to let my participants' voices be heard, I wanted to maintain awareness of my role, position and ideological stance in the research project. Kubota (2014:17) urges researchers to "critically reflect on our own hybrid plurilingual status of privilege within neoliberal academic institutions" as we seek to understand the less privileged position of our participants. Attention to the subjectivity of the researcher and its influence on all stages of research has now become commonplace in qualitative research (Pillow, 2003; Court and Abbas, 2013). Thus it was important to guard myself against "the gaze that doesn't look back on itself" (Abu-Lughod, 2013). Also, rather than seeking a comfortable reflexivity in which my researcher's narrative sits smoothly alongside that of my participants, I wanted to bring out the messier "uncomfortable realities of doing engaged qualitative research" (Pillow, 2003: 193). A particular aspect of concern was anticipated participant ingratiation in the social and socializing occasion of the interview so I realized that it would be important to focus on self-presentational and interactive effects and on shifting roles in the research relationship. Thus both the meanings produced (the whats), and how meanings are produced (the hows) between participants and myself as researcher (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003), were important to my investigation of EL2 learner identity.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

In this chapter I have given an account of the background to my research. I have discussed how I reached my area of investigation, my own background as researcher and the approach and aims of my study. In Chapter 2 I go on to frame my study of EL2 identity by describing the Saudi context in some detail, particularly the position of women, discourses surrounding English, and Saudi studies of EFL learners. I then review the identity literature in Chapter 3 focusing on how researchers in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics have approached the study of identity from a poststructuralist, narrative and performative position. I also review the literature on transitions to higher learning including that of the few studies of EL2 students transitioning to undergraduate programmes in the Arab world. My research questions are presented at the end of Chapter 3. In the Methodology Chapter I give details of the context and methods of my data collection and analysis as well as the challenges I encountered and how I dealt with these.

The four case study chapters (5-8) consist of my participants' narratives in which I investigate their identity constructions across their learning trajectories focusing on the impact of their transition to university. I also hone in on narrative extracts in order to investigate subject positions which emerge in narratives-in-interaction. In Chapter 9, I discuss commonalities and differences in participants' presentations and performances of social and individual identity and relate these to the EL2 identity literature. The 'Final' Chapter reviews the findings and discusses questions of ongoing identity based on understandings gleaned from my research.

CHAPTER 2: THE SAUDI CONTEXT

2.1. The country of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the largest nation in the Arabian peninsula and in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) group of states, which is comprised of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to Saudi Arabia. The country is governed by the Council of Ministers headed by the monarch who is head of state; governance is based on the *sharīʿah* (Islamic law) and the official religion is Sunni Islam which "dominates the customs, beliefs and culture of the people in KSA" (Alhawsawi, 2013: 25). In 2013, the estimated population was approximately 27 million, of whom over 8 million were expatriate workers (Alhawsawi, 2013). Before the unification of Saudi Arabia by its founder Abdul Aziz Al Saud in 1932, rural communities identified with family or tribe and political identity was based on regional belonging (Yamani, 2000). Yamani (2010) emphasises continued regional affiliations and the cultural distinctiveness of sects and tribes within the country, which, she argues, counteract the state policy of national integration.

The religious ideology of Wahhabism, a puritanical form of Sunni Islam, acted as a vehicle of unification. The word 'Wahhabi' is derived from the name of the Muslim scholar Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab who preached a "cleansing of faith from impurities and a return to authentic Islam" in the 18th century (Al-Rasheed, 2013). It was in the alliance of the Wahhabi movement and the Al Saud rulers that the nation of Saudi Arabia was established. Since its creation, Saudi Arabia has undergone rapid economic, cultural and social change driven by the flow of oil revenues, the huge numbers of Muslim visitors to Mecca and Medina and the growth of the global market place. However, it was not until the 1950's, with the establishment of institutional structures, mass communication and a national education curriculum that it "became possible to speak of the emergence of a Saudi identity" (Yamani, 2000: 6).

Yamani (2000) also draws attention to the contact of Saudi people with Westerners and non-Muslims due to the oil economy, as well as with other Arabs,

some of whom became influential as political advisers and teachers and were granted Saudi citizenship in the 1950's. However this trend was reversed in the 1960's when it became almost impossible to acquire citizenship: Yamani (2000:8) describes this reversal as "a form of nationalism but also a technique of social exclusion directed at other Arabs and Muslims". Triggered by the needs of the economy, a new Saudi middle class emerged who were not members of elite families but achieved social mobility through training and education (Alhawsawi, 2013). The upper stratum of the middle class were often educated abroad and included doctors, professors, engineers and some businessmen, while the lower middle class were made up of government clerical workers, school teachers and industrial wage earners (Alhawsawi, 2013).

In her interview study of the 1990's generation of young Saudi men and women born during the oil boom, Yamani (2000) interpreted the ambivalence and uncertainty of their responses as reflecting the conflict between the influence of the traditional, religious customs of parents and grandparents and the interviewees' exposure to rapid modernisation and globalisation. Most of her participants voiced their preference for greater cultural ties with the GCC states rather than continued relations with America, which they felt had a constraining influence on the development of a distinct sense of cultural identity. The family, rather than the individual, emerged as the main "unit of identity…accompanied by an increasing sense of national belonging" (p.13). However, Yamani (2000) also found that her interviewees frequently gave prominence to their religious identity over family and nation and although they welcomed the technologies of globalization, which had brought other cultures into their world, they still clung to the stabilizing influences of Islam.

Doumato (2003) emphasises the long-term political alliance between religion and state in Saudi Arabia and the power of the ʿulamāʾ[2] to impose their version of Islamic law on the people, thus fusing "religious affiliation into identity with an Islamic state" (p. 242). Within Wahhabi discourse the 'women question' (Al-

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[2] Arabic terms, if not translated in the text, are explained in the Glossary.

Rasheed, 2013) has become one of supreme importance: in society's encounter with rapid economic development and Western culture, Doumato (2003) argues that there is "no other challenge to religious values that threatens male identity or affects people's lives so personally" (p.243). I therefore now turn to a discussion of the position of women in Saudi Arabia.

2.2 Women in Saudi Arabia

2.2.1 The status of women

Gender ideology is more restrictive in Saudi Arabia than in any other country in the Arab Middle East (Doumato, 2003): women are segregated from unrelated men in almost all public places, including schools, universities, banks, restaurants and workplaces; women are not allowed to drive or to travel without written permission from their male guardian or *maḥram* and it was only in 2001 that women were first allowed to carry their own identity cards instead of merely being registered as their father's or husband's dependent. Saudi Arabia has a high gender gap index: in 2015 it was ranked 134 out of 145 countries. The unemployment rate for women, for example, was 20.7%, while for men it was 2.8% (The Global Gender Gap Report, 2015).

Hamdan (2005) considers gender inequalities to be deeply embedded in Saudi society and attributes the exclusion of Saudi women from public life to the silencing of women's voices in the name of Islam by the *'ulamā'*. However, tradition, customary laws and social practices also work to oppress women and Yamani (2000) argues that the extended patriarchal family structure is a powerful force in maintaining female suppression and the state acts as an extension of family control. Al-Rasheed (2013) also refers to the replacement of the tribal codes of female honour with a religiously-sanctioned public patriarchy, thus creating the conditions for "the consolidation of an imagined religious nation in which control over women is central" (p. 58).

Al-Rasheed (2013) emphasises the role of the powerful Saudi state which has frequently shown its capability to overcome pronouncements by conservative religious scholars on gender relations for its own political ends. For example, in

the post 9/11 period, the state began to ease restrictions on economic opportunities for women in order to gain international legitimacy and during the Arab Spring, when a number of Arab authoritarian regimes were overthrown, the Saudi king announced that women would be given seats in the Consultative Council and would participate in future municipal elections. Al-Rasheed (2013) also argues that since 2005 the state has deliberately projected individual Saudi women as cosmopolitan, articulate and globalised through national media, in order to project an image of the state as a reformist agency in Saudi society.

In 2013 King Abdullah appointed thirty women to the country's top advisory Shura council, which advises the government on new legislation, (BBC News, 11 Jan.2013) and in 2015 municipal elections were held in which women could vote and win seats on municipal councils (BBC News, 12 Dec.2015): both events were seen as landmarks for the political advancement of Saudi women. However, Al-Rasheed (2013) argues that in spite of the frequent support for female advancement voiced by the king and princes, recent initiatives are not likely to lead to the significant empowerment of women in Saudi Arabia.

2.2.2   Women in education and employment

The public education system in Saudi Arabia has been a means of building a sense of nationhood among the people, of homogenizing their linguistic and religious orientation and of instilling allegiance to the monarchy (Doumato, 2003). In terms of gender issues, the religious curriculum promotes sex segregation and total covering for women (Doumato, 2003). Until 2002, girls' education was overseen by the *rīāsʾah* (General Presidency of Girls' Education), which centralized and controlled the curricula and teaching methods for girls to ensure that female education would prepare girls to be good wives and mothers and to channel their professional aspirations towards jobs deemed appropriate such as teaching and nursing (Hamdan, 2005). However, the growth of female secular public education since the early 1960's and the later proliferation of private schools meant young women and girls were also provided with intellectual tools and a context in which female identity, status and future roles could be renegotiated (Yamani, 2000). Attending school, for example, gave Saudi

young women and girls the opportunity to leave their home and to make social connections outside their family circle (Doumato, 2003). However, Al-Rasheed (2013) draws attention to urgent questions raised in the 1970's over delaying the age of marriage in favour of pursuing an education.

In spite of fervent opposition from the *'ulamā',* King Faisal and his wife, Queen Effat, persisted in their efforts in girls' education, using quotes from the Quran and the *ḥadīth* to support their endeavours (Hamdan, 2005). The first women's university campuses were opened by the government in the late 1970's but subjects were more limited than those for men (Hamdan, 2005). By 2000, women made up over half the total number of university and college students in Saudi Arabia (Doumato 2003) and by 2010 approximately 62% of all undergraduates were women (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). There is little doubt that the government has actively supported women's education as evidenced by the rapid spread of girls' schools and university campuses for women. Yamani (2000) found that most of her female interviewees considered higher education their right as Saudi citizens but considered jobs and careers in relation to family and community, showing their willingness to conform to social norms.

While reviews of Saudi women's education and work such as those of Doumato (2003) and Hamdan (2005) have tended to focus on the restrictions on women of a conservative, segregated society, some more recent studies (eg. Taha, 2010) bring out the aspirations and opportunities of the young Saudi woman. Since 1999, a number of private colleges and universities have opened which provide young women with American-model curricula and an English-medium higher education. Yamani (2000) commented soon after the first private women's colleges opened that they represented a widening gap between traditional family roles and educational experience because they encouraged young women's aspirations.

Taha (2010) conducted a qualitative study in a women's private college in which she found that her respondents had positive perceptions of global citizenship

which they linked to a Western-style, English-medium education. She makes a clear distinction, however, between public women's universities, which follow the traditional Saudi model, and private universities, which she sees as following an American liberal arts college model. Her distinctions bring out the gap in the English learning experience of public and private education and in possible differences in attitudes. Similarly, Al-Saraj (2011) suggests that these women's private colleges create Western-influenced social contexts in that they provide academic courses in subjects like architecture, electrical engineering and finance, which are not available to women in public universities.

Although Saudi women university graduates outnumber men, only 5% of women were in full-time employment in 2001 (Doumato 2003). By 2011 this figure had risen to 12% (Al-Rasheed 2013). Reliance on a foreign labour force, Saudi labour laws which prevent women from working alongside men and impediments on women's transportation are suggested as reasons for the limited job opportunities for women (Doumato, 2003). However, a faltering economy and the need for women to support families have helped to change this situation. Government initiatives to create more employment for women outside of the traditional areas of education and health led to a ten-fold rise in the number of Saudi women working in the business community between 2011 and 2013 (Aarts and Roelants, 2015).

While women's employment has become acceptable, gender integration in the workplace remains controversial (Al-Rasheed, 2013). Doumato (2003) argues that the gender paradigm will remain unchanged as long as the Wahhabi *'ulamā'*, continue to be an obstructive force in the life of Saudi women. Although Saudi women might not yet be ready for direct confrontation with the state and its religious scholars, this "most masculine state" (Al-Rasheed, 2013:94) can no longer afford to ignore Saudi women's voices as they begin to assert their claim to full citizenship.

2.3 English in Saudi Arabia

2.3.1 Competing discourses of English and Arabic

Saudi Arabia has been placed in the 'Expanding' circle of World Englishes (Kachru, 1985), as English has no official status, but is taught widely as a foreign language. However, with the ubiquitous use of English as a lingua franca in business, leisure and domestic contexts in the cities and the spread of English-medium academic learning in private and most public universities, the distinction between learning English as a foreign or second language in Saudi Arabia becomes more difficult to sustain.

The cultural and linguistic 'onslaught' of English has been opposed in journal articles and news media by many academics (e.g. Al-Jarf, 2008), who see the proliferation of English and learning English as a threat to national, Islamic and Arabic identity. Others, on a more moderate note, acknowledge the general inadequacy of current EFL education to meet the needs of Saudi students, but insist that English can never attain the status of a second language due to Saudis' strong sense of Arab and Muslim identity (e.g. Al-Hazmi, 2007). Similarly, some university professors e.g. Al-Shehri (2010) criticise the adoption of English-medium academic programmes in Saudi tertiary institutions, which they see as a hindrance to higher learning. Others, such as Al-Seghayer (2011), invoke discourses of multilingualism, skill development and academic performance in order to promote the expansion of English language education in Saudi Arabia.

In this context of competing discourses, the English versus Arabic debate represents the modern-traditional dichotomy as the globalized marketplace is seen to take over from the traditional community (Yamani, 2000). Since English is important not only as a language of instruction but also in business, scientific, commercial and technological fields, spoken and written proficiency in the language has become a status symbol, an economic advantage and "a marker for the ability to obtain private education and to travel abroad, and a sign of a cosmopolitan lifestyle" (p.58). Communication skills in English are also required for government and professional positions. Thus English has come to play a critical role in gatekeeping both education and work in Saudi Arabia.

In order to gauge the attitudes of Saudi students towards English as a medium of instruction as opposed to Arabic, Al-Jarf (2008) conducted an open questionnaire study in which 470 female students, who were majoring in different fields and in varying years of study at the largest public university in Saudi Arabia, were asked for their views on the appropriate medium of instruction for various majors. Most responded that English was more appropriate for teaching all medical, science, engineering and technology subjects, whereas Arabic was only appropriate for teaching Islamic studies, History, Arabic Literature and Education. They gave numerous social, educational, scientific, vocational and technological reasons for these responses.

Al-Jarf (2008) interprets her results as meaning that her respondents considered English to be a superior language to Arabic and that Arabic faces a serious threat from the dominance of English in higher education due to the lack of language planning and policies to protect and promote the Arabic language. Interestingly, Al-Jarf (2008) contrasts her results with those of prior studies conducted in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries at least ten years previously, in which students had shown their preference for Arabic-medium instruction, for writing projects and examinations in Arabic and for using Arabic textbooks. She claims that her results show that students find English more important, easier and more useful than Arabic: they think that studying in English gives them a more solid knowledge base and allows them to advance in their education and to prepare more successfully for a career. Al-Jarf (2008) takes up a contrary position to her respondents, insisting that Arabic terminology and Arabic translations and references be used at university so that the status of the language can be salvaged from decline. Similarly, other Arab academics in Saudi Arabia (e.g. Habbash and Troudi, 2014) continue to see the teaching and learning of English, which is the language of globalization in the Arab world, as a real threat to Arabic and to Arab cultural identity.

2.3.2 English versus Islam

In the aftermath of 9/11 the Saudi religious education system came under scrutiny and criticism due to accusations that it provided a fertile ground for

Islamic extremism (Elyas and Picard, 2013). Prokop (2003) gives a highly critical exposition of specific elements in Saudi public school textbooks which reflect the Wahhabi view of the world of believers of the 'true' faith and of the 'other' world of nonbelievers. She refers to the 'inordinate' number of hours of religious education at school and university, to the emphasis on Islam in all academic levels and to the emphasis on rote learning which, Prokop argues, inculcates passivity and an unquestioning attitude. In response to Western calls for educational reform, Saudi officials rose to the defence of their school system and the media portrayed criticisms as an attack on Islam itself (Prokop, 2003). However, Elyas (2008) draws attention to later affirmations of intentions to reform the education system by Saudi authorities.

From a critical TESOL viewpoint Karmani (2005a) argues that after 9/11 there was mounting pressure on Muslim governments not only to reform educational curricula but also to promote more English and less teaching of Islam. Indeed, Mahboob and Elyas (2014) directly link the introduction of English into the final year of primary school in Saudi Arabia in 2004 to post 9/11 U.S. political pressure to expand the English language programme in Saudi public schools. Karmani (2005a) sees the teaching of English as a means to promulgate Western values and to serve Western economic interests in oil-rich Arabian Gulf states, with the result of combatting Islamic ideologies, cultures and languages. However, in response to Karmani's (2005b) arguments against the role of English, Kabel (2007) presents a compelling case for the need for discourses of appropriation of English "to give voice to emerging agencies and subjectivities" (p.136). Kabel argues that Islam and English are not incommensurable: language learners bring their own 'hidden curriculum' to the learning process and English can be used to access knowledge and economic power as well as to create discourses of resistance and appropriation.

Furthermore, Muslim scholars, such as Mohd-Asraf (2005), emphasise the importance given in Islamic sacred texts to the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, which requires mastery of foreign languages. Mahboob and Elyas (2014) also cite quotations from the Quran, in which differences in culture and

language are "noted and welcomed" (p. 133). The link between the propagation of Islam and learning English is also brought up by some Muslim researchers (Al-Hazmi, 2007; Elyas, 2008). Thus the relationship between Islam and English is a controversial issue which continues to be the subject of debate in the Muslim world and in Saudi Arabia in particular.

At the higher education level Elyas and Picard (2013) argue that a new educational paradigm of globalization and neo-liberalism has taken over since 9/11 in Saudi Arabia, in which creativity, critical independent thinking and problem-solving are valued over the traditional pedagogies of authoritative teaching, transmission of knowledge and rote-learning. The researchers contend that Western global pedagogies which encourage individualism and private enterprise conflict with Saudi Arabia's theocratic administrative higher education system, and they propose a 'glocalized' pedagogy which addresses the local needs of learners and teachers both to operate in a globalized economy and to preserve their religious and national identity.

2.4   Developments in English education

2.4.1   Learning English at school

In Saudi public schools there are four forty-five minute periods a week of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at intermediate and high school levels (Almutairi, 2007). In 2003 the Saudi Ministry of Education mandated that English should be introduced in the final year of elementary school, grade 6 (Al-Jarf, 2008), and in 2011 that English should be taught from grade 4 (Al-Seghayer, 2011). The issue of expanding English in public schools sparked a heated debate in the Saudi Arabian media between conservative and progressive elements, between those who feared exposing primary school children to a foreign language and culture, and those who argued that learning English opens up avenues of knowledge and opportunity (Al-Harbi, 2002). Although the debate continues, the discourse of learning English as a necessary component of basic education in the interests of global competitiveness and academic development seems to be the dominant one (Al-Hazmi, 2007; Al-Seghayer, 2011), particularly since the educational reforms introduced during the late King Abdullah's rule as monarch (2005-2015).

On the whole, EFL research has focused on the low level of English proficiency of Saudi learners and attributes this to the poor teaching methods as well as to the negative attitude and low motivation of learners (Al-Hazmi, 2003, 2007; Syed, 2003; Al-Seghayer 2005). These researchers argue that students do not see English as directly relevant to their needs and are satisfied with just making the grade to pass into the subsequent year. Syed (2003) claims that although policy-makers associate modernization and progress with English, "local students see no concrete links between English language ability and communicative requirements" (p. 338). Parental attitudes have also been described as indifferent towards their children learning English (Seghayer, 2014) and this indifference has also been seen as a barrier obstructing general learning in Saudi schools (Khan, 2011).

In most private schools the role of English is rather different: English is part of the curriculum throughout the levels and some private schools have the freedom to teach some subjects in English (Alhawsawi, 2013). Parents who can afford it prefer to send their children to private schools, which have to follow the Saudi curriculum, but can add extra subjects and extra-curricular activities (Alhawsawi, 2013). Private school teachers often use English for communication purposes and encourage student interaction in the classroom, so graduates from private schools tend to be more advanced in English than public school graduates (Almutairi, 2007). Since 2005 there has been an increase in the number of private international schools in which English is the medium of instruction in almost all subjects and teachers are mostly expatriate Arabs (Al-Hazmi, 2007).

2.4.2   The role of English in higher education

At tertiary levels English is now an important subject in the preparatory year of both public and private universities and an increasing number of subjects are taught through the medium of English (Alhawsawi, 2013). In the largest public university in the Kingdom, King Saud University, for example, all undergraduate programmes are taught in English, except for Arabic and Islamic studies (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). This development has also sparked off a polarised debate in which the promotion of English in academic programmes is seen either

as necessary for moving into the global economy or as detrimental to the quality of education as it "isolates students from their native language" (Al-Shehri, 2010).

However, educational initiatives implemented by the Saudi government in recent years have raised the status of English. In 2011, The King Abdullah Scholarship Program, introduced in 2005, funded the education of over 100,000 Saudis, of whom one fifth were women, at international universities worldwide (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). A co-educational international university, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), was established in 2009, as a key research and science centre, to provide higher English-medium education primarily for students from overseas (Donn and Manthri, 2010). Improvements planned at tertiary level are aimed to raise Saudi universities to 'world class' standards in teaching and research so that Saudi graduates will be enabled to compete internationally (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). Discourses of growth and increased participation in the global higher education arena thus seem to have gained the upper hand and English-medium education is seen as integral to this development.

The growth of private higher education is encouraged in order to prepare graduates for careers in the private-sector economy. Nine private universities and twenty-one private colleges have been established since 1999, in which students obtain degrees in technical and practical subjects which are not offered at public universities (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). The Ministry of Higher Education offers generous scholarships to Saudi students who cannot afford the fees so they may study at private universities (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). As explained in section **2.2.2**, women's private colleges and universities have helped to raise the status of female students and to prepare them for a wider variety of professions. They lay claim to 'world class' facilities and education on their websites and emphasise their collaboration with internationally renown universities as well as their connections with international corporations and the local business community.

Al-Saraj (2011) explains that the aims of these private English-medium colleges and universities are to provide an international standard of higher education to Saudi women who cannot study abroad so that they may become professional in their field; to meet the growing demands for a domestic highly skilled labour force to replace expatriates; and to improve educational methods from the traditional memorisation of textbooks to a more active, exploratory and analytical approach. The descriptions of these colleges' preparation programmes refer to creative thinking, personal and social development and active learning skills, a far cry from the traditional methods of school learning in Saudi Arabia. The general education first-year programmes are promoted as providing a broad-based core curriculum with the aim of encouraging students to become life-long learners and creative, global citizens. While Islamic values are promoted in the mission statements and courses in Arabic and Islamic studies are obligatory for all students, the skills which are emphasised in the course descriptions are those of problem-solving, logical reasoning and critical, independent thinking.

2.5 Research into English language learning in Saudi Arabia

2.5.1 Investigations of aspects of EFL learning

As a consequence of the drive to improve the standards in teaching and learning English in Saudi Arabia, much published research focuses on investigating current teaching methods and learner strategies in public and private university EFL programmes and then making pedagogical recommendations with a view to improving learning performance. Most studies are quantitative and the dearth of qualitative research on ELT in the Middle East generally has been noted (e.g. van den Hoven, 2014). The language learner strategies of Saudi EFL students, for example, have been investigated in several questionnaire studies (e.g. Alhaisoni, 2012) and have focused particularly on academic reading (e.g. Alsamadani, 2008) and academic writing (e.g. McMullen, 2009). Studies of student motivation and attitude to learning English and towards native speakers of English have also employed quantitative methods to investigate types and levels of motivation and attitude as predictors of success in EFL learning (e.g. Moskovsky and Alrabai, 2009). Survey results generally show high levels of motivation overall,

particularly of instrumental motivation, and demonstrate students' positive attitudes towards learning English and towards native speakers.

Expatriate EFL teachers at tertiary level have introduced Saudi students to more collaborative and communicative classroom methods (Alhawsawi 2013). There have been a number of studies on student views of these new methods and approaches to learning. For example, in their survey of the learning preferences of 310 Saudi female university students with native speaker, TEFL-trained teachers, Moores-Abdool, Yahya and Unzueta (2009) found some evidence of 'cultural dissonance': students generally reported that they were in favour of student-centred learning such as group and pair activities but did not like peer-review of their individual work. A majority thought that they should be dependent on their teachers for information and that sometimes they needed things to be explained in Arabic. The researchers concluded that students are generally willing to participate in more 'western' models of learning and that teachers should be trained to use innovative ways of teaching.

2.5.2 Investigations of EFL learning in its sociocultural context

As we have seen from the studies surveyed so far, research on English learning in Saudi higher education has tended to focus on individual characteristics or specific aspects of student learning; few have studied these in relation to wider social issues which impact on student learning experiences. However, Almutairi (2007) and Alhawsawi (2013) both look beyond the individual learner in the classroom in order to examine educational and sociocultural factors which influence learning. Elyas (2011, 2014) also explores Saudi EFL student identity within the competing cultural discourses of Islam and globalisation.

Almutairi (2007) conducted a mixed-method study of the learning styles and strategies of first-year Saudi female students of English at a public university, in which she links learning style and strategies to social interaction within the cultural and economic context of Saudi Arabia. Her questionnaire results revealed certain educational and sociocultural variables that predicted a pattern of learning styles and strategies. For example, student responses concerning

their educational experiences and social activities corresponded to their perceived lack of involvement in the learning process.

Almutairi's (2007) qualitative data also connected patterns of social behaviour to learning behaviours. Focus group discussions on future possibilities, for example, showed that goal setting and strategic planning in learning were not important to the female student participants, who seemed to display a certain fatalism about future achievements. This is due, Almutairi argues, to societal expectations, family culture and stereotypes of appropriate female behaviour. Almutairi (2007) links these social and cultural restrictions to the limited range and variety of professed learning styles and strategies which reflect the traditional method of teaching:

> The attractiveness of the traditional method of teaching in Saudi Arabia is that it protects the religious tradition that emphasizes conformity to certain codes of learning and behaviour, such as reciting, memorizing, and compliance.   (Almutairi, 2007:174)

The shortcomings of previous schooling, as well as out-of-class experiences, were shown to greatly affect student learning styles and strategies: reliance on memorization and the reproduction of textbook information led to passive learning behaviours and minimal use of cognitive and affective strategies. Although Almutairi (2007) seems to dwell on the structural constraints which hold back progress to a more collaborative teaching and learning approach, students expressed their views in the focus group discussions on how to make the classroom a more stimulating, communicative environment in which students could focus on their productive rather than their receptive skills.

Alhawsawi (2013) also investigated student experiences of learning English at university in terms of the learning context: he looked specifically at institutional influence, family educational background and student interaction with the teaching approach on the preparatory programme of a Health Sciences university. In his qualitative case study, Alhawsawi (2013) interviewed a small sample of male students and teachers, conducted classroom observations and used university and Saudi educational policy documents to investigate the impact

of institution and family on learning and teaching EFL in a university classroom context.

Alhawsawi interpreted his interview data as showing that the impact on English learning depended on the student's family background in terms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Members of the family, for example, transmitted their knowledge, skills and attitudes to their children and siblings through engaging them in intellectual talk and discussions, providing them with educational resources and private tuition and generally serving as effective models of learning and studying practice. Most importantly, an educated, wealthy middle-class family background could provide a private school education and encourage EL2 competence. Although Alhawsawi (2013) found that those from families with little cultural capital generally had negative views of themselves as students, some were determined to overcome their low socioeconomic status and mustered support from teachers and peers.

In terms of teaching and learning on the preparatory programme, Alhawsawi (2013) found that teachers adopted either Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) and these different teaching approaches greatly affected students' perceptions of learning experiences. Generally students responded well to CLT, which was the approach advocated on programme documents, even if this approach differed from their EFL learning at school. Furthermore, those students who already had some experience of CLT from their private education or from EFL private tuition found the GTM approach to be rather tedious. Alhawsawi (2013) argues that the use of CLT privileges students with cultural capital and marginalizes weaker students from underprivileged backgrounds who are more familiar with GTM practices. However, he emphasises student agency in the negotiation of structures such as institution, family and teaching-learning classroom activities: other factors such as a desire for education, skill at conversing, networking and out-of-class activities can provide alternative sources of cultural capital. Alhawsawi (2013) concludes that his findings reflect an interactive relationship between student agency and the structures within which they learn.

Elyas' (2011, 2014) study of the EFL learning identities of first year male Education students at a public university investigates the master narratives (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006) with which the students identify and how they perform their identities within written 'language learning histories'. Elyas contextualizes the learners' stories within the changing education policies and the opposing cultural influences of post 9/11 Saudi Arabia. Since his respondents were training to be English teachers, Elyas views their identities as transitional and shaped by local pressures in the sense that they were faced with the future implementation of the new educational policies in public schools. They were also in transition from learning English in high school to studying the language at university.

Elyas (2011,2014) analysed twenty-two student narratives from the point of view of structure and content and then set them in the wider context of master narratives in order to examine how identities were constructed in their writing. He found that most of the student narratives focused first on the writer's feelings towards his level of English and that the narratives could be divided into success and failure stories. While all students referred to the importance of English and learning English, nine wrote stories which expressed satisfaction with their language level and the rest tended to denigrate themselves, their teachers and their society for their own inadequacies in language learning. Most narratives seemed to place more value on self-study and online interactions. The success stories in particular emphasised the role of the media as a vehicle of language improvement and reflected the master narrative of individual responsibility for success, which Elyas (2014) sees as a Western individual rather than a collective conception of culture. Students' failure stories began with an account of the difficulties of learning English in terms of their Arabic background. They went on to blame the poor attitude of their English school teachers and the lack of understanding of students' low level of English among university teachers. Some respondents put pressure on themselves to do better in short self-motivational 'pep-talks' and ended with advice to other students to take a language course and learn by themselves.

Thus, contrary to conservative master narratives of a fixed, Islamic/Arab identity, students constructed individual identities aligned to "globalisation, the information age and individuality" (Elyas, 2014:28). The valuing of English and learning through English-dominated media are presented as providing students with economic and social capital in their narratives and there is little evidence of the discourse of resistance to English as an imperialistic language. However, Elyas (2014) sees the students' view of English as a 'ticket' for a better life as simplistic and cautions against the uncritical acceptance of the 'Americanisation' of Saudi culture. He concludes by acknowledging the complex influences on students' learning identities in Saudi Arabia.

2.6 Summary of the Saudi context

In this chapter on Saudi Arabia I focused on the rapid changes and critical transitions taking place in the country in terms of social and educational developments, the status of women and the role of English and learning English. At the same time I emphasised the religious, political and academic discourses which continue to compete with discourses of women's emancipation, of globalization and of the spreading of English education. The opening of private universities for women was seen as a significant step in raising their status, as women are introduced to new 'western' style pedagogies and prepared for a wide range of professions. Research conducted in Saudi Arabia on EFL and English-medium education suggests that students respond well to innovative learning practices and have positive attitudes to learning English and to studying academic subjects through English. While researchers who focused on the wider sociocultural context brought out the structural constraints on learning, they also emphasised student agency in negotiating structures in order to become more successful learners.

CHAPTER 3: LEARNER IDENTITY IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

3.1 Introduction

In this Literature Review I focus on the three main areas of learner identity theory and research with which my thesis is concerned:

a) Developments in identity theory and research in applied linguistics

b) Narrative research into identity and the concept of narrative identity

c) Learner transitions into higher institutions of learning

After a discussion of the literature concerning the emergence of identity in the context of second language learning (SLL), the chapter turns to research on L2 learner narratives as important vehicles for identity delineation and then moves on to discuss the literature on learning transitions to higher institutions and in particular on the links between learner/student accounts of transition and identity trajectories.

As SLL researchers moved, in the 1990's, from an individual/cognitive focus to one which was more socially oriented, questions of language learner identity began to emerge in their studies (Block, 2007). Norton Peirce (1995:12), for example, called for "a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context". However, while SLL research began to take a more situated approach, context was generally seen as the surrounding culture and society, which remained outside the inner world of the language learner (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2009). Proposing a more relational approach to contextual elements in studies of motivation and identity, Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009:220) argue for:

> ... a focus on the interaction of this self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of.

A number of interrelated theoretical and analytical frameworks approach language learner identity in this way, to varying degrees, such as those which adopt a sociocultural (Lantolf, 2000), or language socialisation (Watson-Gegeo, 2004) or poststructuralist and critical perspective (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko and

Blackledge, 2004) towards contexts of language learning and use. Others, such as Lamb (2009), have sought to integrate psychological approaches with more sociologically-oriented theories in order to investigate the formation of L2 identity in specific social settings. In this literature review I focus on a broadly poststructuralist approach to the theory and investigation of EL2 identity since it is one which has been productively used in applied linguistics (e.g. Norton, 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2011; Preece, 2016). I also incorporate elements from sociocultural and language socialization perspectives in order to reach an understanding of the referential and discursive construction of identity.

3.2   Identity theory and research in applied linguistics

> Since identity is continuously and constantly produced and reproduced, sketched and designed, and often co-constructed by 'self' and 'other', we should strive to demonstrate how identities are (re) produced through language (and other media) and how they come into existence through social interaction.
>
> (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006)

3.2.1   The poststructuralist approach to identity

While a structuralist approach to identity tends to view the person as a product of their social conditions and as shaped by their 'culture' or the fixed worldview and mode of behaviour of a particular group of people (Block, 2007), a poststructuralist approach, as exemplified in the above quotation, approaches identity as shifting and multi-layered and as emergent in discourse. This latter approach emerged from sociological and anthropological fields of inquiry but a growing number of authors and researchers in the field of applied linguistics have taken up a poststructuralist view of identity to varying degrees since the late 1990's (Block, 2007).

Pavlenko (2002) distinguishes poststructuralist from socio-psychological approaches to theorising the social factors in second language learning and use. In her view, socio-psychological approaches tend to separate social factors from individual or psychological factors whereas poststructuralist approaches can show

how motivation, attitudes or language learning beliefs are shaped by the social context of the learner. In poststructuralist approaches language is viewed as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), as a stepping-stone to greater social mobility, a higher level of education and superior career prospects. Pavlenko (2002: 284) argues that the view of language as symbolic capital has an advantage over the socio-psychological notion of 'instrumental motivation':

> ...as it allows us to link the individual and the social, tracing the process by which particular linguistic varieties and practices become imbued with values or devalued in the linguistic marketplace.

This view of language as symbolic capital is linked to the concept of investment introduced by Norton Peirce (1995) and later defined by her as "the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton, 2013:50). An investment in the target language is seen as an investment in the language learner's identity, which is complex, contradictory and dynamic. This marked an important development in that previous research into language learning, prior to the 1990's, had tended to approach identity as a fixed, unitary, measurable entity which was "generally framed as a fixed and measurable phenomenon, clearly relatable to successful or unsuccessful language learning experiences" (Block, 2007:72).

Language is also seen, in poststructuralist approaches, as the site of identity construction and negotiation and L2 learners and users as involved in a discursive process of taking up certain subject positions and of positioning others. Drawing on Weedon's (1997[1987[3]]) feminist theory of subjectivity in discourse, Norton (2000, 2013) contends that identity constructions are shaped by social context but as agents second language learners and users may contest certain positionings by constructing more empowering discourses. For example, in Norton's (2013) review of her study of immigrant women in Toronto, she describes how one of the women, Martina, set up a counter-discourse at work by

[3] First editions are shown in square brackets.

resisting her English-speaking colleagues' positioning of her as an immigrant in favour of her self-positioning as mother.

Menard-Warwick (2005) takes issue with what she sees as the contradiction between the fluidity and the continuity of subjectivities/identities in Norton's work. Martina's maternal identity, for example, remained constant throughout the research period, which appears to conflict with poststructuralist views of subjectivities continually shifting within discourse. In relation to language learning, Menard-Warwick (2005) asks to what extent individuals maintain 'a sense of continuous identity' across social contexts and discourses and how this may affect learning. In the field of SLA, Menard-Warwick (2005) concludes that the "contradiction between continuity and change in theories of identity remains unresolved" (p. 262).

In a similar vein, Block (2009) disputes the common use of 'identity' as a cover-all term in applied linguistics. While he accepts that identities are generally theorized as "socially constructed, emergent, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project multimodally" (p. 216), Block problematizes this poststructuralist approach and urges applied linguistics researchers to distinguish between 'identity' and 'subject position' or 'subjectivity'. While Block (2009) views 'subjectivity' as more ephemeral, similarly to Weedon's (1997:32) reference to subjectivity as: "constantly reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak", Block argues that 'identity' seems to imply something more permanent, akin to Gee's (1999: 39) definition of 'core' (as opposed to 'socially situated') identities:

> ...whatever continuous and relatively "fixed" sense of self underlies our continually shifting multiple identities.

The third term Block (2009) discusses, 'subject position', denotes "the constant and ongoing positioning of individuals in interactions with others" (p. 217). The focus is still on the discursive, moment-to-moment situation but, as individuals take up subject positions in discourse, there is a sense in which they are creating coherent self-narratives, appropriate to a specific time and place. Although

identity theorists tend to use the terms 'identity', 'subjectivity' and 'subject position' interchangeably, Block (2009) recommends that, in terms of narrative research, it would be more useful to approach identity as a temporarily 'fixed' sense of self, which remains constant, develops or changes over time and space, while a focus on emergent subjectivities or subject positions might show how identity is constructed in discursive interactions.

After this introduction to poststructuralist approaches to the study of identity in applied linguistics, I move on to a discussion of developments in the investigation of identity, particularly in its links to discourse, to positioning, self-presentation and performance theory and research and to a performative approach to identity. Goffman's (1959, 1981) work on self-presentation in social interactions and Bamberg's (1997) model of 'narrative positioning' focus on the role of social context in investigations of identity and thus have a prominent position in this literature review. I go on to examine the role of social structure and individual agency in identity studies and show how the constructs of 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991; Kanno and Norton, 2003) frame identity work and connect identity to the social world of the individual learner.

3.2.2   Investigating identity

3.2.2.1   Identity and discourse

The focus on discourse has been an important development in SLL research in relation to the emergence of identity. Departing from traditional definitions of discourse, which associate the term with the detailed linguistic study of oral and written texts, social scientists interpret discourse in a wider sense to mean a language and a process of knowledge production (Block, 2007). Broader interpretations of the term make links between discourse and identity. For example, Gee (1996:127) defines Discourse as:

> ...a sort of identity kit which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk and often write so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize.

Here Discourse is viewed as a meaning-making practice which shapes identity by defining the way individuals present themselves to others and negotiate their roles.

In addition to Gee's (1996) broad view of Discourse, Menard-Warwick (2005) also emphasises Foucault's (1984) conception of discourse and its connection to subjectivity as influential on studies in applied linguistics: discourse is the authoritative speech or text of powerful social and political institutions which regulate macro-level and micro-level interactions. Thus Norton (2013: 54) views socioculturally available discourses as "the complexes of signs and practices that organise social existence and social reproduction" which are generally conducted through language. These can be seen as resources for identity construction, but also as constraints on the range of identities that individuals can perceive and project in specific interactions (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006).

While recognising that identities are discursively constructed, poststructuralist approaches vary in the emphasis they place on the local context of specific interactions or on their wider political and social contexts. For example, Conversation Analysts (e.g. Stokoe, 2000) tend to focus exclusively on identities emerging in talk-in-interaction and ignore the larger context, whereas Critical Discourse analysts (e.g. Fairclough, 1995) place much emphasis on the representation of identities at the expense of their negotiation in interaction. A more balanced approach is needed: one which incorporates both an analysis of identities constructed and negotiated in interaction and an analysis of positioning within dominant social discourses.

Most studies which elicit language learners' perspectives in self-reports tend to analyse their data at content level, rather than examine the emergence of identity at the level of interaction. A number of studies (e.g. Richards, 2006), however, have analysed classroom talk in second language institutional settings in order to investigate identity engagement and Norton (2000, 2013) draws attention to specific communication encounters between native and non-native speakers. However, only a few SLL studies (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2010; Rugen, 2013) have taken

into account the interactive discourse itself involved in the research interview or conversation concerning the performance and negotiation of identity of the language learner.

3.2.2.2 Identity and positioning

One way of capturing the emergent multiple subject positions taken up in discourse has been through the application of positioning theory. Davies and Harré (1999:37) define positioning as "the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines". In their engagement in conversations, individuals situate themselves and are situated by others in line with their sense of what constitutes a coherent narrative subject position for the particular activity, time and place (Block, 2007). Thus positioning theorists examine the co-construction of identity between speakers and how "speakers adopt, resist and offer 'subject positions' that are made available in discourses or 'master narratives'." (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006).

Positioning research on narrative identity has been criticised, however, for assuming that a priori cultural identities are reproduced in specific narratives (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012), which tends to detract from the interactive emergence of identity. Bamberg's (1997) 'narrative positioning' model aims to locate identity in the local, interactive accomplishment of everyday storytelling. This analytic framework operates on three interrelated levels which allow the analyst to move from the local context to wider sociocultural discourses: level 1 of the framework considers how the events unfold and how the characters are drawn up, positioned and evaluated in the story; level 2 examines the interactional accomplishment, narrative devices, rhetorical functions and the self-positioning of the narrator vis-á-vis his/her interlocutor(s); finally level 3 brings the first two levels together in order to answer the question: how do narrators position themselves with respect to dominant discourses (master narratives) which shape the sociocultural context? Bamberg (2004) claims that his concept of positioning is an agentive rather than a deterministic view in that

it shows "how subjects position themselves in relation to discourses by which they are positioned" (p.225).

Some applied linguistics researchers have used Bamberg's narrative positioning model to analyse the narratives of second language learners. Barkhuizen (2010), for example, draws on narrative positioning theory to show how a pre-service teacher of English in New Zealand positions herself as Tongan immigrant, teacher, activist and investor within dominant discourses of immigration and language teacher education. Barkhuizen distinguishes 'small stories', which are embedded in longer stretches of conversation and are seen as discursively constructed, from 'big stories' or life histories often compiled from multiple interviews. In addition to a line-by-line 'small story' analysis, Barkhuizen used data from his participant's 'big story' collected over time in order to illuminate the wider social context of identity construction.

Rugen (2013), working in the context of a university in Japan, also used a narrative positioning approach in his examination of negotiations of language learner and language teacher identities in conversational narratives. In one particular excerpt of a narrative, he shows how a student on an English teaching methodology course fashions an 'expert' identity as a language teacher in her account of preparing her sister for her university entrance examination which she passed. At the same time she positions herself as a linguistic 'novice' in her telling by first using a codeswitching strategy and then by consulting the researcher, as linguistic 'expert'. Rugen's conclusion is that analysing conversational interactions using narrative positioning can illuminate the contradictions and identity struggles of second language students who are, in this case, learning to become English teachers. Importantly, Rugen (2013) does recommend that future studies follow pre-service teachers over the course of their programme in order to obtain a more longitudinal view of the "dynamic processes of change" (p.213) and to "shed light on how/whether identities sediment over time" (p.214).

3.2.2.3 Identity, performance and performativity

The idea that identity originates not from an individual self but from the doing of identity in interaction was fundamental to Goffman's (1959) work on self-presentation. His dramaturgical perspective throws light on the construction and reconstruction of identity in order for speakers to manage and negotiate desirable selves in social interactions. If performances, according to Goffman, are 'shows' to persuade others, then audience response and indeed the role of the audience become important considerations in identity research (Riessman, 2008).

On the part of the audience, the interpretation of self-presentation and performance is complicated by the distinctive notions of what individuals 'give' and 'give off' in face-to-face interactions (Goffman, 1959). Verbal information might be part of an individual's deliberate self-presentation, but there are other expressive means such as tone of voice and facial expressions, which are 'given off' and might be unintentional. Goffman (1981) later proposed that presenting oneself in interaction involves taking a certain 'footing' or alignment towards the other participants and the content of their talk. For example an interviewee may present himself/herself as collaborative to an interviewer in the role he or she takes up in the story world of a narrative. Goffman (1981) also deconstructs the notion of speaker: the speaker can be an 'author' or one who creates an utterance, an 'animator' or person who actually speaks other people's words, a 'figure' or one who is a character in the story world and finally the speaker might take on a footing as 'principal' or someone who is committed to what the words say. Tellers are thus situated in the storytelling world but they also animate the story world and present themselves through their evaluations of the speech of others (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012).

Similarly, Tannen (2007[1987]) argues that the representation of speech in dialogue is "a narrative act" (p.125) which does not report on a conversation but serves to animate through dialogue and paralinguistic features, thus constructing a drama for an audience who "becomes involved by actively interpreting the significance of character and action" (p.124). The function of constructed

dialogue is also to present a moral or evaluative stance towards the 'voices' of others from within the drama. Vitanova (2013[2005]) describes this as the strategy of 'double-voicing' (Bakhtin, 1981), in which narrators' voices clash with those of others, thus investing words with the narrator's own evaluations and novel meanings. Baynham (2006) also emphasises that bringing in others' voices is "a central linguistic tool" (p. 385) for constructing the narrator's speaking position in agreement or in contrast with others. Koven (2012) builds on this concept of multivocality and shows how speakers take up multiple roles concurrently. Narrator and interlocutor roles can co-occur, such as when a speaker narrates a past event and uses devices such as intensifiers (e.g. 'so much', 'nothing') or laughs throughout, thus displaying his/her stance to the narrated event in the here and now.

Pennycook (2004) suggests that language and identity can best be understood through the conceptualization of performativity:

> Performativity opens up a way of thinking about language use and identity that avoids fundamentalist categories, suggesting that identities are formed in the linguistic performance rather than pregiven (p.17).

If identity is seen as an 'acting out', then performing an identity can be "a means of refashioning the self" (p.16) by claiming new subject positions.

It is important here to make a distinction between the notions of performance and performativity which are sometimes conflated but have different theoretical antecedents (Bricknell, 2003). Pennycook (2004) attributes his use of the notion of performativity in language use and identity to Butler's (2007[1990]) work on gender identity. Butler contends that "gender proves to be performative - that is, constituting the identity it purports to be" (2007:34). There is no pre-existing subject but the self is constituted in "an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (p. 191). These repeated acts take place "within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (p.45) so that, through the incessant repetition of gendered norms of masculinity and femininity, a gendered subject is invoked (Brickell, 2003).

In her use of performativity Butler (1997) explicitly draws from Austin's speech act theory in which constative or perlocutionary acts are distinguished from performative or illocutionary ones. In the illocutionary speech act "the name performs *itself,* and in the course of that performing becomes a thing done" (Butler, 1997: 44), whereas perlocutionary acts of speech "produce certain effects as their consequence" (p.3) which are not the same as the speech act. As an example of a performative speech act pertaining to gender identity, Butler (1997: 49) uses the example of a doctor's pronouncement "it's a girl" which begins a string of appellations "by which the girl is transitively girled". Thus for Butler linguistic performativity is not performance: it is in repeated interpellation or naming that gender identity comes into being and not as an achievement of actors enacting their gender (Brickell, 2003).

While authors who adopt an ethnomethodological approach to identity such as Goffman (1956, 1981) and Zimmerman (1998) also view gender as socially constructed, they, unlike Butler, understand gender performance as a 'doing' by actors in social interactions. It is through their presentation and performance of self as an interactive accomplishment and "within the context of cultural resources, prohibitions and compulsions" that an actor's identity comes into being (Bricknell, 2003: 173). The self, then, can pre-exist the 'doing' but it "never pre-exists the social relationships in which it is embedded" (p. 172).

The notion of performance in communicative situations is seen as a dynamic process, which involves performer and audience, and performance devices such as the use of quoted speech and voice patterns help the performer guide the interpretations of the audience and maintain their attention (Bauman, 1986). The artfulness of the performance is an important consideration as it highlights "the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content" (Bauman 1986:3). Thus oral narratives can be seen as performances 'keyed' to the narrated event (the story world) and the narrative (the telling world) in which the interaction takes place (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012).

3.2.2.4 Identity and emotions

From within a poststructuralist framework emotions and subjectivity are seen as negotiated in discourses, in practices and in performances (Zembylas, 2003). In early second language learning research, affective factors were seen as variables pertaining to individual language learners (Norton, 2013). Diary accounts of language learning were analysed, for example, in relation to affective factors such as anxiety rather than as discursive constructions of identity (Block, 2007). Zembylas (2003) argues that while emotions constitute the self, they are also socially organised and managed. Individuals thus 'do' their emotions in discursive situations. Zembylas (2003) theorizes the link between emotions and subjectivity as more than discursive: it is also performative and embodied. Performances of frustration, shame, disappointment and powerlessness can also be strategies of resistance and can subvert identities as "viewing subjectivity and emotion as performances or "assemblages" opens possibilities for challenging assumed structures…" (p.119). Emotions are thus not seen as the result of self-reflection but as dynamic, shifting and constituted in social interaction and performance.

3.2.3 The role of structure and agency in identity research

Attributions of structure and agency play a key role in identity studies. Identity can be seen as conditioned by social interaction and social structure and as a project of individual agency (Block, 2007). Pennycook (2001:120) expressed the theoretical concerns of applied linguists regarding structure and agency thus:

> The challenge is to find a way to theorize human agency within structures of power and to theorize ways in which we think, act, and behave that on the one hand acknowledge our locations within social, cultural, economic, ideological, discursive frameworks but on the other hand allows us at least some possibility of freedom of action and change.

Social structures such as education systems, peer groups, state governments constrain individual choices in assuming identities; for example, traditional societies impose prescribed gender roles on men and women (Block, 2007). Norton (2013) looks at social structures and social relations of power in society which impact on language learning. She sees power as operating both at the

macro level of government and institutions and at the micro level of encounters between people who have different access to material and symbolic resources. Thus identity is understood in terms of conditions which structure opportunities for the realization of desires for recognition, affiliation and symbolic resources. Gender, ethnicity and social class are not treated as background variables but as implicated in complex ways in identity construction.

Ahearn's (2001:112) definition of agency as: "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" has been expanded by discursive psychologists, sociolinguists and applied linguists who tend to examine agency in local contexts of communication. Reviewing her research carried out in the 1990's, Norton (2013) expands on her interpretations of the stories of a group of immigrant language learners in Canada as the expression of their ambivalent and contradictory positions in relation to gaining access to English-speaking networks and in the context of their language learning experiences in ESL classrooms. She shows how their subject positions develop over time through their specific identity struggles at work and with family and friends.

Canagarajah (2004) sees 'voice' as the linguistic expression of agency as language learners negotiate their subject positions in discourses. It is through language that they can modify or oppose the voices which represent dominant institutions and discourses. Similarly, Vitanova (2013[2005]), drawing from Bakhtin's (1984) theory of dialogic voice and authorship, investigated the enactment of agency by second language speakers. Her interviewees talked about the painful experience of losing their 'voice' when, as Eastern European immigrants newly arrived in the US, they were unable to understand and answer native-speakers. It was through their developing understandings of their social context and their creative, subsequent acts to appropriate new discourses and to challenge native speakers' oppressive discourses, often through laughter and irony, that they found ways to author themselves in a second language.

Thus Vitanova's Bakhtinian approach focuses on the "person as a creative process, an author who is continuously re-creating her/his lived world"

(2013:167). As in poststructuralist approaches, the self is not free from its discursive constitution but, in the establishment of a 'voice', can transcend its subject positions. Similarly, Menard-Warwick (2005) sees Bakhtinian theory as allowing for human agency, not through short-term processes of interaction, but through the orchestration of new discourses to gradually author the self in a second language. Thesen's (1997) study had earlier emphasised the agency of her South African student interviewees in their accounts of emergent identity in which they selectively located themselves in a wide range of social and institutional discourses. Consequently, their complex and contradictory stances seemed to problematize the view that they were defined and constrained by powerful discourses.

Furthermore in the discursive and performative study of narratives, narrators can be seen to attribute agency to themselves as characters in their story worlds (Bamberg, 2011; De Fina, 2006). Agency is also seen as a dimension of identity navigation in that speakers face an 'agency dilemma' (Bamberg, 2011): whether to use narrative devices which construct them as passive recipients adopting a 'victim' role (world-to-person) or whether to position themselves as agentive and in control (person-to-world). In addition, as we have seen, narrators frequently use the performative device of reported speech to present themselves as both ethical and agentive social actors (Tannen, 2007[1987]; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012).

 Similarly, Coffey (2013) argues that in the 'acting out' of scenes from the story world by using reported and direct speech, narrators agentively position themselves and bring the scenes to life for their audience. Focusing on the articulation of agency in discourse, Coffey analysed an interview extract as an episode in the narrative of a 62-year-old man, Paul, looking back at a French-learning trip to France when he was a 16-year-old schoolboy. The narrator's talk is seen as more than referential: it is a reconstitution of experience through the construction and dramatization of narrative episodes, which Coffey sees as the expression of agency. This almost exclusive focus on emergent agency in interactionist approaches to identity has been criticised by Block (2007), who

cautions against losing sight of how macro-level structures impinge on the individual agency of participants in interaction. The individual construction of identity should be seen as constrained by socially and politically defined categories such as ethnicity and gender (Block, 2007).

3.2.4   Communities of practice and imagined communities

3.2.4.1   Communities of practice

One way of connecting language learners with social structures and social relations is to view individuals as participating in "the practices of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities" (Wenger, 1998:4). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015:1) define 'communities of practice' as:

> … groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Although this definition does not necessarily encompass formal, institutional settings of learning, such as language learning classrooms, the three "crucial" characteristics of a community of practice, as set out in Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015:2), can easily be applied, in my opinion, to collaborative university classroom settings:

- "The domain": a community of practice shares a domain of interest;
- "The community": members of a community of practice "engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information";
- "The practice": members are practitioners who "develop a shared repertoire of resources" such as experiences, tools, ways of addressing problems etc.

According to Wenger (1998) learning is not just the accumulation of skills and information but also "a process of becoming" (p.215) a certain type of person, so it is closely linked to identity. Through participating and engaging in communities of practice we negotiate our identities and define who we are. Identity is also characterized as a 'learning trajectory' since "we define who we are by where we have been and where we are going" (p.149). There is a clear

connection between negotiation of identities and transition into new learning communities, as we shall see in **3.4.**

Newcomers become included in communities of practice and may become full members through a process of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991): as novices they participate and engage with other members and gain 'competence' and 'experience', but they must also be granted legitimacy by the community, as only then "can all their inevitable stumblings and violations become opportunities for learning rather than cause for dismissal, neglect, or exclusion" (Wenger, 1998:101). Participation and non-participation in communities of practice can both be sources of identity, and experiences of non-participation, to different degrees, can lead to 'marginality' or 'peripherality'.

However, the importance given to learning of participation in communities of practice has been questioned by researchers. For example, Fuller (2007) contends that individuals' backgrounds and dispositions to learning are just as important as are their changing social relationships in multiple settings. Research studies concerning language and academic socialization (e.g. Duff, 2007), have emphasized the limitations of the community of practice approach in explanations of learner ambivalence over their investment in becoming fully-fledged members of a learning community and of the effects of learner commitments outside the community.

3.2.4.2 Imagined communities

Wenger (1998) sees imagination as an important part of identity work: imagination not in the sense of personal fantasies or withdrawal from reality, but as "a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (p176). A number of applied linguists have taken up this idea (e.g. Kanno and Norton, 2003; Pavlenko and Norton, 2007) in their use of the term 'imagined communities' (first used by Anderson, 1991) to describe how language learners frequently adopt imagined identities in communities of speakers of the language they are learning. Language

learners' affiliations with imagined communities have an impact on their investment and their learning trajectories (Norton, 2013).

Similarly, the psychological construct of 'possible selves' (Markus and Nurius, 1986) has been used to represent what language learners might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming. Psychological studies of L2 identity hypothesise that if near-native proficiency is part of one's ideal self then this will act as a powerful motivator to learn the language (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2009). However, Norton (2013) shows how the constructs of 'imagined community' and 'imagined identity' can better explain particular social contexts of language learning: in one example the 'imagined identity' of Norton's participant, Mai, as a future office worker with good speaking and writing skills, counteracted her investment in the specific language practices of her English classroom, even though she was a highly motivated learner, and she withdrew from the course. Norton (2013) thus emphasises that learning practices should connect to language learners' imagined communities and identities.

Pavlenko and Norton (2007) give examples of language learners increasingly re-imagining themselves as sophisticated multilinguals. They argue that recent research has shown that English may offer language learners an opportunity to imagine different gendered identity options for themselves, especially in traditional, patriarchal societies. McMahill (1997, 2001), for example, shows how a group of young Japanese women in 'feminist' EFL classes moved towards new 'empowered' subject positions in their class discussions of personal conflict with societal and familial expectations. Also, through participating in English in discourses of resistance to patriarchal power structures with women from around the world over the internet, these female students were able to find their voices as members of an international community of practice (Block, 2007).

The notion of imagined communities is also relevant to Kinginger's (2004) four-year study of a young American woman, with a working-class background, learning French. Kinginger focuses on Alice's changing dispositions towards

language learning in relation both to her imagined communities of French speakers and to her gaining access to these communities. When studying French in college in the US Alice nurtured an idealized image of France and French people as highly cultured and socially just. She imagined herself gaining the symbolic capital to expand her identity and become a member of this culturally conscious community. The accounts of Alice's actual experiences in France portray her struggles to access social interaction; her language learning trajectory involved the continual negotiation of her social, linguistic, gender and class identities in order to "upgrade her access to cultural capital, to become a cultured person" (Kinginger, 2004:240) so she might fulfil her imagined identity as a member of a community of sophisticated French speakers.

3.2.5 Social identity

3.2.5.1 The construction of social identity

I now focus on specific social categories as well as on the multidimensionality of social identity in order to discuss how these are seen as implicated in the discourse and performance of emergent subject positions and ongoing identity constructions. People construct particular social identities in both the content of their talk and in their linguistic, narrative and interactional choices, thus indexing their positioning with respect to social categories such as gender and ethnicity (De Fina, 2006). Narratives are seen as crucial sites for social identity construction both in the story world of the narrated event and in the storytelling event (Moita-Lopes, 2006).

Ochs (1993: 288) defines social identity in a broad sense to include "social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of social life". LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) argue that all utterances are 'acts of identity' in which people reveal "their search for social roles" (p.14), in that they adopt the linguistic behaviour patterns of groups with which they wish to be identified. In their investigation of Creole communities in the Caribbean and West-Indian communities in London, they found that participants showed social and ethnic solidarity or difference in their individual uses of language in stories

and conversations, often revealing quite powerful ethnic and linguistic stereotypes. Block (2007:40) emphasises the multidimensionality of the approach to identity of LePage and Tabouret-Keller:

> This multidimensionality means that emerging from all human utterances, framed as acts of identity, is the enactment of different dimensions of identity, such as ethnicity, nationality, gender and social class.

Block and Corona (2016) extend this idea of multidimensionality to the study of the intersectionality in language and identity in which research focuses on how different dimensions of identity such as gender and social class might interconnect.

3.2.5.2 Gender identity

Both McMahill's (1997, 2001) Japanese students' voices of resistance and Alice's account of her language learning trajectory (Kinginger, 2004) show how gender identities are intrinsically linked to other facets of social identity such as ethnicity and social class. Drawing from Weedon's (1997[1987]) theory of feminist post-structuralism and Butler's (2007[1990]) performative theory of gender, Norton and Pavlenko (2004) describe their approach to gender, not as essentialized, unitary or determined, but "as a complex system of social relations and discursive practices differentially constructed in local contexts" (p.2). They take it as given that beliefs and practices concerning gender relations and normative masculinities and femininities vary across cultures. Thus, gender discourses, prevalent in the dynamic sociocultural discourse, influence language learners' perceived opportunities, their desires, their investments and their imagined communities.

Norton and Pavlenko (2004) refer to a number of studies in which resistance to gender patriarchy is an important component. They argue that in the EFL context of Japan, for example, studies show that a much higher number of women than men are interested in learning English and that English is commonly seen by language learners as linked to feminism and women's opportunities in the job market. Similarly, the Japanese women in McMahill's (1997, 2001) study,

discussed above, stated that they found English to be an appropriate language for expressing their emotions and critical opinions regarding gender practices.

Norton (2013) brings out the link between language learning and gender identity in her account of the experiences of Mai, as a young Vietnamese immigrant in Canada. She explains that Mai had no problem practising her English in the workplace, where she worked as a seamstress, until the company began to lay off some of the women. Mai then began to feel marginalized when she was told that she had been kept on because she was a single female, not because she was a competent worker. At home Mai was also struggling with the oppressive patriarchy of her brother who wanted her to get married rather than study English. She was 'saved' from others' negative positioning of her at home and at work by getting married, thus acquiring the status of wife. However, Norton reports that Mai's husband does not want her to work, but he might 'let' her study. Thus Mai's language learning and language use are seen as closely intertwined with gender positioning. Although Norton does show clearly how gender was constructed and interwoven with changes in Mai's identity as an immigrant in Canada, there is little sense in which gender identity emerges in interaction in Norton's study and we learn little about how her participants' narratives were constructed and performed at a micro-social level.

Contrastingly, in his study of the construction of race, gender and sexuality, Moita-Lopes (2006) focuses on the interactional discourse of an adolescent boy, Hans, in focus group discussions in a Brazilian school. Moita-Lopes uses an interactional positioning approach to analyse Hans' enactment of gender identity in terms of macro-social, hegemonic categories. Hans employs quoted speech in his narratives, which are co-constructed with the rest of the focus group, to position his father as both a protector of women in the family ("Go home!/This is not the time for women/ to be out on the street") and as a predator of other women ("Lock up your she-goats/because my he-goat is free"). Hans then positions himself in alignment with his father's enactment: "If we let the women within easy reach ((laughter)),/the he-goat will go/ and ((makes the sound of an animal catching another))//"). Women then, in this case Hans' sister, are

positioned and voiced as passive victims. Moita-Lopes also make the point that the quoted speech indicates who is entitled to speak. While Hans' sister plays an important role in the story, she is not given a voice; she is only spoken about. Thus Hans constructs himself in alignment with his father and in collaboration with his focus group as a hegemonic male through interactional positionings in relation to 'femininity'. Hans' constructions can be seen as reflecting mainstream discourses concerning gender and sexuality.

In its narrative enactment gender is thus seen as a performance, a linguistic and bodily enactment rather than a pre-existing identity, although individuals 'do' gender identity by drawing on established gender-related discourses (Block, 2007). The performance aspects of 'doing' culture are brought out in Abu-Lughod's (2008 [1993]) ethnography of the lives of Bedouin women, in which she shows how individual Bedouin women construct and perform their gender talk in terms of the needs of the storytelling occasion. In her critical feminist narrative, Abu-Lughod (ibid) also challenges common Western interpretations of gender relations in non-Western societies. She argues that, while an Islamic religious identity frames most of the women's stories, it did not determine the situated enactment of their tellings of struggles and resistance, neither did it make the women submissive. Gubrium and Holstein (2009) draw attention to the multivocality of Abu-Lughod's account, to the diversity of performative roles taken up by tellers and to the frequent humour in the tellings related to "the undoing of patriarchy" (p.88).

3.2.5.3 Ethnolinguistic identity

Ethnolinguistic aspects of self also come under questioning in language learners' identity performances (Harklau, 2007). Blommaert (2005:214) defines ethnolinguistic identity as "an identity expressed through belonging to a particular language community and articulated in statements such as… 'I am British *ergo* I speak English". While this might be assumed to be a relatively stable and uncontroversial sociolinguistic term, Blommaert (2005) draws attention to its complexity and how it might be problematic in its applicability to specific language use. Blommaert (2006) distinguishes between 'ascribed'

identity, which relates the individual to the language community to which they belong, and achieved or 'inhabited' identity, which refers to the articulation of the individual's engagement with a particular speech community. There might be tension and conflict between one's ascribed and inhabited identities and Block (2007) argues that more discussion is needed of achieved subject positions in communities of practice as opposed to identities presumed as important to individuals by outsiders, such as researchers.

Rampton (1990) had earlier delineated language identity with his constructs of 'expertise', 'affiliation' and 'inheritance', thus displacing terms such as 'native speaker' and 'mother tongue'. 'Expertise' refers to the proficiency of the individual in a language or dialect which earns the acceptability of other users of the language; 'affiliation' is the attachment or identification with a language irrespective of one's proficiency in it; 'inheritance' is being born into a family or community which is associated with a particular language or dialect. These language identities can shift during a lifetime so that someone might be born into a language community and possibly achieve expertise in that language but later in life might develop an affiliation with (and expertise in) another language community (Block, 2007).

3.2.5.4 Religious identity

Studies of Muslims in the UK (e.g. Modood, 2005) and in the United States (e.g. Peek, 2005) suggest that religion is the most salient source of social and individual identity among those ethnic groups. This was also seen to be the case among young Saudis in Yamani's (2000) interview study (see **2.1**). However, the links between national, ethnic and religious ascribed and inhabited identities are emphasised by Block (2007) and he argues that there is growing interest among identity researchers in "how collective and national identities emerge at the crossroads of religion and language" (p.44). Baynham (2006) shows how narrators draw on religious and linguistic discourses in order to construct speaking positions. For example, in order to dissuade his son, ML, from emigrating from his home country, Morocco, to England, ML's father positions him as a potential apostate from Islam: "ML: you go any place is no Muslim yes he

said to me you no Muslim" (p.385). Thus the dramatisation of his father's reaction to ML's decision to emigrate hinges on the Muslim and 'no Muslim' opposition that his father constructs.

3.2.5.5 Social class identity

Bourdieu (1991) was concerned with the formation of identity within social class and a person's habitus, which can be seen as their dispositions to perceive and act in the world according to previous experiences (Menard-Warwick, 2005). Related to habitus and social class are Bourdieu's (1991) metaphors of economic, cultural, linguistic, social and symbolic capital. Thus social class can be understood as a composite of wealth, status, connections to institutions and symbolic behaviour (Block, 2007). Linguistic capital is also an indicator of social class and links closely with economic capital, in that language acquisition becomes an economic activity when "access to a high position requires the ability to speak or write in a prestigious variety" (Menard-Warwick, 2005: 256).

3.2.6 Summary of identity theory and research

I have shown how identity theory and research have largely moved away from a psychological, essentialist view of identity, based on the individual self, to the conception of identity as a social construction and one which emerges in social interaction. It was seen how concepts of investment, symbolic capital, imagined communities and positioning have tended to supersede earlier concepts such as instrumental motivation and ideal/possible selves, in order to view language learner identity as situated, shifting and interdependent on other facets of identity such as gender.

A central question raised in any study of identity was seen as the role of structure and agency: theorists and researchers tend to focus either on social identity or individual voice, although many also seek to investigate how one might inform the other. Positioning theory, particularly narrative positioning in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, brings together, to some degree, the discursive practices of individuals as they position themselves and are positioned by dominant discourses. Furthermore, in the performance of identity,

narrators/interviewees can resist or create new or consistent subject positions in the story worlds of their narratives as well as in the storytelling situation of the interview conversation. In addition to these "momentary acts of self-positioning" (Menard-Warwick, 2005:270), it was shown that performances on different occasions and in different social contexts can also create a sense of continuous identity over time. I now turn to a discussion of developments in narrative research in order to show how developments in narrative inquiry and narrative analysis reflect these discursive and performative approaches to identity.

3.3   Narrative research on identity

> What is the potential of narration and narrative analysis for the business of identity research? ...The answer has to be delivered by way of empirical analytic research - research that takes into account how people navigate their identity... (Bamberg, 2010: 7)

3.3.1   Developments in narrative research on identity

There has been a clear shift in narrative research from a conceptualization of identity as centred on the psychological, individual self to more recent views of identity as emergent in discursive interaction (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012), as is exemplified in the above quotation. Benson (2005) argues that (auto) biographical narratives are particularly suited to investigating new language learner identities, particularly when language learning experience involves psychological or geographical border crossings. These narratives have been frequently analysed for content or themes in order to reveal the concerns of language learners. Narratives most commonly used in traditional narrative inquiry have been those of personal, past experience usually elicited in research interviews. In this way narrators make sense of themselves in their representational accounts and create more or less continuous, coherent selves. These autobiographical 'big stories' are usually elicited over a period of time and provide data for narrative inquiry research, which has come to dominate the TESOL field (Barkhuizen, 2011; Vasquez, 2011).

In contrast, 'small story' research "focuses on the collection and analysis of narrative data from ordinary, everyday interactions rather than the narratives of an autobiographical nature told in response to interview questions" (Rugen, 2013: 199). Analysis is directed less at the content of stories but rather on the 'how' of the telling and on the talk-in-interaction. Widening the scope of narrative from "the prototypical teller-led personal experience, past events story" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012:108), which was relayed to a 'silent' audience in an interview, has led to the study of a large number of 'small' narratives which might occur in conversations such as retold, shared stories among friends, argumentative, anecdotal, hypothetical and habitual narratives. Hypothetical narratives can help to emphasise an argumentative position and habitual narratives can consolidate a position by presenting events as repeated over time. Thus embedded narratives are often instigated in order to further points made in the surrounding discourse and to amplify previous moral stances (Ochs and Capps, 2001).

Studies in cross-cultural narratives also reveal a great deal of cultural variation in narrative genre and the structure of storytelling (Pavlenko, 2007). Bell (2011) points out that the individual-experience 'autobiographical memory' is a Western cultural product which poses challenges to cross-cultural narrative research. Storytelling styles (Tannen, 2007[1987]), which include the use of narrative devices and modes of narrative interaction, also vary. Tannen argues that her crosscultural research shows that involvement strategies are culturally shaped: she reports her Greek narratives as examples of a 'high involvement style' with frequent repetition and voice animation. Similarly, Johnstone (1983) examines culturally variable rhetorical strategies such as the frequent use of repetition and parallelisms in Arabic persuasive discourse, although she focuses primarily on contemporary Arabic prose.   De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012) view storytelling styles as reflecting cultural 'core' values with dramatization and active participation in narrative indicating sociability and interdependence. They go on to claim that cultures which value storytelling tend to be more focused on involvement strategies and to be more oral-based.

3.3.2 Narrative identity

A central function of telling a story is the construction of identity (Riessman, 2008) and narrative identity has been viewed as developing over time, such as in Benson's (2013) study of 'second-language identity' in participant narratives concerning a study abroad programme, or as "moment-to-moment identity work" which is investigated in "stories told in everyday interaction" (Rugen, 2013: 201). Bamberg (2010), for example, contests the idea of narrative identity research as an inquiry into the reflections of a solitary individual, and locates the self and identity in the local, interactive narrative practices of 'small stories'. His emphasis is on how identity is being *done* in narrative, rather than on how identity is represented and his focus is on speakers' strategic use of narrative practices as they bring the there-and-then of past experience to the here-and-now act of speaking (Bamberg, 2011). According to Bamberg (2011) speakers make identity claims through narrative practices and 'navigate' their identity in terms of:

A. "Constancy and change across time" (p.103). Speakers construct or plot change or consistency using discursive devices.

B. "Sameness versus difference"(p.104). Speakers align or contrast themselves in relation to others referred to or to interlocutors.

C. "Agency" (p. 106). Speakers position themselves along a continuum of high to low agency thus constructing the self as actor or victim.

Vasquez (2011) argues that this 'small story' discursive approach to narrative identity needs to be taken up by more TESOL researchers in the analysis of both teacher and language learner identities. We saw in **3.2.2.2** how applied linguist researchers such as Barkhuizen (2010) and Rugen (2013) used conversational narratives to analyse the identity positions taken up by second-language learners and learner teachers. However, both raised issues concerning the relationship between these transitory narrative positions and the continuity of identity construction across time.

In a similar vein, Watson (2007, 2012), investigating teacher professional identity in a UK setting, raises questions about the significance of identities

which emerge in 'instantaneous' narrative positionings. She argues that prolonged interaction is necessary to judge the salience of identities and consequently analyses the conversational narratives of student teachers both as performances of identity and as informed by a series of interviews conducted over the course of a year. The contextualisation of narrative is important, Watson (2007) claims, in order to show how the students' professional identities have developed over the research project. However, the question of the incommensurability of the meanings in relation to identity of big and small stories, of the "temporary spread" versus the "here and now performance of identity" is the subject of ongoing debate (Watson, 2007: 384).

While accepting that previous narrative tellings give continuity to narrative accounts and act as resources for subsequent tellings, Taylor and Littleton (2006) emphasise that they can also act as constraints to new constructions of narrative identity. For Baynham (2015) acts of identity accumulate over time and this sedimentation of identity positions is 'brought along' to the social encounter and shapes the identity positions (the 'brought about') which are available to tellers in discursive events. 'Brought about' identities are interactively achieved as tellers talk up identity positions and as they contest and remake 'brought along' identities in the moment of speaking.

Schiffrin (1996) shows how tellers construct different aspects of themselves through the form, the content and the performance of a narrative. This notion of identity performance, that participants are doing their identities by telling and performing stories, has been taken up by narrative researchers in conducting and analysing interviews as interactional events (e.g. De Fina and Perrino, 2011; Koven, 2012). The 'small story' approach has been applied not only to everyday conversations but also to research interviews; indeed, Koven (2011) argues that interview stories can be just as 'involved' (Tannen, 2007[1987]) and interlocutory as conversational stories told in 'naturally occurring' situations.

Baynham (2006), for example, used the concepts of performance and speaking position to analyse the interview narratives of migration and settlement of

Moroccan economic immigrants in London. He shows how the construction of their narratives involved shifts in presentation of self, family and community and shifts in narrative positions taken up in interaction with the interviewer/researcher. According to Baynham, performance features, particularly constructed dialogue, animate speaking positions in narratives and help to bring out the narrator's position. These speaking positions also "involve the relational construction of identities by opposition or contrast with others" (ibid: 396). Baynham considers himself as interlocutor positioned by his interviewee: for example, he argues that when his participant MB presented himself as educated in 'the school of life' he was also positioning his white, Anglophone, professional interviewer as a product of conventional schooling.

In making sense of the construction of identity in narratives, Baynham (2006) emphasises the importance of using contextual information taken from previous interviews and conversations. The interpretation of a moment of discourse or performance can be enhanced by the accumulation of meaning across narratives. For example, MM's narrative about his struggles and achievement in passing his driving test in England lends weight to his particular, later narrative telling of driving his family back to Morocco in which he contrasts car drivers with mule and donkey riders. Baynham (2006) also focuses attention on the importance of wider contextual issues such as the socio-political context of the times: these are the macro-social processes which he sees as played out in specific micro-interactions. Similarly, Georgakopoulou (2006) argues for a pairing of roles taken up in 'small' narrative tellings with larger social identities. Thus extra-situational roles, or 'portable identities' (Zimmerman, 1998) such as gender, can be traced through focusing on the details and the performance of 'small' stories.

In this section, I discussed different approaches to narrative research and I particularly focused on the discursive construction of narrative identity. I now move the discussion towards research which deals with the experience of the learner and their narratives of transition, as they move into higher institutions of learning, in order to examine changing identity constructions in their accounts of transitioning. I first review selected UK-based, international, transnational and

local Arabian Gulf studies of tertiary student transitions to English-medium universities and then go on to discuss different research perspectives such as transition as a stage in a 'learning career', as engagement and participation in new social, academic and linguistic learning communities and as a negotiation of identity congruence.

3.4   Learning transitions to tertiary education

> Transition as a change process relates to how students navigate
> institutional pathways and, specifically, how these movements
> affect shifts in identity and agency.
>   (Scott, Hughes, Evans, Burke, Walter and Watson, 2013)

3.4.1   The concept of transition

Transitions to institutions of higher learning denote the movement across learning spaces to new identity positions, as the quotation above indicates. The change process is not a linear one and can be marked by 'explicit moments' of emotional disruption due to identity negotiation and renegotiation in the struggle to work within institutional arrangements and norms (Scott et al, 2013). Viewing the transition in terms of a student's 'learning career' (Blooming and Hodgkinson, 2000) also brings past learner identities, and the relationship between learner identity and other aspects of the learner's past and present life, to the process (Scott et al, 2013). Learner transition is seen as a process of entering and participating in new learning communities or new communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), in order to join and work with new learning groups, for example. The transition to university also involves the learning of new academic pedagogies, literacies and cultural practices, therefore it also denotes the movement into a new discourse community.

3.4.2   Student perspectives on learning transitions

While research on student transitions to institutions of higher learning have tended to be large-scale, survey studies with the purpose of researching causes of student persistence and withdrawal from colleges and universities, a number of studies e.g. Peel (2000) in Australia and Yorke and Longden (2008) in the UK have also investigated student perceptions of their first year undergraduate

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experience through focus groups, interviews or student free-text responses. Peel (2000) contends that his research into student perspectives points to the quality of relationships with university teachers as a potentially important factor in successful and unsuccessful transition. He also emphasises the importance of student interaction and peer networks and of forging links between academic and social orientation in order to navigate what he calls the "collaborative comprehension and management of the first-year experience" (p.6).

In an international context, Woodrow (2013) found that the motivation of her cohort of international students moving from a foundation programme to first-year undergraduate study in Australia dipped over the research span, leading her to emphasise the need for increased student support. Woodrow investigated the academic and linguistic extrinsic and intrinsic goals of international students using questionnaires, followed by semi-structured interviews which provided in-depth insights in relation to participants' experiences, problems, feelings and aspirations during their studies. Many attributed their loss of optimism and motivation after transition to university to their unfamiliarity with university expectations. However, they also reported that they were struggling to adapt to the impersonal academic setting, that they found it difficult to understand lectures and that they had made few friends. By the end of the year some students reported lapsing into a state of procrastination due to the difficulty of academic work.

In Yorke and Longden's (2008) large-scale, longitudinal study of the first-year undergraduate experience in the UK, questionnaire results showed that students were generally positive about their first year experience but free-text responses emphasised the importance of the social side of higher education, particularly from the aspect of making new friends. As in Peel's (2000) Australian study, poor teaching quality and lack of interaction with academic staff or fellow students were major issues and this could be clearly seen in the free-text responses given by non-returning students. Yorke and Longden (2008), however, tend to view academic and social demands as separate concerns. For example, social integration is seen as a separate problem which relates to non-academic mixing

with other students rather than to peer-supported learning and peer interaction in the academic setting. Indeed, Scott et al (2013) contend that the main focus in recent studies on student experiences of transition has been the relative importance of either social or academic integration, rather than on their interdependence. The Peel (2000) and the Woodrow (2013) studies, however, suggest that student reports make links between the social and academic challenges of the transition experience.

3.4.3 Affective challenges of transition

A more integrated approach was adopted by Beard, Clegg and Smith (2007) who argue that a richer conception of students as emotional selves is needed in order to investigate engagements in their learning at university. Emotions such as shame and pride, for example, can be related to success and failure and "play a key role in the establishment and maintenance of identity" (p. 238). In the researchers' study, first-year university students in the UK were invited to write down, on either side of a blank sheet, their positive and negative feelings regarding their university experiences. The researchers found that students noted down either positive or negative references to the idea of making social relationships and some were overwhelmed by the workload and fear of failure. Later in the year making new friends on their courses and in social settings was still important and they reported making academic relationships with tutors and lecturers. More specifically, some were happy to get involved with groups of students in order to work on presentations together and socialise. Others, however, reported having nothing in common with their fellow-students and resented not having enough interaction with teachers. There were several negative comments about the independent approach to studying as well as having to work in groups and some even expressed their apathy in relation to courses and their wish to give up university studies. Based on their data, Beard et al (2007) contend that students experience an intense emotional journey in their first year which affects all aspects of their lives. Transitional challenges are thus seen as critical emotionally, socially and cognitively.

I now turn to studies of transition of Arab learners to English-medium, tertiary institutions in the Arabian Gulf in order to examine student perspectives within this particular sociocultural context.

3.4.4   Transitions to English-medium institutions in Arabian Gulf contexts

Van den Hoven (2014) draws attention to the prominent role of English-medium instruction (EMI) in the Arabian Gulf but also to the lack of research on the implementation of EMI practices in different regions and within institutions. As shown in **2.3**, learning more English has been seen as a threat to Arabic and Islam, although Arab student-participants in recent research (e.g. Al-Jarf, 2008; van den Hoven, 2014) have tended to choose English as a more appropriate and functional language for academic and professional uses. However, researchers of Arab students at English-medium tertiary level colleges (e.g. Malcolm, 2013) emphasise that the level of English required for academic study is far beyond that of state school graduates.

In spite of the expanding use of EMI, few studies of student transitions to English-medium institutions in Middle Eastern countries focus on EL2 identity as such. A notable exception is Elyas' 2011 study of first-year university student identity in Saudi Arabia (see **2.5.2**). However, some recent crosscultural research (e.g. Hatherley-Greene, 2012; Malcolm, 2013; Holden, 2015) has examined student perspectives and motivation in the context of EMIs in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), contexts which have much in common with Saudi Arabia. Hatherley-Greene (2012) constructs the transition of Emirati male students from their high school to a foundation year at an English-medium college of education as a cultural border crossing in that students are compelled to move from an Arabic life world to a predominantly Western culture in college, in which most faculty are EL1 speakers. He sets this crossing in the complex context of the UAE's rapid transition from a traditional society to a globalized, modern economy with an unknown future. Male state school graduates showed they were not prepared for college-level studies, leading to cultural, academic and linguistic shock in the first two months, and there was a 66% attrition rate at the end of the first year (female students, who were not part of the project, were

reported as faring better). Although parents showed little interest in their sons' studies, Hatherley-Greene (2012) claimed to uncover a deep love of family, community and nation among students, implying that their social identities were not activated by their EMI learning context and he emphasises the need for increased social integration to facilitate the transition of students struggling to cope with academic learning in a second language.

Contrastingly, Holden's (2015) found in her study of success and failure among transnational students in a foundation year of an mixed Irish medical school in Bahrain, that social integration did not pose a challenge to students because of the institution's promotion of a strong 'culture of belonging'. She attributes this to university staff efforts to build academic community awareness as well as to the common Islamic, Arabic background of a majority of the students. Peer study groups were seen to act as bridges between social and academic integration, although Holden found that students tended to create study groups with students of a similar academic level. While social integration was reported as unproblematic, academic integration was full of challenges and Holden examines factors contributing to failure rates, such as previous education and English language experience as well as transitional challenges. However, a sense of belonging to a caring learning community and the feeling of being a valued member of that community were all-important factors contributing to academic integration.

In her interview study of motivation among male Saudi students at an English-medium medical college in Bahrain, Malcolm (2013) focuses on the demotivating affective issues of transition particularly in student reports of saving face and falling self-esteem, as they have to interact in class with international school graduates who are more proficient in English and to adjust their self-images from successful to struggling students. However, in an earlier article, Malcolm (2011) contends that, in this setting, failing students are not unmotivated and actually muster the impetus to become more independent English learners. As students learning to become doctors, they are spurred on by the self-motivating voice of their ideal selves and they also feel bound to satisfy parental expectations. Thus

the research reviewed suggests that transitions to EMI institutions in the Arabian Gulf are burdensome and can cause emotional upheaval and falling self-esteem on the part of the transitioning students. However, as Beard et al (2007) found in their UK study, students frequently prioritised social relationships with peers and teachers in an effort to engage with their learning.

3.4.5 Transitions in a 'learning career'

Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) developed the concept of 'learning career' in order to investigate the changes in the learning dispositions of students in transition over a three-year period in the UK. Dispositions are understood in terms of the learner's changing identity constructions and transformations over time. From students' past and present learning experiences and contexts elicited in interviews, the authors conclude that most of the young people's stories could not be understood without relating them to experiences outside college life; also, that learning careers should be seen as complex interrelationships between the constant and shifting identities, economic, social and cultural factors, and the changing perceptions and dispositions of the individual learner. An important, additional point the authors make is that transformations in learning careers often involved critical turning points, which "prompted learners to appraise themselves and their life-worlds in ways they had not done before" (p.595).

Scott et al (2013) also find the concept of a learning career useful in order to capture some of the complexity of learners' experiences of transition to institutions of higher learning for three main reasons:

- Academic activity can be firmly located in a learner's social context.
- Transition can be seen as an individual and a collective activity.
- Identity transformation, rather than categorization, is a key feature.

Academic and social integration are not seen as distinctive activities in a learning career as both are the product of an identity trajectory and shape that identity.

While the researchers focused on the transition of postgraduate students at master's level in various UK institutions, they contend that transitions at this level have commonalities with other levels such as undergraduate transitions.

While different stages of transition may be identified with their own intellectual, social and emotional challenges, transitions in a learning career tend to be fluid and variable. A longitudinal perspective is necessary to incorporate both past and present experiences as the student brings previous identities and dispositions to the transitional process of appropriating new institutional rules and arrangements.

Scott et al (2013) found wide differences in postgraduate students' accounts of transition to their master's level course. Many experienced peaks and troughs at the start and not all were able to reach an equilibrium. Those with already established academic identities were usually able to participate more fully, even after a shaky start, while some younger students, with less established academic identities, remained on the fringes of the postgraduate learning community. According to the authors, their investigation clearly shows how the different learning careers of these individuals result in different experiences of transition.

3.4.6   Language learning careers

The concept of learning career in education has been extended by Benson (2011) in the field of TESOL to investigate the language learning careers of L2 learners in their narrative accounts. He defines language learning career as both:

- a person's course through life which is concerned with language learning;
- a process in which the person develops an identity related to the social category of language learner.

 Benson (2011) describes his interview study of first-year Hong Kong university students who narrated their experiences of learning English from the early stages to university entrance in one long interview. The researcher summarized the interview transcripts in short language learning histories which were seen as language learning careers and subdivided into phases, processes, incidents and critical incidents. The narration of a particular incident concerning language learning could thus be contextualized in the larger narrative to give a sense of the learner's conceptualization of events and processes. As such, Benson (2011) uses the concept of language learning career as a psychological construct to

investigate the current self-concept of language learners and their evolving identities as language learners. Little consideration was given to the social interaction of the interview, of different oral narrative styles and of the 'life reality' (Pavlenko, 2007) of interviewees. Longitudinal research, which links learning careers to life experiences and to wider social identities, such as the Bloomer and Hodgkinson (2000) study, can perhaps trace identity changes more effectively through interview narratives of educational transitions in their local and social context.

3.4.7   Taking on a student identity

A learning transition is better seen as entering into and participating in a new learning community (e.g. Hughes, 2010, Scott et al, 2013), which requires re-negotiation with the self, with family and friends and with tutors and other staff. Scott et al (2013) argue that Wenger's (1998) term 'community of practice' might not be apt in their study of students embarking on a master's level programme, as the postgraduate community could not be said to have a common enterprise or goal; however, in the sense of engagement, belonging and negotiation of practices and rules by the novice student, the term is relevant and appropriate (Scott et al, 2013).

According to Scott et al, a learning transition involves a quantitative (an accumulation of learning) and a qualitative (reflexive knowledge, skill or disposition) change. The official form of this transitional process, created by institutional rules and formal arrangements, may be at odds with the individual student's view or understanding of the transition and this pressure on the student to conform to the formal version of the transition is a likely to be a source of tension:

> The student is placed within these arrangements (which are not static but changing) and has to find a way through them. And within the appropriation of these rules and many others is a notion of identity as a student.   (Scott et al, 2013: 8)

3.4.8 Negotiating identity congruence

A number of researchers have expanded on Wenger's (1998) idea that participating in a new learning community involves identity transformation. For example, Hughes (2010) makes the point that individuals must reconcile their learning group identities with wider social identities from other community memberships relating to gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and maturity. Since identity is performed and therefore shifting, learners have to continually negotiate and renegotiate this 'identity congruence', which "gives the self a coherent and emotionally acceptable sense of identity *in situ"* (p.7). In her qualitative study of student experiences of collaborative learning in blended learning courses, Hughes showed how learners negotiated identity congruence with peer groups in order to belong and engage. Her analytical framework distinguished between social, operational and knowledge-related identity congruence.

Hughes (2010) contends that, contrary to the e-learning literature, which focuses on the isolation of learners in virtual communication, she found that social incongruence in learning groups had little effect on formal learning. Operational congruence, such as employing communication technology in a particular way, did not guarantee learners' engagement with new knowledge either. Knowledge-related identity congruence, however, seemed to be essential for social learning and engaging with group knowledge appeared to provide a strong sense of belonging. Those learners whose identity positions conflicted with "the ideas, concepts and knowledges that are under construction" (p.48) within the group expressed dissatisfaction or even withdrew from the course. Hughes argues that as learners develop identity congruence through identity shifts and transformations, some may develop academic identities and others may become less teacher-centred. However, she cautions that these new identities may not be easily achieved, as they may challenge gender and other social identity constructions.

3.4.9 Negotiating participation in new discourse communities

Citing Swales (1990), Flowerdew (2000: 129) lists six criteria for defining a discourse community: members share common goals, participatory mechanisms, information exchange, community-specific genres, a highly specialized terminology and a high level of expertise. When students transition to university they encounter new oral and written academic discourse demands and for L2 students this can be particularly challenging. Studies on the academic and language socialization of L2 learners in high school and university in Canada (e.g. Kim and Duff, 2012; Morita, 2004) focus on the challenges of negotiating participation in new discourse communities.

Duff (2010: 172) defines the theoretical premise of language socialization as:

> ...language is learned through interactions with others who are more proficient in the language and its cultural practices and who provide novices explicit and (or) implicit mentoring or evidence about normative, appropriate uses of the language, and of the worldviews, ideologies, values and identities of community members.

Duff views academic discourse as a social, cognitive and rhetorical process and accomplishment, in which identity work and negotiation of ideologies are crucial aspects. She argues that the emotional tensions and struggles of newcomers may be particularly pronounced in intercultural contexts.

Drawing from concepts of legitimacy and peripherality (Wenger, 1998), Morita (2004) explored the academic discourse socialization experiences of L2 learners at a Canadian university. The researcher used L2 learners' self-reports (mostly written), interviews and observations of classroom discussions over the first year of their master's degree to investigate how L2 learners negotiate competence and identity in classroom oral activities. The contextual analysis of the self-report data reflected the struggle of students to (re) construct their identities within the classroom. However, Morita also found that L2 students could be creative and critical in their dealings with classroom challenges and constructed a wide variety of subject positions in the local context. Her group of six Japanese female students responded to and participated in classroom interaction and learning in different ways, which challenged stereotypes of

Asian/Japanese women as quiet and passive. Learner agency, on the other hand, was found to be limited by ascribed identities imposed by instructors. Also, experts or peers did not always assist newcomers to engage in academic practices, showing that a granting of legitimacy was not forthcoming on all occasions. All in all, Morita (2004) brought out the complexities of relations between L2 learners' power negotiation, identity and socialization into academic communities, using the construct of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998).

Duff (2010), however, draws attention to the limitations of the communities of practice approach to classroom discourse studies. She argues that discourse socialization associated with communities of practice tends to be narrow and apolitical as it disregards students' simultaneous engagements with their individual social networks. Consequently, a wider sociocultural approach to language and academic socialization is needed. Duff (2007) cautions that L2 learners may not be fully invested in becoming socialized into their new academic discourse communities, due to their future goals and trajectories, or because of their commitment to primary communities, or due to their ambivalence over becoming full members of L2-mediated communities.

As discussed in the introduction, Thesen (1997) had also researched the stances of students towards new academic literacies and practices, in this case, during their first-year English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses in a South African university context. Thesen views transition in two ways: it is both the experience of entering into new literacy practices and the impact on the university of the social changes of post-apartheid South Africa. She found a discrepancy between institutional discourses and identities ascribed to Black students, such as 'second-language' and 'disadvantaged' and the way students described themselves as they made sense of their transition to university.

Thesen (1997) uses the concepts of discourse and voice as linguistic representations of structure and agency in her investigation of the relationship between academic discourse practices and individual student perspectives. She

found that, in the biographical interviews, students located themselves in relation to discourses. For example, Robert described how he reacted to his past transition from a farm to an urban township school and, showing awareness of the discourses of power in the latter, tells how he lied in order to cover up his origins. Likewise, he explains his struggle with academic text in terms of the clash between his own personal religious discourses and that of academic religious explorations with its Western cultural connotations. In these ways, Robert creates an 'identity in movement', over a period of time, in which he "seems to be straddling discourse practices creatively, trying to find the points of intersection between several discourses, old and new" (p.497), in order to construct new identities as an African and a university student. Research participants also showed that they were often alienated from the curriculum and at times invested more in their social lives than in their academic identities.

Thesen (1997) thus argues that her research interviews constitute accounts of emergent identity across different contexts in which students are agentive in their choices to merge or resist discourses. Like Vitanova's (2013[2005]) Russian immigrants, Thesen's (1997) students found new ways to author themselves by orchestrating multiple discourses in their new learning contexts. She criticises those studies which impose homogeneous categories on individuals, instead of giving them the opportunity to speak for themselves. Furthermore, Thesen shows awareness of the interview situation and relationship by discussing how students might have adjusted their responses in talking to her as a white stranger. She comments, for example, that through his explanations of his personal religious knowledge, Robert is also instructing her on his African religion.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have brought together three bodies of literature: the initial section on identity informed the subsequent narrative and transition sections and acted as a base for the methodological and empirical works reviewed. I first examined developments in identity theory and research, particularly those which view the EL2 learner as constructors of their identity in the sense that they are

seen as creative, strategic speakers/narrators but also as individuals positioned by social structures and wider discourses of social identity. I then showed how recent narrative research has begun to capture this sense of shifting, multifaceted and at times ambiguous identity through greater attention to the interactional and functional contexts of narrative performance with its concomitant opening up for analysis a wider range of genres, speech styles and discourses than has been the case in traditional, biographical narrative inquiry. Important to the narrative identity research discussed in this review, was the issue of the status and significance of narrative positioning in 'small stories' and the need for contextualization and accumulation of meaning across several tellings.

Transitions to new learning contexts and the subsequent renegotiation of identities across time and space were also seen as complex and multifaceted in learner/student accounts of their learning trajectories. The concept of learning career was seen as useful in investigations of changes in learner/students constructions of self as they engaged with (or disengaged from) new learning communities. Studies of the identity negotiation of second language students transitioning to an English-medium university constructed the process as complex and burdensome although some researchers showed that students actively sought to make sense of their experiences and to locate themselves in institutional and wider social discourses, thus achieving new identities which allowed for more successful strategies toward social and academic integration.

3.6 Research questions

The following research questions guide my investigation of participant identity both in the big narrative of their learning trajectories and in the smaller narratives of emergent subject positions. They reflect my social constructionist approach and my taking on board theories of social identity which connect EL2 learning to participants' self-positioning in their learning contexts and in their wider social worlds. At the same time my questions leave me room to investigate identity construction at both macro and micro levels, particularly the way larger

structures are implicated in the presentation and performance of identities in interviews.

1. How do participants at a women's English-medium Saudi university construct their past, present and future identities as EL2 learners, speakers and students?

2. How do they relate these identities to wider social categories in their accounts?

3. How does their transition to a new learning community affect participants' self-constructions as EL2 learners, speakers and students?

An important question which emerged from my study of the identity literature was that of the continuity and fluidity of identity: for example, are the meanings which emerge in instantaneous positionings and performances in conversations commensurable with those of coherent identity constructions? Baynham (2015) frames the issue as the tension between laid down identities and those interactively brought about (see **3.3.2**). The tension between structure and agency in identity construction also emerged from the literature particularly in the constructs of 'speaking position' and 'voice'. The question whether voice, as the enactment of agency, can create new meanings and to what extent individual language learners can creatively construct their identity positions through "the orchestration of new discourses" (Menard-Warwick, 2005: 270), is a subject of ongoing debate in theorizing identity. These two issues of continuity and agency in identity construction relate closely to my research questions and figure prominently in my investigation.

CHAPTER 4 – METHODOLOGY

> "Like Freud, we may want to object that sometimes a cigar is just a
> cigar but of course a cigar is always what we do and do not make of
> it and of ourselves."   Preissle (2006)

4.1 Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

4.1.1 Background

A qualitative study, in contrast with a quantitative investigation, is person-centred and thus appropriate for a study of a small group of language learners: it seeks to explore the complexities of the social world and depends on the researcher's engagement with the world and with the research process itself (Richards, 2003). It also studies human subjects in a natural setting. However, within qualitative research methodology there are a wide variety of approaches and methods which reflect different conceptions of human experience. There is also considerable terminological fluidity in the representation of paradigm divisions.

In order to consider different theoretical research frameworks, Roulston (2010: 205-216) provides useful tables in which she clearly sets out the theoretical assumptions and methodological issues connected to different conceptions of the qualitative interview in social research. She labels the first four conceptions Neo-positivist, Romantic, Constructionist and Postmodern. The Neo-positivist conception is primarily concerned with "establishing the truth and accuracy of reports provided by participants" (p217). The Romantic conception assumes that interviewees can describe "interior and exterior states" (Roulston, 2010:206) accurately and further, that the researcher can establish an intimate rapport with participants in order to access confessional details and their 'inner world'.

A major paradigm shift occurs with the Constructionist conception which focuses on how the interviewer and interviewee make sense of the research topic and how data are constructed, for example in narratives, and co-constructed by speakers. There is no longer an assumption that the 'authentic selves' of participants can be accessed. Here, naturally occurring data, such as recordings

of classroom talk, can supplement interview data in order to enhance understanding of how participants make sense of the research topic rather than as accuracy checks on participant reports. The Postmodern conception sees interview data as "situated performances of selves" (Roulston, 2010: 210), which can only represent the partial aspects of a 'fragmented' self. These four paradigms reflect my own theoretical journey.

4.1.2   My theoretical journey

My theoretical approach at the start of my research project could be described as largely neo-positivistic: I assumed that there was a 'truth' that could be uncovered about learners' beliefs and behaviour and that I could attempt to approach this 'truth' through triangulating my participants' self-reports with classroom observations and with the teacher's 'point-of-view' as expressed in her interview responses. As the relationship between my participants and me developed through our interaction within and outside the interviews, I would describe my approach as 'Romantic' in the sense that I became more aware of my own role and influence in the interaction and that, as our rapport and mutual trust grew, my participants were opening up to me and revealing some of their 'innermost' thoughts.

Nevertheless, listening, reading and reflecting on my interview data led me to an awareness of the presentational and performative characteristics of my participants' talk. They seemed to be constructing themselves and their learning and life environments in particular ways for particular purposes. For example, in order to emphasise or even to persuade me, their audience, of their evaluations as learners, they would dramatize a particular event or experience in a short narrative. Rhetorical devices, such as ironic asides, sardonic laughter, dramatic exclamations and rhetorical questions were frequently employed to heighten impact and to give weight to their arguments and stories.

Another discovery was my role in these constructions and dramatizations. In my reactions and responses, both verbal and non-verbal, I was playing a significant role as amused, enlightened audience and even contributor to (or critic of) my

participants' constructions. In consequence, participants would either adjust their talk and non-verbal behaviour to mine or sweep away my 'best laid plans' in the involvement strategies of their various agendas. Through my noted reflections on our interactions, supported by my reading of social constructionist literature in applied linguistics, I moved towards the constructionist paradigm which helped me see <u>how</u> my data were constructed and co-constructed in social interactions.

The postmodernist conception, as described by Roulston (2010:210) also seemed particularly relevant to my study of identity, as participants took up different, at times conflicting, subject positions such as those of successful language learner, struggling student, well-informed social commentator and disgruntled or dutiful family member and also positioned me in different ways during the course of the interview and across interviews. These constructed selves often appeared inconsistent, even contradictory, in the details of the views, beliefs and identities they were declaring. It became clear to me that I would have to consider these shifting subject positions as a major aspect of my analysis. As I progressed on my theoretical journey my research focus was modified from a focus on changes in participant beliefs to the construction of participant identities as second language learners and speakers (see **1.1**).

4.1.3 Case Study -"a contextualized human profile" (Duff, 2014)

My social constructionist approach and my interest in investigating the identity of a small group of EL2 learners and speakers in a particular social, cultural and educational context influenced my decision to conduct a case study. A case study, or a set of individual cases, requires rich descriptions and details, focuses on individuals or groups of people and seeks to understand their perceptions of events (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). While a case study has been defined as an investigation of a 'bounded system' (Merriam, 1988; Creswell, 1998), others more recently (e.g. Yin 2014) emphasise the importance of setting the case in its context. Through using a variety of data collection methods, often including direct observation and interviews, the case study researcher seeks to

obtain a richly nuanced and multidimensional understanding of real people in real situations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

Case study research has played an important role in applied linguistics, especially in investigations of language learning and use (Duff, 2014) and has "helped practitioners and stakeholders better understand the experiences and issues affecting people in various socioeducational and linguistic settings" (p. 234). Dörnyei (2007) particularly emphasises the rich insights and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of "the unitary character of the social being" (p.152) that can be obtained through case studies. (p.237). Duff (2014) sets out the usual components of current qualitative case studies in applied linguistics: studies tend to be social constructionist/constructivist in orientation; participants and sites are described in detail; cases are nested in their sociocultural contexts; the focus is on macro-micro interactions and on researcher-researched intersubjectivity and participants' insider (emic) perspectives are generally sought in order to reach an understanding of the phenomenon.

Duff (2014) goes on to emphasise the preponderance of recent case studies which foreground "sociocultural, discursive, and personal (affective) aspects of experience and learning" in order to examine "the changing identities and communities of language learners (multilinguals) in contexts affected by globalization" (p.235). In these case studies the status and learning of an L2 may be shown as constrained by local ideologies and educational practices, whereas in other settings "multilingualism is enabled when the learners are encouraged to draw liberally and creatively on their linguistic and other semiotic resources" (p.235).

I would position my case study in this qualitative, interpretive category in that I examine the phenomenon of EL2 learner and user identity in the particular context of EFL and English-medium learning at a Saudi university. While acknowledging that the cases are presented from my own perspective in the service of my own purposes as researcher, it is my participants' voices and insights that give life to my research. My study is also nested in wider ideological

and social issues related to the status of English and to the social identities of EL2 learners. My aim was to produce a rich, thick description of a small group of learners in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their past, present and future learning trajectories.

Duff (2008, 2014) suggests four to six cases as ideal for doctoral research, which can be reported as a group or as individual cases. I had planned to consider my four case studies as a group of individuals studying at the same institution. However, from my initial interview data and field notes, I found that four very different perspectives, styles of presentation and constructions of identity emerged: this led me to thinking of my participants as four different cases. In my study I follow the four cases from the beginning of the second semester of their preparatory programme (PP) year through their transition to university and also through the first semester and the beginning of the second semester of their freshman year. Data from interviews conducted over at least one year show how my participants make sense of their transitional experiences by actively constructing new positions and identities.

A longitudinal perspective was an inherent part of my multiple case study since I focused on my participants' identity formation as they moved along their learning trajectories; on their shifting constructions of self in the contexts of their learning transitions and the transitions of their society; on our developing researcher-researched relationship and on the accumulated meanings of our interactions across time and space. This prolonged engagement with participants over time has been a common feature of case study research in applied linguistics (Duff, 2014).

4.1.4 An ethnographic approach
I have taken on-board Wolcott's (2008) cautionary advice over claiming the ethnographic label: while my study inherently attends to the sociocultural context of my cases, it does not have that extended and painstaking commitment to reveal a culture "*through discerning patterns of socially shared behaviour*" (p.71) which Wolcott describes as the underlying idea of traditional,

anthropologically oriented research. When a looser definition is applied (e.g. Dörnyei 2007:131), my study can be seen as ethnographic in its focus on the subjective interpretation and meanings of my participants; by my engagement for an extended period in the natural setting and culture of my participants; also, by the emergent nature of my research focus. The advantage of my 'insider' status was that, unlike many ethnographers, I did not need to invest an extended time period in familiarising myself with a 'foreign' culture or to disengage with the cultural setting at the end of the research period. Thus, while ethnographically informed, my study is not a traditional ethnography.

Another consideration is the postmodern and poststructuralist challenge to traditional ethnography's claim that it can capture the lived experience of people (Denzin 1997). Rather than a way of seeing and knowing, ethnographic practice is seen to produce particular, situated understandings of "slices of the culture in action" (p.8) and represents the participant's talk as a textual construction. The literature on this new interpretive ethnography resonates with the methodological, interpretive, transcriptive and analytical aspects of my study in that I approach my interview data as situated self-presentations and performances, also as co-constructions and co-performances from which emerge identities and subject positions.

Denzin (1997: 5) argues that "ethnographers deal…with performed texts" and "the meanings of subject's statements are…always in motion." I have kept in mind that my research report is also a construction which cannot directly reflect another person's experience. However, to view data and findings as constructions does not necessarily mean that they cannot represent social phenomena, as long as the reflexivity of the researcher is a significant feature of the research report (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). An important part of the research process of my study was keeping detailed field notes on the research setting and context, as well as noting reflections on my role in interactions with participants and on the impact of our developing relationship, in a journal. The ethnographic researcher is seen as an active research participant, "the research

instrument par excellence" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 17), who cannot avoid influencing research proceedings.

4.1.5 Narrative inquiry

In his review of narrative inquiry in applied linguistics research, Benson (2014) uses the label 'narrative inquiry' as an umbrella term for a variety of approaches which focus on language learner and teacher experiences. Narratives play a significant role in my study, as an object of inquiry, as an analytical tool and as a means of representing research findings. I find Barkhuizen's (2011) 'narrative knowledging' to be a useful concept as it brings together the 'sense-making' and social aspects of narratives at each stage of the research process. It is "the meaning making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co) constructing narratives, analysing narratives, reporting the findings, and reading/watching/listening to research reports" (p.395). Narrative knowledging is thus an active, fluid process which acknowledges the discursive construction of narratives and the ongoing process of (re)interpreting them.

A narrative or story can refer to a life history or to "a sequenced storyline" with "specific characters" and "the particulars of a setting" in oral or written communication (Riessman, 2008), or, more loosely, to "a construction of sequence or consequence…encompassing temporal references…and the logic or cause-and-effect relationships"(Taylor, 2010). A broader definition of narrative, associated with small stories, opens up for analysis "a range of verbal utterances and interactions" (Watson, 2012:461). As narratives are so varied and ubiquitous in conversation they resist "delineation in terms of a set of fixed, generic, defining features" (p.54). I use narrative with this broad definition in order to focus on oral discourse and social practice rather than text-type. Narratives do not necessarily have storylines or biographical details and sequences of events which emerge in talk are not seen as part of the extended life history of an individual "reflectively taking stock of larger segments of life" (Freeman, 2011:114), but as discursive resources used by speakers to support their ongoing identity constructions (Taylor, 2007).

Although big stories of teacher/learner identities in TESOL have been ascribed to research interviews and small stories to more informal, everyday conversations (e.g. Vasquez, 2011) (see **3.3.1**) the boundary between big and small stories has become less divisive in recent studies on the identity constructions of second-language learners and student teachers. As seen in **3.2.2.2**, some narrative researchers (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2010) use a small story, narrative positioning analysis of their interview data, but qualify their findings with thematic analyses of ethnographic data. Since I found that conversational narratives were embedded in the interviews as participants shared, dramatised and joked about their experiences in interaction, I decided not to make a distinction between formal or informal contexts in my narrative analysis. As Koven (2011) argues, interview narratives can be just as performed and interlocutory as conversational stories.

De Fina (2009) also makes a case for a closer, more interactional approach to interview narrative analysis. Contrary to the view of narratives elicited in research interviews as a homogeneous genre, De Fina (2009) uses the notion of 'account' to examine one type of narrative which emerges from interview interactions. Accounts involve an explanatory component since they are told in response to an interviewer's question and they are also designed for a particular interlocutor in an interactive context. De Fina (2009) emphasises her points that the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee shapes and reflects the kind of stories which are told and that the narrative genre, whether explanatory account, hypothetical or habitual narrative, also depends on the expectations of interview responses as negotiated between interviewer and interviewee. Indeed, interviewees may not use narratives in their responses and this may pose a problem for narrative researchers who tend to focus on participants' 'successful' accounts of experience (Elliott, 2012). This analytical approach to co-construction in interviews is an important methodological aspect of my study.

4.1.6 Summary
In this section I have presented the theoretical and methodological context of my qualitative study of a small group of EL2 learners as a movement from a neo-

positivist to a social constructionist framework. I explained how my research project fits the criteria of a longitudinal case study, particularly in case study research's more recent emphasis on social context. Drawing from new ethnography approaches, I also brought out how my study focuses on the relationship between researcher and researched and on the performative aspects of participant narratives. I finally explained the importance of investigating narratives in interviews in terms of content, of discursive construction and of ongoing (re)interpretation.

4.2   Research setting and participants

4.2.1   Research setting

The setting of my research is Sharifa University, a private English-medium women's university in Saudi Arabia. The preparatory programme (PP), which acts as a foundation year, is housed in a building within the university campus. It aims to prepare students for the university by offering intensive courses in English Language as well as introductory courses in students' chosen fields of study. The secondary purported aims of the preparatory programme are to bridge the gap between secondary school and university and to help learners adapt to the educational university environment.

The new academic year after PP marks a transition to a different social and academic environment, that of the university itself. In their freshman year, participants study general subjects such as Maths, Biology, Islamic Studies, Physical Education, Computer Studies and Advanced Critical Skills, all through the medium of English and there is no dedicated English Language class. As English and Translation or English Literature majors none of my participants take courses in their chosen fields of study in their freshman year. There is also an important difference between the PP classes and those of the university in that the latter are made up of a mixture of 1st to 4th year students. It would be expected that the process of entering and participating in this new learning community would be an emotional, intellectual, linguistic and social challenge for my participants.

I chose Sharifa University as my case study context as opposed to another Saudi female tertiary institution as it had less of a reputation as an American-style liberal arts college. It promoted itself as more of a Saudi institution which prepared female students for future careers in Saudi Arabia so I thought it would be a more 'authentic' Saudi environment. My other motive was one of convenience: it would be difficult for me to gain long-term access to a university, but at Sharifa I had a close contact who was a former colleague of mine and I knew she had gatekeeping authority.

4.2.2 Case study participants

The participants are four Arab female EFL students, aged between 18-21 years old at the beginning of the research period, who have all experienced formal English instruction at a Saudi public or private intermediate and high school. Their pseudonyms are Alexandra (Alex), Nevine, Nour and Sandra. Like her parents, Alex is Jordanian by nationality, while her ethnicity is Palestinian, but she is a second-generation immigrant and has lived in Saudi Arabia all her life. She is also a Saudi state school graduate. Nevine, Nour and Sandra have Saudi nationality. Both parents in each case are Saudi and Nevine's grandmother is Egyptian. Nour graduated from state school while Sandra and Nevine are private school graduates, which means that they learned English at school from an early age. In February 2012, which marks the beginning of my research project, my participants were in the second semester of the preparatory programme (PP2) at Sharifa University.

4.3 Methods

4.3.1 Rationale

I now turn to the methods of data collection which I used to obtain knowledge and understanding of my case studies. In order to conduct a thorough, rich analysis of the cases and to achieve a deep, layered description from multiple perspectives, I decided to use:

- A. Interviews with participants and their teacher
- B. Observations of participants working on three class activities
- C. Field notes

D. Post-activity interviews with participants and their teacher

E. Notes in my journal.

My aim in using a variety of data collection methods was not to validate my findings, in a positivist sense, but to achieve an understanding of the complexities of the cases, within the different contexts of these methods and the data they generated. However, as my research progressed, the different methods changed in their degree of significance and I have tried to capture this sense of movement in my account of methodological process and procedures. Interviews, for example, moved to a more central position in the methodological framework as my research questions came to focus on participant constructions of learner and social identity in interaction with me as interviewer. The other methods came to play more of a supportive role in data collection. GELL responses (see **4.5.4**), emails and texts were not pre-planned methods but drawn on in the course of data collection in order to enhance further an understanding of identity construction.

4.3.2 Interviews

The research interview is the most commonly used method in qualitative applied linguistics research (Dörnyei, 2007). Interviews "hold out the possibility of *understanding* the lived world from the perspective of the participants involved" (Richards, 2009: 187). I decided to use the semi-structured interview initially to find out about my participants' perspectives on their learning and themselves as EL2 learners: I provided direction and structure through my pre-planned questions but allowed participants space to develop and explore topics in order not to "limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story" (Dörnyei, 2007). I also followed Richards' (2003) advice to try and capture some of the non-verbal, emotional dimension of the talk by making notes immediately after the interview. Thus, by listening carefully to the recording of our talk and by allowing my notes to jog my memory, I could include some of the non-verbal elements in my transcript.

As interviewer I decided to adopt Kvale's (2007:19-20) metaphor of 'traveller' rather than 'miner'. These metaphors represent different epistemological conceptions of interviewing as "a process of knowledge collection or as a process of knowledge construction" (p.19). I see my role as not uncovering and collecting knowledge 'buried' in the interior of my participants as much as journeying or 'walking along with' participants, listening to "their own stories of their lived world" (p.19) and reflecting, interpreting and analysing them in order to bring them "back to home audiences" (p.20). The reflection-interpretation process has led me, as traveller, to new understandings, even self-understandings which I have incorporated into my field and analytic notes.

Talmy (2010) argues that greater reflexivity in interview methodological issues is needed in applied linguistics research: the research interview as instrument, in which the researcher 'mines' the attitudes, beliefs, feelings, experiences of respondents, has been the usual approach in case study, ethnographic and narrative research in applied linguistics. However, the research interview as social practice or as a social encounter has been given much less attention (Talmy, 2010; De Fina and Perrino, 2011; Talmy and Richards, 2011). A more reflexive conception of the interview context rejects interviewees' speech as a transparent report of speakers' thoughts and words which accesses authentic identities (Koven, 2014; Mann, 2016). As Block (2000: 757) had earlier cautioned, there is an inherent 'danger' in taking research participants "at their word" without problematizing the data.

Holstein and Gubrium (2003) recommend that researchers take a more 'active' view of the interview: that they attend to both the content of what is said (the whats) and to "the interactional and narrative procedures" (p.68), which constitute the meaning-making process of the interview (the hows). Furthermore several researchers in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics (e.g. Johnson, 2006; Mann, 2011; Miller, 2011) have taken up the call to view the research interview as an interactional accomplishment, rather than as a conduit to respondent 'reality'. Studies (Baynham, 2011; DeFina, 2011) have also shown

how interviewer and interviewee roles and positionings influence the types of narratives told and the performance of narrative in interviews.

As my interpretation of interview data came to focus on the constructional, presentational and interactive aspects of the interviews, my methodological approach shifted somewhat: from viewing the interview as product, which would provide me with thematic information about my participants' perspectives and experiences, I decided to include the discursive and performative process of the interview 'event' as part of my analysis. I considered how I might undertake an analysis which could capture both the performative and the interactive aspects of my interview data. As the examination of the 'hows' and the 'whats' of my interview data became more intensive, the interview as method began to take centre stage: field notes, for example, were seen as constituting an additional layer and as throwing light on different facets of my interview data.

In my original research plan I had hoped to conduct interviews with my participants soon after the observed class activities in order to triangulate their interpretations of their role in the activity with those of the teacher post-activity interview and with my own perspective recorded in field notes. Even though I conducted the interviews immediately after class and played back recorded extracts, I found that my participants were not able to give me detailed accounts of their participation and learning in the activities. I decided to modify my purpose to one of understanding their general perspectives on the activity and I refer to these interviews as 'post-activity interviews'.

4.3.3 Observations

In placing my interview data in a central position I do not mean to devalue other methods such as observational methods of data collection. On the contrary, in case studies in applied linguistics, observation methods can help researchers understand the physical, social, cultural and linguistic contexts in which language is used as well as provide linguistic and interactional data (Duff, 2008). Coffey and Atkinson (1996) contend that observation of activity and behaviour, unlike

interviews, can give us direct access to how people actually perform activities and to naturally occurring interaction.

My purpose was to observe and record the behaviour and participation of my four student participants working on oral activities in their Listening and Speaking classroom setting, in order to gain another perspective on participant interaction and participation in language learning. I did not have the option of videotaping the activities I observed, as this would not have been acceptable in a class of Saudi female students. Wolcott (2008: 51) describes the "non-participant participant observer" as one who does not seek to hide their presence as observer but who does not take the active or interactive role of the participant observer. This is how I would describe my position during my observations as I watched, made notes and audio recorded but tried not to intervene in the interaction itself. However, I became aware that my presence and my role as audience in a 'social performance' and as a foreign 'guest' were having an impact on the process of observing and on the behaviour of observed participants.

I decided not to use an observation schedule, as I was not recording specific classroom practices, but to draw a diagram of the layout of the classroom, to note down teacher and student classroom behaviour and events i.e. "the larger fields of observation" and then to focus "to a greater extent on the cases in question" (Duff, 2008: 139), namely the behaviour or interactions involving my participants and the teacher and between the participants themselves.

Observation is often used in tandem with other data collection methods in applied linguistics research, particularly in case studies, in order to triangulate methods or to provide corroborating evidence (Duff, 2008). Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 14) however, disagree that data from different sources or different data types can be aggregated to form a more authentic or "a single more valid representation of the social world." Neither the interview nor the observational method is superior but each yields different types of constructed data (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003). Thus the function of my observational data and their relationship to my interview data shifted somewhat: rather than using

observational data to verify or to check the accuracy of participant/ interviewee's statements, I approached them as different accounts of 'events' which I could put to use to create a complex, multi-layered picture of my participants' performed identities.

4.3.4 Field notes

Field notes can be seen as types of constructed representations on the part of the researcher. Gubrium and Holstein (2009) contend that the researcher's field notes cannot be the literal reproduction of 'field realities' because the report will always be filtered through their preconceptions, perspectives and relationships in the field. I made field notes on my classroom observations and my face-to-face interviews. I also wrote detailed notes on my conversations with participants and on our emails and text messages. In the interview situation, data were 'public' in the sense that they could reach a wide audience, whereas in many of our conversations recorded in field notes, the data were more 'private'. Neither represented a 'truer' version of events but recording both types of data added "complexity, richness and depth" (Silverman, 2011: 371). Field notes grew in importance as I expanded and revised my research plan (see Table 4.1).

4.3.5 My research journal

In addition to field notes of my observations I kept a research journal from the very beginning of my research project. In it I wrote notes on my research journey, such as provisional research procedures, mishaps, reminders etc. which I could use later to reconstruct the research process. Duff (2008: 142) states that "journal keeping becomes part of the analysis and interpretation process itself". Throughout my data collection I also considered my positionality and emotional responses. I recorded these reflections in my research journal and included decisions on ethical issues, such as what I would omit from my data in terms of personal participant data. My journal also focused on my ongoing relationship and interaction (or non-communication) with my participants, on my changing impressions of participants and what I considered to be their views of our research relationship. I extracted several of these reflections and included them in my typed-up field notes for each participant.

4.4 Trustworthiness

4.4.1 Criteria

There is little agreement in the literature about producing sound qualitative research. Reliability and validity are positivist criteria, which are not generally considered appropriate for interpretative, qualitative research. Regarding qualitative case study research in education, Merriam (1988:171) contends:

> Because what is being studied in education is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual…and because the emergent design of a qualitative case study precludes a priori controls, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful but impossible.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed a set of naturalistic criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, which Richards (2003) describes as depending on long-term exposure to context and adequacy of data, leading to a careful documentation of procedure; transferability, which depends on the richness of description and the relevance to researchers in other situations; dependability and confirmability, which relate to the documentation of research design and procedures so that the researcher's decisions are clear to the reader. These criteria have been developed by qualitative researchers and seem particularly applicable to case studies. I found them useful as general guidelines, although they do not refer to reflexivity as an important criterion, which was important in my study.

Assessing the validity of a study is also problematic when it is the constructions and understandings of participants that are being investigated rather than the 'reality' of their situation. Triangulation of data and methods, member checking and long-term observation have been put forward as internal validity checks, as well as the clarification of researcher bias but these are disputed by researchers, particularly those with a constructionist or post-modern perspective. This is mainly because they ignore "the context-bound and skilful character of social interaction" (Silverman, 2011: 371). When the interview is viewed as an interactional event, the role of researcher becomes a resource for the analyst rather than a source of bias (De Fina, 2011).

The criterion of generalisability or external validity is especially crucial and controversial in case study research (Duff, 2008). While the focus is "particularization not generalization" (Stake, 1995:8), some researchers agree with Lincoln and Guba that transferability is a useful substitute for generalizability; others place significance on the typicality or representativeness of the case. The former view places responsibility on the reader to engage with the situation described and the interpretations offered and to make connections with their own study context; the latter sees cases as instances of a broader set of features (Richards, 2003). My approach has been to focus on the particular, subjective meanings of participants in my representation so that with rich description and articulation I can draw in readers who might then respond in terms of their own experience.

4.4.2 My claims

In providing rich data on my particularized cases, my participants' narratives of experience and my interpretations of them should lead to greater understanding of the contexts and lives of EL2 learners and users in an unfamiliar setting. Thus readers might broaden their horizons by critical self-reflection and greater empathy with those experiencing and presenting a different world from theirs. However, I do not set out to propose new theories in the field of foreign/second language identity: I remain cautious about my findings. This caution arises from my concerns about how the rich, holistic, context-dependent description of a case study might be affected by the analysis of performativity and its effects. The post-modern challenge to our understanding is that it can only ever be partial and fragmentary.

The validity of my analysis and interpretation of my data rests on my theoretical perspective and position: my social constructivist perspective, for example, does not see the correspondence between participants' accounts and other evidence as providing access to a deeper truth, since those accounts are not reports of 'facts' but versions which are constructed in order to present events and experiences to a particular audience. What is important is my interpretation of participants' meanings and understandings within our situated interaction. This

interpretation is necessarily subjective, and I accept that there can be alternative interpretations of my data, however I have aimed at a principled subjectivity. While accepting that, in qualitative research, "subjectivity is an essential element of understanding" (Stake, 1995: 45), I undertake to be as reflective and open as possible about my subjectivities and engagement with participants and about the research process itself.

4.4.3   Ethical issues

Formal ethical approval prior to my research project was duly obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Education: here the emphasis was on protecting the privacy, anonymity and well-being of my participants, on obtaining their informed consent (in Arabic and English), on making it clear to participants that they can disengage at any time and on ensuring that our interactions are as unobtrusive and as beneficial as possible to their language learning situation. Besides these established procedures and formal intentions however, there were ethical dilemmas to be faced in the course of the qualitative research process, particularly when the focus of inquiry was the personal experiences, views and emotions of participants.

Ethical issues developed and changed at different stages of the data-collection process. As my role and positionality as interviewer shifted to that of sounding-board, counsellor, confidante etc., participants began to reveal intimate details in stories of their lives and learning experiences to me. At times I felt discomfort and deflected the conversation away from sensitive political or highly personal topics. Considering the conservative traditions and culture of the country I was working in and my research context, I did not feel that pursuing certain issues would be appropriate. At later stages I had to continually make ethical decisions about which personal, even intimate, details to include in my data analysis and findings so that my participants were not compromised either politically or personally.

Having promised anonymity with the use of pseudonyms, it is often difficult to protect the identity of the participant when the aim is to produce a rich, 'thick',

contextualized description of the person, the site or the event (Duff, 2008). Changing key elements to protect anonymity might interfere with the particularity of the case. My approach was to make a decision as each situation arose: either to omit or disguise but not alter any elements which might reveal the participant's identity. I decided not to disclose the location of Sharifa University, for example. I also asked my participants after interviews whether they would like me to leave out anything they had said. There seemed to be little ethical awareness overall among people in my research context: participants continually referred to the trust they had in me and never asked me to omit anything. In spite of this, I persisted in my efforts to be a non-exploitative researcher.

Another ethical consideration was how much information about the aims of my research to share with my participants. If I told them that I wanted to investigate their identities as English language learners this might influence their responses in our interviews and even their behaviour in the classroom. I decided to present my research as an exploration of their learning experience in order to give them a wider field of reference. I also wanted to ease the potential pressure of having to expound on an area about which they might not feel knowledgeable: this might lead to discomfort and even attrition. In fact one of the four young women did become a reluctant participant, in part due to her imminent departure and then her disappointment at having to continue at Sharifa. This development was both a practical and an ethical challenge. While respecting her right to withdraw, it needed some sensitivity, patience, good humour and flexibility on my part for her to re-engage with the research project.

How or whether to disengage with my participants at the end of the research period were important ethical questions. I did not want them to feel that they were being used. After completing the interviews, we continued our interaction through social media, telephone conversations and even through meetings at our homes and cafés. Our continued casual contact actually gives me the opportunity to check up on further uncertainties about data and at times even to check on my interpretation. However I am aware that my interpretation and analysis of the

interviews are influenced by my casual, on-going interaction with my participants and this "absence of analytic closure" (Dörnyei, 2007:87) leads to re-interpretations of my data.

4.4.4 Member-checking

Taking data, interpretation and conclusions back to participants for their corrections and comments has often been considered an important validity check, particularly by those researchers working from a neo- or post-positivist perspective. However there are a number of risks: if participants do not like the analysis they might choose to withdraw or they might want to edit their original contribution in order to appear more favourable (Duff, 2008). Similarly, Riessman (2008) emphasizes the limits of the respondent validation process: since the memory and meaning of experiences change with the passing of time, participants might not agree with our current interpretations of their interview narratives. However, Riessman (2008) views taking work back to participants as desirable from an ethical point of view so that they have another chance to give their consent to the inclusion of certain narrative segments and to check whether their identities have been suitably disguised.

Two out of the four participants showed an interest in viewing interview transcripts and my initial analyses and gave me some feedback, which was mostly to correct my Arabic transcription or to inform me that their views had changed. The other two participants said that academic commitments meant they had no time to read through transcripts and reports. I did have my doubts also about whether their level of language proficiency would be sufficient to understand my written analyses and interpretations. I decided to send each participant the initial background narratives I had written on her and this led to minor changes in biographical detail. After that I made it clear to participants that they were welcome to view any work which related to them, at any time.

4.4.5. Reflexivity

Mann (2016:15) proposes a working definition of reflexivity as "a conscious process of thought and articulation centred on the dynamics of subjectivities in

relation to the interviewer, the interviewee(s), and the research focus and methodology". He goes on to show how this self-awareness also extends to questioning one's interpretation and analytical methods. I set out to be a reflexive researcher by examining my own feelings and attitudes to the focus of my research (Saldaña 2013), by reflecting on my changing relationship with participants and by making explicit how my perspectives might have shaped the interview process in a research journal (Mann, 2016).

I took on-board careful consideration of how my age, race and gender might affect my data (Corwin and Clemens, 2012), in particular how my participants might react to me as a researcher and as a person and how they might perceive the purposes of my investigation. Talking to and being observed by a target-language speaker with many years' teaching experience might be a rather intimidating, constraining experience; on the other hand, talking to an older woman could also be a "supportive, enabling dialogue between females" (Mills, 2001). I wrote notes on my perceptions of my participants' reactions and also, in later exchanges, asked them directly about their initial impression and attitudes towards my research and me.

In addition to aspects of my social identity, insider-outsider status was another important consideration. Mann (2016) alerts us to the danger of viewing and interpreting participants' experience through the lens of our familiarity and experience. Indeed I had to be careful not to view my participants as if they were past students with whom I had frequently interacted. Furthermore, the advantages of insight and understanding which I had assumed seemed, at times, to lose significance during the interview process. My insider-outsider status fluctuated in interaction as my participants and I negotiated our roles and our relationship.

In spite of my awareness that, as researcher-interviewer, I had timekeeper 'power' and that I was mostly in control of choice and change of topic, especially in the first semi-structured interview, I came to realise more and more, as I reflected on my data, that each participant was building her own agenda and

purpose in our talk. Each also seemed to reveal a rather different perspective on the appropriate subject matter for discussion, from the rather formal comments on classroom procedures to the highly personal details of family conflicts. While my interview questions in one way constrained learners to subject positions as language learners and university students, my interviewees were at the same time "speaking subjects" who were "afforded agency to construct the world in particular ways" and to "position themselves interactionally vis-à-vis the interviewer" (Miller, 2011: 57).

My 'power' as interviewer and researcher had limits: I was positioned in my interaction with participants and I "am also positioned as needing to construct coherence and meaning from these (participants') accounts" (Miller, 2011: 57). I was aware that assumptions of empathy with my participants could lead to complacency. I needed to acknowledge our difference. Watson (2012:464) cautions that: "We may be engaged in 'co-construction' of the narrative, but this does not necessarily imply shared meanings". My interpretation and my understanding of their meanings and consequently my findings would be partial and indeterminate. As Miller (2011) argues, indeterminacy of meaning is an unavoidable aspect of all interview research.

4.5   Data collection

4.5.1   Rationale

As I aim to be as 'transparent' as possible, giving a detailed account of my research procedures is an important part of my claim to trustworthiness. As Duff (2008: 179) recommends, I am creating "an audit trail" of my decision-making throughout. In my narrative of what I did and why, I aim to make the continual revision and expansion of my research project, as it unfolded over time, as clear as possible.

4.5.2   Accessing and getting to know my research site

After presenting my research proposal at a meeting of university directors including the director of the preparatory programme (DPP), I submitted a research plan to the president's secretary who later informed me that I had the

president's full consent to conduct my research at Sharifa. I made a decision to use the PP as my research site, rather than the university, and PP2 students as my participants. One reason was that the DDP, Dr S, was the only director who responded to my messages and emails and was keen for me to carry out my study in her department. We met frequently in her office and I was able to observe three PP classes. My other reason was a discussion with a group of PP2 learners about their English learning experiences, in which I found them willing and able to discuss their learning in some detail.

In order to familiarise myself with my research context, during the introduction week of the second semester, I spent time in Dr S's office while she registered and counselled new and continuing students. She explained the different sections, subjects, assessment procedures etc. to me and introduced me to teachers and students in the PP. I also briefly discussed my research with the EFL teachers and they talked to me about the students and the teaching/learning situation at the PP.

4.5.3 Finding my research participants

All students in the PP had a Saudi educational background and I intended to select six Saudi students who would be able and willing to discuss their learning experiences in English. However the scenario of finding participants was rather serendipitous (Duff, 2008). One of the language teachers, Ms A, invited me to sit in on her Listening and Speaking class and I spoke to her students at the end of class about my research and asked for volunteers to come to Dr S's office for a brief chat. Only two girls actually turned up, Alexandra (Alex) and Sandra, who were keen to participate in my research project and communicated quite well in English. I personally handed out the information sheets and consent forms to them and answered any questions they had. The student advisor, Ms L, allotted time in her academic writing class to encourage more students to participate in my research and to distribute the student information, consent form and the biodata sheet. Nour was hesitant to volunteer at first, due to her perceived inadequacy in English, but Ms L assured her that she could express herself in Arabic if necessary. Nevine, my fourth participant, had only recently joined the

class when two sections in Humanities were merged the previous week. Ms L encouraged her to join us as her spoken English was of a good standard. Their advisor was thus instrumental in recruiting participants by assuring them that their participation would be a good opportunity to improve their spoken English.

4.5.4 Conducting the interviews

The purpose of the informal interview, which was not recorded, was to start building rapport and to find out my participants' general perceptions of English in their life and study contexts. I conducted informal interviews with Sandra and Alex, who chose their pseudonyms without hesitation. Basing my first questions on their biodata, I branched out into inquiries about their family background, their goals and motives, their past school experience of learning English and their current experience.

With Nour and Nevine I faced the problem of irregularity in scheduling interviews. They kept postponing our appointments so that even their informal interviews did not take place until after the first activity observation. I had to be understanding over their purported transportation problems and family pressures, however, and tried out different strategies to encourage them to attend interviews such as giving them small gifts and making the interview sessions more friendly and 'social'. For example, since Nour seemed reticent to attend interviews alone, I organised group interviews after the second and third activities. These strategies proved quite effective but still timing, number and length of interviews varied considerably, which I attributed to study pressures and fluctuations in participant commitment to the research project.

Not surprisingly perhaps, since they had willingly volunteered to participate in my research, only Alex and Sandra were consistently enthusiastic in fulfilling their roles as interviewees. Although I had fewer interviews with Nour and Nevine, Nour and I had several informal conversations and Nevine and I began to correspond by email the summer before her transition to university. At the end of the PP academic year I also sought to supplement my interview data by devising a Good English Language Learner (GELL) sheet (see Appendix E6) which

required participants to rate good language learner qualities and to comment on their choices in English and/or Arabic. Nour and Alex chose to send me their written responses while Nevine and Sandra preferred to discuss their choices in face-to-face interviews.

4.5.5   Expanding and revising my research plan

My original research plan was to conduct three semi-structured interviews with my research participants over the three months of the second PP semester. However, I decided to expand on my original plan both in terms of the data collection method of the semi-structured interview and of the timespan proposed in my research plan. There were several reasons for this:

a.   My aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of my participants learning English in the PP of Sharifa University. After transcribing the 3 semi-structured interviews I felt that my data were not rich enough to allow me to do this. Also, as I became more involved in the trajectory of each participant, I felt I needed to follow them further through their transition to university and their freshman year.

b.   By the third semi-structured interview my participants had begun to influence both the level of formality, setting and structure of the interviews themselves and I wanted them each to continue to develop an 'independent' voice and to present their ideas and feelings in more detail.

c.   Three of my research participants, Alex, Sandra and Nour, got better at talking about the process of their learning and about the academic and life contexts of their learning and told me that they would like to continue with our interviews into the next academic year. Nevine, however, was not able to tell me much about her experiences, feelings and ideas in a recorded interview: she preferred to write me long emails and then later to visit me at my home for a friendly discussion. If I had not interviewed her during her second university year I would have learnt little about Nevine's situation.

d. The relationship between my research participants and myself evolved in different and unexpected ways: we developed bonds through more informal types of interaction such as unrecorded face-to-face and telephone conversations, emails and texts. My participants tended to open up to me and express themselves in a variety of ways during these informal interactions. Our evolving relationship, in a sense, framed these informal types of interaction. At the same time the nature of our interactions also shaped our relationship.

In the course of the data generation process my study had evolved away from the ethnographic setting and context of my participants' learning, namely Sharifa University, to the more private sphere of home, families and relationships. Sandra, Nour and Nevine expressed their preference for talking to me at my home and I became a regular visitor to Sandra's home; only Alex out of my four participants insisted on meeting on campus because she was not permitted by her family to meet me outside.

Expanding on my participant interview schedule and adding more informal, conversational collection methods, placed more emphasis on the responses and accounts of the participants themselves in terms of their personal lives and their educational transitions and experiences. In the original research plan I had intended to question my participants on their perceptions of the transition from high school to the PP only, which they experienced some months before the start of my research project. However, the semi-structured interviews on the revised schedule, shown in Table 4.1, take place over one year from February 2012 to February 2013. This period covers their transition from the PP to the University in September 2012, so the immediate and longer-term effects of this transition become an important focus in our interactions after that time. The revised individual schedules of participant data collection can be found in Appendix G.

Table 4.1: General (revised) schedule of participant data collection

WHEN	COLLECTION METHOD	DATA
End of Feb 2012-early March	Fill-in form	Biodata, narratives
End of Feb-early March	Informal interview	Field notes, narratives
25th Feb 2012-20th Feb 2013	4-7 face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Alex SS3 on Skype. Nevine SS5 on Skype, continued by email	Audio-recordings of interviews (except for Nevine SS6). Field notes
29th Feb 2012 10th April 22nd April	Observation of class activities: Act. 1 Act. 2 Act. 3	Audio-recordings and field notes.
29th Feb 2012 10th April 23rd April 25th April	Post-activity interviews: Alex, Nevine, Sandra only on A1 Group interview on A2 Alex, Sandra on A3 Ne, No in group interview on A3	Audio-recordings and field notes.
7th June 2012 10th Sept-17th Oct 15th Sept 16th Sept	Response to GELL sheet: Sandra-GELL interview Alex -3 emails Nour-filled-in form Nevine-GELL/SS4 interview	Field notes Audio-recording Written response Written response Audio-recording
10th Sept 2012-20 May 2013 15th Dec 2012-19th Nov 2013 15th Feb 2013-14th May 2013 17th Nov 2013-27th Nov 2013	Unrecorded conversations (in addition to telephone conversations): Nour-2 Sandra-3 Alex-2 Nevine-2 (includes unrec.con.)	Field notes
10th July 2012-27th Nov 2013	Emails and texts: Nevine-12 emails, 2 texts	Field notes

4.6 Transcription

The act of transcribing recorded data is considered more than just a mechanical
process: it is the first stage of analysis and interpretation (Cameron, 2001; Duff,
2008; Kvale, 2007). The mode of transcription selected depends on the
theoretical concerns, interpretative stance and analytical purposes of the
researcher. Researchers have to make a series of decisions on what to include
and exclude: indeed Richards (2003) and Riessman (2008) present different
transcripts of the same stretches of talk in order to show how 'evidence' in one

version, which is missing in another, can point analysts (and readers) in different directions.

When I started transcribing the recorded interviews my concern was to be accurate and 'holistic' in order to represent my participants' voices as closely as possible. I decided to include false starts, repetitions, fillers, pauses, interruptions and code-switches in my transcriptions (see Table 4.2). I also wanted to try to capture the performative and emotional features of our encounter so I included verbal descriptions of tone, pitch, volume and pace of voice as well as laughter. I decided not to measure pauses or include elongated sounds, as my purpose was not to conduct a fine-grained Conversational Analysis. I was aiming for both accuracy and readability and as Duff (2008: 155) cautions: "a very fine tuned transcription can interfere with readability". While paralinguistic detail was important to my transcription and analysis, I did not want its complexity to detract from the stories being told.

I also took on board a consideration of the 'political' aspects of transcription (Green, Franquiz and Dixon, 1997; Roberts, 1997): transcripts are researchers' constructions which represent participants in particular ways. This consideration is particularly relevant to me as I am representing Arabic speakers who are mainly using English as a second/foreign language. The issue here is how I can manage the tension between transcribing accurately and consistently and at the same time representing the 'voice' of the participants expressing themselves in another language (Roberts, 1997). Consequently, I had to make a number of strategic decisions about transcribing my participants' talk: I decided not to 'tidy up' participants' English speech by correcting language mistakes but to use standard, rather than phonemic, orthography in order to "avoid stigmatisation and to evoke the naturalness of speech" (Roberts, 1997: 170).

I transcribed Arabic speech into romanized script using the ALA-LC romanization table from the American Library Association and the Library of Congress (see Appendix J) and then translated into English. Temple and Young (2004) urge all researchers to reflect on how they represent people in translation. Transcribing

equivalent words from Arabic into English is not just a technical issue but also one of reconstructing the speech of the participant and one in which I tried to stay as close as possible to my understanding of the intentions, feelings and values of the speaker's 'message'. On the other hand I realise that using English "as the yardstick for meaning" (Temple and Young, 2004:167) may cloud and/or devalue the cultural meanings of Arabic speech. With the help of a family member who is a bilingual speaker and educated in both Arabic and English, I produced a translation which aimed to reflect these cultural meanings.

The form of transcription can also vary over the course of the inquiry as what is relevant becomes clearer (Hammersley, 2012). For example, as I revised interview transcripts on repeated listenings, I became aware of the interactional features of our conversations so I needed to adjust my transcription system to bring out features of the interaction. Consequently, in my transcription, I chose to clearly separate out and display as accurately as possible my own words and paralinguistic features but in an extended participant's account I decided to insert my requests for clarification, interjections and exclamations of surprise or encouragement within the body of my participant's talk. In this way the reader can get more of a sense of the interactional context as well as the co-constructed 'self' of the participant instead of focusing on the narrative itself as a product (Riessman, 2008). However, in the group interviews I decided to separate out utterances by different speakers, for clarity's sake.

The interviews were becoming much more than vehicles for passing on information: the 'social action' needed to be accounted for in transcription. I decided it was important for me to try and capture some of the inaudible aspects of participants' behaviour such as gestures and facial expressions in addition to the details of voice discussed earlier. As I listened to the recorded interviews, I used my journal notes and my recollections to add non-verbal details to my transcripts in blocked brackets. These details exemplify the porousness of the boundary between transcribing and interpreting. Here, Alex comments on and diverts from a topic I introduce in order to launch into her 'Jordan' narrative:

K: So now the last question is (P) [in an amused tone] are you enjoying your year so far at university? [laughs]
A: [laughing rather hysterically] You're gonna ask me this question now? [ironic facial expression]
K: [laughs with embarrassment]
A: [seriously now] I think there are a lot of things different between the college and thehigh school (K: ah!) you know, the way you study…   (Alex SS5: 20)

My transcripts were beginning to look more and more like playscripts with 'stage directions' and actor's notes. The performance, positioning and interactional features of the interviews came to the fore, showing how transcription is also partly analysis. Thus the construction of my transcripts became the interpretative link between my primary data and my analysis.

Table 4.2   Transcription conventions used

(adapted from Duff, 2008: 157)

A	Alex
K	Kathy
Ne	Nevine
No	Nour
S	Sandra

_____	emphasis on word(s)
CAPS	heavy stress on word (s)
(P)	pause (longer than 1 second)
=	latched utterance
{ }	overlapping speech
[ ]	non-vocal action; manner of speaking; tone, pitch, volume, speed of voice, who is being spoken to.
.	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
,	continuous intonation, slight pause, inserted to support meaning
!	surprised tone
{{xxx}}	inaudible speech
__	interrupted speech
…	omitted utterance (s)
( )	English translation, alternative word(s)to support meaning
italics	Arabic used
" "	direct speech

4.7 Analytical approaches

4.7.1 Initial steps

I had realised from the outset of my qualitative research project that my role as analyst would be one of *bricoleur,* and that the process of analysis would be long and 'messy'. However, I was willing to experiment with various methods that might lead me to a greater understanding of my cases. My preliminary analysis and interpretation began early on in the research project as I noted down features and patterns in participant statements which emerged in my data in memos and field notes (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I was intending to later look for patterns and developments within and across interviews which might give me insights into the learner's individual learning trajectory and also into the particular social, cultural and life context of the learner. As participants' responses became longer accounts of their language learning experience and even of the wider life context I decided that a thematic narrative analysis, which did not fragment the data, might be more appropriate and meaningful.

4.7.2 Thematic narrative analysis

My lists of participant statements seemed obvious and clichéd as data if not linked to my developing theoretical framework of identity construction. In a narrative thematic analysis I could explore the developing and changing identities of my participants as reflected and constituted in my interview, observations and research journal data. I decided <u>not</u> to use a grounded analysis because:

> a) my study centred on individual cases rather than on thematic categories across cases;
> b) it was important to me to preserve the sequence of my data;
> c) the local context of data generation was also important.

In "granting my subject both agency and voice" (Pavlenko, 2007: 180), my aim was not to code and categorise the content of my interview data so that my participants' 'voices' could no longer be heard. Thus the fragmentation and decontextualisation of a grounded analysis did not serve my purposes. Only in a thematic narrative analysis could I explore the meaning and nuances of the big story of my participants in order to fruitfully answer the question: how do

participants construct their past and present learning experiences as they move through PP2, the transition to university and then through their freshman year?

4.7.3 Interviews as interactive practice

The interactional nature of the interview affects the content of talk: it also affects the form of the 'telling' (see **4.3.2**). An analysis of the narrative examines how second language learners construct themselves in a second language, how they use rhetorical and linguistic devices to interpret experience and to position themselves and others and the interactional function of their narratives (Pavlenko, 2007). The form of the 'telling': how participants constructed and presented themselves, others, 'events' and experiences in the interviews grew in importance during the course of my analysis as it allowed a richer understanding of what participants were communicating to me and alerted me to the methodological issues surrounding interviews. While a consideration of the co-constructed aspects of the interview was an important part of my analysis, I did not want to carry out a micro-analysis that was confined to the local context, as in Conversation Analysis (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012) .

4.7.4 Performance and dramaturgical analysis

The performative nature of interviews has been emphasised by Pavlenko (2007) and Riessman (2008) among others, particularly in studies of identity and self-construction (see **3.2.2.3**) . An extract of participant's talk in an interview is not merely used as evidence of recounted events or experiences: we need to recognise that social actors do things with words, "that spoken discourse always takes place within forms of action or performance" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 170). I wanted to examine how participants actually brought their stories to life for me, their audience. In this way I could focus on how identities were actually performed: what roles and positions were my participants taking up in order to create versions of themselves and others? How did I, and other real and imaginary audiences, affect and even co-produce these dramatizations? In emphasizing performance I do not mean to suggest that participant constructions of identity are inauthentic: they are situated and produced with a particular audience in mind (Riessman, 2008).

Consequently I decided to use a dramaturgical analysis in order to bring out this performance aspect in participant constructions. Saldaña's (2013) Dramaturgical Coding views interview narratives as social performance with humans interacting as a cast of characters. As discussed in **3.2.2.3**, the individual/social actor is both a character performed and a performer and my interpretative activity, as audience, is necessary for this character/performer 'self' to emerge (Goffman, 1959). My role is thus also a dual one: of interpreter within the interaction of the interview and also of retrospective interpreter/analyst of recordings and transcripts. Saldaña's (2013) dramaturgical codes use terms which apply to characters in a playscript. The six facets of his Dramaturgical Coding: participant-actor's objectives (OBJ), conflicts or obstacles (CON), tactics or strategies (TAC), attitudes (ATT), emotions (EMO), subtexts (SUB), helped me gain insights into my participants' self-presentations because here I had to look for more than just the referential meaning of their statements: the participant-actor adopts subject positions and presents themselves and their world to their audience, using dialogue, monologue, asides, rhetorical speech as well as tones and nuances of voice, laughter, facial expressions etc. Although he did not include them in the second edition of his coding manual, Saldaña employs two more facets of Dramaturgical Coding, the Physical (PHY): how the character/actor moves, gestures, expressions etc. and the Verbal (VER): how the character/actor sounds, tones, nuances of voice etc. (personal communication, 30 July 2013). I included these facets if recorded in my transcripts and/or field notes and if I felt they added to an understanding of the presentational aspects of my data.

4.8 Data analysis

4.8.1 Interviews

I first wrote a background narrative on each participant based on the information they had given me on their biodata forms and in the first, unrecorded, informal interview by picking out and noting salient themes such as "dislikes group work" and "constructs self as high achieving student". Even though my aim was to provide a 'factual' background and the informal interview had not been recorded, my field notes indicated ways in which participants were from the beginning presenting themselves to me as particular types of learners

and people and how our first interactions were creating a basis for our research relationship.

I decided to conduct my analysis of interview data on three interrelated levels:

a. a thematic narrative analysis, which focused on participant referential statements concerning 'events' and experiences within their learning and life contexts;

b. an interaction analysis which examined our shifting roles and positions within the interviews as well as how we positioned each other;

c. a dramaturgical and textual analysis in which I analysed how my participants constructed, presented and positioned themselves and others in their narratives and other 'talk'.

This three-way analysis would give me an in-depth examination of my data from different perspectives, capturing the referential content, the interactional context and the performative aspects of the interviews. Following this complex analytical procedure with each of my four participants was indeed extremely time-consuming but had several advantages: it allowed me to preserve the interactional context of my interview data rather than to focus exclusively on my participant's contribution; I could delve deeper than the purely referential meaning of the words into the intended or even unintended presentational features of my data; in analysing large chunks of talk with a sequence of thematic statements I avoided decontextualizing my data into short codes or fragments; I was able to trace developments, changes or consistencies in the learner's big narrative over one year, as reflected in the interviews; I was also able to examine in some depth the function and features of the smaller, often dramatized narratives; my interpretation of data formed a clearly discernible part of the analysis itself rather than merely a post-analysis stage; it allowed me to continually 'think with my data' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) rather than focus on their analytical products; consequently, I could expand or modify my interpretations right up until the time of writing up my findings.

After a second listening and re-adjustment of my transcripts of each semi-structured interview I wrote a detailed analytical account, divided into scenes by topic, with a prologue and conclusion, which analysed and interpreted the data as a) narrative-thematic, as b) interaction and as c) dramaturgical and rhetorical presentation. My analysis was eclectic and data-driven in the sense that 'talk' in different sections of the interview seemed to emphasise a self-presentational, performative, interactive or information-giving approach or combinations of two or more of these. I used different fonts in order to highlight the three levels of analysis, although there was considerable overlap. However, this was a useful technique in which to identify dramatized narratives and to examine their function and structure. As illustration, an excerpt from the beginning of Nour's SS5 interview and my analytical account of the excerpt can be found in Appendix I1. After analysing in this way I proceeded to write analytic summaries of all the interviews (for sample analytic summary see Appendix I2). These formed the core of my analysis. Focusing on the summaries of pre-transition interviews and then post-transition interviews, I wrote out my 'findings' relating to construction of identity and subject positions which would form the basis of the big narrative of each participant.

4.8.2   Other data

A. <u>Field notes</u>: I wrote summaries of my field notes which included my contact with participants, our relationship over time, our pre- and post-interview unrecorded conversations, our email correspondence and any observations and memos I had written down in between meetings and while transcribing their data. These were important for the visualization of context and participant behaviour. I wrote up summaries in two parts: one pre-university and the second covered the freshman year. I compared the two parts in order to examine changes and developments over time in our relationship and interaction. As far as my notes allowed, I examined my participants' presentations of themselves, others and situations as well as my role and contribution to our interaction. After writing a summary analysis I noted down links between the interviews and the field

notes such as: "Alex gives her mother a voice in our conversations but in the interviews her mother rarely has a voice."

B. <u>Class activities</u>: I examined the participant's role in each of the three activities and wrote a summary of what she did and said, using the transcripts and field notes, focusing on her interaction with the teacher and other students. These summaries were analysed for links to the main interview data and a list of linked themes was compiled. An example of a link/comparison between interview data and data from the class activities was "Alex says she loves being active with the teacher (SS1) but in my observations of the activities I found she hardly ever sought out an interaction with the teacher". However I did not use my observation data to undercut my interview data. I viewed datasets as the result of different data generation methods: neither had a bigger claim on "the" truth.

C. <u>Participant post-activity interviews</u>: I wrote a summary of what each participant said about each of the activities, particularly concerning her interaction with the teacher and other students. I used the same three-tiered system of information-interaction-performance to analyse these data. Again, I examined links between these interviews and the semi-structured interviews but in addition I compared them with my observations and transcripts of the activities and with the teacher's post-activity interviews.

D. <u>Teacher interviews</u>: I wrote summaries of both the two semi-structured interviews with the teacher in which I included her views and comments on the particular teaching and learning context as well as anything relevant to the individual participants. In my summary of the 3 post-activity interviews with the teacher I compared her account of the activity with that of each participant and also summarised any comments the teacher made on their participation in the activity.

4.8.3 Moving on with my data analysis

Finally I wrote a general list of findings concerning how the 'Other Data' impinge on the main interview data, not in the sense of discrediting what participants said in the semi-structured interviews, but with a view to obtaining a more

complex picture of their identities as learners. Thus I had a complex set of 'findings' for each participant, gathered from my data sets. With my 'findings' I was confident that I could construct the big narrative of their learning and life trajectories. I could also examine the identities they reconstructed and renegotiated before and after their transition to university. The big narrative is my construction of those threads of narrative identity which I have identified as salient across our interviews, our conversations and to a lesser extent, my observations of in-class behaviour and our post-activity discussions. From these narrative threads I identified four or five salient, 'big' identities for each participant which reflected the continuities and changes in their self-presentations through time and place. I also decided to give each of the interviews a title to represent the constructed stage in the context of each participant's EL2 learning, in order to obtain an overview of their trajectories.

However, in addition to a long-term view of participant construction of narrative identity, I wanted also to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how subject positions emerged in narrative performance and in our moment-by-moment interaction. Therefore I decided to conduct a narrative positioning analysis, using Bamberg's (1997) model, of narrative extracts from the interviews. These small stories were selected from different stages of the big narrative on the basis of their critical impact, of the intensity of the emotions expressed and of the space given to the narrative by participants (and myself in co-construction). My analysis of small stories was guided by the three interrelated levels of narrative positioning:

A. The positioning and evaluation of characters and events in the story.
B. The interactive accomplishment of the story through mutual positioning, narrative function and 'artful' performative devices in response to audience.
C. Narrator's positioning, 'who am I?' with respect to dominant discourses of their sociocultural context.

Although Bamberg (2007) is doubtful over the commensurability of big and small story methodology, I sought to bring them together so that they might

complement one another. While the big narrative frames and contextualizes the small stories, the latter throw into relief significant aspects of the presentation of subject positions that may not be picked up in the big narrative. Identity trouble, for example, such as a performed clash of identities difficult to reconcile, can be investigated in more depth in the small story. On the other hand, the big narrative can explain participants' longer-term investments in subject positions in terms of their expressed goals, life context and envisioned future selves. Thus in the presentation of my case studies I neither confine myself to 'small story' analysis which focuses on the 'here and now' of the telling, neither do I limit my big narrative to the content of autobiographical reflections on experience without accounting for the 'how' of the telling.

Based on my three-way analysis, I used 'big narrative' to mean the research report of my 'narrative knowledge' (Barkhuizen, 2011) of participants' ongoing accounts across interviews and I used 'small story' to mean a narrative extract, the analysis of which highlights its discursive and performative construction within the interview. The two narrative levels are relational in that they make contextual connections and links between different tellings within and across interviews. Neither refer to pre-existing attitudes, beliefs, emotions or memories but focus on the expression and presentation of these in the interviews, conversations and observations. This is why the Historic Present tense seemed the most appropriate for writing the case studies. A participant's account is not a report on past events and experience but comes alive in her imaginative, constructed and situated telling. I referred to my transcripts for my big narrative but the transcripts of narrative extracts were written out on short numbered lines: this was done to draw attention to rhythms, repetitions, metaphors, different voices, structure etc. in order to highlight performance features of the text as talk.

4.9 Writing the case studies

Choosing a structure and style for writing the case studies is a major part of the representation process: a persuasive, engaging account can contribute immensely to the credibility and authenticity of the study (Duff, 2008).

Richardson (1998) goes further: writing is not a mopping up activity at the end of the data analysis stage; it is a method of inquiry in itself. This is how I view my writing of the case studies, as part of the representation process which is not definitive but partial, subjective and ongoing. I recognise that my constructions are fallible and that a case could be made for alternative interpretations of my data. However, I strive for an informed, analytical construction of 'reality': one which is obviously rhetorically constructed, imaginative and subjective but not self-indulgent (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

I build each of my four cases case mainly from my analysis and interpretation of interview data enriched by observations, field notes and my research journal. My approach is that of 'narrative knowledge' (Barkhuizen, 2011, 2013): through my analysis, interpretation and representation, I am making sense of the narrative data of my cases with the purpose of reaching a deep understanding of the identities as second language learners which they project in the interviews. I also take into account the macro-context of language, social and cultural discourses which position them and in which they are positioned (Pavlenko, 2007).

I have selectively used Stake's (1995) organisation of a case report, as adapted by Duff (2008: 192), in order to structure my account:

A. I begin with an entry vignette which is an extract from the transcript of an interview, selected to give the reader a feel for the participant's presentation of her identity in relation to her English learning.

B. This is followed by a descriptive narrative of the participant, based on the biodata and first, informal interview as background to the case. Also I give my audience an idea of the context and course of the relationship which developed between the participant and me.

C. Through a descriptive, analytical and interpretive narrative, I then identify the salient issues of content and construction in the big narrative of the learner which helped me to understand the development of the case over time.

D. I also use other data, such as field notes on class activities and on my conversations with participants to expand on this account and to gain further understanding of the complexity of the case.

E. Interspersed with the big narrative are analyses of small stories which I deem critical in that they are accounts of key moments. I focus on how my participants and I co-construct an unfolding narrative and how we negotiate a narrative performance. The order of stories is based more on thematic relevance and less on chronological sequence. Each small story analysis starts with a short summary. The reader is referred to Appendices A-D in which each complete small story may be read.

In this way I aim to present the case as a social encounter: both as an account of my interaction with my participant and also as an encounter between my reader/audience, my case and myself.

4.10 Summary of Methodology Chapter

My aim in this chapter was to convey a sense of motion in the methodological concerns of my study. After introducing my research setting and my participants, I went on to justify my use of narrative and ethnographic methods and then showed how interviews as both product (supplying content) and as discursive, performative process, became the core data collection method of my case studies. In terms of the trustworthiness of my research, I described my approach as one of principled subjectivity in which methodological, ethical and reflexive aspects were given due emphasis and continually reconsidered. While I aimed to communicate a nuanced understanding of EL2 learners living and learning in a context unfamiliar to many readers, my claims were constrained by the indeterminacy of meaning which resulted, in part, from contradictory and unstable participant constructions.

In my 'audit trail' of procedures I again gave an account of reassessments and adaptations in the course of my research project, such as the expansion of my interview schedule into the university year. I then described my transcription methods, showing how I made adjustments in order to capture the performative features of talk and interaction. The data analysis section was taken up with

details of my triple-level analysis of interviews: narrative-thematic, interactional and dramaturgical/performative. I justified this complex analytical procedure in terms of investigating both the 'whats' and the 'hows' of interviews in order to write the ongoing big narrative of my participants. I then explained my narrative positioning analysis of selected small narrative extracts from which shifting subject positions could be further investigated. The chapter ended with a description of the structure of the case studies.

CHAPTER 5 ALEXANDRA

Alex   …do you know when some Saudi women
         who talk English and you know OK she's
         a Saudi woman or an Egyptian woman
         (K: yeah). I mean some girls when you hear
         them if you heard them on the phone
         you would not guess they are an Arabic
         people (K: you would like to speak like them)
         I would like to be like them. (K: why) I guess
         I will achieve something. Or I will prove to
         myself that I'm like them. I did something.
         I have this accent. I learned something from
         these four years and really if I talk to someone
         he will say "Oh my God! You are <u>good</u>!"

                                           (A- SS7:10)

5.1   Our relationship

Alexandra (Alex) is the only one of my four participants who politely refuses to
meet me outside the university campus, as she claims her father would not allow
it. Although I usually take my ʿabāyah[4] off for the interview, I have never seen
Alex without her ʿabāyah and only occasionally, when together in an otherwise
deserted classroom, has she removed her ṭarḥa. However this conservative
image is belied by her manner and her speech: unlike the others she rarely uses
religious terms, never brings religion into our conversations and I have never
seen her pray. This could be an aspect of her identity which she deems
inappropriate to the context of our interviews and conversations on learning
English and one she chooses not to present to me.

A slight, bright-eyed brunette, Alex looks rather nervous when we first meet in
the PP Director's office for the informal interview. At first she seems unsure
about the interview situation but appears interested in me as an academic
practitioner and tries her best to respond specifically to my questions. During the
course of our interviews, she tends not to stray from topics relevant to her
language learning and her studies. Alex also always insists on talking to me in an
empty PP classroom even when we agree to meet for an informal conversation.

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[4] See Glossary

Of the four participants, Alex is the one who shows most interest in my research. In our unrecorded conversations towards the end of the research period, she asks me specific questions such as why I didn't choose ex-international school participants who would speak better English and why I didn't talk to more students so that I would get a wider picture. On two occasions she talks about how she has benefited from the speaking practice and my experience. She says she feels comfortable talking to me because: "You don't judge me. You just want to understand" (post-SS5 conversation-FN:11). Alex is the most reliable and committed to my research of the participants: she shows enthusiasm in scheduling our interviews as if they are an important part of her academic timetable.

5.2 Background

Although born, raised and educated in Saudi Arabia, Alex is the only one of the four who is not Saudi by nationality. She describes her parents as Jordanian-Palestinian in her informal interview (see Appendix F1). At the beginning of the research project she was 19 years old. She tells me that her father works with a team of lawyers, one of whom is American, and speaks English well, but her mother doesn't speak English at all and has never worked outside the home. Alex attended state schools throughout her school years and describes her school English learning as a failure. She plans to major in English and Translation at university. Her parents did not encourage her to study this subject at the beginning, as they didn't think her English was good enough, but now, impressed with her excellent grades, have changed their minds. She loves translation and would like to work as a translator in a big company. When she graduates she hopes to go on to get a master's degree in English and Translation from Sharifa, but she is not sure if they offer this. Alex says it is also important to learn English as it is a second language in Saudi Arabia and it is a method of communicating with people of different nationalities.

This first encounter with Alex has shown me two important 'facts' about her situation: firstly, that she is an outsider in the sense of not being Saudi, which is significant because I know she is not eligible for the government scholarship which

amounts to fifty per cent of the fees and secondly, that she feels the need to prove to her parents that they have invested wisely in her university education. This second point is related to the first in that, as I presume, the hefty private university fees could be a strain on the family income. Furthermore, from our first, informal interview, Alex puts emphasis on her academic identity: she constructs herself as a serious, dedicated PP student with academic and professional ambitions and a rather positive self-image of her scholastic abilities and achievements. The PP is viewed as a creditable institution, helping her to fulfil her aims of becoming a better speaker and of learning more vocabulary, which she needs if she is to do well the following year at university. Her use of English as a lingua franca in her dealings with non-academic life is a secondary consideration.

5.3 Alex's big narrative and small stories

5.3.1 Overview

The titles which I have given each of the seven interviews, which took place from the beginning of the PP2 semester to the second university semester, represent my overview of the development in Alex's construction of her language learner 'self', of the process and evaluation of learning and achievement, of the transition to the new university learning context and of her coping with the challenges of adapting to a new system:

25 Feb 2012	SS1	**A satisfied PP2 English learner**
9 April	SS2	**Some cracks in the system beginning to show**
16 June	SS3	**I've completed the PP year but haven't moved far**
	TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY	
10 Sept	SS4	**This boundary crossing is harder than I thought**
20 Nov	SS5	**Reaching danger point**
16 Dec	SS6	**Moving on with some strategy**
6 Feb 2013	SS7	**Rising to the challenges now**

In telling Alex's big narrative I am interpreting her constructions of self and others, of her learning experiences and of her relationships with her learning contexts across time and space. Within these constructions I have identified five 'big' identity positions: **English language learner/user, student, Translation**

student and future translator, **oppositional student** and **family member**. These positions are variably adopted, problematized, linked together or even pitted against each other as Alex explains and narrates her past and present experience and possibilities for the future. My interpretation of how Alex comes to take up these identities, and how the interview titles map on to her English language learner self, are presented below.

5.3.2   English Language Learner/ User (ELLU) identity

SS1 - A satisfied PP learner

From the very first interview Alex establishes her commitment to learning and studying in English because of her firm goals in the field of English and Translation and her personal desire to "have second language not just Arabic" (SS1:1). Alex presents her English language learner identity to me through expressing her early emotional attachment to the language: "the important thing is I love this language" (SS1:4), even though her first school experience with learning English in intermediate school is narrated as a discouraging one.

When looking back at her school years, Alex does not present a 'successful' learner identity either in the context of English as a school subject, or in her social and familial interactions: it was when she joined the PP at Sharifa university that she really began to feel a sense of achievement:

> A: I can speak with other people. When I was start here in college I wasn't speak with anybody English, anybody, so now I can speak, I can understand the general idea, if someone want to talk with me. I can write well, very well now…   (A-SS1:8)

Her satisfaction with her new language learner self can be understood in her 'enabling' words e.g. "I can speak", "I can understand" etc, which denote a positive transformation in her abilities. She presents her academic context as fulfilling her learning needs and attributes her more effective learning generally to classroom interactions with the teacher in English and to more stimulating activities.

Alex constructs her learning at the PP as the learning of English words through interacting with her idea of a good teacher:

> A: ...If we don't understand this word we ask it in Arabic. "What does this mean in English" So she told us and we try as much as we can to remember this word and she ask this word another time to the class so this would be a good teacher.   (A-SS1:2)

As a PP learner Alex presents herself as fulfilling her conceptualisation of a 'good learner': she attends closely to the teacher, asks her to explain any new words she doesn't understand and then reviews the words at home. Alex also begins to present a budding multilingual identity in both academic and non-academic contexts:

> A: ... the girls here speak some English so we say the word 'class' 'vocabulary' 'assignment' 'project' 'leaflet' some words we say in English we didn't say it in Arabic but in the home for example my mother she don't speak English so I can't tell her "I went to the class" I should say it in Arabic you know so this is a little bit different but when I talk to my father I use this word. And sometimes he tell me "What's this word" because he don't know it and I told him "It means this".
> K: That's good
> A: And he was happy that (because) he didn't know this word.
>
> (A-SS2:14)

 Alex's account is multi-voiced: first there are the code switching student voices, then her hypothetical utterance to her mother, next her father's inquiring voice and finally hers in response. She is now a member of a bilingual community and more than this: she has become a resource for her father's learning. Alex positions herself as an occasional English speaker at home: "I talk with my dad in English sometimes" and outside class: "I talk with the Miss in English outside (class) sometimes" (SS1:13). Thus the PP year so far is marked as a favourable period for the advancement of Alex's language learner self.

SS2 - Some cracks in the system beginning to show

However, Alex also indicates some underlying tension between her personal expectations and those of her learning context. Firstly, she was expecting the course to be more challenging in terms of studying English in PP1 and even in PP2, in which she has learnt several new words, she still finds it rather easy.

Secondly, although she commended the frequent group learning activities they do in PP2 classes, she shyly but emphatically expresses her preference for working alone. Her reason is that other group members might not accept your "unique idea". These tensions are intensified in the second interview towards the end of the PP year: while Alex confirms that since mid-term exams "we improve our vocabulary and our listening and everything" (SS2:1), she continues to show her dislike of working with her peers. As a learner of English, she states her main aim as accumulating more words through 'taking' them from 'better' girls:

> A: I want to speak English with a girl, how I say it to you, with a girl she is better than me in English because I want to learn from her not a girl I am better than her because OK I will teach her some words but I will not take some vocabulary from her.
>
> (A-SS2:7)

Apart from having to work with less able students, Alex complains of the difficulties she and her classmates are undergoing in their PP2 Translation class: they have moved from translating at word level to translating whole paragraphs in an academic book on Translation, written by the professor teaching them. However, in spite of some cracks which are beginning to show in SS2, Alex positions her learning in the PP year as valuable in terms of her future university studies: "I think the important is that I don't forget what I learnt in this year. It's very important" (SS2:8). This 'naïve' orientation to PP learning is later given voice in Alex's 'Bad PP' narrative (A-Small Story 4 pp 153-155).

SS3 - I've completed the PP year but haven't moved far

After the end of the PP year in SS3, Alex shows her contentment with her excellent final results in PP2 but in terms of learning more English she does not present a more developed identity than previously. Her progress is expressed in moderate terms: "I have a lot of words to remember, I can speak with anyone more than when I was in high school. It's good" (SS3:1). Furthermore, her rather troubled Translation student identity tends to overshadow SS3. Alex reviews the semester as useful for improving her general language skills but not useful in Translation. This feeling of not having been stretched in a meaningful way characterises SS3.

SS4 - This boundary crossing is harder than I thought

Alex presents the boundary crossing to university as a wide gap requiring an enormous academic and social struggle. In our short, first interview after her transition to university, two and a half months after SS3, Alex expresses the embarrassing and debilitating effects of dealing with a 'new' language:

> A: ...there is a huge development in the university. They talk in a different way. They use difficult word that we didn't hear it before. And I told you that there are some girls from the college they have been 2 or 3 years in college so they are in our class. We don't know. We scared to say something that make them laugh or something like that. (A-SS4:1)

Now her presentation of the PP as a productive language-learning site is toned down: the PP was only "A little bit helpful. A little bit" (SS4:1). They need to do much more intensive language learning in order to better prepare students.

SS5 - Reaching danger point

Alex enacts a belittled language learner identity in her narrative of transition to studying through English at university. Her stressed condition can be perceived through her exhausted demeanour, her high-pitched voice, her frequent nervous, ironic exclamations and laughter as well as through the content of her talk. While I offer encouragement, Alex uses tragic terms to describe her position:

> K: But I think your English is much better than when I first interviewed you the first time
> A: Sure but in college I'm nothing. I'm nothing. (A-SS5:12)

The transition from using English in interviews and studying academic subjects through English is performed as a critical one as Alex expresses an abrupt awareness that her language is not up to the required standard. Now she blames the PP, as she claims all the ex-PP students do, for not delivering on their 'promise' to prepare them linguistically and academically for their studies at Sharifa university: "...I feel so bad to study one year here at the PP. Actually all of the PP girls say that..." (SS5:2).

Her state school background also comes back to haunt her as she compares her linguistic ability with that of the ex-international school students. She performs a collective 'silencing' of PP graduates:

> A: When we saw the girls they were from international
> schools they *māshāʾAllāh* speak English very very well so we
> can't talk we can't tell the doctor or ask him something in front
> of the other girls.   (A-SS5:2)

SS5 thus represents a critical experience for Alex as an ELLU (and as a university student) and her performance of incapacitation indicates that she has reached a critical turning point.

SS6 - Moving on with some strategy

Alex does not stay at 'point zero' for long: within a month she presents me with a rather different learning situation in SS6. She is making a concerted effort to speak up in class and to write down everything in English. Rather than showing any discouragement Alex impresses on me her increased motivation since the PP:

> K: In the PP did you write notes in English?
> A: No I didn't have this enthusiasm to learn English then. Now I
> realise that I need to learn English very well to achieve or to reach
> the good girls in this university.   (A-SS6:9)

It is especially in the activity of giving a presentation that Alex looks for advancement in her use of English. Furthermore, in her exposure to 'models' of good English learning and use in the university classroom and in her desire to join her university learning community, Alex is moved to conquer her shyness to speak. She presents this as a change to her language learner identity: while she constructed herself as shy to speak in class in SS5, now she presents herself as bolder and more discerning. Contrasting her past and present voices, Alex reassesses the distance between these 'models' and herself as not as great as she had indicated previously:

> K: So do you still feel a bit shy because=
> A: =No no because I have different standard standards and I <u>must</u>
> speak so I know each girl what she says. In Islam when I told you a lot
> of girls they understand and when they present I just look at them and

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say "Oh I thought that she is a good one." But it's not that good.

<div align="right">(A-SS6:8)</div>

She also shows that she has taken a daring step in the advancement of her language learning by choosing to take the Academic Presentations (APS) course ahead of time. Her use of grammatical construction: "it **should be in** Freshman 2...**but I took it in** Freshman 1" (SS6:10) enhances the expression of her agency in going against the norm.

Now, at the end of the first semester, Alex shows how her strategy has paid off: the 'better' girls in her APS class acknowledge that she has made progress by relying less on memorisation and more on understanding of the subject, as they do:

> A: They just understand the idea. They memorise some words like
> information about someone, you must memorise it so just they said
> I start to do this thing. To start to understand the subject
>
> <div align="right">(A-SS6:11)</div>

Using pronouns 'they' to index the experts and 'I' to index herself as novice, Alex indicates their acceptance of her into their group of girls who understand. Her repeated use of "I start to..." reinforces her self-presentation as a student engaging with her learning community.

Following this, she goes on to explain that the "subject" to be presented does not pose a problem in terms of content and they ('we' refers to Alex and the 'better' students) can focus on manipulating the language for their purposes:

> A: So our subject the final subject was so easy and the words it was
> so easy for us so we could understand it easy and change the words
> and we could say everything.   (A-SS6:11)

Alex's speech here represents a turning point in her learning: as a novice she is now joining the ranks of the 'expert' students. Her great advancement is not just in understanding ideas in English but also in making new relationships, in expanding her social circle at university and in not confining herself to her ex-PP friends: "And I felt after APS yes yes I can I can make relationships in other courses" (SS6:11). Alex's new-found confidence is reflected in her language and demeanour. Her earlier 'incapacitation' expressed in negatives such as "we can't

talk" and "we are nothing" in SS5 has turned into expressions of self-efficacy as noted in the above quotation. There is a change in her 'presence' from flustered and overwhelmed to engaged and resolved. As a fledgling member of the university learning community it seems she now has a ticket to a more successful learning career.

This is not to say however that everything is now plain sailing for Alex. Within the advancing self there are moments of setbacks, which reflect her struggles to come to terms with new ways of learning. In Computer Studies (CS) for example, they are expected to do independent work with minimal teacher instruction:

> A... and they just teach us the lecture then they say "OK the assignment is on Blackboard so solve it at home." So how can we solve it   (A-SS6:2)

Using contrasting voices, Alex presents her insecurity, as still an ex-PP learner, at having to relinquish her reliance on teacher instruction and support. However, as shown above, Alex takes on a more strategic role as SS6 progresses.

SS7 - Rising to the challenges now

In our final interview, in the second freshman semester, Alex claims she is now more familiar with the particular "system" of her teachers and thus better able to cope with the challenging linguistic demands of note taking in lectures. Her concentrated study for exams has helped her improve her English considerably. While she assesses her level of English as now "nearly the same" (SS7:5) as the 'better' girls, she rates herself as less able to participate in class. Effective "participation with teachers" (SS7:7) Alex presents as important to her as an ELLU but as a deficient area in need of improvement.

As she looks backward and forward along her language-learning career, Alex performs a richer, more articulate and critical language learner identity. Now, her heightened regret and disillusionment over her past learning at state school and in the Sharifa PP are strikingly expressed (see A-'Bad PP' narrative pp153-155). In her review of school learning she uses an internal monologue to communicate her regret that English was not made meaningful for her:

> A: ...When I think about it I say to myself "OK if I have this
> something inside me which encourage me to just understand this
> one not only the words that they told us to study it. If I have
> more...erm (P) (K: motivation?) motivation to read this or to try to
> memorise this not to memorise just for the exam maybe I will be
> better." The teachers did not encourage us.   (A-SS7:7)

She also criticises the PP in that it did not provide the necessary language support to prepare students for understanding and communicating with their university teachers in the classroom. Crossing the line from EL2 learner to EL2 user in a classroom context is presented as an important step at university and one which she might have attained more readily, if she had been better prepared in an intensive language course.

Alex's describes her ideal future self as a fluent speaker with an impeccable English accent like some of the advanced students in her university classes. Using English is thus presented as a lifetime aim for personal and social status. Although there is a sense of moving forward in Alex's account of her language learning and an imaginative leap in her description of her ideal English user self, the final narrative indicates a modified ELLU identity, one that will be constrained by family and culture (see A-'Ideal and Possible Self' narrative-pp 156-158).

5.3.3   Student Identity

5.3.3.1 Alex's self-presentation as a student

I have presented phases of the big narrative which relates to Alex's ELLU identity. Now I move on to her self-presentation as a general student which is more narrow in scope than her language learner self as it is confined by the requirements of her specific educational context. While at the PP, Alex presents herself as a mostly excellently performing student, but at university her student (and ELLU) identities undergo a critical stage of adjustment. At school and in the PP Alex is primarily an EFL student but at university she struggles to claim for herself an identity as a student of general academic subjects at an English-medium university. However, linguistic proficiency is presented as salient in Alex's claim to success as a university student so there is considerable overlap

with her ELLU identity. In my delineation of Alex as a student, I focus on her accounts of self-assessment as a student, of obstructive and facilitating teachers and of becoming a member of a new student body.

5.3.3.2 Self-assessment

Two, sometimes conflicting, strands can be seen to develop in Alex's self-assessment as a student: the private aspect relates to her own judgement of her self-efficacy, while the public side is the acknowledgement of others usually through the grading system. The discrepancy between her outstanding results and her limited linguistic attainment in the PP was made clear in SS3. At university Alex rates herself in "the middle" (SS7:3) because, while her exam results are commendable, she claims she has neither the knowledge nor the vocabulary of the more advanced and ex-international school students:

> A: My grades it's really good maybe it's like them or a little bit under them but in participation in class they understand everything and I'm not, I didn't understand everything but my grade is good my exam is good.   (A-SS7:3)

Thus her private student identity is closely linked to her ELLU identity. Alex's confidence as a student seems to rest on her assessment of her language proficiency for communicating with teachers, for working with 'better' students in class and for understanding rather than memorising study material.
Alex presents her first experience of failure in an examination (in Physical Education) as the lowest point in her student career so far. Her public student subject position can be seen in her expressions of concern for saving face in front of her parents rather than as a private experience of failure. Even though we agree that PE is not an important subject in relation to her degree, Alex brings up her failure on the PE exam twice more in the same interview in the context of keeping the news from her parents. One reason why this failure is not presented as a private one is that she has embedded it in her 'Bad PE' narrative (A-Small Story 1), in which she positions the PE teacher as obstructive to all students.

5.3.3.3 Obstructive and facilitating teachers

The rather comfortable, accommodating teacher-student relationship, which Alex described as part of her PP student context, is not continued in the university interviews. Teachers are presented as extremely variable, either as hostile and threatening to her identity as a student or as flexible and understanding of the linguistic needs of ex-PP and freshman students. Facilitating teachers are presented as actively making allowances for students' low level of English proficiency. For example Ms B, their Biology teacher, made the mid-term exam easier for them:

> A: ...she told us "If you forgot this word and you can't remember it but you know it in Arabic then write it for me and I will accept it as right"   (A-SS5:4)

Alex follows this 'good teacher' account with a contrasting 'bad teacher' one, which I now present as Small Story 1.

<u>Small Story 1</u> (SS5:4-6)   <u>The 'Bad PE' narrative</u>   (see Appendix A1: 330-332)

This extended 'bad PE' narrative serves to illustrate and display Alex's picture of a particular "bad teacher" and to dramatize the outcomes of her 'bad' practices. It is one in a series of emotional outbursts relating to the 'drama' of coping with the overwhelming linguistic and study demands of her first semester at Sharifa University. The narrative is a tragi-comedy: while it is told in an entertaining way to heighten its impact, the implications of its content are presented as serious. Most importantly perhaps, it functions as an oppositional story of a second language student at an English-medium university. Alex artfully and persuasively structures her narrative in 4 parts.

Part 1: Prelude- The Bad PE teacher

Alex's opening: "But I have a doctor …" (1) alerts me to this new, contrasting, teacher story after her short account of a facilitating teacher. She describes the PE teacher as "so bad" (9) rather gleefully, as if we are in collusion. Alex draws me in with two more exaggerated exclamations:(11,13), while I persist (10,14) in asking for concrete reasons behind her dramatically stated aversion. Alex focuses on her "bad" accent first. She positions her teacher as lacking in credibility: not only is her English not up to the standard expected of an English-medium instructor but she just reads from the slides in class. Alex mimics the teacher's voice apologising to the class for not pronouncing English well (19-21). Although the teacher is presented as willing to explain in Arabic, Alex emphasises the teacher's responsibility: "She must teach us in English" (34). Here Alex takes up a subject position as an EL2 student dependent on her teacher as a good model of proficiency in English.

Part 2: Bad PE exam

Alex moves the narrative on to the PE exam which she exclaims "was so bad so <u>bad</u> so BAD" (36). Then she reveals the outcome: "Even I go to my advisor and cried" (37). The seriousness of the situation is revealed later but now the story becomes entertaining as Alex presents herself in retrospect as reacting in uncharacteristically emotional fashion: "I start crying [laughs] (40)…I can't believe myself…" (42) but at the same time performs her 'saving face' subject position in expressing her reticence to show emotion in front of her peers (42-43).

She moves the scene from exam hall to advisor's office where her advisor, Dr S, takes on a mothering role and speaks in a hyperbolic tone: "WHAT HAPPENED" (39) and then "[in a loud voice] No ḥabībī (my darling) sit down. What happened" (46-47).

Contrastingly, the PE teacher is intractable: "They (the advisors) talked to her (50)/ She didn't, she don't hear from anyone" (51). Anticipating my surprise, she announces her exam result: "Imagine that I get 9 out of 20" (52). Alex's voice sinks lower and lower as she reaches the unhappy climax of the story: "[quietly] I failed. I failed the mid-term exam" (54). Although the diatribe on the teacher and her examination in some way vindicates Alex's first-time failure in an exam, keeping the information from her parents is expressed as her main concern (56-57).

Alex emphasises the PE teacher's unwillingness to allow students to improve on their marks by letting them resit the exam, as she claims most teachers do (59-62,64). She structures her reasons carefully for presenting the PE teacher's exam as 'bad': "number one" (76), the students were confused by the huge amount of information they had to review which they could not make sense of (72-76), and "number two" (77), they had never encountered this type of exam question before (77-78,80,82). However, Alex seems to present the situation as one in which final marks should be negotiated between teacher and student.

Part 3: Exam aftermath

Next Alex positions herself as a witness/reporter of a conversation between Nour, Alex's classmate, and the PE. teacher. Nour acts as the spokesperson for the disgruntled students and as Alex's outspoken and provocative alter ego: Nour confronts the teacher for not improving student grades by setting extra work, as the 'flexible' teachers do. What Alex implies here is that the teacher should have reached a compromise with Nour. The teacher's response:

        90   ..."When you fail in the final exam
        91   come back to me and I will do something"

is not deemed an acceptable 'offer'. Nour's retort is aggressive and mocking in the manner in which it parodies and ridicules the teacher's response:

Part 4: Evaluation and conclusion

Finally, Alex positions her P.E. teacher as unfathomable (98). She chides herself for not trusting in college hearsay about this teacher. When I question her further, her loud, ironic voice condemning the P.E. teacher is echoed by the whole university community:

104 A: …ASK ANY GIRLS in college [Laughs]

105 K: They will tell you

106 A: They will tell you "Yes I know *duktūrah* H"

Throughout the narrative, in order to strengthen her underlying argument that she has become the victim of a 'bad' teacher and her 'bad' exam, Alex plays the silent observer and reporter and does not speak as a character. However her own critical voice rises in outrage and falls with quiet significance in her performance as omniscient narrator. Our interaction becomes Alex's forum of protest and by using structured, persuasive reasoning, irony and corroborating voices she succeeds in convincing me of the plausibility of her arguments against the 'obstructive' PE teacher. Alex adopts a subject position of forceful and creative protester in her second language. The emerging subtext is that, in not agreeing to let students improve on their marks, the PE teacher is not facilitating them in their challenging transition to university. She is a spoke in the wheel preventing the smooth functioning of teacher-student negotiation.

In spite of the actions of this 'bad' teacher, most university teachers have influenced her to broaden her sphere of learning: for example, her Advanced Critical Skills (ACS) teacher's voice is dominant in Alex's narratives of classroom interaction: she shows how the teacher urges her students to work on weak areas of language independently, and to always write in their own words in order to avoid plagiarism. The ACS teacher is creditable in that Alex presents her advice and the academic skills she is teaching them as challenging but relevant and useful. However, Alex shows she is not interested in interacting with the Islamic teacher, even though he is described as one of the facilitating ones:

> A: some courses it's not interesting for me to participate with him. Like for Islamic I don't care whether I speak with him or saying something with him (K: Oh!) He just explain everything. It's just about explaining and discussing opinions in all the religion [laughs]
>
> (A-SS7:6)

Here Alex seems to delineate her student identity in narrow terms, ruling out learning on general studies courses which must precede study for her major, Translation. I see it also as showing a dismissive and indifferent attitude to compulsory religious education.

5.3.3.4   Becoming a member of a new student body

Alex presents her student identity as very much part of the PP community in her references to common problems and situations in SS1-SS3. At university Alex presents herself as held back by her ex-PP identity and her state school background and as agentive in distinguishing herself from other ex-PP students. She claims she is doing much more in general studies courses: she's taking 17 credits this semester, as opposed to their 12 or 13: "They are more comfortable. They have maybe 4 or 5 subjects so it's easy for them" (SS5:10). Furthermore, she has negotiated with her advisor to let her take Academic Presentations (APS) a semester early and is also taking steps to study her major in the second freshman semester, which Alex claims is against university rules.

The troubling transitional factors Alex introduces in SS4 centre on her feelings of social alienation as a university student. She claims that she cannot communicate with the girl sitting next to her in class because "I don't know how to talk with her" (SS4:5). Now her classes consist of different year groups of students, some of whom speak excellent English. Although she hopes to be able to work with the more proficient students, which is her objective, the downside is that these students tend to form cliques. In SS5 we see her as both a diminished language learner (see **5.3.2**) and university student. Alex is finding the work too much of a challenge and is hardly able to cope. There is a dramatic emphasis on critical present time: "Now this is bad. This is the most bad week in my life" (SS5:1). Her identity as a university student is in crisis; she constructs her troubled state using expressions of stagnation and paralysis:

K: Oh. So what do you do when you go {home?}

A: {NOTHING} It's just I can't study. I'm stuck. I can't study. When I open my book or when I open something I feel that I can't study anything   (A-SS5:1)

The repeated negatives and staccato rhythm of her speech reinforce this inability to function as a 'normal' student. The dramatic impact of her performance is heightened by Alex's previous self-constructions as a high achieving, hard-working student: now she must adjust her image of herself from high achiever in a mostly unproblematic programme ("In the PP I think everything is easy" SS1:3) to that of struggling student in a still unfamiliar, challenging academic environment.

Alex responds to my reassuring remarks by more 'reasonably' discussing the merits, for example, of her APS class: "Yes, I think it's useful because it introduce you to another girls. I think I become more better in front of another people" (SS5:2). Within the tragic 'drama' then a coping strategy emerges: getting to know and work with more advanced students will help Alex integrate and function in her new learning community. Alex's general university student identity and her ELLU identity come to complement one another as she strives to join the ranks of the university by making an effort to speak and work with more advanced students. She performs her 'risk-taking' new identity in the context of her participation in an Islamic class presentation in Small Story 2.

Small Story 2 (SS6:6) The 'Good Islamic Presentation' narrative (see App.A2:332-333)

This narrative represents a turning point in Alex's student and language learning career after the critical period of her transition to university. As a narrative of 'identity repair', it is a display of Alex using strategy to join her new learning community by conquering her shyness to speak English and by showing that she has understood, rather than memorised, the relevant study material in a class presentation. Alex constructs her story as a replay of her presentation in an Islamic class and she positions herself as both the self-conscious protagonist and the appraiser of her actions. In her display of a new voice the narrative acts as a performance within a performance. However, I am not a passive audience: I contribute to the telling and we both share in the joy of the relived experience.

First of all, the way Alex draws up the characters and the events is in a moment-by-moment performance of the recent classroom experience. After establishing the setting in line 4, she quickly moves on to a self-praising evaluation of her presentation, delineating the event as one of self-accomplishment. In her narration she is the initiator of each stage of the action (8,11,16,20,21,22,25), so that she positions herself as agent, as the one who 'acts' to achieve success. Alex is a risk-taker, a strategist and a fledgling university classroom member who is beginning to know the ropes.

The other characters in the story are her classmates and her Islamic Studies teacher. Her classmates are listeners only and it is a mark of her presence as a speaker that they stop talking to listen to her. She shows awareness of her audience: "I hope that they follow me" (15). In SS5 Alex told me that there were 45-50 students in her Islamic class who were mostly all proficient in English so that she always felt too shy to speak out in class. This makes her achievement here seem even more impressive. It also develops her fledgling identity as a functioning Sharifa university student. The Islamic teacher is presented as distantly encouraging (20) and Alex suggests, through her monitoring voice (23), that he was pleased by her performance. Her display of understanding is

meaningful when seen in the context of Alex's report of the same teacher's advice to the class before their mid-term exam: ""If you understand this idea…you will be answering well." (SS6:5). Echoing this advice, Alex assures me when she introduces the story: "I understand the ideas" (10); by the end she has proved herself to her teacher: "I showed him that I understand the idea" (25). Her final accomplishment is that she is even able to expand on her pre-planned talk (22).

Alex's actions are shown to be powerfully guided by the teacher's implied voice, as if she has a checklist: speak loudly (11), don't just memorise your talk (22), don't read from your notes (16) and make eye contact with your audience (19). These are her criteria for a successful presentation and she praises herself as she accomplishes each one. Interestingly, Alex only fleetingly mentions the subject-matter (27) in response to my question (26), but focuses mainly on the mechanics of presentation. She positions herself as a language learner and user, in the sense of understanding and speaking English well enough for the demands of the presentation task. However she also alerts me to her novice position in the group: "Because you know er-r just I do the er-r conclusion"(8).

With regards to the interactional accomplishment of the story, Alex as narrator guides my reactions every step of the way: at first she joyfully shows surprise that she exceeded her expectations and I react with pleasure at Alex's achievement after the darkness of SS5. When she performs her experience of the event (11-22) I am carried along by her newfound self-efficacy and echo her praises.

Her narrator self seems surprised to hear Alex speaking out loud and I contribute to her heady performance of holding a rapt audience:

> 11 A: …so when I start talk suddenly my voice it was loudly yes
> 12   and when the girls stop talking [laughing]
> 13 K: [Laughing] They were listening to you
> 14 A: Yes [loudly and half-laughing] so I was scared in myself

In this narrative, Alex claims for herself, for the first time, a position as validated English speaker in an English-medium classroom. In showing understanding of an academic subject she places herself on the road to success in terms of her learning context. However her success, although significant, is performed as tentative indicated by her nervous emotion and her over-praising of self (four times in sixteen lines). An analysis of this small story indicates that Alex's claim to establishing a space for herself in a university classroom is not as confident as her appraising self professes. This narrative also evokes the wider educational context: one in which high school graduates who have learnt their limited English in Saudi state schools ('government English') are expected to study academic subjects through the medium of English at university. Alex indicates that the advanced language level required is not the only obstacle but that unfamiliar classroom practices are also hurdles to be overcome in order to develop a successful university student and ELLU identity.

Thus in SS6 Alex appears to have made many social adjustments and to enjoy working with more advanced groups. However, she still presents her attempts to adapt to new ways of learning and studying as problematic. Balancing studies of difficult academic subjects, becoming less dependent on teacher explanation, taking notes in class while listening to the teacher and relying more on understanding than memorisation are linguistic and academic processes which Alex claims she finds challenging and exacting. Furthermore, Alex's expressed disengagement as a student of general studies is presented as a result of her enforced negation of her Translation student identity, which I examine next.

5.3.4. Translation student identity/future translator
5.3.4.1 Translation and EL2 learning
From our very first interview Alex delineates herself intellectually and emotionally as a budding Translation student with further academic and even professional ambitions in the field. Her expressed love of translation, as a process and an academic subject, links closely with Alex's language learner self, particularly in her presentations of Translation studies in the PP, which she sees

as an opportunity to learn English vocabulary. Although complications arise in SS2 and SS3, due to difficulties encountered with Translation work in PP2, Alex holds out and sustains her position as Translation student against all odds. In her freshman year, Alex's identity claims are frustrated and in compromising her Translation student identity, she becomes disillusioned with the university institution and develops an oppositional self. Likewise, in her future self-narrative at the end of SS7, her translator identity, which is reflected in her consistent goal to be a professional translator, is presented as a site of self-doubt and seems compromised by familial and cultural restrictions.

In the first recorded interview Alex links English learning to her primary goal of studying Translation and constructs herself as a Translation student who enjoys the challenges and procedures of translating between Arabic and English.

> K: OK and what do you find are the easiest things. What is easy for you.
> A: Translation [laughs]. I like it a lot. When the doctor asks us to translate something I will be so happy.
> K: You find that easy do you?
> A: Yes. It's not so easy because I don't know all the words but I love when I open the dictionary and I find this word and the meaning and so...
> (A-SS1:3)

She tells me she has three dictionaries at home and if she can't find a word she asks her father; only as a final resort does she ask her teacher. Thus Alex constructs herself as a Translation student both at the PP and at home. According to Alex it is the process of translation which facilitates vocabulary learning. She remembers a lot of new words she learnt in PP1 Translation "because we translate a little story" and "When you translate something sure you will not be able to translate all the words but you learn a lot of words...(SS1:11).

5.3.4.2 Problems with Translation

These calm waters become somewhat disturbed in SS2 as she hesitatingly tells me about the Translation problem the whole class encounters "because the doctor who teach us he's a professor so when he teach us we should study his book" (SS2: 2). Alex contrasts this book with the text they used with her PP1 Translation teacher which was "like a story for a movie and we was exciting. Now I translate a scientific book so it's boring it's very boring" (SS2: 3). She also brings

up the method of translation as being the source of difficulty: in PP1 "we translate word for word" whereas this 'doctor' focuses on the whole paragraph "so this is difficult for us." (SS2: 3).

Although she uses 'we' and 'us' to express these problems, Alex is quick to separate herself from others who have changed their major due to difficulties with the Translation professor while she remains personally committed to the subject. In her review of her PP year in SS3 she continues to position herself as a Translation student, albeit in conflicting terms: although she presents her primary achievement as learning: "the basic things or the important things in English for the Translation department" (SS3:1), she also claims that the PP2 semester was "not useful for me in Translation" (SS3:4). Alex reminds me of difficulties of studying with the Translation professor in PP2 and this acts as a prelude to the 'Bad Incident in the Bookstore' narrative, which is Small Story 3.

Small Story 3 SS3:1-2 The 'Bad Incident in the Bookstore' (App.A3: 333-334)

In this narrative Alex relates an incident in which she and her fellow PP2 students had their Translation assignment done by someone working in a bookshop because they found it too difficult to do themselves. I focus on the performative, structural, functional, positional and linguistic features of the narrative in order to throw light on the telling, on Alex's evaluation of the narrative event and on strategies she uses to draw up subject positions in interaction with me. Our rather slow communication and the clumsy execution of the narrative can partly be attributed to the 'distance' of our Skype connection. However Alex's telling can be seen as strategic and palatable for her audience: it is revealed slowly and cautiously, with little emotion or drama, and is presented as three parts justification to one part narration.

Alex introduces the narrative as a critical incident (12) but in the process of interaction her 'spoiled' identity is somewhat repaired or rather co-repaired. She appears to evade a clear explanation of what took place and focuses instead on lengthy justifications (14-21, 29-34), which emphasise the collective nature of the action. Alex changes subject pronoun from "I" to "we" throughout. While retaining a competent public student self (38) she emphasises her own extensive but frustrated efforts to execute the translation task to the best of her ability (15-20). However, it is "we" who committed the act (7,8,22,26) because "we" found the assignment far too difficult (14, 21). Thus Alex's use of pronouns functions to absolve her 'self' of individual agency in a collective justification. What Alex misses out of her narrative is information about who took the decision and what the circumstances were of the student visit to the bookshop.

Alex's narrative performance is recipient-designed and relies on knowledge from previous interactions. She deliberately refers me to her former complaints about the PP2 Translation teacher in SS2: "I told you that before"(3) and prepares me for the event by negatively evaluating both the development of the problem before the telling begins: "it get in a bad way"(6) and the event itself: "This is something bad" (12).

When I ask Alex to explain she again avoids narrating the event itself but focuses on the lead-up to it, which acts as her initial justification. She makes this convincing by referring first to a much shorter assignment (15) which had taken her a long time to complete (16) and then highlights the length of this assignment (6 pages) (19-20). It is not until lines 26 and 27 that Alex briefly and clearly tells me what they did and I finally understand. She pinpoints the difficulty as the complex words in the text (33) and my show of mutual understanding lends weight to her justification.

In the final lines (37-43), on my In instigation, Alex changes orientation and reports on her excellent performance in the Translation examination, which reduces the critical impact of the narrative. This, coupled with her opening statement (1-2), suggests that the incident is an isolated one that does not significantly threaten her successful status as a student. In interaction with me, Alex can be seen to draw up a subject position as a still competent student who collaborated on an inevitable 'guilty act'. At the same time, a more private identity also emerges in her lead-up account (15-20), in which she reflects on her struggle with academic translation. It is through her use of repetition and parallelisms (29-34), that Alex emphasises these 'private' difficulties and this acts as a foretaste of her problems in dealing with academic language after her transition to university. Thus shifting, contradictory subject positions can be seen to emerge in our co-construction which offer insights into Alex's identity trajectory.

In terms of wider discourses, Alex positions herself as an EL2 learner (e.g. in her search for alternative words for 'difficult') who is learning to become a student at an English-medium university. The hurdles she must overcome, such as coming to grips with academic English: "it's not words I use it everyday" (33), and a more independent style of learning: "it's too hard for us to translate it ourselves" (14), are reflected in her narrative. Also she positions herself within a system of teacher-student relationships in which students resort to cheating in order to be successful when other options such as student-teacher consultation are perhaps unavailable.

5.3.4.3 Not a Translation student

Alex seems to see little relevance to Translation in her general courses; only "ACS will help me with Translation because I will translate from Arabic to English" (SS4:3). Two months later, however, in SS5, I sense Alex's frustration and resentment towards institutional arrangements which dictate that she will continue taking general courses in the second semester:

K: ... Do you feel bad because you're not studying your major?

A: Yes. I went even for the plan in the Translation department, but they told me if I want to study Translation for example Introduction to Translation I must sign a paper that I'm responsible for this and the university told me that I can't do it but I did it.   (A-SS5:3)

Alex's account emphasises her agency in going against the institutional programme in order to study Translation the following semester by pitting her "I" and "me" against "they" and "the university". Later on in the interview, however, after we have discussed her problems with courses and teachers, she appears to back down: "But I feel scared when they told me that I need to sign this paper. I feel that I can do this thing? Or not? I'm not sure" (SS5:10). So while Alex presents herself as different from other PP students who do not want to study their majors, her motivation to achieve her goal is mitigated by her anxiety over standing alone against the system. Alex presents her identity as a Translation student as suppressed and problematized in terms of her stated goals, her actions and her sense of academic self. Now even the procedure of translating words, which was presented as a source of pleasure in the first and second interviews, has become problematic because studying academic subjects through the medium of English is time-consuming and difficult: "...but now if I want to translate everything it will take a lot of time so I stopped doing this thing" (SS5:12).

Alex presents her Arabic identity to me as part of her linguistic and academic capital as a translation student and, as I keep reminding her, is a positive result of her education at a Saudi state school. She positions the ex-private school students as weak in Arabic due to their schooling in English and herself as proficient: "I was good in Arabic even in high school. I was very good in Arabic" (SS6:10). In order to illustrate her point she presents a dialogue between the Arabic teacher and the ex-private school students in which the teacher chides them for their lack of Arabic: "Oh you are Arabic people...you should know your language" (SS6:10). They blame their private schooling for their poor knowledge of Classical Arabic vocabulary. Alex positions herself here as a superior AL1 speaker, contrary to her usual inferior self-positioning as an EL2 speaker.

During her PP year, she had anticipated studying her major at university with enthusiasm. Now she sadly declares: "I am not a Translation student you know" (SS7:1). She conveys her embarrassment when asked by others about her Translation studies and feels compelled to lie in order to save face:

> A: ... I really feel embarrassed when somebody told me that "How are you doing in Translation" I can't tell them "Oh I didn't take any course in Translation" (K: yeah) so I told them "Oh it's fine" [K & A laugh] "I'm doing well." So it's really, I don't know. This is what I'm like now. I don't like that.   (A-SS7:1)

Alex performs her identity 'trouble' effectively through using conflicting voices in this short narrative. She is encouraged to develop her 'liar' narrator position by our mutual expression of amusement but she evaluates her current 'hijacked' Translation student identity here with displeasure and disbelief. The final two statements declaring her current position as unhappy 'deceiver' indicate her investment in both a public and private Translation student identity.

5.3.4.4   Future translator identity

In her construction of her future, imagined self at the end of the interview, Alex presents her goals to do a master's in Translation and to work as a translator as somewhat thwarted by family and cultural expectations. At first her ideal self wishes for recognition of excellence in translation and imagines others admiring her work and saying: "Oh you are really good in this it's really your department." (SS7:10). Even the job itself has to be a high-level one so that others do not say: "Oh she work as a translator in some company and it's an ordinary job" (SS7:10). Using voices of acknowledgement bolsters her public translator self.

On the other hand, Alex's projected professional identity as a translator in a big company is called into question by her expressed feelings of doubt about her abilities and self-efficacy. She positions herself as my informant on the complexities of translating between Arabic and English:

> A: ...It's not always you follow the rules you know. Sometimes you must change some things to follow the culture of Arabic not the culture (P) (K: the style) yes the style or the system (K: yes exactly).

So I don't know maybe if I wasn't this level I don't know actually

(A-SS7:10)

This is a far cry from the emotionally attached, comfortable relationship with Translation she presented in the early interviews. In spite of a greater focus on its complexities, Alex consistently appropriates Translation as "my department", in her speech.

However reality creeps in at this point in her account when she brings in the possibility of getting married before graduation. Her desire to do her master's and then work as a translator all depends on her future husband's wishes. When I bring up the scenario of working with men Alex shifts her presentation of her future self somewhat: now she presents her intention to work as a translator from home, as she would be expected to marry a fellow Palestinian who would not allow her to work outside the family home. Alex overrides my questioning to 'defend' herself and to loudly and firmly justify her position of gender conformity while still retaining her translation "department" identity. In this imagined act of compromise with her cultural identity, Alex shows me yet another constraint to the fulfilment of her translator subject position.

5.3.5 Oppositional student identity

As a language learner and college student, Alex becomes quite fiercely critical of her learning institution, particularly of the PP. Her animosity towards the PP builds after transition to university and becomes particularly bitter in the final interview. Likewise, her freshman year is seen, in the same interview, as one that stands in opposition to her future self. The antagonism she shows towards the institutions seems to be part of a much broader conflict: that between herself as agent and the 'wall' of social structure which she seems to meet at every corner. In her identity performance Alex pits her personal, academic and professional goals and desires against the social restrictions, economic concerns and cultural and familial constraints of her environment.

 In pre and post-interview conversations Alex's oppositional student identity emerges much earlier. In our pre-SS2 conversation, for example, Alex complains

about having to purchase expensive coursebooks when teachers only cover a few of the units: "We buy books for what. For 2 units?" (pre-SS2 conversation-FN:1). This abrupt, staccato, accusatory discourse style is rarely used in the interviews except in her angry diatribe against the PP in our final interview on a similar economic theme. Alex does not blame PP teachers but positions them as pawns of the system. The main economic issue, that as a non-Saudi she is not eligible for a Saudi government scholarship, is also spelled out to me in our pre-SS2 conversation. This 'backstage' piece of information, which Alex might have been reticent about revealing in an early interview, is presented with dramatic force in SS5 and SS7.

Alex's resentment towards the PP is expressed in the context of the difficult transition to university study. She foregrounds her deep regret over 'wasting' her past year in the PP instead of doing language courses outside the university and explains that she did not have this option because she would only be guaranteed a university place if she passed the PP year. Alex directs her blame at the PP in a series of emotional outbursts expressing regret and anger:

A: Because err I give him 40,000 (Saudi riyals). It's lost in the air.
K: Really? [with concern]. You think it's a waste of money.
A: Yes. [Angrily] a <u>lot</u> of money.   (A-SS5:2)

Here Alex gives voice to her economic concerns for the first time in a recorded interview. I seek again to temper her emotional performance by asking her for constructive criticism of the PP. At first she seems too upset to reason with me, then she admits that the PP prepared them for essay writing, for college-type exams and helped them with time-management: "But it's not enough, it's not enough" (SS5:2). In her second university semester, Alex is still finding it difficult to adapt to the linguistic demands of her studies and our interview forum has become a setting for voicing her protests to me as an 'outsider' researcher and increasingly as her confidante. Alex's diatribe against the PP intensifies in our final interview and she develops a powerful oppositional voice in Small Story 4.

Small Story 4 (SS7:7-9)   The 'Bad PP' narrative (Appendix A4:334-336)

In this emotionally charged argumentative narrative, embedded in her final interview, Alex expounds on her diatribe by casting the PP as a deceptive voice luring naïve students, herself included, into spending a year at the institution preparing for university. Alex positions herself both as a past, duped PP student and a present, more enlightened, but resentful one, in order to highlight her moral and evaluative stance towards the institution.   She acts out the voice of the PP, which had succeeded in duping her and other prospective students:

> 65   they give us the picture that [feigning concern]
> 66   " it will really help you when you enter the college"
> 67   and you feel it's better (K: mmm)

I take up a position as defender of the institution by reinforcing and supporting their aims so that Alex's speaking position becomes one of contesting both the 'duplicitous' institutional voice in her storyworld and of counteracting my arguments in our interactional world. Using strategic arguments, she convinces me, as someone who has not experienced the 'deception', that I am wrong on each of my points.

After her initial melodramatic outburst of "hate" towards the PP, perhaps encouraged by my laughter, Alex quietly and poignantly reflects on her 'loss':

> 6 A: [quietly] It's a whole year
> 7   it's gone from me you know

With this metaphorical turn of phrase Alex draws me in to the seriousness of the situation: the PP has turned out to be a very poor investment in her language learning. She takes me back to the time she started the PP course and acts out the pretentious voice of the institution, advising students of the advantages of studying at the PP (17-18). She swiftly contradicts their advice (20-21). I contest her stated view that the "system" (33) of the PP is "really wrong" (35) by playing devil's advocate and produce the official aims of the PP (37-43) in a formal, impersonal style.

Alex counters my points of time management coming to class on time and meeting deadlines and rejects my position: "…it's not necessary to teach us that" (49). She gives me a personal example of PP deception: she relates a conversation she, as a 'figure' in her story, had with someone who told her that, since she had scored over 90% in the PP1 exam, she could miss out PP2 altogether and go straight to university. In her past naïve voice she rejected this (73-74) because the PP had convinced her that their students had an advantage over those who went straight to university after graduating from high school. I again position myself as supportive of the PP and my disagreement with Alex reaches a head:

> 81 K: But that should help you
> 82 A: It's not necessary

When I inquire if Alex has shared her opinion with her parents, she brings in the voice of her father, who she imagines would be horrified if she were to disclose the 'deception' to him:

> 105   he will feel [with intensity]"Oh my God you waste all that
>   money!
> 106   And you know this semester you give him 20,000 (Saudi Riyals)
> 107   For the year 40,000"

Alex draws on patriarchal discourses, in the sense that she is indebted to her father for his huge financial investment in her education. Then, in solidarity with her father, Alex 'overlaps' her father's voice with her own in a series of rather desperate but chiding rhetorical questions, addressed to the 'villainous' PP, which make the negotiation of her learning seem like the act of squabbling over prices with sellers in the market-place (109-110).

> 109   "*yaʿnī* for 40,000 what you give me for information
> 110   You learn me essay OK. And then what"

By incorporating her father's imagined discourse she can more firmly protest against the speaking position of the personified PP, who represents the 'evil' establishment in their exploitation of dedicated but non-Saudi students. Interestingly, in the context of the story world, only her mother hears her opposing arguments but is not given a voice.

Alex continues to personify the PP/University as the villain who has cheated her and her father and in her father's intense voice she exclaims:

113　　"Oh my God! How we follow them
114　　　or how we just listen to him"

Then in a conspiratorial tone of voice she continues to deride the institution in an aside to me (115-117). I feel Alex has gone too far in her anti-institutional criticisms and we are no longer aligned in our interaction so I interrupt to change the direction of the interview.

Alex's strong oppositional voice shows her high motivation as an EL2 learner eager to accrue linguistic capital but also her economic concerns over the payment of fees as a non-Saudi. She is thus positioned as disadvantaged by her outsider status and this resentment comes through in her emotional, almost hostile, rhetorical questioning of the PP and her conspiratorial suggestions which follow. The situation of our final interview, in which Alex speaks from the vantage point of an 'enlightened' university student, provides her with the opportunity to voice her resistance to the PP institution with creativity and passion. Her accomplishment as imaginative narrator and able arguer builds Alex's identity as an EL2 speaker.

Alex's opposition to Sharifa University is less directly expressed, certainly in a more understated manner, than in her 'attack' on the PP. When I ask her about her understanding of the university system she positions herself as opposing the system of freshmen only taking general courses in the first year: "...it's my opinion, that it's ridiculous to waste a whole year without doing anything of my department" (SS7:1). Thus on reflecting back over the PP and on her freshman year so far, Alex constructs both as not providing her with a return on her father's investment.

Alex also expresses contradictory views of the university compared with high school. At the end of SS5 she presents her dilemma of whether she should move to university in Jordan or remain at university in Saudi Arabia in the 'Jordan' narrative, which is Small Story 5. Interestingly, Alex never mentions the name of the country (Saudi Arabia) in her criticisms, even when comparing universities with those in Jordan.

Small Story 5 (SS5:15-16) The 'Jordan' narrative (Appendix A5:336-338)

After her performance of a self weighed down by the academic and linguistic demands of the transition to university, Alex introduces and reflects on a possible, alternative, 'better' world in which to fulfil her student identity. She presents her dilemma as an argument with herself in which she weighs up the pros and cons of being a university student in Jordan. Her narrative is also recipient-designed, as her purpose is to further my understanding of her situation in terms of the possibilities and constraints of her cultural and familial context. One can detect the conflict between Alex's student and family member subject positions, but more than this: Alex's ambivalent ethnic identity and her oppositional gender identity, largely invisible in her big narrative, emerge and are performed for me as aspects of her dilemma.

The characters of Alex's brother and her girlfriend who attend university in Jordan and Palestine respectively, represent Arab students who appreciate the freedom of studying in the outside world whereas her father, mother and grandparents represent the restrictive, conservative world of her family culture. She positions herself as caught in the middle between the two: she aspires to achieve a better education in a more relaxed university environment than her present one but is constrained by cultural expectations and her own conflicted ethnic identity. By using reported and direct speech Alex voices her characters' points of view and at the same time positions her unstable voice within their more established voices. In contrast to the assurances of her brother and female friend that university life is very different from high school in Jordan, Alex claims she has not experienced this difference 'here':

7 A: ... I can't compare because we are
    8   you know something like high school
    9   you feel that you are {in a limited place}

She gives me two examples of specific restrictions: gender segregation and enforced confinement within the university campus. The words Alex uses indicate a negative orientation towards such restrictions e.g. "you can't just get out wherever you want" (11). This contrary view of the Saudi student experience brings Alex on to her dilemma: should she study in Jordan or stay 'here'? She draws me in by reminding me that she has told me on previous occasions that her father wants her to study there (22-23).

Now she presents her dilemma in strategic fashion by first giving the advantages of the higher quality of university education in Jordan (26-29) and then the disadvantages to her student self if she lived with her grandparents while at university there. Alex makes it clear to me that she would not have a choice: "you know I must be in their home" (34). This family restriction is seen as having significant repercussions: she would have to entertain visitors and do the housework for her grandmother (37-38) and she confides in her mother that she could not fulfil both family and student obligations.

When I propose a solution, that she study and live with her brother in Jordan, Alex corrects my cultural misunderstanding: her brother actually lives in the same building as her grandparents and has obligations towards them. Her father's commanding voice on the phone orders her brother to "do this do this do this" (42) and their grandparents' voices make demands on his time (56). From her brother's current situation Alex envisions her own which she sees as even worse due to her gender identity:

    64 A: Oh, it's hard
    65   very hard for me because I'm a girl

Alex also shows a conflicted ethnic identity in this extract. She presents her dilemma again in the form of a rhetorical question: "Why I didn't go there to study" (77), thus reinforcing her regret over a lost learning/studying opportunity in Jordan.

However, when Alex considers living there she singles herself out from her brother and friend:

> 78   But they live in a happy place
> 79   They want to live in this place
> 80   but I don't want

That Alex would say that she does not want to live "in a happy place" might seem strange but what she is expressing is her lack of affiliation to Jordan in spite of her nationality. When she and her family spend a short time there in the summer, she is eager to return. She expresses this in emotional terms: "just one week and I start crying/I want to come back to here" (83-84). The reason she gives is that they always stay at home while in Jordan as they do 'here'. It is her father who prevents the family from going out and getting to know the place: his voice constantly reminds them: "I'm here just to see my parents" (88). Her final statement is spoken with sad irony:

> 96 A: It's here in home
> 97   It's there in home

In terms of wider discourses Alex positions herself as an aspiring young woman living in a patriarchal and conservative family and society. It is her father who has given her the option (granted at a price!) to study in Jordan but her deliberations, as presented to me, do not include a discussion with her father. It is his voice which directs and controls his family and Alex never confronts him directly; she only addresses her mother in private. Thus a gender identity emerges in the performance of the narrative in which Alex positions herself as oppositional but not rebellious. Regarding her ethnicity, Alex positions herself as ambivalent in her orientation to either country: her conflict is expressed as one between a desire for greater freedom and for a higher-level university education in Jordan (27-29) but an overriding feeling of belonging to 'here' in spite of its social restrictions (7-12). Alex presents me with glimpses of her desire for freedom and a better education but these form part of a subtext in her account and she positions herself as unable to avail herself of these advantages. Sadly, her vision of a better world in terms of her student and gender identity seems unlikely ever to be realized.

5.3.6 Family Member Identity

5.3.6.1 Family constraints on her studies

Alex presents a family member identity in conflict with her student identity and creates distance in her performance of family relations. Saving face in front of her family is presented as an important motive for outward success in her language learning and studying in English while familial demands are seen as impinging on her accretion of academic and professional capital. In her email response to the GELL sheet (A-email: 17th Oct. 2012) Alex explains her motive for studying Translation as: "I want to prove to myself and to my parents that I can be perfect in this department." In a post-SS7 conversation she tells me her father made fun of her when her uncle said a word in English that she didn't know. The admitted embarrassment she felt fuelled her regret for not doing language courses, which she claims would have helped improve her English.

Through the interviews Alex builds a certain distance in her relationship with her family: when her mother gives birth to her baby brother at the end of the first university semester, for example, she presents this event as an interference to her studying. Even when she reports in SS5 that she confided in her mother her extreme stress over her university studies, her mother is not positioned as supporting her studies, indeed she responds with a challenge:

> A: She told me "What will you do if you get married while studying at university" [Laughs]
> K: What did <u>you</u> say
> A: I told her that I know myself. I can't. I can't act with this responsible, that I study from 8 to 3 or 4 and I come back to my home and, I can't I can't   (A-SS5:11)

Alex's rather desperate opposition to her mother's teasing, reflects a potential threat to her student identity. Her mother's voice expresses her view in more abrupt fashion in our unrecorded conversation at the end of Alex's freshman year. Knowing that her daughter would like to do her masters and then work, her commanding response is: "not in <u>my</u> home" (FN:13). At this Alex seems to acquiesce or at least compromise: she agrees to get married by her final year at university but not before.

5.3.6.2 Family culture

In our post-SS7 conversation Alex presents herself as a family pioneer: neither her father nor her mother have been to university and "would be surprised" (Post-SS7 conversation-FN:5) if their daughter went to work. There is only one other female relative in her extended family studying at university but there are no women working:"It's the culture of my family" (Post-SS7 conversation-FN:5), Alex explains. She distinguishes her family culture from that of Jordan, where she says most women work, and that of Saudi Arabia, where more women are now seeking careers. Alex positions herself in a family culture which problematizes her professional and educational identities, as Small Story 6 shows.

Small Story 6 (SS7: 9-11) The 'Ideal and Possible Self' narrative (App.A6:338-340)

In this narrative, at the end of the final interview, Alex foregrounds her imagined identities as English speaker and translator. The projection of her ideal self creates a tension through the narrative but she reaches, in the end, a performed harmonious position with her culture, which means adapting her goals to fit society's expectations that she become a wife and mother. Alex develops a public, ideal self in the sense that she imagines her achievements rewarded by public recognition of her excellence but this is counteracted by the more private, domestic identity presented in the last section of the narrative (64-89).

In terms of characters, this narrative is unusual in that there are few 'real' people; indeed, apart from Alex herself, there is her imagined husband and nameless admirers of her superior spoken English and translation skills. The only 'real' people she presents are the group of more 'competent' English speakers at her university. As if breaking the bounds of her EL2 identity, Alex aspires to a future identity as a near-native speaker like these fellow students who:

    32   if you heard them on the phone
    33   you would not guess that they are an Arabic people

The most important attribute is having the "real accent" (15,18) even more than "language" (17). Alex holds on to this vision, in spite of my reassurances that she is an effective enough communicator in English. She even corrects my assumption that she just wants to speak English like the 'competent' students (34-35): indeed, taking on a near-native social identity is the ideal achievement of her four years of university study (37-41) so that "I will prove to myself that I'm like them" (38).

A new subject position thus emerges which seems unrelated to Alex's identity as a student. Now she seeks public recognition of her imagined status:

42   and really if I talk to someone
43   he will say "Oh my God! You are <u>good</u>"

Alex traces the process from language learner (39-41) to language user (42) to acknowledgement of others (43) as the path to her ideal self, indeed, Alex's imagined self as English speaker in her local setting takes up the first half of the narrative (8-43). She uses this same pattern with her imagined, superlative level of translation presenting her goal as the recognition by others of the outstanding quality of her translation work. Again Alex speaks in the voice of her admirers: "…Oh you are really good in this/ it's really your department" (47-48), which underscores the importance to her of the social recognition of her imagined self.

At this high point reality seems to seep in as Alex considers her likely marriage or engagement in her final year of undergraduate study. In the delineation of her future self, Alex's imagined husband becomes a character who looms large. He is the unknown factor that will decide if she can fulfil her goal to study for a Master's in Translation and will determine the conditions of her working as a translator:

56 A: I don't know what's his mind my husband (K: right)
57   I don't know if he will accept I study master or if I work
58   I don't know you know so (K: right [dubiously])

With these repetitive statements of uncertainty Alex's imagined self starts

to crumble and she emphasises its ephemeral nature in her reminder to me: "I'm just now telling you what I wish about my study" (59). Alex now positions herself as a wife willing to accommodate to her husband's will and she negotiates with him to allow her to work from home (69-72). Alex is no longer oppositional: she is now a member of a family culture and my cultural informant:

75   we're Palestinian people you know
76   we not that open mind
77   we are not that thing

Her parallelisms constitute a strong statement of identity. Her final declaration (82-89) is a defiant identity confrontation, a declaration of Alex's solid translator identity within cultural borders. Here she interrupts my questioning voice to loudly assert her acceptance of her position as translator at home. Her argument that her translator identity will remain intact, whether she works at home or in an office, is a powerful one and I feel I have no choice but to accept it. A future self, divided between her professional and domestic identities, is the most likely one if Alex is to forge a compromise with her culture.

Thus Alex finally carves out for herself a viable future self in her sociocultural context. Although she does not draw attention as such to her gender identity she shows in effect how she is positioned by ideological discourses of gender inequality in that marriage is presented as a given not an option. Discourses of English as cultural, social and economic capital also position Alex, and she imagines her future ideal self in relation to these wider discourses. Speaking English to an advanced level gives status to Arabs especially to women in Saudi society in terms of social class and level of education. Similarly, studying Translation to an advanced level will give her the economic capital in order to gain access to employment as a translator. However, Alex displays uncertainty over her access to returns on her investment in English. Gaining legitimacy in her family is an important consideration. The challenge of juggling familial, social and professional identities is a common one and can be seen as part of a dominant narrative which positions many young women in her society.

Thus social, familial, educational and cultural structures are frequently presented in the course of the interviews as obstructions to Alex's ELLU, general student and Translation student selves, and even as constraints to our interaction in that her family culture precludes us from meeting outside campus. However, in the final narrative, Alex positions herself as accommodating her future self in a bid to reconcile her identities as educated, professional young woman and as wife and mother.

5.3.7 Summary of Alex's big narrative and small stories

Alex's identity performance as a language learner can be plotted along a trajectory of processes from learning words to translating to memorising to understanding to manipulating language and finally to joining an imagined community of highly 'audible' EL2 speakers. Moving forward in parallel to this language learning 'highway' is Alex's student self which at first is not stretched enough, is stunned into silence at transition to university and then gains a voice as novice student as Alex moves away from her ex-PP peers to join new learning groups of more advanced students. Two turning points are shown as critical along the way: Alex's 'silencing' at the shock of academic, linguistic and social transition and the later validation of her EL2 voice in the university classroom. The development of an oppositional self in terms of institutional, familial and cultural constraints on her general and translation student/future translator identities is a defining feature of Alex's identity trajectory.

A sense of coherence is achieved through Alex's frequent reference to previous tellings, her mounting regret over past EL2 learning at school and at the PP and her foreshadowing of later developments. For example, the seeds of the struggle she encounters with academic language are sown in her early narratives and her frequently expressed desire to work with better students in the pre-transition interviews becomes an important strategy in her working towards social and academic integration at university.

The small stories give a nuanced account of the emergence of gender and ethnic subject positions in interaction and their changing relationship with ELLU and

student identities. They also show how interactive positioning and performance devices, particularly Alex's exclamatory and rhetorical style, create a sense of impassioned agency in her self-presentations as a learner but also point to the tenuousness of her identities as successful student and imagined professional. Through the evaluation of conflicting voices in narrative performance, Alex positions herself within wider social and cultural discourses, at times showing an ironic disdain towards patriarchal and institutional threats to her agency but finally effecting a compromise with her family culture. However, Alex develops a powerful, argumentative EL2 voice in the interactive context of the interviews.

CHAPTER 6   SANDRA

> S: … I like the way when I study everything in English.
>
> K: You like it.
>
> S: Yes because it have you know it give you another, it give you another way to look at, no not another way, it give you yeah another way for see the world or learn something *yaʿnī*. Sometimes you will feel you are existing you want learn more because that in English and that we don't know about not the Arab opinion or the Arab what they do or what they make no, now we will learn about the people outside like in American in Italian in Spanish in like that. Now we talk about these people we learn about them like that. I feel for me it's nice when I study in English the courses.
>
> <div align="right">(S-SS3: 2-3)</div>

6.1   Our relationship

Sandra was the first of my participants to volunteer to take part in my research. She seemed to take pleasure in talking to me and after PP2 insisted on meeting me outside the academic context, first in a shopping mall and then, for all later interviews and conversations, in our respective homes. She had a family driver at her disposal and seemed to be able to meet me at times convenient to us both, suggesting that Sandra's family was not particularly conservative. Before and after the interviews at our homes there was extended discussion on a variety of topics. Consequently, it is probably true to say that I developed a more familiar relationship with Sandra than I did with my other three participants.

Sandra was also one of the three participants living in fatherless families, in the sense that there was no dominant, paternalistic presence in the family home. She would often come to my home with one or two young siblings in tow, explaining that she had the responsibility of looking after them. Sandra was eager for me to meet her family, which I did when I went over to interview her about her response to the GELL (Good English Language Learner) sheet at the end of the PP year. Most of her family speak English quite well and I would categorise her home as middle-class. Sandra and her younger half-sisters live in a separate annexe from her mother and stepfather and within this area, Sandra seems to rule. Although a voluble speaker Sandra's frequent false starts and stammering,

particularly when she is being recorded, make listening to her lengthy utterances rather challenging. However, her friendliness and warmth compensate in part and her, at times, rambling discourse in English creates an impression of unfiltered speech and of her 'openness' in response.

6.2   Background

Both Sandra's parents are Saudi and she has lived in Saudi Arabia all her life. Although 19 years old at the beginning of the research period, she looked older and had a strong English presence. By this I mean that she was a feisty conversationalist and able to express her ideas quite forcefully in English. She had the advantage over two of the participants of having been to private schools, where she studied English throughout her school career. Sandra presents herself in her informal interview (see Appendix F2) as one who has grown up with English. She claims that she first learnt English from her Filipino nanny when she was five, then mostly from her uncles and from watching English movies.

Sandra is quick to impress on me her dysfunctional family life: she tells me that when her parents got divorced she was five years old and was first sent to live with her grandparents and three years later was moved to another city to live with her father and stepmother. Finally at fourteen her grandfather arranged for her to come back to live with her mother and stepfather as her stepmother was "offensive" (S-Inf. Int:1) to her. Sandra claims that she is closer to her two young uncles than either her mother or father and seeks to emulate them, particularly in their foreign language competence.

6.3.   Sandra's big narrative and small stories
6.3.1   Overview

Sandra's focus on her 'self' forms the core of her account of language learning and her personal and emotional dispositions tend to parallel her learner and learning developments. The interview titles below indicate Sandra's rising confidence in her development as a language learner while at the PP. After a slump in the first university semester, she seems to be on the rise again by the second semester.

25 Feb	SS1	Finding a niche
4 April	SS2	Learning more and more
25 April	Grp.	Feeling ready for next year
15 May	SS3	Reaching for the sky
7 June	GELL	Confidence on hold for the holiday

TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

11 Sept	SS4	My Muslim identity and future concerns
19 Nov	SS5	Problems of the university fledgling
5 Feb	SS6	Moderate success in facing new challenges

I have focused on what I interpret as the main identities Sandra takes up in her big narrative as:

A. **English language learner/ user (ELLU)**
B. **Student**
C. **Counsellor/Psychological self**
D. **Quiet loner**

Within different interviews Sandra also takes up particular identities, such as her problematic Arabic speaker identity in SS2 and her Muslim identity in SS4. These do not appear consistently through the interviews but are presented perhaps to show me a different aspect of herself. The plethora of Sandra's stories and anecdotes in her speech also provides a rich tapestry of subject positions and positionings.

6.3.2 English language learner/user (ELLU) identity

In Sandra's self-presentation as a ELLU before her transition to university she positions herself as a quiet listener, a helper and advisor in relation to her fellow-students and as a unique individual with a strong will to learn and with her own special problems and ways of working. Her mostly successful and upward language-learning path is constructed as a series of 'epiphanies' or breakthroughs from high school to university. Sandra also shows a growing awareness of her language learning in her accounts of classroom procedures and in her appropriation of teachers' voices. However, she displays limited agency as a learner and tends to present herself as the passive character who chooses not

to take an active role in class. After transition she presents herself as having moved beyond learning general English in order to cope with the demands of studying new, academic subjects through the medium of English. Sandra's self-rating and motivation as a language learner appear to fall in the post-transition interviews and she emphasises her urgent need to raise her language level. In our final interview, however, Sandra seems to renew her efforts to adapt to university language learning practices.

From the very beginning of our interviews, Sandra presents her relationship with learning English as one which stretches well beyond her academic context: she relates it closely to her family ties and her life-context. She also shows awareness and appreciation of the beneficial effects to her learning English of our interactions. Most Saudis, Sandra claims, are not interested in learning English because they do not think it is important. However, she frequently expresses her motive for improving her English as a life-long pursuit, not particularly in order to study at university or to get a good job but for herself in an increasingly English-speaking Arab world.

SS1 - Finding a niche

Sandra repeats a number of times in her interviews that she hated English while at school because of the poor teaching. She mentions specifically that English teachers did not pronounce well, whereas watching English movies helped her to "know how to speak the word in the right way and also the access (accent), my access was come good" (S-SS1:3). She presents herself as always achieving excellent marks in English at intermediate school in an amusing habitual anecdote: her teacher would wait until Sandra had completed the test and then give her classmates her paper to copy from, as the rest of the class were "very bad"(SS1:5) at English. Although school is not presented as a site for improvement, Sandra performs a learning breakthrough in her high school English grammar class due to an effective grammar book which, she claims, gave her a new understanding of English grammar. She emphasises that she still uses the book in the PP as a learning resource and even shares it with her friends in order to help them with their grammar.

In comparison to school, the PP is presented as a creditable and trustworthy language-learning environment. In her account of PP2, Sandra presents another learning breakthrough:

> It (PP1) was good, that was just the beginning, but in that time I don't feel anything different but when I come in PP2 ah-m here I found I found the different because everything is change   (S-SS1:7)

Although Sandra claims she was apprehensive about studying everything in English when she first came to the PP, she now presents her learning as enjoyable and productive. She describes useful class activities like watching a video, trying to pick out the problems being discussed and then feeding back answers to the teacher.

While Sandra expresses her opinion that being active with the teacher is better for her learning because then the teacher can more easily identify her weaknesses, she emphasises her preference for being a quiet listener in class:

> I just want to be sit and quiet [...] if they not ask me I will just stay and just listen. I like listening.   (S-SS1:9)

Also, she states her preference for working on her own in class rather than in a group. She presents this as a dilemma because on the one hand she wants to help her classmate who she sees as a friend or sister but then she gets annoyed when this girl copies her assignment and gets a full mark. Although in her first recorded interview Sandra still seems to be 'finding a niche' in the PP, her outlook and orientation as an improving learner of English are forward-looking and optimistic.

SS2 - Learning more and more

Sandra presents her PP2 English learning repertoire in specific terms in SS2: she's practising her listening and beginning to understand people who speak English fast; she's learning new words and actually using them in her speaking; she can understand anything she reads on the internet now and she can write her opinion in English. Sandra expresses what she is able to do in the first person singular 'I' throughout, implying that she is commenting on her progress as an

individual learner rather than as a member of her PP2 class. She expresses another meaningful, personal 'epiphany' in Listening using the 'first-time' motif:

> My teacher she say we're good our grade it was fine. But for me I feel that this is the first time I can understand the more things of the Listening. In PP1 I cannot but now... (S-SS2:3)

However, from within this language learning 'roll' Sandra presents a rather disillusioned but stoic self: "I feel I'm doing well. But there is some mistakes, but *ya'nī* it's fine it's OK but there is some mistakes"(SS2:2).The motif "it's fine" recurs in her comments on her attainment levels on tests. The implication is that Sandra is not aiming at excellence but satisfied with moderately good marks.

At the end of SS2, when I inquire how her studies in Translation are going, Sandra performs her relationship with English as an enabling, trouble-free one, whereas her first language, Arabic, is presented as problematic. As a family problem it also bears on her identity as a counsellor/psychological self, as we shall see in **6.3.4.** Interestingly, the narration of this problem and its explanation take up about one third of SS2 but Sandra never mentions the problem again in any of our other interviews and conversations. Small Story 1 is made up of two extracts of this long narrative.

Small Story 1 – (SS2-A: 5-6, B:7-8) The 'Arabic problem' narrative (App. B1:341-342)
In the context of her rising confidence as an English learner and user at the PP in SS2, Sandra presents a spoke in the wheel of her identity as a Saudi, namely a problem she claims to have with expressing her opinion in her first language, Arabic. In the 'Arabic problem narrative' Sandra brings out her ease of self-expression in English and pits this against her construction of communication in her first language as complicated and problematic. This is certainly an unexpected turn in Sandra's self-presentation as an EL2 learner and her surprising question: "How can I translate something in English to my language"(A17) makes a rhetorical impact.

Sandra introduces her Arabic problem to me in the context of her progress in her Translation studies, as if revealing her unusual 'self' to a counsellor:

4   but there is some problem with me
5   I'm not speaking well in <u>Arabic</u>
6   not in English in <u>Arabic</u>   (Part A)

She traces this problem, which she claims her sister has also 'inherited', back to her mother as if absolving responsibility: "That's not my problem" (A9). By line 18 she and her sister seem cast as passive victims of a family condition as Sandra presents their 'finding' of their Arabic problem (A15, 35, B32) and creates a sense of mystery surrounding its source (A11,13).

Sandra expounds on the Arabic problem which has become hers (A18, 35, 37) and presents it as having different, far-reaching effects such as disabling communication, as obscuring her explanations to fellow-students and as lowering the quality of her translation work. "I don't know" becomes a motif through the narrative, especially among I-statements which reflect on the consequences to her 'self' (A7-8,16, B9,13,) and lead to her rather desperate final statement:

33   I don't know how to tell you what I want
34   what I want to say.   (Part B)

Positioning herself as both narrator/investigator of the self and observed self, Sandra comments on the manifestation and implications of her 'self' as an ineffective communicator on others, using the generic 'you':

31   but I try to give you my opinion
32   but you will still
33   but you will not understand quickly
34   I have to tell you any examples for anything $ya\dot{}n\bar{\imath}$ (Part A)

Dr M, her Translation teacher, is an important character as he is the authoritative voice which corroborates Sandra's claim: "you have problem translating into Arabic." (A41). Now the tone is more light-hearted: Sandra positions herself as a mystery that others discover about her. That her teacher has found out her secret problem is a

source of amusement (A42). However when she takes herself and her problem to a space and time outside her university context in Part B, it becomes serious:

4   because that is very problem if I want to work in anywhere

5   for example company in school in university.

6   That is very hard   (Part B)

Her contradictory statements that first position her as not actively trying to improve "I'm not trying to make better" (B14) and then as "now doing better" (B16) due to her own efforts, are followed by her hesitation over using the word "study" to denote how she is helping herself:

17   I'm always trying to study.

18   Yes, not study yes maybe study

19   maybe you can say study   (Part B)

In the context of her story of her Arabic problem, this hesitation over the best word to use in English and the contradiction in her expressions of agency seem ironic.

She communicates her Arabic problem to me as one which seriously and critically impedes her self-expression. Now seemingly estranged from her first language, she positions herself as settling comfortably into her EL2 self. Using enabling words and a more light-hearted tone to denote her current relationship with English, she emphatically contrasts this with her expression and tone of concern in relation to Arabic:

28   but now in English I <u>can</u> speak well

29   I <u>can</u> tell you ah my opinion

30   I can speak

31   But in Arabic

32   [seriously] I found problems   (Part B)

In effect, Sandra performs a problematisation of her Arabic identity, adopting an English-friendly persona in order to highlight her problems with her Arabic language and acts out her relationship with Arabic and English using repetition, parallelisms and contrasting tone and diction. An additional interpretation could be that she is expressing her satisfaction and self-efficacy in talking to me and in expounding on a

'personal problem' in her EL2. Sandra has a clear agenda to expound on her personal problems and I hardly feel we are co-constructing the narrative as she rejects or ignores my three contributions. My role is to listen and understand. In her delineation of Arabic as a difficult language and of English as an easy one, Sandra is positioning her own situation as a language user within wider social narratives. Also her Arabic versus English narrative reflects current debates on the importance of maintaining and nurturing Arabic identity in the face of the 'onslaught' of English. Discourses of language position Arabic as a more formal, complex language while English is seen as functional and more suited to a confessional mode of expression. It is in her presentation of her problem as a 'psychological' case and an emotional issue that Sandra finds a personal niche. However, Sandra stops at the exposition stage and there is little sense of agency or concerted personal effort expressed in order to deal with the problem.

6.3.2.4 Feeling ready for next year – SS3

In our group interview (Sandra, Nour, Nevine and myself) Sandra claims she feels ready for her study in English at the university and is confident that she will understand her teachers. She defends her choice of major, English and Translation, in terms of its use in answering her brothers' and her friends' questions and in speaking to people rather than in pursuing further academic studies or a career. Sandra now seems to be presenting herself in the context of her society as beginning to move beyond a situation in which English is the only important L2: when Nevine argues that English is all she needs because it is a lingua franca, Sandra dismissively retorts that English is now a 'general' language but useful to know as a stepping stone to the learning of other languages: "we must learn English and then we will learn another language" (Group-2: 9).

Before Small Story 2 (see below), the tension rises between Sandra and Nevine as the latter continues to express her exclusive attachment to English and her rejection of Arabic study. Nevine has forestalled Sandra's positioning of her as an 'outsider', who lived in America with "*mā titkallam*" (Don't talk) [laughs] (Group-

2:3) in order to explain her attachment to English and this can be seen as a foretaste of Small Story 2.

Small Story 2: (Group 2: 10-12)   The 'Teasing Nevine' narrative (App. B2:342-344)

Sandra, Nour, Nevine and I participate in an impromptu discussion on learning English and the uses of English in Saudi Arabia on the last PP2 teaching day. We have left the class party in order to have our own get-together in another classroom. This alternative space becomes a forum for an entertaining exchange of views and the group dynamic seems to influence the positions that we take up. In this narrative, Sandra launches into a mocking, hyperbolic critique of Nevine's spoken and written Arabic, her translation into Arabic and finally her knowledge of Classical Arabic. By using the third person throughout to refer to Nevine, as if she is not present, Sandra creates an ironic distance, perhaps taking away some of the sting of her taunting remarks. From my part, I open the window for Sandra's 'onslaught' in phrasing my initial question asking for opinions about Nevine's Arabic (1).

Sandra is brazen in her remarks: she assesses Nevine's spoken and written Arabic as worse than that of her foreign domestic worker:

(8)   S: My maid she speaks better and she write better. No Nevine no she's=
(9)   K: =She's what
(10) S: She's bad. She's bad.
(11) Ne: *yā waylī* (I'm done for)

Here Sandra creates hyperbolic humour based on our shared knowledge that domestic workers rarely write Arabic and even their spoken Arabic would be appropriate to the functioning of domestic work rather than to an academic social context. There is also irony of language use produced in the exchange: while Sandra uses her EL2 to remark on Nevine's Arabic, Nevine melodramatically bemoans her fate in Arabic. Sandra constructs the narrative as a comedic drama: her audacious statements make everyone laugh, particularly Nevine, but there is a sense of embarrassment and discomfort in our laughter. Although Nevine (3), Nour (7) and

I (5) all intervene in order to curb Sandra's provocation or at least curb its effects, she sustains its 'bite' until Nour's moderating assessment of Nevine's Arabic: "No, some words it's good…/But some words I think {maybe she's American}" (13). This remark, which tentatively identifies Nevine as American, can be seen as positive from both Nour's and Nevine's point of view: we can interpret it in this way based on previous participant talk. It has the effect of mitigating Sandra's outburst somewhat so that she now limits her critique to Nevine's knowledge of Classical Arabic. This part of the narrative is co-constructed by Sandra, Nevine and myself and seems to lose its slanderous edge:

(14) S: {In a normal way} In a normal way she can speak well (K: Yes) but in Arabic in=

(15) Ne: =like Arabic the formal language

(16) K: Classical Arabic

(17) Ne: Yes Classical

(18) S: Ou-u!

(19) Ne: [laughing] Horrible!

Sandra extends the joke using creative metaphors, suggesting they should "make a new language for Nevine" (20) and "make a book for this language" (20) which ironically positions Nevine as a total outsider to the Arabic world, of which she and Nour are part. It is as if in positioning Nevine as alien, Sandra is setting herself up as judge in her capacity as first language Arabic speaker. This seems highly ironic in the context of her earlier 'Arabic problem' narrative (S-Small Story 1), three weeks earlier, in which she performed a troubled Arabic identity.

When I seek to defend Nevine's 'weak' Arabic by establishing her alleged international school background, Sandra turns the tables on me as another 'weak' Arabic speaker: "OK miss but you also" (30). I attempt to deflect her positioning of me as a new target when she insists I tell a story in Arabic (31,33). Again the audacity of Sandra's initiative draws laughter from the others, but this time Nour shows her approval (35) and I finally agree to speak some Arabic after turning the recorder off (37). I have positioned myself as mediator and defender of Nevine to Sandra's performance of provocateur and joker.

Now I refuse to accept the 'victim' position as Nevine did and to provide 'public' amusement for the group. In one sense I see this as a challenge to my researcher/interviewer status. As EL1 interviewer I expect my participants to tell me stories of their life and study context in their EL2, which I record for the purposes of my research. However, Sandra is here usurping my role as researcher/interviewer and counter-constructing the interview situation, in the informal context of our impromptu group meeting.

Sandra's jibes at Nevine's Arabic can be seen as tapping into current language debates in Saudi Arabia concerned with Saudi young people losing their Arabic due to English medium education. There is also concern that many children are not exposed to Arabic as they are being brought up in English by foreign nannies. Considering Sandra's provocation in this light makes her comparison between her foreign domestic worker's Arabic and Nevine's Arabic seem particularly objectionable. Thus, in this narrative, Sandra can be seen to mark and target Nevine as one of the Arabic 'deserters' while solidly identifying herself as a first-language Arabic speaker.

SS3 - Reaching for the sky

In SS3, which takes place soon after the end of the PP academic year, Sandra gives a boost to her account of blossoming as an English learner in PP2. Again she uses 'enabling' phrases to express what she has accomplished:

> Now, in PP2 I found a good way to memorize the word. I found the easy way to, as I told you, to write the paragraph. Now I found how to choose this word for my subject or for my work, like that   (S-SS3:1)

Sandra performs her accomplishments in learning more English as a discoverer, as one who 'finds her way' rather than as a 'taught' learner, which is consistent with her highly individual stance in her self-presentations.

Also, this is the second time that she brings in the beneficial effects to herself of our interaction. In SS2 she mentioned the opportunities she has to speak English with me and now she draws attention to my role in terms of my encouragement and my assessment of her progress in speaking English. I become a character in Sandra's language learning story and a marker of her progress:

> K: OK so when you say you can write well you can speak well did someone tell you that or you believe it yourself?
> S: Er-erm the first person who told me now I'm doing well in my speaking is you and this way I feel like yes there is someone feel what I'm doing now. No, not feel, there is someone who found the difference or someone know how I was speak and how I speak now. (S-SS3:2)

She expresses her optimism about studying in English at the university which will not only give her advantages in language learning but will also have the effect of opening up the world and learning "about the people outside, like in American in Italian in Spanish in like that" (SS3:2-3). Her motivation to learn more English is not confined to her studies, however. Completing her PP year successfully seems to lead her to display an inner surge in self-confidence and motivation:

> S: Erm something is for me is give me like you know give me, how can I tell you. This let me, before I was <u>hate</u> English. Now after I saw myself now I can pass I can learn that is I feel now I want to learn <u>more</u>. I want, that is give me big chance to learn more do more make something more (S-SS3:16)

In this wave of optimism, it is individual will that is put forward as the most important factor in successful language learning. Whereas in SS1 Sandra had argued that the best way for anyone to learn English would be to stay in an English-speaking country, now one's learning environment is seen as immaterial:

> S: ... Because if someone want to learn English he will. He will learn it even in his town or outside. If you want to speak English well you will try many ways like in students' college, books, like in internet like when you first visit outside. (S-SS3:5)

GELL - Confidence on hold

In the GELL interview (see **4.5.4**), which took place in her private sitting room at the beginning of the summer holiday, Sandra presents herself as goal-driven: "If I have a goal I want to get it" (GELL:1). She expresses her opinion that nobody wants to learn a language unless he or she has a specific motive. However, later on in the interview, Sandra seems to expand on her motive for learning English. Now, learning languages is presented not just as an economic or cultural investment, but as a personal desire to possess the foreign language:

> S:　Maybe this language is not useful or not useful for me in my
> culture in my time. Also it not help me in work or anything. But for me
> I want even I don't need I want. I still want it.　　　(S-GELL:4)

In her explanation of her choice of 'a good listener' Sandra again constructs herself as quiet in class: "I just listen. I don't like the active. I just like listen" (GELL:3). This construction of herself, as a learner who doesn't like talking in class, distinguishes her from other students who are "always chatting on their Blackberry" (GELL: 3). She presents herself as not even wanting to answer the teacher when she asks her a question in class. When I suggest that others could be learning more English via their mobile phones, she agrees with me but insists that this is not her way of learning. Sandra expresses her confidence in her own, esoteric learning predilections: "I have special ways in my opinion about myself because I know myself. I can pass this thing and also I can do well *yaʿnī*. I know myself" (GELL:4). As in SS1, Sandra appears to place her individual predilections above beneficial learning practices.

In anticipation of her transition to university Sandra also emphasises the importance of consistent study of the language. She acknowledges her frequent grammar mistakes, which seem to concern her. I can hear the worry in her voice as she speaks about her intention to study English at an institute over the summer:

> S:　...But I will try this summer *inshāʾAllāh* I will go to an institute
> because I need to practice myself because I will find a big problem
> next year　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(S-GELL:3)

There is a sense of concern over the adequacy of her linguistic proficiency. Thus her self-presentation in the group interview, as well prepared and confident regarding her university studies, is problematized in the more informal setting of the GELL interview.

SS4 - My Muslim identity and future concerns

When I pick Sandra up from university about one week after the beginning of the semester we chat in the car about her summer job and about life and progress in Saudi Arabia. Sandra defends her Saudi Muslim identity: "we are Muslim city" and emphasises the importance of keeping and saving "our religion" as it "gives you an identity". She emphasises the significance of learning languages for a Muslim and the obligation to "share with" and "love" non-Muslims (pre-SS4: FN3). Much of SS4 is then taken up with Sandra's concerns about doing charitable works in her life with a view to being a good Muslim, as can be seen below in Small Story 3.

Small Story 3 (SS4: 2-3) <u>The 'Muslim narrative'</u>   (Appendix B3:344-346)

In the 'Muslim narrative' Sandra's subject position as a Muslim pervades all aspects of her self-presentation. She is dismissive of her studies and her formerly stated motives of becoming a translator are replaced by those of getting to heaven and obtaining a posthumous reputation for her charitable works. Learning English is presented as part of her purpose to be a good Muslim as is her dutiful orientation to her parents and her inability to live without her family. Our interaction changes footing: Sandra, in didactic mode, positions me as the 'other' who needs to be made aware of Sandra's Muslim identity. Sandra navigates her Muslim identity in interaction with me by resisting and reaching out to her 'outsider' audience. She superimposes her 'self-as-Muslim' agenda on my persistent inquiries about her academic and professional goals. At the same time as resisting my agenda, she is reaching out to me, the non-Muslim 'outsider', in her continued emphasis on the humanitarian aspects of being a Muslim, her voiced approval of the good works of a

---

Western non-Muslim celebrity, Angelina Jolie, and her criticism of many Muslims who she claims are indifferent to human suffering.

Her performance is also an exposition of her ideal future self as a Muslim philanthropist. She moves from my study and work concerns to her higher purpose of building homes for poor people so that they will remember her after her death (9-11); she even gives these poor people a voice:

14   "Sandra she was a good person
15   and then she make all this for us"

Sandra is single-minded in building her case for seeking rewards for her good deeds in the afterlife. She positions me as knowing little of her religious culture and treats me to a short lecture using Islamic terms in Arabic. In order to check that I am keeping up with her performance, she twice asks me if I've understood (16,44). I still insist on trying to bring back the old Sandra, the one who was considering doing a master's degree abroad (46-49). She accepts that she did tell me that once but now, in line with her Muslim self, she foregrounds the Islamic patriarchal rule of *maḥram*: that she does not have a male guardian to accompany her abroad:

51   but my father he is not allow for me
52   because I don't have a big brother
53   I'm the only one

Sandra also uses her mother's authoritative voice to define her as the kind of person who does not stray from her family (56-57). In order to convince me of the accuracy of her mother's description, she tells me the story of a time she was alone with her grandfather in the holy city of Medina and suffered greatly because she missed her mother and half-sisters (60-67). I sidestep Sandra's self-positioning as a conventional young Muslim woman when I persist in inquiring about her work prospects (69-71). She is vague about her future job: while she expresses her wish for a job which allows her to maintain her EL2, she is adamant about her lack of ambition relating to work (79-82). This makes her return to her philanthropic aim appear more emphatic:

> 83   I just want to make something for poor people
>
> Sandra relates an anecdote to justify this aim to help the poor rather than focus on her career: it concerns two small African children scavenging for something to eat in a rubbish heap (85-86, 88-91). She emphasises her distress at witnessing this pitiful scene (92-94), which she reports back to her mother (95).
>
> Finally Sandra brings the narrative back to her self-presentation as a responsible and compassionate Muslim but now her words have a critical edge: she claims that Saudi Muslims are generally indifferent to the suffering of the poor while the non-Muslim celebrity, Angelina Jolie, has done "many good things for the people inside Africa" (108). By linking herself to a non-Muslim woman in wanting to help the poor, Sandra claims an identity as an enlightened, outward-looking Muslim who embraces contact with the outside world. In the context of our interaction Sandra performs a role as definer of her Islamic boundaries ("my Islam"-101) but also as open and receptive towards me, the non-Muslim 'other'.

When I steer her back to a discussion regarding her first week at university, she does not express any linguistic anxieties, only a worry about her dealings with teachers. She appears receptive to learning in a different way; specifically in Academic Critical Skills (ACS), she expresses appreciation of a "useful" (SS4:4) task the teacher has set on presenting her opinion of a news item on the internet. She also expresses feelings of self-efficacy on writing a report about an enjoyable novel she has read. However, in general, Sandra seems intent on graduating as soon as possible and expresses muted enjoyment of her courses. She creates an ironic, and possibly provocative, distance between us when she impresses on me, as a mature PhD student, her need to complete her studies when still young:

> S: ... I want to study everything in short time and quickly because I want to arrive to my goal when I am still 31 32 like that. Do you understand me? (K: Yes) Yes because I don't want to be a big woman and I still study.   (S-SS4:2)

SS5 - Problems of the university fledgling

From the beginning of SS5 Sandra expresses some concern about studying new, general subjects in English:

> S: ...in Environment when the teacher say anything I feel like my
> brain stop thinking and I just want to relate it together because I need
> to understand what she say. But it's fine I can *al-ḥamdulillāh* I can
> pass the way.   (S-SS5:1)

Sandra is composed in her performance, although she is discussing her major problem in understanding her teachers. As the interview progresses she increasingly expresses how difficult she is finding her courses. She appears to change her orientation towards the PP: "I thought I learned in the PP many things" (SS5:6): now she says she sees it as only helping her to improve her English: "all my things I learn in the PP now I speak English well. This is all that I think" (SS5:6). Sandra presents the idea that she has improved on her language but has little knowledge as another personal revelation:

> S: I understand I don't know anything. I thought I know many
> things but now I know you know what like *yaʿnī* certainly I know
> about myself [laughs] that I don't know anything [K laughs]. I was
> just have a good language like that   (S-SS5:6)

When I ask if Sandra feels her English is good enough to do well in her university courses, in an attempt to get her to bring her language level to bear on her subject learning, she gives me a subdued and characteristically stoic response: "It's fine. It's not well *yaʿnī* but it's fine [small laugh]. It help me to understand things" (SS5:7). Sandra presents an unmotivated self as a freshman student at the end of SS5 which she explains is due to her just taking general courses "just work just work" and not studying her major, Translation.

SS6 - Moderate success in facing new challenges

In SS6, almost two months later, she claims that her motivation has returned: now her objectives are to be a good translator and to be a good English speaker. Sandra developed an apathetic side in SS5, now her mood seems lifted and her tone more enthusiastic about her university studies. In spite of this, her comments on her English ability seem to reflect a rather poor self-rating: "but in

English for me it (Psychology) is hard because I'm not good well in English because I get confused but I can *yaʻnī* try" (SS6:5). It is academic English which Sandra seems to be saying she finds difficult, indeed in her constructive criticism of PP2, she suggests they help students prepare more effectively for university by introducing more academic vocabulary, teaching students how to write notes in English quickly, getting them to read complete books and actually introducing them to the subjects and to the tasks they are required to do at university in English.

Sandra appears to take on teachers' voices when she suggests how she is responsible for making sure she keeps practising English outside the classroom at university: she must "read anything in English" (SS6:5), listen carefully and write down information she hears on TV medical programmes and speak English with her friends and members of her family at home, in other words "work up of myself with myself"(SS6:6). Sandra echoes these words in one of her contributions to Nour's SS6, speaking in her ACS's teacher's voice: "If your English is weak or you have some problem in language go work up with yourself." (No-SS6:5). Sandra assimilates this university orientation towards independent English learning into her narrative of greater maturity and strength 'to go it alone'.

Sandra continues to present herself as the quiet member of the classroom who prefers to learn by listening to the teacher rather than by talking. She adopts a stern, more urgent tone with herself, using "must" in her speech about the importance of getting over her shyness to speak English in class:

> K: ...do you feel that (shy)?
> S: Yeah, of course I feel that but I'm not in this college *yaʻnī* to feel *yaʻnī* (P) [voice breaks up] I'm now on my way to learn English and to be good speaking English. Because of that *yaʻnī* I must don't feel shy but I must say to myself *yaʻnī* "I will be like her (a good student)." (K: Ah yes in the future) yes for me this is better. Now I feel shy I say to myself "don't be shy *yaʻnī* you're studying it now *yaʻnī* don't be shy"   (S-SS6:6-7)

The repetition and hesitancy of her self-motivating voice seem to indicate the increased but unsure effort Sandra is expressing in her goal to improve her English. Her sense of individual responsibility as a language learner comes across quite strongly. She also shows a lack of confidence in her speaking when she tells me she sits in the front row so she can answer the teacher quietly. I challenge Sandra at this point when I tell her that I observed her interacting quite vociferously with the teacher in two of the PP2 class activities. She replies that she only talks if she is among friends in class as she then feels comfortable. Helping each other and learning from one another as peers now appears to be important to Sandra; she has moved on from presenting herself as counsellor and advisor to others. She needs peer help in ACS because although she considers herself a good writer, she still makes many mistakes in written English.

In her final presentation of her imagined future self, Sandra sees herself as professional translator but does not focus on her ELLU identity. While resisting but then resigning herself to family pressures to get married, she emphasises her priorities of owning her private home and of taking care of her new baby half-brother, to whom she appears devoted. While family is not presented as in conflict with her professional aspirations, Sandra deliberates over working from her office at home or in a company. She communicates her dilemmas to me as a Saudi woman accommodating to her environment "because you know the life here is not like outside" (SS6:8) and her musing over future travel abroad is expressed merely as an individual wish. Thus Sandra creates a clear demarcation line between Saudi and outside contexts.

6.3.3 Student identity
6.3.3.1 Acquiring a student self

Sandra speaks of her student self from more mature vantage points as she progresses through the interviews. In the pre-transitional interviews her student self begins to blossom in parallel to her language learner self as she narrates her PP experiences. Once at university, she talks about her adjustments to new subjects, new teachers, new classmates and academic English. However, in SS5, Sandra constructs a conflicted and contradictory student self: while showing

some engagement and enjoyment in her studies, she presents herself as an unmotivated freshman student. By SS6 she appears more content and better adjusted, but she does not lose sight of her personal, longer-term goals, in which being a student is only one stage of her life.

6.3.3.2 Developing maturity

At the PP and at university Sandra presents her past school student experience as a series of personal experiences, rather than as those of a member of a student body. The depictions of her formal language learning environments, and her relationship to them, change through the interviews as she develops a more mature student identity. For example, in SS1 Sandra tends to caricature school English teachers, whereas in SS5 her descriptions of school learning appear more reflective and critical. The PP also, in the early interviews, is presented as a site for successful and self-fulfilling language learning but in SS5 Sandra appears dismissive and even contemptuous of the PP as preparation for university study. By SS6, Sandra is presenting me with a list of suggested improvements for the PP from her vantage point as a more experienced university student.

In the pre-transition interviews, Sandra seems to take on her student role and responsibility at the PP easily in her stride. In PP2 she shows that she values her language studies: she embraces the new type of EFL learning activities and appreciates her teachers, especially her Speaking and Listening teacher. She constructs her student identity as distinct from other 'lazy' students who would rather cheat than study hard. In the GELL interview she commented that 'Study hard' is very important for learning English except if "you're cheating", which is very common. She, on the other hand, is a more dedicated student: "I need to study well, to understand, to know what it's about. Skip, skip, skip, it's not good." (GELL:2). Sandra also refers to herself as part of the group: she is only in PP2 but presents herself as already a university student: "we feel we are now big and and we're in university. The teacher when they when they talk with us not talk with us like when we was in high school" (SS1:8).

This greater sense of maturity and independence builds up over the post-transition interviews but her experience is presented as a personal one. Part of being at university is learning to 'go it alone': "Before I was afraid but now no *ya'nī* just go alone to my class and then I change I go to another class' (SS4:4). However in SS5 Sandra presents her student self rather differently: the burden of new responsibilities and the higher expectations of university study appear to aggravate the apathetic disposition she narrates. By SS6 Sandra appears to have settled somewhat into her role as university student. She shows her appreciation of the necessity of working independently: "I must work on myself *ya'nī* this at least" (SS6:3) and accepts group work as part and parcel of the university classroom: "I cannot say I want to work alone because this is not something I can choose" (SS5:6). However, she expresses her acquiescence ironically: "OK it's fine OK OK it's fine [speeding up] OK OK" (SS5:6).

While she claimed in SS5 that, as a freshman student, not studying her major was the reason for her lack of motivation, now she seems to patiently acknowledge the importance of the general courses, as if she is more trusting of the university system:

K: Are you still unhappy that you're not studying Translation?
S: No I can wait because I must take everything step by step *ya'nī* is now I study Translation maybe I will not get well because I don't have enough background about that *ya'nī* I must take this semester and we will take it next year   (S-SS6:3)

While Sandra's self-presentation as a functioning university student in her final interview indicate greater adjustments and increased motivation, in a later informal chat she describes herself as "deep depressed" (S-Field Notes: 11) and as dependent on extra work or examination resits which some sympathetic teachers arrange in order to maintain a pass mark. This more private, 'backstage' presentation creates another layer of identity, in addition to the more public presentation of the interview.

6.3.3.3 Defining her student role

In SS4, in which Sandra was mostly concerned with her Muslim identity and future life, she paid little heed to her studies. Interestingly, it is not academic study in English which worries her in her self-presentation at the beginning of the university semester: it is her pride in dealings with her teachers. She voices her concern that: "in college if the teacher didn't like you for any reason she will not let you pass the exam"(SS4:1). In SS5 Sandra continues to present herself, somewhat humorously, as the kind of student who always tries to be nice to teachers, again implying that her relationship with the teacher is an important factor rather than level of work in gaining a pass mark. However, she also displays her varying orientation to teachers in terms of institutional hierarchy and of the 'credibility' of the subject they teach.

Sandra revisits her school student identity in SS5. She constructs herself as an Arts student in high school so she finds new subjects like Math and Environment at the university quite difficult. Now that she is studying general academic subjects in English but not the language per se, she reviews her school education in a broader sense: she criticises all school learning as "repeating" (SS5:1) and mocks her school studies of Islam and Psychology as being too simple. She now appears to really value her university classes in Islamic Studies by performing a more enlightened Muslim self: "...with the doctor, sometimes I feel like when I'm taking this class that I didn't become Muslim before" (SS5:1). Sandra claims this makes her realise how bad the teaching was at school.

Sandra discusses her problems adjusting to the university in SS5 such as getting used to new types of test questions, studying from slides rather than books and having to make notes while the teacher speaks, as what she says might come up in the exams. However, her studies in ACS appear effective and engaging in her accounts: she describes class tasks in some detail, one in which they discussed problems students might have at university such as how to cope with pressures of work. They had to write down two solutions, then exchange their paper with another member of the group and finally discuss which solution was the best and

why. However, Sandra presents the task in a detached manner as if she were an observer rather than a participant.

Towards the end of SS5 Sandra performs a subject position as an unmotivated, lethargic student, a condition which she blames on her status as freshman:

> S: This year I just put my motivation inside my drawer *yaʿnī* (K: [laughs] why) because I'm freshman, this is not motivation *yaʿnī* [laughs] just work just work but my motivation will come out from my drawer when I start (my major) next year   (S-SS5:7)

She describes her behaviour as "very lazy" (SS5:10) which seems ironic when she has, up until now, separated herself from the lazy students.

6.3.3.3   Taking on new challenges

In SS6, at the start of the second semester of her freshman year, Sandra presents herself as more challenged by university study and more motivated to reach her goals of becoming a translator and buying her own house. She locates herself firmly in her social context as a young Saudi woman for whom "the most important thing is the study" (SS6:1) and in Small Story 4 she positions herself as one of the ambitious, young Saudi women.

Small Story 4: (SS6:1-2) The 'Men and Women in Saudi ' narrative (App.B4: 346-348)
Now Sandra's translator future self appears to regain momentum and she positions herself as one of the ambitious young Saudi women with definite professional goals. She presents strong arguments, using first-hand evidence, to inform and persuade me that firstly Saudi women are more ambitious than Saudi men and secondly that the country does not encourage excellence and creativity with the result that most ambitious Saudis choose to live and work abroad. Sandra raises her voice to resist those who urge her to prioritise marriage over her studies and she also takes up a role as an able, forceful arguer in her second language. Sandra positions herself, for the first time, as an extremely critical informant on her culture and society and as a self-sufficient language learner/user.

To my inquiry about whether more women or men are drawn to a career as translator, Sandra sets herself up as an authoritative commentator on gender differences in her society:

> 9 Look here in Saudi Arabia *yaʿnī*
> 10 the man he didn't focus just in one goal like women

In a fast-paced, repetitive series of short bursts followed by a two-line 'interview' with an imaginary Saudi man, Sandra emphasises men's willingness to take up any job (11-19):

> 15 Maybe he will get Accounting
> 16 he go to Marketing
> 17 he go to Business
> 18 "So what is your goal"
> 19 [quietly] "Anything".

This contrasts with the parallelisms expressing women's ambition for a specific profession (20-25):

> 21 "I want to be a pharmacist"
> 22 "I want to be a translator"
> 23 "I will be a doctor" *yaʿnī*

At first Sandra presents these goal-driven women as strong voices in the social reality of Saudi Arabia (24-25, 29-30). Then she positions herself as one of them. In response to those traditional voices which try to convince her that marriage is more important than her studies (34-35), she sets herself up as voice-in-opposition:

> 37 " No for me it's better if I study and then get my job
> 38 and then look to my life get married anything
> 39 But the most important is studying" (K:mmm)

In her reaffirmation of the men-women divide, Sandra uses the example of her male cousin who, she claims, doesn't care where he works (41-45) and compares this with women who "want work in a specific place" (47). It is in the contrast of the repeated words such as "just want" (11, 51) and **"anything"** (14,19,45) to denote male apathetic attitudes to work and words expressing specificity to distinguish women's aspirations, that Sandra creates an impact.

Sandra's focus begins to change from line 54: from male-female division she moves on to the lack of Saudi academics (**"doctors"**) at her university (54-56, 60-73). She emphatically backs up this point with first-hand observation (62-63). She claims that even the Saudi 'doctors' she has seen are only in the country temporarily and live and work elsewhere. Using the voices of Saudi academics, Sandra creates a sense of rejection of their home country, for example:

> 71   "I was in America. I was in London. I live there
> 72   I just come here *yaʿnī* for few days
> 73   and then I will come back there."

Now she broadens out her argument to include all ambitious Saudi men who have chosen to leave the country to live and work abroad (74-78) because nothing here helps them achieve their goals.

In a more political vein Sandra blames the lack of opportunities which discourage inventive Saudi men and women from staying in the country. She identifies herself as a Saudi who experiences the existing deficiencies: **"**Here we don't have a centre for invention, we don't have" (88) and compares this to the situation in America where "they have a centre for everything**"**(90). Her stance then becomes decidedly anti-government and in a moving metaphor she describes the negative effects of the government on Saudi people:

> 94   the government are upset the people here in Saudi Arabia
> 95 K: the government upset the people
> 96 S: upset it's mean *yaʿnī* broke their dreams.

At this point I switch the topic of conversation back to Sandra's personal motivation as her discourse verges on the country's politics, an area which I am keen to avoid.

In this narrative Sandra positions herself as vocal, critical commentator on elements in her society and positions me as the foreign information-seeker whom she takes into her confidence. I speak little and tend to position her as a reliable informant rather than an EL2 speaker. Furthermore, when I do suggest an English word (87)

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and correct her verb form (93) Sandra appears to ignore my suggestions, thus claiming an identity as a confident proficient EL2 user. Sandra's political outburst at the beginning of SS6 comes as a surprise since most of her narratives focus more narrowly on herself and her small world of family and university. Her creative use of multiple voices, repetition etc. helps to create a powerful impact as she navigates an identity for herself in her sociocultural context as an ambitious young Saudi woman who rejects master gender discourses by prioritizing her education, career and personal development over marriage.

Sandra then looks back at the first university semester as one in which she accomplished very little and claims she was even thinking about giving up university completely.

> S: ...really I don't know the reason why this semester I feel it's more exciting but the last semester *yaʿnī* the first thing it was too long it was so boring also *yaʿnī* my college sometimes I feel that *khalāṣ yaʿnī* (that's it) I don't like to study anymore. I don't know why *yaʿnī*
>
> (S-SS6:2)

Now she presents herself as more focused and motivated even though she is still not studying her major. She constructs her teachers as facilitative, for example the ACS and the Marketing teachers repeat what they say and give students time to write notes. In Statistics she finds that she can focus on what the teacher is saying and make notes but in Islamic Studies she needs to record the lecture as she finds it difficult to listen, understand and make notes. However, as Small Story 5 shows, recording her Islamic class is not an acceptable cultural practice.

Small Story 5: (SS6:4) The 'Islamic Class' Narrative (Appendix B5:348-350)

In this narrative Sandra relates (12-17, 29-32) and evaluates (18-28) a past strategy she used to help herself with understanding the Islamic teacher: she recorded him speaking in the first class and then listened to the recording at home until she understood what he had said. Although the strategy seems to have paid off, Sandra introduces a major obstruction to repeating it: the Saudi "ladies" (19, 23) would not want their voices recorded. Sandra respects their point of view and identifies with their unwillingness to be 'heard' as Saudi, Muslim women.

While her orientation towards university study might seem somewhat contradictory and inconsistent in Sandra's big narrative, in the detailed analysis of the Islamic class narrative, we can see a strategic narrator at work navigating positions between engaged, confused, critical and appreciative student, ethical Saudi young woman particularly concerned with Islamic issues and informant on Islamic education and proper Islamic behaviour for me, her non-Muslim, 'outsider' audience. Although Sandra singles out her Islamic Studies class as the only subject in which she is having problems, she positions her teacher, Dr M, as an interesting teacher: she shows that she values both the content of his lessons (55-60) and his style of teaching (63-65). It is the long, complicated words he uses (5) and his quiet voice (34, 36, 67) which she blames for her difficulty. Sandra twice contests my suggestions that the onus of her problem falls on the teacher (3-4, 33-34) and at the end she describes him in affectionate terms: "He's very lovely and he's very nice" (72).

Sandra positions her classmates rather differently from other narratives: they are not lazy but worthy of her respect:

    18   But I can't every class record
    19   because they are ladies
    20   they speak like that it's not good *yaʿnī*
    21   it's not fine even if I delete this voice
    22   (K: I see) *yaʿnī* it's not nice.

Instead of distinguishing herself from other students as she frequently does, now she positions herself as one of them:

24 S: For me if I see someone record
25   I will not speak (K: really?)

This statement, as an indirect comment on my data collection methods, seems highly ironic and as Sandra continues in an Islamic moralistic vein (26-28), I feel culturally distanced, while appreciating her ethical and respectful orientation towards her classmates. Her long, critical evaluation (18-28) of recording female students in class can also be seen as a communication to inform me on gender conventions in Saudi society: that the private, predominantly female space of the classroom should not be brought into the public arena through recording.

In response to my recycled question about the differences concerning the teaching of Islam at school and at university with Dr M (37-40), Sandra draws a number of clear distinctions. She constructs school Islamic classes as basic (41-43) and insufficient (51-52) using "just" four times to emphasise their inadequacy e.g. "In school just they teach me the important things" (41). Voices of instruction at school give prescriptive orders:

46   You must cover your hair
47   you must do that
48   this is *ḥarām*
49   this is *ḥalāl*

On the other hand, with Dr M, Sandra constructs their lessons as more valuable and less prescriptive. Now they study in more detail (51-52). In her performance of her recent Islamic class, her teacher interestingly sets up a situation and asks questions about it using "can" rather than prescribing correct Islamic behaviour with "must" as her school teachers did:

56   what if when I was outside and then
57   if I see a bottle of wine in front of me
58   what I can do, can I touch it?
59   Can I stay on the table, the one it have?

Sandra presents these as practical, relevant questions and also implies that there was discussion in the classroom: "Like that we was say" (60). She expresses her approval of Dr M's 'ask-discuss-explain' teaching procedure (63-65).

She also claims that Dr M allows students to openly disagree with him in class (68-72). This 'face' of an Islamic teacher is certainly distant from the school stereotype: Dr M is described as approachable and even his "low" voice makes him seem gentle and uncontrolling. Sandra's positioning of the male teacher in an all-female class is interesting as this is the first time that most of the students would have been taught face-to-face with a male teacher. In state universities male teachers still teach their female classes over closed circuit television. Male-female religious discussion, outside the family, would be rare in this segregated culture and Sandra positions herself as a young Saudi woman who would not feel comfortable being recorded in this situation. At the same time Sandra positions herself as part of a gradual opening-up process in women's university education in her taking on board practical, relevant content areas and discursive classroom practices in religious teaching.

6.3.4 Counsellor/Psychological self
6.3.4.1 Potential Psychology student
Sandra first alerts me to her passion for psychology in the informal interview in which she presents her interest as purposeful: she claims she first started reading about psychology in order to help herself cope with her own dysfunctional family problems and she describes her motive for wanting to pursue advanced studies in Psychology as to help others cope with similar problems. Although she first voices her intention to study Psychology at university once her English has improved, by SS2 she is already complaining about the long, difficult words in her PP Psychology studies and at the end of the PP year she claims that her English is still not good enough to pursue undergraduate studies in Psychology.

The post-transition interviews tell a story of Sandra's gradual demotivation regarding the academic study of Psychology due in part to the linguistic demands of studying the subject in English. Interestingly, Sandra claims in SS5 that others who know her think that she is a student of Psychology:

> Also my uncles and most of my friends think I'm studying that (Psychology) but I'm not studying that *ya'nī* but that's what I feel for you (K: it's an understanding) yeah because I understanded you but because of that (K: yeah) I'm interested but not deep inside. (S-SS5:3)

Also in our final interview, Sandra claims that she is less interested in the subject and has stopped reading psychology books at home. However, she expresses her eagerness to register for a general studies course in Psychology even though it is not a requirement for her major, as they are studying children's psychology and she has a personal interest in this: "... because I have little brother and I need to know what you have to do" (SS6:3).

6.3.4.2 Counsellor

Sandra frequently takes up a position of counsellor of others and appears to find some personal fulfilment in this role: for example in SS2 she presents herself as an internet researcher on psychology in English so that she may help her teenage stepbrother with his 'obsession' with girls. Thus becoming a better English reader and researcher can be seen to link to Sandra's desire to help others with their problems:

> K: ...So what do you look up on the internet
> S: I'm just looking for information about psychology because I have my stepbrother he stay in his home he have some problems. I just want to know how what I can do with someone who have these problems. I'm just looking and searching in English. I'm not sure if I understand everything but I can understand something.   (S-SS2:1)

Similarly in SS5 Sandra presents herself as a counsellor to a male friend. However, now her desire to help seems to be linked to human interest rather than any deeper interest in psychology. As a character in her dialogue she performs herself as having special insight and understanding of people:

> There is my friend when he speak to me you know no one can know if he is sad or no. When he talk to me I love that. I tell him

> "Why are you sad" He tell me "Nothing." I tell him "No you have a problem."   (S-SS5: 3)

Her role as carer of her young stepsiblings also transfers to her learning context as she supports and advises friends and peers on study matters and personal problems. For example, she performs a quasi-teacher role in her account of helping a PP1 student in her home: "I try to to give her more vocabulary and I tell her summarize this and memorize this, do like that, always like that" (SS1:11) and in SS3 she acts as advisor to a friend who asks for her opinion of Sharifa and Sandra recommends that she apply to the university. This helper/counsellor role which Sandra takes on can be seen as linked to the performance of her Muslim identity as helper of the poor and to her role as supporter in Nour's final interview in which Sandra positions herself as interpreter, supplier of English vocabulary and as corrector for Nour.

6.3.4.3   Psychological self

Most of all Sandra presents herself as an interesting 'psychological' case throughout the interviews. Although she never reaches a deep level of self-analysis, she tends to view her 'self' as having fixed predilections and characteristics which she traces back to her parents and her early troubled childhood. Sandra presents a different aspect or problem of self in interviews such as her problematic first language position in SS2 and her apathetic disposition and behaviour in SS5. However, her self-descriptions and self-presentations can be conflicting and contradictory.

Sandra tends to use a psychological lens to describe herself. She emphasises the source of any particular psychological issue by going back to her childhood or attributing what she presents as her flaws to her past troubled family life. Links are even made with her English learning, for example in her informal interview she attributes her failure to learn new words in English to her nervous disposition. As narrator, Sandra is often an observer of self: however, in spite of her continual assurances of understanding herself ("I know myself") she tends to present her psychological characteristics as unfathomable.

She draws links between her disruptive family background and English learning: in a critical childhood episode she depicts her uncle as a significant adult using English for therapeutic purposes. In her narrative she tells him of the problems she was having with her stepmother while still living with her father and he gives her useful and comforting advice. Sandra presents these conversations with her uncle as a kind of breakthrough in her language learning:

> S: He is speak Arabic but always he speak English and at sometime
> I was feel something difficult because I can't get what does he mean
> and then after I practice like that now I can understand him.
> (SS1:4)

Sandra presents herself as having a fearful disposition towards new, unfamiliar situations which often conflict with her expressions of wellbeing. For example, in the informal interview, she tells me that she remembers feeling anxious and "afraid" (Inf.Int.:2) for much of the time at school and she attributes this to her troubled home life. In SS1 she also reports feeling "scared from the study" (SS1:7) before she started the PP, as she was worried about learning through English. Then with some relief in her voice she presents herself as a satisfied PP student. Similarly in SS3, while basking in the self-confidence and well-being which she connects to her English learning, she also voices her fears about finding out her final PP results: "Until now I didn't open my Blackboard because I'm afraid but I feel that I do well this time but I'm still afraid to see my grade (SS3:1).

Sandra frequently presents her individual situation to me in relation to her personality, disposition and behaviour as curious, unusual, interesting and even amusing. At the end of SS5 for example, Sandra develops a narrative of self as an unmotivated and apathetic freshman student: this is Small Story 6.

Small Story 6 (S-SS5: 9-10) The 'Apathetic Disposition' narrative (Appendix B6: 350-352)

In this narrative Sandra casts herself as a tragi-comic figure passing through an anti-social and demotivated phase due to her inability to cope and to her fear of failure at university. Apart from her rather desperate self-motivating statements of intention to work harder (9-12) Sandra does not come up with any strategies to help herself and seems to be on the brink of giving up her studies. She presents this situation to me as a change in orientation precipitating a generally apathetic disposition. Typically, Sandra performs herself as a curious, psychological case and illustrates her apathetic disposition in three different rather farcical situations set at university and in hospital.

At the beginning of the narrative Sandra sems to have hit rock-bottom in her account of her progress as a university student. She gives a desperate performance of impending failure (4-7) and her appeals to Allah to help motivate her are voiced in a monotone and in a series of parallelisms (9-12), in which working harder seems to be her only coping strategy. Sandra then moves on to her isolation narrative (17-27). In her university context she explains that now she prefers to stay alone during her breaks and will not even make the effort to go to the cafeteria when she is hungry. Although the content of her talk seems negative, Sandra's performance is not:

        28   Also if I'm hungry
        29   I'll cut my leg before going to dining
        30   [K laughs] and then come back
        31   I will never do it

Sandra uses exaggeration and hyperbole to make her account of self amusing. In a dialogue with a classmate this builds to Sandra's amused expressions of a farcical level of laziness (37-40). At this stage she explains her behaviour as an issue of personal maturity in terms of university expectations:

        43   not because of this university itself, no
        44   because of me
        45   because I'm now in the university
        46   because now I'm big
        47   I must take more responsibility like that (K: mmm)

Then her explanations take a more personal turn in that she describes her surfeit of patience as a fixed personality characteristic but in her example and rhetorical question concerning not visiting the doctor over her painful arm, she seems to be presenting herself as long-suffering rather than patient. In her self-declaration "Like that I am" and in tracing her trait back to childhood, she constructs a unitary, stable self:

```
65  K:   So is this just now
66       or from September?
67  S:   No no no. I am like that
68       since I was small ya'nī
69       Since the time I come to this life I am like that
```

Sandra claims that university has aggravated her condition and gives me three more short dialogues (72-75, 76-79, 83-86) to illustrate her 'lazy' disposition. Her speech rate quickens as she dismisses her friend and her auntie who insists on her asking for Panadol and on getting water for her when she has a headache. Sandra acts her own role with affectation and indifference to contrast with her aunt's voice of concern. I participate little in Sandra's monologic 'display' of her apathetic disposition except to suggest reasons and words to describe her condition: however on four occasions Sandra rejects these (25, 43, 67, 81), thus positioning herself as a self-sufficient EL2 speaker who can give an accurate self-description supported by anecdotal dialogues in order to aid my understanding. I insist on viewing her apathy as a result of her freshman position and Sandra finally agrees that she will come out of her lethargic state the following year when she studies her major subject. Thus Sandra frames the transitional process not as a coming to terms with linguistic, academic and social pressures but as an individual challenge to her personality, disposition and maturity.

Sandra is consistent in her self-presentation as an individual with personality traits: she is a listener and not a talker and claims she has been like this "since I was small" (SS1:9). In the university classroom Sandra claims she never talks but just listens and even in our interviews: "you just tell me anything I just stay and listen that's me ya'nī" (SS4:4). Similarly, in our final interview Sandra still labels herself in this way: "I'm very very quiet" (SS6:6). These self-descriptions conflict

with my observations of her participation in two PP activities and in her interaction with me: in our interviews and informal conversations it is Sandra who does most of the talking.

6.3.5 A quiet loner

Sandra presents herself in her informal interview as an only child in the sense of having no full brothers or sisters. Although she claims she is not close to either parent, she demonstrates a rather intense, erratic relationship with her mother. Her relationship with her father remains distant while her intermittent role models appear to be her grandfather and uncles. This sense of being alone in the world of her family pervades the pre-transition interviews and can be seen to spill over into her presentation of herself as a loner in her language learning and her studying.

Sandra expresses her preference for mixing only with her old PP friends in SS5. However she claims that she never sees any of them outside campus as she never wants to go out once she is at home. She defines herself firmly as 'not the kind of girl' who likes going out to parties and having fun:

> S: ... I'm not these kind of girls who always get out always have a
> party just if you need me I'm here *yaʿnī* I'm not this kind of girl *yaʿnī*
> I'm very very quiet (K: yeah). I just sit with my cousin.   (S-SS6:6)

She also resists her mother's complaints that Sandra does not answer her calls to her mobile phone by giving a similar reason, maintaining her aloof image: "I'm not the one who's chatting all the time. I don't like it" (SS6:8).

Sandra tells me how she manipulated her stay-at-home image in order to persuade her grandfather not to send her to the local state university which she disliked:

> S...my grandfather when he tell me "you will go to King Khaled
> (university)" I was say "I don't want to complete my study. For me
> no problem I stay at home."   (S-SS3:12)

Then Sandra presents me with her 'truer' self, one who loves to study and is passionate about learning. She tells me that she gradually convinced her

grandfather to allow her to attend Sharifa by talking to him about the scholarship and the benefits of studying there. This narrative draws my attention further to the presentational aspects of Sandra's self-descriptions: while labelling herself as a 'stay-at-home' type and a non-socialiser, her behaviour and speech often belie these labels. My field notes continually reflect Sandra's outgoing personality and her talkativeness, particularly within our relationship and in her private life.

Sandra develops a metaphor in the final interview, which could be seen as representing her loner self: her future "special home" (SS6:8). In the GELL interview she had justified her first choice of language learner qualities, motivation, by describing to me a motive which was driving her to study hard and to get a well-paying job: her goal was to buy her grandmother's old house where she had spent a happy period of her childhood. Now with her renewed sense of motivation and in her account of her future self in 5 years' time, Sandra returns to her yearning for this house, presenting it as her own private refuge and perhaps a symbol of personal freedom:

> S: This house is my dream. For me *yaʿnī* I'm a person see the house is my world for me *yaʿnī* I love it *yaʿnī.* Always I feel if I have my private house my private thing I feel that is my world *yaʿnī* I put everything I want inside.   (S-SS6:2)

This place will be for her private use alone: she makes it clear that her mother or future husband will not have a choice over what to put in her private house. On further consideration, however, she revises her imagined self: "…because *yaʿnī* my family they wouldn't let me after 5 years just stay alone. Even now they want me to get married" (SS6:8). Sandra positions herself in opposition to her family over getting married while she is still at university, but she seems to accept that she would be living with her husband in the future when she would be working as a translator. However she appropriates her future space: she will be working in "my office in my house" (SS6:8) and "if he (her future husband) need anything I will be in my office" (SS6:8).

6.3.6. Summary of Sandra's big narrative and small stories

Sandra constructs an identity as an individual rather than a collective language learner and student. Learning is presented as a series of personal revelations and a case of individual will and self-knowledge. Furthermore, Sandra rarely presents herself engaging with teachers and peers; she tends to take up a detached, stoic and passive position in her self-presentation. Even after transition Sandra explains changes as a personal maturation process she is navigating and only occasionally dramatizes linguistic and academic difficulties. New university experiences are constructed as challenging but enriching. However, a more nuanced identity layer surfaces in the small stories and another, more 'private' layer in our informal 'backstage' interactions which indicate Sandra's struggles at university.

In some small stories Sandra expounds on her psychological 'states' which she claims go back to her childhood but in others positions herself in her sociocultural context. Her subject positions as middle-class second language speaker, as 'enlightened' Muslim, as young Saudi woman with academic and professional goals, as member of her extended family and as anti-government protestor, emerge at different times and often lead to a change in 'footing' in our interaction and position me as outsider. They also create an unstable imagined identity which seems to move between a desire to belong to a primary community of family, religion and culture and a craving for private space, for learning and for personal fulfilment.

In spite of Sandra's consistent presentation as a quiet listener and loner, in action and in interaction, her second language voice emerges as strong and provocative at times. By the same token, Sandra's insistence on playing the stay-at-home, quiet recluse is belied by her sociable behaviour in interviews and conversations. Conflicting narratives expressing a fear of being alone and those reflecting a desire to stay alone are brought up in the same conversation; even at university Sandra seems to alternate between expressions of surprise and joy at finding old friends in her classes with whom she enjoys working and those of rejection and apathy towards any social contact. In spite of Sandra's Saudi, Muslim and Arabic

identity performance, there is little indication that she engages with her university peers or that she uses strategies to join and work with new learning groups.

CHAPTER 7   NOUR

> Nour: ...after that maybe (I) feel good standard my family my daughter
> myself after that maybe I continue (studying) because I like it the, my
> <u>dream</u>: Nour she's study English (K: OK) yes my dream. I want go up
> and up and up in English (K: but why) I don't know. I think (because)
> I see my uncle speak a little bit English because he is go in the outside
> country go America go London go other country *māshāʾAllāh* I see [in
> polite tone] "Good morning." I like it. I want but I want meaning. I
> want to help mother father and family and outside people. I feel [with
> emphasis] that the people or family or other people (should)
> understand what is the English what he say the man or woman or
> doctors or engineers or anybody (K: help Saudi people understand)
> yes yes.   (No-SS6:16)

7.1 Our relationship

My first impression of Nour when I first saw her in the PP classroom was of a
lively, bright, very sociable young Saudi woman with striking good looks, a slim
figure and a sophisticated dress style. Nour was the last of my four participants
to meet me for the informal interview; her reticence over participating in my
research was explained to me by her advisor, Ms L: she didn't think her English
was good enough. Although very friendly and chatty with me when we met by
chance on campus, Nour seemed to want to avoid a one-on-one interview alone
with me; indeed, only two of the recorded interviews were individual ones and
these were shorter than the rest. This could have been because she was unsure
about her level of English, in spite of reassurances that she could switch to Arabic
whenever she felt the need.

Nour arrived late for her informal interview in a PP classroom, with Nevine in
tow apparently for moral support. Nour complained of feeling tired and ill and
apologised for not completing the biodata form. However, she obviously enjoyed
speaking English in the interview and managed to communicate a great deal of
information about her life and her English learning. Although she was the
weakest English speaker of the four, and often used Arabic in the early
interviews, she was a most colourful and effective communicator of ideas and
emotions through her charming, often pithy, storytelling. Through the course of

interviews and conversations we came to share an understanding, a respect and a growing fondness for each other.

7.2. Background

Nour said she was 21 years old at the beginning of the research period, a little older than the other three participants. (see Appendix F3). Her divorced parents are both Saudi and she lives with her mother and her 5-yr old daughter. Nobody in her immediate family speaks English, but she does have a cousin who is an English teacher. She has been through the Saudi state school system. Nour presents her life as tough in the sense of getting married, having a daughter and working while still at intermediate school so she comes across in this first conversation as a heroic survivor: she shows her determination to work hard and remain independent in order to make a good life for her and her daughter. Furthermore, her long struggle through her own divorce, the hardship of being a single mother and the financial burdens of supporting her family and of paying half her university fees herself, set her apart from the other three participants and from the picture of Saudi women in gender discourses prevalent in Saudi society.

Nour expresses her emotional attachment to English which is presented as important for her own future particularly as her professional goal is to work as an interpreter. Her resourcefulness in her quest for learning is impressive, such as procuring a place for herself on British Council courses run by the hospital where she was employed and obtaining a scholarship at Sharifa. Nour builds a picture of herself primarily as a dedicated student: it is financial necessity which has led her to seek work in wedding halls as a singer at weekends. Starting her university life at Sharifa is seen as a great achievement and a privilege: "Finally I step into my dream" (Inf Int-FN1). Nour's metaphoric turn of phrase suggests not only that she is revealing to me her aspirations to study at university but also her unique style of drawing me in to her personal story. I am duly captivated by Nour's self-presentation and interested in finding out more about her.

7.3. Nour's big narrative and small stories

7.3.1 Overview

As I was not able to set up the complete programme of recorded interviews with Nour (see Appendix G3) I have had to be flexible with my choice of 'formal' interactions from which to draw her big narrative. Since our second individual interview did not take place until after the end of the PP year, I decided to count the spontaneous, but audio-recorded, group interview as Nour's SS2. Likewise, the interview at the end of the first university semester, which was the extended account of the transition to university, became SS5 and an earlier informal encounter on campus took the place of SS4.

In terms of Nour's progression as a language learner and student there is little sense of moving forward in spite of her continual self-presentation as a motivated and aspiring learner. For example, Nour's desperate need for teacher and peer support is just as keenly expressed in SS6 as it was in SS1. Consequently, the interviews indicate limited development and most reflect the difficulties she communicates at each stage:

10 April 2012   **SS1   Taking new challenges on board with help**

25 April   **SS2/Group   Urgent need for speedy improvement**

24 June   **SS3   Moving closer to my dream**

             Transition to university

10 Sept   **SS4   Too much on my plate now**

15 Dec   **SS5   Getting very hard but motivation unwaned**

  3 Feb 2013   **SS6   Still struggling to cope with the new**

Nour presents and performs her 'self' as a young woman with multiple identities. I have found that she takes up three main identity positions in addition to **English language learner/ user (ELLU)** and **student** within these constructions. These are**: social commentator, mediator** and **mother.** Although I will examine each of these identity positions separately, their interrelatedness should become evident in my narrative analysis.

7.3.2 English language Learner/user (ELLU) identity

SS1 - Taking new challenges on board with help

Nour claims that her emotional attachment to English set her apart from her peers at school who hated it because they saw it as unimportant and difficult. Nour does not appear to value her English language learning at school highly and pokes fun at state school teaching and learning. She uses hyperbole and dramatic irony to portray the teachers in SS1 narratives and with an artful use of voicing captures the conflicting positions of teacher and student: in an early narrative, for example, she illustrates the uncaring behaviour of school English teachers in a conversation between a student and a teacher:

> No: I don't understand the meaning. "What's the meaning Miss" "Oh
> you go the home for book dictionary or tell somebody what is the
> meaning or search not mine *ya'nī mushkelatik intī mū mushkelatī* (I
> mean it's your problem not mine)".   (No-SS1:2)

However, in a later narrative, there is a drastic change in the teacher's approach because she wants the students to graduate from high school and go on to university:

> No: ...She (The teacher) need everyone successful. OK [mimics
> whiny voice of student] "homework, no because I'm scared, sick"
> "OK I help you." [In whiny voice]"Oh it's wrong I not understand."
> "OK OK. I put the 5 marks. OK go."   (No-SS1:4)

Nour also relates the exceptional case of a high school teacher who tried to impress on her students the importance of learning English. Her voice blends with Nour's which shows her influence perhaps on Nour's investment in her EL2:

> No: She want student like the English. "Why you don't like English
> because hard? OK I help you but you love the English because she
> need outside restaurant hotel and hospital or accident or cities
> yeah another cities. Maybe sometime she need the English".
> (No-SS1:2)

While English learning at intermediate school is presented as limited to letters and some words, high school English introduced a few grammar and spelling rules. This did not prepare Nour for the shock of the huge jump to PP English. Sharifa is presented as a rich learning environment, one in which: *"ghaṣbān*

'annik tit'allam English (whether you like it or not you'll learn English)" (SS1:5).

Nour refers to the difficulty of the transition from high school more than once:

"...when go in university, oh my God, confused because very hard" (No-SS3:9) but

her self-motivation is presented as undiminished:

> No: I'm coming here I'm listening everybody talk English. I need
> like that but Nour, I'm trying because the successful not "I'm afraid I
> cannot no". He need study he need give it the education *inshā'Allāh*
> *kūays* (hopefully good).   (No-SS1:4)

Although PP1 was very difficult at first, she now feels better in PP2 and
anticipates studying "professional English" (SS1:5) the following year at
university. She expresses her satisfaction with the teaching and learning at the
PP. Teachers are helpful and encourage her to speak English all the time. For the
first time there are class activities in English and she has an opportunity to
develop her Listening skills. As a language learner she presents herself as "active
with the teacher" (SS1:5) in the classroom so that the teacher gives her a good
mark (she says in a cheeky aside) and so that she stays awake.

Nour constructs herself from the beginning as a language learner in need of help
and support from her peers, her teachers, her advisor and any significant other
who she positions as knowing more English than her. Her only regret in SS1 is
that in PP2 she does not receive regular teacher counselling as she did in PP1:

> No: PP1 there is teacher help me in English, grammar listening
> speaking writing everything in English in their class one hour only
> give help teacher students for the English. (K: Yes) But in PP2
> don't have.   (No-SS1:6)

While a dependent learner she is also resourceful and gives an account of her use
of English out of class. She positions herself as seeking out resources, such as
using the internet to listen to the news in English and even writing English
poems online. She constructs herself as desiring contact with native English
speakers and as already a user of English: in the informal interview she makes it
clear that she has native speaker contacts and that she enjoys interacting with
them, especially Americans. At the end of SS1, Nour explains the origins of that
affection: what she calls the "earth dream" of her grandmother, which is the

longing her grandmother repeatedly expressed to visit America. The earth dream becomes a core metaphor in the development of Nour's identities as ELLU and mediator and is the focus of Small Story 1.

Small Story 1(SS1:6-7) The 'Earth dream' narrative (Appendix C1:353-354)

Nour tells me this story in response to my question about her reason for liking "the American" (11). In her story she goes back to her childhood when she lived with her grandmother who she presents as the one who continually talked about her desire "to see America"(32). This earth dream is now hers and she has also passed it down to her daughter (45). Although Nour focuses on her grandmother for much of the narrative, at the end, in order to demonstrate her love of America, she performs a dialogue in English, in which she spontaneously tries to engage some foreign-looking people in conversation, thinking they might be Americans. This dialogue can also be seen as an example of Nour reaching out to embrace the foreigner within her own society.

This narrative is important because it makes connections between feelings towards a country, its people and its language and in its performance it also links Nour's desire to communicate in English back to an authentic, family source. She tells me that she and her siblings were brought up by their grandmother and thus influenced by her curiosity and wish to see the outside world in America. Now, Nour and her daughter, who is the same age as she was then (37), share the same dream (45). Thus the narrative creates a woman's world in a patriarchal, segregated society in which female children receive nurturing and influence from older female relatives.

The narrative is co-constructed by us, using both Arabic and English. Once Nour begins telling me about her 'dream' (13) she launches into Arabic to explain the influence of adults always talking about America as the earth dream, from the time she was a child (15-16). Actually, she code switches within the same chunk of speech and she does this at least five times in the narrative (14-15,22-23,27-28,37-38,45-46).

When Nour switches to Arabic I also use Arabic to respond to her on two occasions (18, 48). Nour alerts me to the central influence of her grandmother in Arabic; I seek confirmation of this in English (21) and Nour confirms her as the pivotal character of the story: "My grandmother" (22). She emphatically positions her late grandmother in English and Arabic as an important source of her aspirations to 'know the other'.

In her story world, as a 5 or 6-year-old character, Nour echoes my question asking her grandmother for the reason why she wanted to see America. All she gets is a repetition of her statement, this time in Arabic (40). When I move the focus to her daughter, Nour indicates that seeing America remains at the dream level: she doesn't talk to her daughter about it, as she might not actually go there (43-44) but "She is inside the dream like me" (45). In this way the matrilineal link suggests that the wish to learn and experience foreign countries (and cultures) will most likely remain as a dream and never be realised.

Nour's gender identity also surfaces in her positioning of Saudi females. There is a sense of female solidarity in the passing down of dreams and aspirations along the matrilineal line. However, in the limited opportunities for contact with foreigners and the unreachability of women's 'ideal selves', Nour delineates the position of women in Saudi Arabia as virtually unchanged from the time her grandmother was alive. Nour presents little hope even in the prospect of her daughter fulfilling her dream.

In the setting for her anecdote narrating a specific encounter with foreigners in English, Nour seems to reduce the space realistically available to her at the present time. The contact with the 'other' is seen to happen in her local context. Nour introduces her anecdote with a generalisation in Arabic in the form of a statement of belief:

    46 (because if a person likes the country
    47 he likes its people)

Her amusing anecdote illustrates the way love for America stirs up in her a warm response at the sight of American-looking people in her local environment (49-52). Nour, as the character performing her love of America, utters her greeting and her compliment in English to the passing strangers in an ultra-polite, friendly manner (51,52). The twist at the end, when the foreigners identify themselves as French or German and Nour clears off, turns the joke on herself. Thus, in her telling, she is positioning herself as a well-meaning but naïve EL2 speaker striking up conversations with foreign-looking strangers. At the same time, Nour creates a situation which ironically resembles our 'Saudi meets foreigner' interaction. Her anecdote can also be seen as a successful attempt at telling a joke in her second language.

To sum up, this narrative can be seen in metaphoric terms as Nour's reaching from her Arabic identity to know and embrace the 'other' both outside (in the dream) and inside her country. In her performance of greeting and complementing the foreigner (51,52) she herself becomes an agent of that desire for openness to the outside. The wish to encounter the other, which she performs as instilled in her by her grandmother, is also an opening out to me in our first recorded interview. Nour's friendly, personal narrative both charms and amuses me and creates a positive basis for our future interactions. It does not present the process or experience of her English learning on which most of my interview questions focus, but in our co-construction and negotiation of content, language and meaning, we, in some way, actually perform the communication that Nour states as important at the beginning of the narrative (2,3).

SS2/Group - Urgent need for speedy improvement

Nour expresses fearful anticipation of studying in English at university the following year during the group interview, in contrast with Sandra and Nevine who claim they feel ready for the transition. Nour defends a classmate who Sandra categorises as weak in English by explaining that it was her shyness to speak which held her back and not her lack of ability: "Yeah. She's the shy. First time I can try, again she cannot try, stop" (SS2/Group-1:1). In order to urgently

raise her standard of English, Nour voices her intention to study at the British Council over the summer holidays. Since this interview is taken up with a general discussion of learning and uses of English in the wider context, there is little on Nour's individual progress.

SS3 - Moving closer to my dream

At the beginning of SS3 Nour seems elated at having completed the PP year and excited over her prospective university studies in Translation. She now constructs herself as a creditable English speaker. In the informal interview and in SS1 she expressed her reticence to speak English in public in case other girls laughed at her. Now however, as a PP graduate, she presents herself as changed, as no longer shy to speak, in spite of her mistakes. While claiming to have learned much grammar, vocabulary and essay-writing in PP2, I can sense her uncertainty over her language level but also her emotional commitment to achieving her goal of graduating in English and Translation.

Nour expresses her joy at understanding conversations and in talking to her friends in English and uses a simile of "a candle bright inside the dark" (SS3:7) to describe how she feels now she is a better English speaker. She continues to present herself as an out-of-class learner: she tells me that she spends up to six hours on the internet listening to the news in English, watching films and searching for words that have come up in her Translation classes. She expresses her belief consistently in the advantages of living and studying in an English-speaking country as a fast track to learning fluent and "professional English". Nour shows me that she is specifically looking for opportunities to take a summer English course abroad by giving me prices for fees and accommodation.

On the other hand, Nour still constructs herself as a dependent learner in her formal learning context. Her appreciation of teacher support is represented in her depiction of Ms A, her PP2 Listening and Speaking teacher. She constructs Ms A as steadfast and unrelenting in her efforts to make Nour communicate in English. Nour uses an Arabic proverb to emphasise the teacher's 'toughness' for the student's benefit: "*al-um qāsīah ʿalá abnāʾihā yitaʿlamū* (The mother is hard

on her children so they can learn)" (SS3:2). Ms A, from her side, in her interview at the end of the PP year, portrays Nour as a hard-working, determined student who began with little English but through consistently seeking out help and doing independent work at home in addition to classwork, has progressed more than any other student in her class. This sense of flourishing and thriving in the learning context of the PP due to teacher and administrative support comes through in the first three interviews and in our conversations. Nour uses the metaphor of the family to describe the institution: "I like PP, in Sharifa, like the family. He need someone help he help someone, like that" (SS3:2).

Peer support is also an important expressed need: she evaluates her connection with the other participants in terms of the amount of help they are willing to give other students in the classroom. Nour constructs herself and Sandra as particularly willing to help their peers. She goes on to expound quite forcefully on the benefits of working in groups in the classroom using rhetorical questions:

> K: Do you think you learn more English if you study alone or if you work with other girls?
> No: With other girls because I feel responsibility with all of them. Yes all of them are students. Why you need some people work alone. Why you need. Because in work *maʿa bʿaḍ* (together) *lammā yīshtaghil maʿa bʿaḍ yīsawī shay aḥsan* (If you work together you do it better.) Successful yeah?   (No-SS3:5)

SS4 - Too much on my plate now

When I meet Nour on campus soon after the beginning of the first university semester she appears extremely anxious and overwhelmed by her busy schedule of lectures and assignments. She alerts me to the transition as a critical experience: "Now in college. It's very very serious" (No-FN:2). As if desperate to escape her stressful situation she presents me with plans to travel abroad and to study in England, which seem highly unlikely, considering her economic difficulties. In this informal, unrecorded conversation Nour explains how important speaking English is for social status in Saudi Arabia and claims people respect someone more if they speak good English. She seems intent on avoiding discussion of her study situation and focuses on her identity as mother, as wage earner and as status seeker.

SS5 - Getting very hard but motivation unwaned

After the transition to university Nour's voice asking for help becomes rather more desperate. She highlights her main difficulties as the high academic level: "all times the study hard" and understanding what the teachers say: "the teachers is fast talk many many information inside the class" (SS5:1). Since the university expects students to take more responsibility for their learning and study, more than at the PP: "Maybe nobody help you. Only help yourself", her usual strategy of obtaining regular and consistent help is thwarted. However, there are exceptions: Nour finds second or third year students who seem to enjoy helping her.

At university Nour presents herself as performing poorly in language-dense subjects like Biology, Islamic Studies and PE (theory). She does not focus on her language learning or even subject learning but on her actions to procure better results for herself. However she expresses her enjoyment of Advanced Skills (ACS) because as she tells me, she is studying grammar and vocabulary: "how can make a sentence, a paragraph, an essay, an article" (SS5:2). Also, even though most of the other students are 2nd and 3rd year students who speak English well, her ACS teacher is presented as encouraging her personally:

> No: Dr B: "First time Nour you study hard, you study hard but
> now Nour you're better"*al-ḥamdulillāh*   (No-SS5:2)

Nour seems to bask in the teacher's words. Also, her continued narrative of no longer being shy links to her sustained motivation. In her classes at university, most of the other students speak English very well but Dr B encourages her boldness and she finds this motivating:

> K: And do you speak English or are you shy?=
> No: =No no I speak English maybe I good or wrong I speak (K:
> very good). She (Dr B) [small laugh] like me because Nour not
> shy. I love it like that I'm not shy [laughs]   (No-SS5:3)

Nour expresses here in emotional terms how much her identity as a language learner and user is tied up with her sense of well-being and confidence as a person.

In spite of the pressures of university study and the pressures of outside family commitments which come across more strongly in our informal conversations, Nour's overall orientation in SS5 is upbeat: she is motivated and engaged and makes positive associations with learning English. Furthermore, Nour presents herself as enterprising: she arranges to meet up with advanced students after class, sometimes asks teachers to repeat information in class and often seeks out her advisor's help, thus indicating that her strategies are effective in terms of her need for support.

SS6 - Still struggling to cope with the new

Now in her second semester she attempts to put on a brave face but the demands of studying in academic English are clearly taking their toll: "…Maybe the subject different and difficult a little bit but new subject and new vocabulary grammar like this [with concern] up and up and up like that" (SS6:1). There is more teacher and peer criticism in SS6 relating to her struggle to attain and maintain acceptable grades. Nour complains about the lack of language support in ACS2 and seems unhappy that students are expected to work on grammar on their own. Although she informs her new ACS teacher of the gaps in her knowledge of grammar, she is expected to work from a grammar book rather than work with a better student:

> No: I want to help but I don't have the grammar I tell her maybe I don't have learned the grammar. I want some student help me. She told me "OK, you can go in the library (bookshop) you take it the book grammar Mr Murphy 3rd or 4th you can buy the book and *inshāʾAllāh* help you   (No-SS6:3)

In SS6 Nour announces a change in her orientation to working in a group and impresses on me the importance of this change: "=I change my mind really. I write in my Blackberry [laughs]. I change mind really because before I want to work together in group but now I change mind… (SS6:3). In spite of her 'change', Nour still constructs herself as in urgent need of language support in our final interview. She makes it clear that she still has urgent language learning needs which cannot be promptly met in Saudi Arabia. Although she concedes, in discussion with Sandra, that it has become more common in Saudi to

communicate in English in public places, in SS6 she consistently favours learning English abroad. Nour does find students to help her, however, especially among the new, non-Arabic speaking students and she expresses her relief and joy at these opportunities for support:

> Z help me in essay, in summarizing, anything article opinion. Maybe
> third year student. She cannot [laughs] understand Arabic. With me
> in Islam now. I'm very happy [laughs]   (No-SS6:5)

On looking back at the PP, Nour is uncritical in her appreciation for the PP as a stepping-stone into university study: "After the PP the student is ready for college" (SS6:6). She describes her own experience and language learning at the PP as invaluable:

> It help, me a lot because I not write paragraph or—because help
> me yes — essay translation speaking listening grammar all this
> in PP take it help me now in college yes. (No-SS6:6)

Nour opposes Sandra's stated view that the PP only acted as a mere introduction to university studies; she proceeds to list the benefits to her English learning compared to school, such as having a Speaking class everyday in the PP, as opposed to an EFL class once or twice a week at state school. Thus, contrary to Sandra, Nour shows a reluctance to speak critically of the PP.

In her account of her future self, Nour highlights the use of English as a main factor in her job as interpreter in a hospital. Economic necessity gives her no choice but to work as soon as she graduates. However, if "my family my daughter and myself" (in that order) attain a good standard of living, she would love to continue her studies in English: "I want to go up and up and up in English" (SS6:16). Although she would like to help her family and outsiders understand what people say in English, she does not present herself as able to fulfil this role now but hopes to in the future. Learning English also links to her wishes for her daughter's future: she hopes to have the means to send her to an international school as it will help give her a better life.

7.3.3 Student identity

7.3.3.1 Creating a student identity

Among the multiple identities that Nour presents in our interactions, her student identity is the current one towards which she aspires and works. While she shows that she is able to integrate her student identity with her language learner, work and family supporter roles during her year at the PP, finding her feet at the university becomes an all-consuming task. Consequently, her university student identity becomes a site of an ongoing, unresolved struggle. Overall, Nour creates some distance between her everyday self and her student identity: in the informal interview she refers to her dream of studying at university and in the final interview she again refers to her dream of continuing her study of English after graduation. There is a subtext of unreachability, as there was in her grandmother's earth dream of visiting America.

That she is also breaking new ground in terms of her family and social background is made clear, not in the recorded interviews, but in our conversation towards the end of her freshman year. Nour tells me she was the first in her family to go to university and her five sisters have followed her lead and are all now either working or studying. She does not develop a subject position as pioneer, however, neither does she give me details of her humble beginnings, but from the limited information she does give me of her parents and from the run-down apartment block in the poor part of town in which she lives, I can tell that she has fought hard to enter tertiary education.

7.3.3.2 Transition to PP

As seen in 7.3.2 Nour presents her first PP semester as a huge jump: "very difficult the PP1 because new, study in the *bakalūrīās* (at degree level) English and Translation" (SS1:3). Although the PP is supposed to act as a preparation period, Nour presents her study context as an academic challenge, one that was more demanding than she had expected after high school. She presents herself as continuously noting down everything the teacher says for review later: "I review my notes, me: Yes, OK, yeah, I understand" and as studying hard for exams in spite of some poor results: "…But I'm not marked good but *al-ḥamdulillāh*"

(SS3:2). Through her concerted efforts at obtaining extra support, at negotiating her marks with teachers via her advisor and at doing more follow-up work at home, she manages to maintain an acceptable standard.

Although Nour seems more comfortable talking about matters outside her academic context, there is evidence in SS2 and SS3 that she is seeking to consolidate her student identity. In the group interview, for example, she declares that although her old hospital employer frequently asks her to return to work in the medical centre, she always refuses: "... because I study in university" (SS2/Group-1:4). Nour voices her anxiety about becoming a freshman student: it's not only her language level she is concerned about but the more impersonal university system:

> ...system [3rd time says it clearly] in the college is very very hard. I listen like that because in college time, time and quiz, quiz. If time 1 hour quiz 1 hour finish. You're not finish take the paper. Here it's easily for the students.   (No-SS2-Group-1:2)

In SS3 Nour develops her identity as a prospective Translation major and shows emotional engagement with her future studies: "I want myself inside my heart in Translation" (SS3:1). Her ambitions are presented as far-reaching: as a graduate of the PP her self-confidence seems to soar. Her Translation studies will allow her to perhaps work in the king's council, (where they have just started admitting women) or in a Saudi embassy abroad. Thus Nour's fledgling student identity and her ELLU identity seem to merge with her vision of self as mediator between Saudi and English worlds.

7.3.3.3 Transition to university

After her transition to university Nour constructs her student self more intensively as an active negotiator. She presents herself as weighed down by her busy schedule of seven academic subjects, Basketball and Office admissions:

> Oh! many many subjects... [No shows K schedule] You see. (K: My God! You're busy!) Yes [laughs a little hysterically] I cannot move like that. Islamic Biology PE Maths Basketball ACS Arabic Club CS. I have another one I didn't write here Office Admission. I work

Office Admission (K: really?) Yes I take it 10 value points.

(No-SS5:3)

Nour acts to obtain a high number of value points to help improve her grades. In Office Admissions she serves as an interpreter for those prospective students who speak little English. Although her academic scores in Maths and Computer Studies are high, in language-dense subjects they are very low. In Biology, for example, she tells me she scored 4 out of 20 on the mid-term exam. However, from Nour's composed but lively manner I understand that her low score did not demotivate her: on the contrary it motivated her to act in order to negotiate a better 'deal' for herself. She talks to her advisor who then mediates with her Biology and Islamic teachers:

> No: ...I go and talk to her (Biology teacher) and she was OK. I do
> extra work *al-ḥamdulillāh.* Islamic, Dr S., I talk to advisor, she go
> to the doctor give me extra work. I do it *al-ḥamdulillāh.* She give
> me higher grade (No-SS5:1)

Her narrative shows her pro-active approach to achieving her goal. She uses a string of action verbs to relate the procedure of obtaining through her endeavours the best student 'face' she can. However, Nour meets a brick wall when it comes to 'negotiating' marks with the PE teacher as she narrates in Small Story 2.

Small Story 2 (SS5:1-2) The 'Bad PE' narrative (Appendix C2: 354-356)
In this narrative the PE teacher is presented as obstructor of Nour's development as a successful university student. Using 3 short anecdotes she dramatizes *duktūrah* (*dra*) H's 'unhelpfulness' to students and its consequences. In two of the anecdotes, set in the exam hall and the PE classroom, Nour plays the part of witness to proceedings; the last anecdote is a short dramatization of an unresolved dialogue between herself and *Dra* H in the teacher's office. The problem is depicted as concerning students as a group primarily and reflects a claim on Nour's part to be a member of that group.

Her fast-paced narrative is performed using a variety of devices such as direct speech, rhetorical questions, ironic humour, which, by emphasizing her arguments and providing amusement, seek to convince me of her argument that the PE teacher "is not good with the students"(SS5:1). Nour constructs herself as a doer, a confronter and an ironist. She presents herself as taking direct action to help solve her problem with the PE teacher: she has actively sought to improve on her PE exam mark by consulting her advisor and the PE teacher but to no avail. In the course of the narrative Nour takes up subject positions as spokesperson for her group, as witness to unjust exam proceedings and as pleader for the cause of students who are less proficient in English.

 Nour focuses her criticisms for much of the narrative on the PE teacher's exam (18-60), which she describes as difficult and not aimed at freshman students like herself (21-23). Positioning herself as an unprepared freshman student, Nour imagines herself addressing the teacher directly, asking her, in a loud voice, about her incomprehensible exam questions (28-29). The emotion builds up as Nour speculates on the type of answer the teacher expected (30-32). Finally, she addresses the teacher again with pleading intonation at the end of this stretch of talk: "What you need" (33).

Nour holds up the character, student M, who she describes as American and claims ironically that even M, as an EL1 speaker, could not understand everything on the exam paper. Nour recreates the exam scene (48-60), in which M is the protagonist, while Nour is an onlooker (54). The antagonist is the authoritarian invigilator, *Dra* A. The PE teacher is not present, though her offstage presence can be felt. Twice M protests out loud during the exam: "What you need. What you need" (49), echoing Nour's earlier rhetorical question, and "I don't understand the paper"(53). *Dra* A retorts: "Don't talk in the exam" (51) and then to Nour: "Nour, turn round"(56). When she gives her evaluation of the incident at the end (57-60), it seems as if Nour is addressing both the invigilator and myself:

57 but she's American
58 she cannot solve
59 and I Arabic slow [laughs aloud]
60 Really! [in high pitch] I cannot!

Here Nour positions herself as an Arabic L1/EL2 speaker which emphasises how unfair and ridiculous the situation is when she is expected to answer questions that even an American student cannot understand. With this ironic sense of the ridiculous she builds up to her motif: "I cannot!".

Nour responds creatively to my hypothetical classroom question asking the teacher for help (61-63) by performing her version of a typical *Dra* H response (64-69). She verges on the sarcastic here with her use of sound effects:

64 No: She tell: [with great affectation]"her-her-her
65   another student cannot tell her?"
66   Like that (K: oh!) "her-her-her
67   can anybody explain her?"

Nour expresses her shock in an exclamation (68) and then her own uncharacteristic behaviour as a result. The powerful line "I keep it silent" (69) contrasts with the rest of the 'noisy' narrative and the effect is dramatic because of the surrounding assertiveness of Nour's narrative voice.

She then moves the setting to the PE teacher's office in order to perform a private dialogue with *Dra* H. Now Nour is the main speaker and narrator of a scene, possibly representing her last resort, in which she asks the teacher with exaggerated politeness to make allowances for the low level of a small group of less proficient speakers (74-84). Nour casts herself as spokesperson pleading with the teacher and using her lack of proficiency to negotiate an exam resit with her. *Dra* H is ice-cold in response:"7 everything 7 Nour"(83). Her voice reflects her inflexibility and lack of sympathy: she refuses to even consider improving on Nour's exam score which is 7 out of 20, a definite fail. Again, the anecdote ends with the motif "I cannot" (84), indicating that Nour has tried her best but has given up with this teacher.

Nour's use of irony and her mocking laughter targeted at the PE teacher and finally at herself (98-100), reduce the seriousness of her ineffective agentive negotiations. All the students in unison refuse adamantly to take PE (93-94). Nour turns to humour as she frequently does at the end of a narrative: among her ex-PP friends "only me and Alex" (100) are doing PE, implying that they are the only fools. I respond with irony: "That's a <u>big</u> problem!" (101), so we end up making light of it.

Although her efforts fall short in all three teacher-influenced settings in which she structures her narrative, the ironic humour in Nour's dramatizations and evaluations create a wise distance between the teller and the told. Furthermore, Nour is artful in the way she weaves the anecdotes with her developing argument in the narrative. It is a story of the difficult transition of a Saudi state school graduate moving to an English medium university who brings school practices to her new student environment. However, Nour's telling remains upbeat and spirited and, through performing her novice student self struggling to adjust to university systems, implies that she will make a more informed choice of teacher next time.

Even in SS6 Nour shows that she has not yet 'acclimatized' to university life. While still bringing out the merits of generous but sporadic teacher and student support in her second semester she presents herself as still uncomfortable with

the set-up of new classes with new classmates of different levels and ages: "It is different mind, different thought, all this" (SS6:1). Her narratives and anecdotes tend to be more critical in SS6, indicating that her functioning as a university student is less of a satisfying one and her glowing review of the PP towards the end of SS6 suggests that the core of her student identity remains there. Her main problem is that if she misses a class there is no one that she can rely on to tell her what she has missed. Also she complains that many students are lazy and she doesn't know who would be helpful to work with in a group. This new isolation as student is brought out in the 'Bad Computer Studies' narrative in which she positions herself as the only member of her group to do all the work for a CS project.

Small Story 3 (SS6:3-4) The 'Bad Computer Studies' narrative (Appendix C3:356-358)
Unlike Small Story 2 Nour's predicament is presented in this narrative as an individual problem: her loss of marks on a CS project and her failed negotiations with the CS teacher become a tragic story of loss of agency. The function of the story is to explain why she has changed her mind about working in a group and to highlight the injustice of the CS teacher. She achieves this by acting out the impersonal, cold voice of teachers coercing students to work in groups and enforcing deadline grading rules and the single, protesting voice of her 'self' defending her case as a hardworking, conscientious student. As Nour sadly acquiesces to the accusatory voice of the CS teacher and then finally to the coercive voice of the APS teacher, she takes up a subject position as victim of an 'unfair' university system.

Nour prepares the ground by justifying her statement to her APS teacher: "I want alone work in all the presentations" (9). Her justification to me is that she doesn't know the "new" students and she doesn't know who will contribute and work hard so she can't make an informed choice of group (5-8). The teacher is positioned as impersonally stating and upholding the rule that students lose marks if they work alone (13-15). When I teasingly remind Nour of earlier presentations of herself as a

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social learner, she makes a direct, emphatic statement of change in her attitude towards working with others, even adding with some amusement that she had recorded this change in her mobile phone. It is her particular experience with group work at university that, she claims, has caused her to change her mind. The others in her group skive off while she is left to do all the work by herself. My stated judgement: "Yeah it's not fair" (32) seems to encourage her to give me a full-blown example of group work turned foul.

The story is about Nour's bad experience working on a group project for Computer Studies. Again she claims she was the one who did all the work for the project and turned it in to Blackboard for marking. She comes up against the rules, delivered in the CS teacher's impersonal tone, that projects would not be accepted after the deadline. In response she assures the teacher that she sent it at 11.58, two minutes before the deadline. However, due to a problem, it arrived at least 15 minutes late:

43   and I lost 2 marks <u>me</u>
44   and <u>all </u>students full marks (K: Why)

Nour's construction of difference and distance between herself and the other students in her group helps create a feeling of gross unfairness and injustice. The rest of the narrative is told in the form of a dialogue between her and the teacher. The speech of Nour as character is worded and expressed as a direct protest:

45   I go and ask her like that [indignant] "Why (P)
46   I work <u>myself </u>not all students
47   All students take it full mark
48   and me, not fair"

She brings out the lack of understanding between unsympathetic teacher and Nour as student eager to gain maximum marks, in simple dialogue:

49   She tell me "2 marks?
50   What's wrong Nour"
51   I tell her "because 2 marks is big thing"

Nour then proceeds to emphasise, as if addressing both the teacher and me, the lack of effort of the others in her group in contrast with her individual, diligent work at home. She also impresses on me the importance of the project which counted as their mid-term exam in CS. I position myself as understanding of her predicament (58), contrary to the teacher, who still does not:

> 61   She tell me "OK why you angry"
> 62   I tell her "Because I am doing all of this myself"

As I seek clarification of the story, the teacher's voice becomes more accusatory in her justification for giving Nour 18 marks (66). Nour explains, through the teacher's inflammatory voice, how the others in the group managed to get a full mark even though she was the one who put the finished project on Blackboard:

> 74   "maybe this student she send (would have sent it) early
> 75   but you Nour you're lazy
> 76   so you send it late."
> 77   I tell her [weakly] "No"

As the teacher's voice grows louder and more unreasonable, Nour seems to lose her assertiveness: her voice becomes meek and finally accepting of the teacher's argument:

> 80   I tell her "OK" [dejected].

She then presents her denouement to the story: as a result of this negative CS experience, she politely states her preference to the APS teacher for working alone. She thus returns to the introduction of her story but now I can better understand her predicament. The response of this teacher is similar in tone to the CS one, as if they are both mouthpieces for university rules:

> 85   She tell me "Maybe you lose 2 marks
> 86   or 3 marks you working alone
> 87   Work together"

Nour now positions herself as acquiescent: in spite of her bad experience, she has no choice but to work with others and hope for the best (88-89).

To sum up, the function of this narrative is to illustrate Nour's losing battle as she seeks to carve out a credible student identity at an English-medium university. Nour positions herself as an earnest, struggling student making a huge effort to do well but shows her personal resistance to the enforcement of deadline penalties and to teacher coercion of students to work in groups on their projects. In interaction with me, Nour's priority seems to be to bring out the injustice of the teacher as rule enforcer. She develops her victim stance by taking me through each stage of her resistance: surprise-outrage-despondency and the poignancy of her final dejection makes an emotional impact. Unlike the PP, which she described as "like a family"(SS3:2), the university is a hostile place in which she performs herself as estranged and frustrated in this narrative.

It has been an upward climb for Nour as a student of the PP and a university freshman. Due in part to her multiple roles and commitments, such as tutor to her daughter who is now in first grade, as family financial supporter and as supervisor of the renovation of the family apartment, she is hard-pressed to devote all her time to being a student. Nour's strategy at university is to be active in the sense of taking several academic and non-academic courses and of working to achieve a high number of value points in order to improve her grades. The subtext of her narrative is striving for success by doing things. This strategy worked to some extent but in the final interview Nour's student identity is performed as strained. This in no way seems to affect the presentation of her imagined identity as an English speaker or of her professed desires in terms of professional and personal goals.

7.3.4 Social commentator identity

From the informal interview, Nour sets herself up as commentator on her society, particularly in relation to English. She gives herself a wide berth and often moves the context away from the academic one to comment on uses of English in her society, to public places where English is spoken, as well as to her own family and domestic context. The variety of local settings of her narratives:

home, her daughter's kindergarden, school, wedding, restaurant etc. reflect the breadth of her experience and her keen sense of her social, cultural and educational context. She also encompasses a long time frame stretching from her own childhood to her future vision for herself and her daughter. In Nour's narrative of recent and present experience, past and future seem always significant and she often presents her personal story within a commentary which reflects developments in her society.

In response to my questions on her past school experience in SS1, Nour reports on what is learnt in English lessons at intermediate and high school level to provide me with a general picture. Using simple dialogues, she also relates several short anecdotes about English teachers who do not encourage their students to learn English. Nour's narrative is spirited but rather cynical concerning English teaching and learning at school. She expresses her concern about the low level of high school education and the urgent need for improvement in order to make the transition to university easier: "I want the standard up because when go in university, oh my God, confused because very hard" (SS3:9).

Nour's narrative commentary about learning English in the Saudi school system includes an account of an inspiring English teacher who motivated her students to love the language. The results of this example of teacher motivation become a general commentary on the growing demand for English language instruction among young women. Likewise, Nour remarks on the progress in English teaching and learning at intermediate level using her young cousins as evidence: (They study better than in the past, than when we used to study. Now, recently they study better) (SS1:2).

 As narrator/commentator Nour uses first-hand evidence from her personal experience to clarify and justify her observations on society. She rarely positions herself as the main character in her narrative performance but stands outside to observe and commentate. Here she presents Saudi society as becoming multilingual:

> K: And what about speaking. Do they do speaking at school now?
> No: [Hesitantly] Yeah. Speak in English speak some little French Germany (K: really?) Yeah. I see my friends go in the wedding talk to her I listen one words is French some words Germany. What is this. This is different, the language. Not only the Arabic now. *māshā'Allāh khalāṣ tighayir al-wad'* (My God the situation is changing). (No-SS1:4)

Nour develops a voice of experience, one which is qualified to inform me, as a researcher on learning English in Saudi Arabia. In our interviews, while I claim the power to change direction and topic, she claims the power to move the discussion to a different setting or context, which she is familiar with, as the excerpt above shows. In this movement to different settings, Nour claims an identity for herself as a social 'mover', not as a Saudi female confined to a home (and study) context. She constructs herself as 'streetwise' in the sense of having a handle on current trends:

> K: ...Do you want to do more speaking?
> No: Yeah because now it's the *mujtama'* (society).
> K: What's that, universal?
> No: Yeah. Many people young or adults is using the English everywhere, banks supermarket hospital... (No-SS1:6)

Nour positions herself as the most authoritative, knowledgeable and experienced of the three students in the group interview as we discuss uses of English and best ways to learn and she maintains that position. She holds her own in an argument about whether study abroad is the best way to learn English as we see in Small Story 4.

Small Story 4 (Group-2/SS2:3-4) The 'Study Abroad narrative' (App. C4:358-360)

Nour takes part, with Sandra, Nevine and myself, in a conversation on the merits of learning/studying English at home or in an English speaking country. The more relaxed, sociable setting of the spontaneous group discussion gives rise to different interactions. While Nour and Sandra argue in their EL2, Nevine expresses her arguments in Arabic as if excluding me. Nour shows translingual competence in her strong sense of voice in supporting her argument in both languages. Her starting point seems to be her social positioning as a well-informed, opinionated young Saudi woman.

Nour forcefully denies the proposition that one can learn English well in Saudi Arabia (3). Sandra playfully counteracts Nour's argument (8) while Nevine defensively disagrees with the 'learn abroad' argument (14). Nour, in adamant opposition, takes up a definitive stance as supporter of learning and studying English in America and maintains her position, despite some compelling arguments on the other side. She argues, in an earnest tone, that in America one has to speak English to everyone and that the "study" is "better" (5). When Sandra retorts that in Saudi Arabia Arabic can be used to check meanings of English words, Nour is quick to oppose her using a narrative example of her cousin who graduated in English Literature from a Saudi university "but he cannot one sentence (in English) he tell me" (11). However, after a three-month stay in America, "…now *māshāʾAllāh* he can't stop ter-ter-ter-ter [laughs]" (13). With a few short, simple strokes Nour is able to get her argument across clearly. Sound effects enhance the humorous element in the conclusion to her anecdotal illustration.

Nevine, switching to Arabic, rejects Nour's argument: "[quietly) *mū sharṭ* (not necessarily)" (14). Defensively, Nour addresses Sandra in Arabic to blame, not the study or the teaching, but the laziness of boys for her male cousin's failure to learn

English in Saudi. Ignoring Nevine's interjection and addressing Sandra, she qualifies this with a description of their mechanical, unmotivated learning (16). Sandra seems to acquiesce at this point of 'shared knowledge' in Arabic (17) either because Nour has touched on a view of Saudi males which they have shared in previous conversations or perhaps because they are no longer displaying their command of argumentative English. In positioning Saudi males in this way, Nour is claiming, for herself and for Sandra, Saudi female identities as motivated, committed EL2 learners.

Even though Nour attempts to explain away Nevine's counter narrative of a boy who studied in the States for 3 years but did not learn much English by suggesting that the boy just went to America to study for the TOEFL (19), Nevine contradicts her and positions Nour's cousin as perhaps having the "tongue" but not the "education" (20). The strategic words are spoken in English, giving Nevine more authority in the expression of her opinion. Nour then clearly and definitively justifies her argument in colloquial Arabic, giving a practical reason for her cousin's success in learning English: (The one I'm telling you, it's because he went to work there he had no choice but to learn the language but here he did his bachelor's degree but didn't like it) (21).

The down-to-earth, practical wisdom in Nour's reasoning seems to win the argument, at which point I join the discussion and switch the language of our discussion back to English. Sandra joins Nour and me in a quick-fire discussion on negative attitudes to English among Saudis. They position themselves as informers in alignment: Nour, emboldened by Sandra's comment (26), confirms that some students hate English and gives me an explanation in her staccato, clipped English style: "Difficult yeah and I can't I can't. He mind like that. I cannot doing and stop mind" (32). In three short spurts of rather basic English, Nour effectively communicates the process of students giving up learning English, using first person for internal speech and third person for her commentary. Interestingly, Sandra presents the difficulty of learning/studying English in terms of her own personal

experience (26,30), whereas Nour positions herself as social commentator only. The points she makes are in agreement with her previous argument: that it is difficult for Saudis to learn English in their country.

Nour shows engagement, even enthusiasm, in this fast-moving discussion. In spite of the lower level of her language compared to her interlocutors, she plays a major role in expounding on her arguments in favour of study abroad and she positions herself throughout as experienced and knowledgeable about the best ways to learn English for Saudis. The group situation, which generates varied responses, appears to stimulate Nour and to widen her sphere of reference: she comments on a wide spectrum of success and failure from her cousin chatting away in English on his return to Saudi to failed local learners who find learning English far too difficult. Interestingly, Nour and Sandra argue and align themselves effectively when they converse in their EL2, perhaps because they are displaying to their English audience. However, Nour engages less effectively with Nevine, even though they argue in Arabic.

Nour shows she has an eye on the job market in her continued discussion with Sandra on the merits of study abroad in SS6. She argues that local English graduates are somewhat valued by employers; "you see the graduate, in Saudi Arabia, but English: 'Oh OK', but those who have actually studied abroad are highly prized: 'Oh better' (K: yes) you need this one" (SS6:7). Nour develops her commentator subject position in her argument with Sandra, showing a temporal orientation to her observations on Saudi as a progressively more productive language learning environment:

> No: OK before [quietly] before not now, in past, maybe not all
> student or all people using the English (S: mmm) but now and the
> future maximum will speak English [murmurs of opposition from
> Sandra] ...before...You cannot learn the English inside Saudi Arabia.
> But now yes. You can learn in Saudi Arabia because I go in the
> hospital the doctors maybe talk with her English go in the gallery

> [stumbles] talk the English restaurant any place you find maybe one
> two talk English.   (No-SS6:8)

In this comparatively long stretch of talk, Nour shows that, by the final interview, she has developed a more articulate commentator self in English. Interestingly, she does this in conversation with another Saudi student, Sandra, with me as audience. In this performance, it could be argued that Nour's second language voice develops in tandem with her commentator identity in our interviews. Nour relates from the outside looking in, as if her individual story of 'self' is not the central concern. Her performance as commentator moves through a variety of contexts of time and place and she often illustrates her comments with amusing first-hand examples. As a member of her society she is commenting on local developments but she is also looking outwards, beyond her society, as we shall see in the next section.

7.3.5 Mediator identity

In her discursive, translingual interaction with me and as a subject position developed through the content and performance of her talk, Nour enacts a mediator identity throughout our interviews and conversations. She uses the interview situation as a social encounter and an opportunity to socialise and 'bond' with me, the 'other', the native English speaker. Nour's striving to communicate with me in English (with some Arabic) appears more than a desire to learn: it is part of her role as mediator between the Saudi Arabic and English languages and cultures. Furthermore in her stated choice of studying Translation in an English-medium university and in her future stated professional goal as interpreter or ambassador, she positions herself as Arabic-English mediator and in a sense as one who can bring these two worlds together. This is not only an endeavour for personal benefit: in bringing the English language and its "meaning" to her family and to her people, she positions herself as working towards the progress and the enrichment of her society.

Nour makes it clear from the informal interview that she enjoys interacting with native English speakers. Even when she presents herself as a belittled student in SS6, she upholds her preference for EL1 rather than AL1 teachers and performs

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her pleasurable effort at understanding and communicating with her ACS native speaker teacher *Dra* T:

> …But T you have really vocabulary. You can get the meaning and
> meaning and meaning, maybe simple words, I understand what
> she is need or she use the signs yeah?   (No-SS6:5-6)

Nour positions me as the foreign mother, the curious foreigner and I play into that role with my surprised reactions, my interest in all aspects of her life and culture and my acceptance and encouragement of her Arabic usage in the interviews. Our translingual conversations enhance our communication in the early interviews. In later interviews Nour still peppers her English with the expressions: *al-ḥamdulillāh, inshāʾAllāh* and *māshāʾAllāh*, reflecting her Muslim identity, but this never creates distance between us. For me it enhances her sense of hopefulness to attain the vision for herself and her daughter that she describes.

Her narrative performance in English develops through the interviews. Nour's expressive style, her frequent use of dialogue, imagery, internal monologue, asides, humour etc. help her get across multiple and complex meanings with her limited repertoire of English vocabulary, structure and idiom. In the group interview, for example, Nour enacts a mediator role in addressing me in English to explain a point or to tell a story. Nour maintains her mediator (and social commentator) position in interaction with me in the 'English for Secrets' narrative which is Small Story 5.

Small Story 5 (Group-2/SS2: 5-7) The 'English for Secrets' narrative (App.C5:360-361)

In order to exemplify her comment that Saudi girls sometimes communicate in English with friends in order to hide secrets from their parents, Nour tells me an amusing story in English about one of her school friends who used to communicate with her boyfriend in English so that her mother would not understand their conversations. In her telling Nour positions herself as commentator of others which contrasts with Sandra's positioning of herself as one who needs to speak a foreign language to hide secrets from her own family. As a conversation in 'the alternative party' context, an important function of the narrative and the surrounding talk is to entertain and to socialize. Nour shows that she primarily seeks to be my informant in English, in that she selects and exposes uses of the language of which I might not be aware.

Nour intercepts Sandra who makes some strong gendered distinctions: while boys are "*māshāʾAllāh* loser"(4), girls like learning and studying (2,4). Nour interrupts to allot girls a less serious preoccupation: "[Laughing] They like stories"(3) and she continues, in contrast to Sandra, to position some girls as having an ulterior motive in learning English: "Some girls, they need take the language but it is for secret with the friends only [laughs]. She need like that" (7). Nour's statements grab everyone's attention and with her entertaining proposition she holds the floor. She explains the situation in interaction with me (10-15). The joke is that the girl's family cannot understand English so the girl uses her mobile or computer to talk to boys or about boyfriends. Sandra makes an attempt to personalise the issue by applying it to herself (16,18): she has to look for a more unusual language so she and her cousin can talk about their secrets at home.

Sandra vies for Nour's position as group EL2 storyteller in the narrative but fails to achieve it. Nour is soon reinstated when she announces that she has "a lovely story" (19) to tell. I back Nour's position as storyteller of the group and urge the other two to listen (20) but Sandra turns away to talk to Nevine in Arabic.

Nour tells her story about her intermediate school friend who used to talk to her boyfriend everyday in English on her mobile. Her mother studied English so she would be able to understand their conversation. Nour tells the story in spurts and Sandra corrects her English (23) and I support her telling by repeating and rephrasing, both to correct her English and to bring out the humour.

The mother becomes an object of ridicule in the telling and Nour laughs so much that I can hardly make out what she is saying: "Yeah. She listen and listen and listen but she cannot know what talk the boy"(27). I draw an ironic moral from the story: "So that's a reason to study English, to check on your daughter" (28) and we all laugh. Sandra again attempts to begin a personal story (30) but Nour seeks to re-engage her by starting the conclusion to her story in Arabic (31). Sandra however turns again to talk and laugh with Nevine so Nour and I co-construct the ending (32-35) in English: the girl gets engaged to her boyfriend and then they get married. This puts the story into a socially acceptable context.

Interestingly Nour is not a character in her story but typically creates characters from her relatives and friends in order to illustrate a comment on her society, usually in relation to English. Thus she creates an ironic distance between Saudi society and herself so we can 'meet' at a point at which we can laugh together and share an understanding. Also, Nour maintains the interaction with me as the 'outside' interested party throughout; at no time does she initiate an Arabic conversation with the other two neither does she ask them for English words even though they are more proficient speakers.

I consistently support, guide and clarify Nour's story thus positioning her as the weakest EL2 speaker of the group but she takes on a subject position as principal narrator, informant and humourist in her EL2. Nour and Sandra provide me with different versions of girls learning and studying English in Saudi society, one has a light-hearted motive, the other a serious one. These versions correspond to gender

discourses prevalent in Saudi society in which girls are seen as higher academic achievers and more studious than boys but also as more in need of adult supervision. English has a function, in the telling (and possible discovery) of young girls' secrets in a highly conservative society and Nour develops this version into an entertaining story.

Nour's social world in this narrative, then, is one in which adults do not speak English and daughters can use it to hide secrets from their parents. The joke she tells about her girlfriend rests on this premise. Her implication that she comes from a lower class background contrasts with Sandra's claim that she needs to speak a more 'exotic' language (16,18) to keep secrets from her family who all speak English. Also the context of state intermediate school draws attention to Nour's lower class background. Thus the 'English for secrets' narrative positions Nour from the point of view of social class and culture.

In her mediator role Nour visibly enjoys presenting her English 'persona': she even jokes about forgetting Arabic words as she speaks more and more English. She performs this as a source of contention with her family at times:

> No: … mother she's angry. Yeah. "I don't like you study English."
> "Why" "Because you not speak Arabic you speak English. I don't
> know what you speak." (No-SS3:7)

However, this does not affect Nour's resolve to improve her English in order to be able to help and enrich the lives of her family and others. Nour positions herself as go-between, the link between English and Arabic but she claims that it is more than the English language that she wants to bring to her people. Her uncle has returned from his travels abroad and has a cultured manner:

> No: … *māshāʾAllāh* I see [in polite tone] "Good morning." I like it.
>   I want but I want meaning. (No-SS6:16)

She expresses her desire to bring this "meaning" to her society: "I feel [with emphasis] that the people or family or other people understand what is the

English" (SS6:16). Furthermore, her imagined future self as hospital interpreter relays information to terminally ill patients in a sensitive manner:

> No: ... I want to connect information err with patient or some people err in clear and nice way like the cancer. You can't tell the people "You have the cancer" (K: I see). I want make comfortable. I want to behave (relieve) the pain in human.   (No-SS6:15)

Nour consistently maintains her Saudi identity as mediator: although she says she is willing to study abroad for up to five years in order to learn "professional English", her aim is to bring back to Saudi what she has learned. She also wants her daughter to travel abroad in order to "get open mind" (SS6:16), but this is part of her wish for her daughter to "have a better life" (SS6:16) in Saudi Arabia. Her professed emotional engagement and commitment to Translation studies seems to consolidate this role further. Nour constructs the subject Translation as well within her capabilities because it involves both Arabic and English. Her Arabic is strong, unlike those students who studied in international schools, because she went to a Saudi state school: "I can now take it both because English and Arabic al-ḥamdulillāh strong inshāʾAllāh" (SS6:11).

She is the Arabic speaker successfully communicating and establishing good relations with me, the native English speaker, in her second language. Rather than seeking a second language identity Nour maintains a mediator position, as a Saudi, in which she reaches out to the 'other' in a receptive and sociable manner so as to gain the advantages of learning another language and culture and of bringing this enrichment back to her society. As she looks to the future, she presents her daughter as also taking on this mediator position by bringing 'big stories' about other countries and cultures back to her friends.

7.3.6 Mother identity

Nour returns again and again to her mother identity through our interactions. In her aim for a better life, her daughter and she are a dyad and learning more English is seen by Nour as a strategic route for both of them. Nour reinforces the idea of her daughter following her in the pursuit of her dream to speak

"professional" English so that she may keep up with the trend in Saudi society and thus have the means to help herself be independent in her future life:

> No: …I want she's like <u>me</u>. She love the study in English because I am dream I speak English, professional speak English. I like my daughter like me.   (No-SS3:1)

Nour presents herself as active in the search for a good English education for her daughter. At the beginning of SS1 Nour tells me how her 5-year old daughter is learning English: she is absorbing the language 'naturally' and picking up 'native' pronunciation at an early age. In her preschool, her daughter has a structured day in which they learn English through playing games and watching videos. Nour's optimistic future vision is reflected in her daughter narratives: for example, she sees parallels between Saudi progress in English education and her daughter's current experience compared to her own. However, when her daughter moves to state school, her school experience is described as a hard struggle which does not include learning English.

One can detect a thread from Nour's earth dream narrative, which showed her grandmother eager to see America, to Nour's current situation in which she has not yet travelled abroad but has managed to get a scholarship and is attending an English-medium university. Onwards from that point she presents her future self working as an interpreter and making enough money to send her daughter to an international school and to travel abroad. Thus Nour weaves the past, present and future into a coherent, progressive thread, which can be seen to reflect developments in the country. At the end of our final interview (SS6), after presenting her future self, Nour gives me an account of her future vision for her young daughter which is Small Story 6.

Small Story 6 (SS6:16-17)   'Daughter's future' narrative (Appendix C6: 361-363)

In this narrative Nour expounds on the future life she imagines for her young daughter. It can be seen as a projection of Nour's own unrealizable imagined identity which she can possibly make real for her daughter. She communicates a desire to enable her daughter to have a "better life" (18) and a "comfortable"(15) job so that:"She doesn't need anybody" (16), thus positioning her daughter as a future member of a higher social class. More than the trappings of the Saudi middle class, she imagines her daughter accruing cultural capital through an international school education and travel abroad. There is tension and distance, though, expressed in the narrative, between her daughter's future ideal self and her current self and the barrier of economic uncertainty looms large.

At the beginning of the narrative Nour shows her priority is to raise the level of her daughter's education which means sending her to an English-medium international school "because good the language" (6). She presents her opinion as based on her witnessing the high level of English of 16-19 year-old girls at international schools. The vision of her daughter's life as better than hers runs through the narrative. However, this better life does not mean she will live anywhere else but Saudi Arabia (21-23); she specifies that her daughter will live with her mother's family. Thus Nour presents her daughter as a better version of herself, but one who will retain her Saudi and her matrilineal identity.

Nour continually emphasises to me that she cannot presently afford what she desires for her daughter (10-12, 25-26, 31-32) and repeats the motif: "I cannot now" (25) and "maybe after that *inshāʾAllāh*"(26). Her wish to travel abroad is presented as an opportunity for her daughter to "see another country" (33), to "get open mind (34)" and to know "the history here and the history here" (35). In her hierarchy of countries to visit, England and America are at the top, however she would settle for Turkey or Egypt as more likely destinations affording her daughter stories of "the pyramids in Egypt" (37). The parallelisms of imagined experiences build up to her

daughter's proud voice: "Yes I go in here and I go in here" (40). However, the hoped for 'big stories' which her daughter would tell her school friends contrast ironically but poignantly with her daughter's current 'little stories', like those about going to a local McDonalds or a nearby children's park. The tone and expressions of uncertainty in her narrative intensify in the last section. What is 'real' is that her daughter now attends state school and "she take it more Arabic" (56). With repetitions of "maybe", "I dunno" and *"inshāʾAllāh"*, Nour distances her hope that her daughter will attend an international school later on in her school life. However, by the end of the extract we are aligned in the prospect of her daughter's bilingualism (59-62) and this alignment is the result of a negotiation of priorities and values within our interaction.

I have mapped out and guided Nour through different facets of her daughter's life: schooling, work, place of residence, holidays and back to schooling. When I problematize the issue of an international school education for Nour's Saudi daughter I am touching on a long-standing Arabic versus English education debate. My "will you be worried/that her Arabic maybe won't be very good?" (48,49) implies that Nour should be concerned. Nour had told me previously that she had to move her daughter to a state school due to hefty private school fees. Now she expresses a justification for her daughter remaining in her state school at least at elementary level: it is to consolidate her Arabic. Thus we both place our hopes on her daughter maintaining bilingual status.

To sum up, Nour places her daughter's future narrative within middle-class discourses of an international school education and travel abroad. There are two conflicting female strands running through the narrative: Nour's desire for a better life for her daughter represents the progressive strand mirroring developments in the position of women in Saudi Arabia while the regressive strand discouraging economic independence holds women back from attaining their goals. It is her precarious economic position which Nour constructs throughout the narrative as the major barrier, though one which is her responsibility. As such, Nour's daughter's

narrative stands outside Islamic discourses of prescribed male financial support and 'protection' of females. Nour imagines herself as the parent providing her daughter with the means and the opportunity to live independently of men. As one of an increasing number of single women supporting families in the country today, Nour positions herself and her daughter within a Saudi female counter narrative. But there is another division between the dream and reality which gives a poignant quality to Nour's daughter narrative. Although not stated in the recorded interviews, Nour frequently brings up in our conversations her deep fear that her ex-husband may take her daughter from her and her conviction that he cannot give his daughter a good life. Considering her daughter narrative in the context of this constant fear of losing her, as seems likely in her Islamic patriarchal society, seems to retract the sense of agency from Nour's performance of imagined identity.

Nour's mother identity pervades our interview data especially in the early interviews when her daughter is seen as representing Nour's idea of 'moving on' in Saudi society and as continuing her matrilineal dream of knowing the 'other' and of learning 'professional' English. As we focus more on Nour's experiences as a university student in SS5 and SS6, she refers less to her daughter in the interviews but in her final narrative positions her daughter as an extension of her own imagined self.

7.3.7 Summary of Nour's big narrative and small stories

The consistency of Nour's self-presentation as EL2 learner and user is evident in her narratives of past, present and future and her identity as a mother is constructed as closely connected to this self-presentation, particularly by the threads of cultural capital and the social advancement of girls and women in Saudi Arabia. What stands out in Nour's construction is her strong sense of social awareness and responsibility which is reflected in her frequent commentaries on her society moving forwards and her self-positioning as participator in its progress. Nour's gender and social class subject positions emerge in her small stories of social commentary in relation to English. She constructs her identity niche in the linguistic and cultural mediation between English and Arabic both in

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her story world and in our interactions. As such, there is little sense of a narrative of individual language learning experience.

As a student, Nour presents herself as 'living a dream': she works hard at building a student identity to integrate with her multiple identities as mother, breadwinner, wedding singer and daughter. While she is agentive in forging a student identity, her successes are presented as facilitated by regular teacher and peer support in the PP. At university outside pressures and past social and learning practices catch up with her and Nour's student self seems to flounder. However, this 'demise' seems to impact little on her performance of her own and her daughter's imagined identities.

Teacher-student negotiation is seen as an important aspect of Nour's learning career. She uses teacher (and student) voices to evaluate teachers from the cynical or motivating voices of school English teachers to those of supportive PP teachers and then on to the obstructive and inflexible voices of some university teachers with whom her negotiations as a student fail. Nour takes up subject positions as observer, as witness, as spokesperson and as silenced student in her small stories to illustrate and defend her student position. In her role as mediator in the telling of her narratives she employs humour and irony both to show her resistance to university practices and to construct alignment and sociability in our interaction.

CHAPTER 8   NEVINE

> K: So Nevine you said improving your English was important for you.
> Do you think most young women in Saudi Arabia feel the same as
> you?
> Ne: [laughs] No maybe she finds English very difficult and most young
> girls they think that English is not important to learn.
> K: Why do you think they think that
> Ne: I don't know [laughs shyly]. Maybe because they find English is
> very difficult and they didn't learn English from many years ago.
>
> ...K: So what about your Arabic. Tell me about your Arabic.
> Ne: Err [laughs] I don't like Arabic at all and I don't know I don't like to
> learn Arabic.
> K: Why not
> Ne: Because I want to accomplish all my study in English. I need a lot
> of English so I didn't need to learn Arabic.   (Ne-SS1:1)

8.1. Our relationship

The first time I saw Nevine was when she worked in a group with the rest of
my participants during the first observed activity in their Listening and
Speaking PP2 class. Ms L, the class advisor, had recruited her for my research
project probably because she considered Nevine to be one of the more
proficient English speakers in the class. The large pink bow in her fair hair
and her American style clothes caused her to stand out among her ʿabāyah-
cum-headscarf clad peers. She also pronounced English with a distinctive
drawl. Nevine seemed rather distant and only responded briefly to my
questions in the post-activity interview. A few days later during our informal
interview, which also served as a pre-SS1 interview chat, Nevine again
seemed guarded and her responses tended to be rigid and undeveloped.

I was surprised that, although the most proficient English speaker of the four
participants, she was the least talkative and acted withdrawn in terms of
presentation of self. While using endearing terms (she called me "sweetie" during
the informal interview) she seemed to hold back from sharing past learning and
life experiences with me. Her responses in the interviews tended to be brief with

little use of the anecdotes, dialogues and metaphors which enriched the spoken discourse of the other three participants.

My interview period with Nevine was longer than that of the other three participants. This is because there were 'silent' periods during her PP2 semester and her freshman year when we were unable to set up any interviews. Also we had begun to communicate by email before the start of her freshman year, as Nevine expressed her preference for a written response. At a particularly low point, when Nevine's plans to continue undergraduate studies in the US were thwarted half way through her freshman year, and I had heard nothing from her for two months, Sandra told me that Nevine did not want to participate in my research any longer. However, Nevine contacted me soon after as she needed my help. I decided to put our relationship on a friendly, more relaxed footing, in the hope that she would feel more engaged. Consequently, we set up a meeting at the university but I decided not to record or make notes during our interview (SS6).

After her summer in the States, at the end of her freshman year, Nevine seemed a changed person. She was eager to meet and visited me at home. Studying English Literature in the first semester of her second university year seemed to revive her and she talked enthusiastically about her life, her studies and her future ambitions to do her master's in the States. I showed Nevine my pleasure at her renewed engagement in her studies, she was vocal and communicative with me and we talked as old friends. This is why I decided to include this interaction as the final one in our research communications (Unrecorded Conversation 1).

8.2 Background

At almost 21 years old, Nevine was the second eldest of my participants. After she graduated from high school, two years before the beginning of my research, she told me (see Appendix F4) she had lived for eight months with her elder married sister in Miami where she had studied English at a language institute. Now she misses her sister and friends and feels "homesick" (Inf.Int:1) for the States. Her plan is to major in English Literature at Sharifa, do her master's and doctorate degrees in the US and then run her own English language institute for

foreign students over there. The reason she gives for studying at PP level is that she did not attain the required score in the TOEFL examination which would have allowed her to go straight to university.

Nevine's father was Saudi and her mother is Saudi-Egyptian. She tells me that her father died 5 or 6 years ago and since then she has lived with her Egyptian grandmother but she sees her mother, who lives alone, every weekend. Although her Arabic is good, she usually speaks to her mother (who doesn't speak English well) in English. Nevine attended only private schools in Saudi Arabia and at high school they studied Maths and Sciences in English and the rest of the subjects in Arabic. Nevine comes across in our informal interview as an outsider in Saudi society. As she says that she doesn't live with her mother or male guardian, I suspect that her local family situation is dysfunctional (although she does not present it as such), mainly because she appears to long for her family and friends in the States. Secondly, although appreciative and accepting of local teaching and learning at high school and the PP, her sights appear to be elsewhere.

8.3 Nevine's big narrative and small stories

8.3.1 Overview

Nevine's big story is tumultuous, particularly in retrospect. As her story unfolds in her presentation, much of it seems to me to remain behind a façade of 'putting on a brave face' and of conforming to an image of an able student/language learner. Our unrecorded conversation, the first which takes place outside the university, marks a time when Nevine begins to 'open up', presenting me with a self that has been through hardship and disappointment. The characteristic title for each interview/conversation is based on my understanding of Nevine's self-presentation as a language learner, student and person within that particular interaction rather than that which her later comments might suggest.

PP-Second Semester

3 Mar 2012	SS1	**Productive but detached**
25 April	SS2 (Group)	**Outgrowing the PP**

TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

University-Freshman year

11 Sept	SS3	**Encountering problems**
16 Sept	SS4 (GELL)	**Sustaining English reader and writer self**
25 Nov	SS5 (+emails)	**Reaching for ideal all-round self in US**
10 Feb 2013	SS6	**Resigned but dissatisfied at Sharifa**

University-Second year

17 Nov	Unrec. Con.	**Building a new English Lit. self**

There are consistencies and some developments in Nevine's presentation of her identities as an **English language learner/user** and as a **student**. Much of her story seems to fall under the category of an **alienated identity,** which comes to a head in SS5, both in our Skype interview and in her email responses to my questions. Nevine's identity as a **writer of English** begins to emerge in the early interviews and becomes her main vehicle of self-expression towards the end.

8.3.2 English Language Learner/user (ELLU)

SS1 Productive but detached

Although Nevine is a Saudi Arab by nationality and has lived in Saudi Arabia most of her life, she presents herself as more than just an EL2 learner and user: she aspires to reach EL1 status and positions herself as an Arabic Language 1 (AL1) deserter in terms of her preferences, future goals and academic identity. She has already made it clear to me in her informal interview that her plans for the future are directed towards living, studying and working in the United States. In SS1 she presents herself as a displaced person who is not living and studying in Saudi Arabia by choice:

> Ne: My circumstances were horrible that's why I stayed here.
> K: Why were your circumstances horrible
> Ne: Because my father died that's why I had to stay. (Ne-SS1:1)

She expresses an aversion to learning Arabic and to writing in Arabic. Only English has value for her because she wants "to accomplish" all her study "in English**."** Improving her English is an urgent and a high priority: "I need a lot of English so I didn't need to learn Arabic as well" (SS1:1). Her detachment from her first language is consistently expressed throughout the interviews.

As one directed by her strong affiliation with English and her future vision as a committed member of the English speaking world, Nevine's presentation of herself as an English language learner consistently focuses on her potential improvement in all areas of the language. In SS1 Nevine projects herself as a good language learner: she is one "who works hard and tries to learn from outside not specially in the university"(SS1:2). She also listens carefully to her "instructor" and learns by "writing a lot of essays, articles and paragraphs" (SS1:2). Nevine does not present herself directly as a more proficient English speaker than the other students but does indicate her proficiency by telling me that she has to speak to them in Arabic in the classroom "cause there are a lot of students who don't understand English well" (SS1:4) and she frequently helps her classmates with their writing "cause they also have a lot of mistakes in Writing"(SS1:4). In Small Story 1 Nevine explains her role in the first class activity.

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Small Story 1-Nevine explaining her role in Activity 1 (Post-Act Int 1 App.D1:364-365)

In this extract from the middle of the post-Activity 1 interview, which was my first face-to-face encounter with Nevine, she explains her role and the parts played by Sandra, Nour and Alex in Activity 1 and finishes off with a brief evaluation of the activity itself. Throughout the interview Nevine tends not to be forthcoming in her responses but it is only fair to point out the unfamiliarity of the situation: not only was this the first time we had talked but also, since their sections had only been merged one week previously, she had only recently started working with the other three students. In the extract Nevine takes up subject positions as interpreter and explainer to others (in both English and Arabic,) rather than language learner or student.

</div>

In Activity 1 students were asked to act out a scene depicting a local social problem. My participant group discussed and role-played a scene in which a nurse used the same needle to inject two patients, the second of whom died in consequence. Although Nevine begins her account presenting her actions as providing the groundwork for the acting of the others in the role-play (4-6), she tends to downplay her contribution and to position the others in the group as agentive. For example, the others are presented as selecting an acting role in the activity:

        14 K: …so you didn't act
        15 Ne: No
        16 K: Why not
        17 Ne: I don't know
        18   They are actors [laughs]
        19 K: Sorry?
        20 Ne: They are choosing

On the other hand, she appears to fall into her particular role as one which is necessary in order to fulfil the task (4). Apart from explaining to other members of the group, she also claims she wrote the "explanation" (scenario) of the role-play and explained it to the "instructor", all actions which I had observed her doing, but she presents her role as of lesser importance, particularly with her use of "just" and by positioning herself last:

        51 K: How did you share the {responsibilities}
        52 Ne: {Ah, Nour gave us} the story
        53   and Sandra and Alex acted the play [laughs]
        54 K: And what about you
        55 Ne: I'm just explaining to the teacher

Nevine also positions herself as conversant in both English and Arabic within the group and thus able to use either language depending on the situation. She explains her use of Arabic in the group discussion (23-24), and then elaborates on her explainer role to other students generally. In her former section she had to explain in Arabic more because "there were a lot of beginner girls"(36), whereas her current class, in which the two sections have been merged, "was speaking English more than

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the others" (41). Here she can be seen to develop an interpreter position for herself as opposed to an EL2 learner position and not only that: in claiming she has to speak less Arabic in her new section, she seems to position herself as adapting her supporter role uncritically to institutional requirements.

Nevine categorises Nour as a "beginner in English" (64) in order to defend the latter's use of Arabic in the group discussion, even though they have both completed PP1. She appears surprised and embarrassed when I ask her to assess her level as EL2 student (68) but then positions herself with characteristic modesty: " I'm in the middle" (69). Thus Nevine is able to maintain a position as assessor of others while still retaining a non-assertive, downplayed status herself as classroom member. In her evaluation of the activity, Nevine brings out the socialising and entertaining aspects rather than any specific language learning benefits. Indeed, she refers only to the social responsibility aspect of the lesson which itself is presented as limited with her use of " just" (89) and "that's all" (91).

In terms of our interaction, I can detect a certain impatience in my manner of questioning and probing (e.g. 10,14 and 16) in my attempt to elicit more talk from my interviewee. This is perhaps partly due to my expectation of Nevine's greater volubility in English. From her part, Nevine tends not to elaborate or initiate in our conversation and she speaks in a quiet, timid voice interspersed with frequent, embarrassed chuckles. At times she seems even to resist my probing by using cut-off strategies such as "that's all" (81,91). Perhaps, as this is our first interaction, Nevine and I are playing our roles as interviewee and interviewer rather rigidly; consequently our interaction does not seem a mutually satisfying one.

In the context of EL2 learning, Nevine positions herself as an outsider in the extract. She adopts a role, without self-aggrandizing, of one who is above and beyond the Saudi EL2 learner. As successful communicator in both languages, she is in a position to act as explainer and writer for her group and, as an English 'expert', she also

claims a subject position as assessor of the standard of English of the rest of her classmates. However, she builds a role, through the extract, of one who is not an agent in the class activity but who lays the groundwork for the social actors. Although not a social actor herself, Nevine claims a space which is indeed far from the master discourses of the struggling Saudi student in the EFL classroom.

However, Nevine also brings out weak areas of her own: in her first SS interview she says that she found the grammar learning in PP1 rather challenging and she also had difficulties in Listening, which she claims made her feel "very frustrated in the beginning" (SS1:3). Now she has improved through frequent classroom practice provided by her teachers and her motivation to attain higher grades. She openly praises the PP: "I think everything is very good" (SS1:4) and her criticisms of her learning there tend to be muted, for example while she emphasises the importance of building vocabulary in English, in the PP she claims she only "got a few more words" (SS1:3). She also expresses her need to learn more grammar than she does in PP2 in order to be good at Literature, "but there's not a lot of grammar so maybe it's the same" (SS1:4). Although Nevine assesses her PP learning as productive, there is a subtext of dissatisfaction in her responses.

Nevine constructs a positive picture of her past English language learning at school. She presents her school as international and as a site of English since she claims there were few Arabic L1 speakers: "There were a lot of foreign people from India and Pakistan, so this was the most important thing that helps me to learn English" (SS1:2). As well as a social site of English, school is presented as a rich learning site: Nevine claims she had a rewarding relationship with her teachers, particularly her English teacher who taught her a lot of English grammar (Inf Int:1). She presents herself as a high-performing school student and as always attached to her English studies. High school offered her several opportunities for learning more language: students were set presentations, tasks and homework which all helped them improve their English. Teachers frequently gave "gifts and certificates" (SS1:2) and Nevine presents this as positive reinforcement of her learning.

Nevine maintains a teacher-dependent identity as a language learner in a formal setting. Her orientation to her teachers tends to be uncritical and rather passive in a pedagogical sense while her attachment to particular teachers seems to be a great motivator in her language learning and performance. For example, she explains her improvement in Listening in the PP as brought about by her teacher: "I got a lot of difficulties in Listening and I was very frustrated in the beginning then my teacher helped me a lot and she gives me a lot of practice then I got the highest grades (SS1:3).

Nevine does not construct her transition to the PP as a difficult adjustment: they do similar class activities and tasks as at high school and she still has a rewarding relationship with her teachers. One of the only differences she mentions is the communication between teachers and their students: "Because in the high school they was teaching us like young girls but right now we are adults" (SS1:3). Although the PP is not presented as a social site of English since Nevine has to communicate with her peers in Arabic, the PP receives, in SS1, a favourable evaluation as a formal language learning site. Nevine picks out her Psychology classes as being particular useful as they are set assignments "about a depression case, about schizophrenia and hallucinations and so on" (SS1:3).

SS2/Group Outgrowing the PP

Her self-presentation as a language learner is different in the group interview which takes place almost two months later: here, in contrast to Sandra and Nour who express some uncertainties about university learning through English, Nevine appears totally confident, answering my questions curtly and with some impatience, for example:

> K: Will you be able to do the reading?
> Ne: Yeah yeah I can do all that by my own
>   (Ne-SS2/Group-2:5)

Similarly in our group discussion of Activity 3, Nevine is adamant that she learnt nothing at all in carrying out the activity, although she claims to have enjoyed it:"It's not useful for me. I didn't learn anything" (SS2/Group-2:2). In addition,

she presents herself at the end of the interview as a language learner who has outgrown the PP: "There's nothing new, I think. Basically there's nothing new" (SS2/Group-2:10). Her orientation towards the PP thus appears to change in the group interview, in which she presents her language learning as limited. However, as this is a group rather than a one-on-one interview, this change could be explained in part as Nevine's self-presentation as different from the other EL2 learners/interviewees.

Nevine positions herself as an exclusive and superior champion of English even when Sandra and Nour show their alignment in wanting to learn many languages:

> K: What about you Nevine, would you like to learn other
> languages?
> Ne: No
> K: Why not
> […]
> Ne: [Laughing a little] I think English is enough
> K: You think English is enough=
> No: =No not enough
> Ne: [Laughs] English is a lingua franca (Ne-SS2/Group-2:7-8)

She explains her change of major from Translation, which the other participants have chosen as their majors, to English Literature as based on her dislike of studying "Arabic as a grammar" (SS2/Group-2:10) and when Sandra later baits her on her 'poor' command of Classical Arabic, Nevine agrees with her (see Nevine's 'Teasing Nevine' narrative, Small Story 3).

SS3 Encountering Problems

In relaying her first impressions to me of university she seems disorientated and dissatisfied with her general courses as a whole and enjoys only her Advanced Critical Skills class in which the teacher sets reading and writing assignments. She connects ACS with PP English by describing the work in a similar way: "Reading novels, doing assignments, paragraphs and so on" (SS3:1). Nevine focuses little on her language learning and use at university. Apart from ACS she does not construct her study of general courses through English as beneficial to her success as a language learner.

In this first interview after her transition to university Nevine is critical looking back at the PP. The A+ she received at the end of PP2 does not seem to mean much to her as she evaluates the level of language required as too low and the final examinations as too easy. Her overall assessment of the PP is that it is not satisfactory preparation for university:

> K: What could they (the PP) do to help you prepare more
> Ne: Improve the level of English maybe because it's very weak
>
> (Ne-SS3:2)

Her evaluation of the institution however conflicts with that of her teachers whose classes she loved. They set them numerous quizzes and essays which she herself enjoyed writing, but which others found challenging. Nevine thus assesses herself as an accomplished language learner, who learns through doing, especially through writing in English.

SS4/GELL   Sustaining an English reader and writer self

Nevine has an opportunity to talk about herself as a language learner in the SS4/GELL interview, which takes places two weeks into her first university semester. She expresses her pleasure at the amount of work set by her "wonderful teacher" in ACS who "is teaching very hard" (SS4/GELL:3): they have a homework assignment on a newspaper article, a vocabulary quiz to prepare for and an upcoming test and Nevine appears to relish all this language work in the second week of the semester. She expresses her attachment to teachers using emotional terms: she loves them and even needs to love them in order "to be able to achieve" (her notes on GELL Sheet). Her highest priority for successful language learning is 'like your teacher' but Nevine emphasises the personal, endearing qualities of teachers rather than more teacherly attributes: she wants her teacher to be "helpful and very kind and [laughs] compassionate" (SS4/GELL:1). Nevine rarely explains helpful teaching procedures, for example, while her Listening and Speaking teacher at the PP was "very lovely and she has a special way to teach" (SS3:2), she does not explain what that special way consists of.

Nevine has marked 'have a special talent' as the second most important quality (after 'like your teacher') and she explains this as: "I think to have the ability to pronounce words and difficult words and so on. Lots of the girls here don't pronounce well. It's not something they can just work on" (SS4/GELL:2). She seems to imply here that she has the 'talent' to pronounce English words in a native-like way. Nevine also emphasises the view that one also needs a special talent to be a good writer and she names her special talents as both reading and writing. However, she has to work hard on memorising new vocabulary and grammar rules, which, she says, do not rely on talent.

Nevine also presents herself as an EL1 speaker in her claim to translate from English to Arabic during our discussion of language learner qualities. It is the English word which comes to mind first.

> K: Do you think when people speak English they first of all think of it in Arabic and then translate it into English?
> Ne: I don't do that. Sometimes I'm translating but I'm translating English.   (Ne-SS4/GELL:2)

This identification with English can be traced throughout Nevine's self-presentations in the interviews.

SS5   Reaching for ideal all-round self in the US

Nevine again singles out ACS as the only useful subject at university in SS5, which occurs just before she plans to leave to continue her studies in the States, because it adds to her readiness for academic study in the US. In her email of 25/11/2012 which continues SS5, Nevine presents her imagined future self in the States as having a high enough level of English to cope with university study and in a subsequent email, as anticipating a boost to her general English language learning because "people and society there are very friendly and cooperated (cooperative)"(email-1/12/2012).

Even in SS5 when Nevine seems so disillusioned with education in Saudi Arabia, she is consistent in her positive evaluation of her PP experience, for example, she brings out the advantage to herself: "I learnt to work hard and never waste a time" (email: 25/11/2012). She explains how her favourite teacher Ms L helped

her: "she was asking about me if I'm absent. She was asking what did u miss and when do u want me to explain for u. Honestly, all the instructors were beautifully helpful" (email 01/12/2012). The teachers at the university however are "not all good" (SS5:2). This is the first time Nevine has expressed criticism of teachers. Her Computer teacher, for example, is "very very strict...difficult and boring" and this is immediately followed by her assessment of the course itself as "horrible" (SS5:2).

SS6   Resigned but dissatisfied at Sharifa

When we talk in SS6, after an interval of almost 3 months during which she was intending to leave for the U.S., Nevine puts on a brave face and covers up her disappointment at having to stay at Sharifa but her frail, washed-out appearance and her despondent account of her learning at university belies her positive comments. She presents herself as now motivated by new plans to postpone her move to the States until after graduation. She tells me that she did not score high enough in her TOEFL exam to get into a good university in the U.S. and her aim (in terms of language learning) is to take an IELTS course after six months and then sit the IELTS exam after two years. However, as a language learner in her second semester at Sharifa, there is very little of substance in her talk and even when we discuss her favourite subject, ACS, she is unenthusiastic about her learning this semester.

Nevine's need for a caring relationship with her teacher seems to affect her orientation to her courses and to the university as an institution. She presents herself as resigned to continuing undergraduate studies at Sharifa but states that she receives little support and has no positive feelings about her teachers and no contact with them or with her advisor Dr S. Her university experience is mechanically presented in terms of her schedule of classes and her 'ritual' five hours of study every night. Even her new teacher in ACS is presented as lacking the teaching skills of the previous one. Thus in spite of Nevine's brave demeanour, she communicates a sub-text of disappointment which is closely linked to the purported absence of a guiding, nurturing teacher figure.

Unrecorded Conversation   Building a new English Lit. self

Nevine's demeanour and self-presentation seem transformed in our first unrecorded conversation in the first semester of her second university year. She had already prepared me for this 'revival' in her email of 4/10/2013 in which she describes herself as "very inspired this year", her major courses as "wonderful" and her Literature teacher, who is an American, as "a gracious instructor". In our conversation, which takes place in my home, Nevine shows me a renewed, engaged self, one which communicates a language user rather than language learner identity. It seems from her comments that it is through her reading of American and British literary texts, her interaction with her teacher and her autobiographical writing that she is able to project herself and at last to talk at some length about herself and her experiences. She shows an emotional attachment to particular authors, expresses deep empathy with their life struggles and appears to assimilate something of their style and language in her own writing.

Nevine closely links her revival to her relationship with her English Literature teacher. She presents herself as one of the favoured by this teacher: while most students failed the mid-term exam and dislike the course, she attained a full mark and loves the texts "Ms B" has chosen to teach them. Nevine also performs a more discerning orientation towards teachers and courses: while Ms B is well-loved and her advisor Dr S, who was unhelpful in SS6, is now "very kind" (UnCon:1), another, the ACS3 teacher, is "horrible" (UnCon:1) because of his teaching procedures. Nevine positions herself as a member of the class who does not ask him questions: she claims that any student who does is made to feel silly. She also now distinguishes between her orientation to the teacher and to the course: for example, on looking back at her Translation Studies with Dr M in the PP, she expresses her love for the teacher but her lack of interest in his book on Translation and in the subject itself. Overall, her evaluation of the university is presented in terms of how close it might bring her to achieving her goal of pursuing postgraduate studies in the United States.

8.3.3 Student identity

8.3.3.1 Pre-transition

Nevine consistently presents herself as a person who fits easily into the role of student. Studying English Language and later studying English Literature are constructed as important, meaningful pursuits in her life context. Thus her student and language learning trajectories are closely intertwined. Although Nevine's self-presentation tends to lack development due to her brief utterances, she still comes across, in her account of her school and PP experience, as a hardworking, high-performing student who is motivated by "very successful" (SS1:3) grades.

Nevine constructs herself as a student who has aims and orientations to studying academic English and academic subjects through English that set her apart from other students. First of all she has consistent goals which feed into her motive to do her master's in the U.S. Specifically, she brings up her GPA (Grade Point Average) in almost every interview to show me her unwavering intention to maintain the level required to gain a government scholarship to study abroad. As a student in the PP classroom, however, Nevine presents herself as "distracted" by others "because maybe they are strangers and I don't know them" (SS1:3) and as slow to interact with her peers:

> K: How do you communicate with the other students in your class
> Ne: [laughs] I don't communicate all the times with them
>
> (Ne-SS1:4)

At the same time, she presents herself as an English helper to the other students, using her Arabic to explain and translate for them in class. She even expresses her preference for group work in SS1 "to exchange ideas and to help together" (SS1:4). Indeed, I observed Nevine both helping and socialising in Arabic with her group/partner in all three class activities. There appears to be a tension here between Nevine's orientation towards fitting in with her social group and her self-presentation as a student who is distinct from the rest in terms of her competence in language and her 'disaffected' future vision of self.

Nevine constructs herself as a student whose main interest is studying English and whose chosen major is English Literature. She is adamant that she rejected

Translation Studies once she found out from the PP administration that she would have to study Arabic and she continues to present herself as happily 'not a Translation student' in later interviews. When assessing her final PP examination performance, she describes all subjects as very good apart from Translation in which she reports feeling "a little bit confused" (SS3:3) in the exam.

8.3.3.2 Post-transition

Nevine's transition to university takes its toll on her presentation as a dedicated student. While still making an effort to attain good grades, she emphasises the problematic aspects of having to study new subjects in which she is not interested. Her social discomfort in the classroom also appears to intensify in her self-presentation as a student. Once she engages with her English Literature studies in her second year, however, she seems to revive as a student, and even the downsides of her account of her university study experience do not mar her overall narrative of success in our final conversation.

The first problem that Nevine brings up after her transition to university is her lack of friends: "I didn't make friends with the girls till now" (SS3:1) and her expectation that she will not make new friends in the future due to the university system of changing classes for every course. She tells me she always works on her own in class "because I have no friends right now" (SS3:4) and then in the GELL interview when I ask her if she speaks to her classmates in English or Arabic she asserts: "I didn't speak to them yet" (SS3/GELL:3). Indeed, Nevine claims throughout her post-transition interviews that she only has her few old ex-PP classmates for company. Her social discomfort in her university environment is sustained throughout and is thus an aspect which appears important in Nevine's self-presentation.

In contrast to the picture she creates of herself as a confident student in the PP, now she constructs herself as beset with problems. When we meet for SS3 at the beginning of the academic year, Nevine appears anxious and overwhelmed by the initial demands of adapting to university study. Her responses however are

understated and as usual do not elaborate on the details of her presented problem:

> K: ...And so far how do you find the classes
> Ne: I have some problems with the courses
> K: OK tell me about them.
> Ne: In the Islamic course there are some difficulties to pass.
>   (Ne-SS3:1)

She assures me that the problem is not one of language but of her reluctance to study subjects other than English: "When I choose my major I choose English because I only want to study English" (SS3:1). It seems that Nevine does not see the point of taking general courses in the freshman year and is finding certain subjects such as Biology and Arabic very difficult. Her 'nostalgia' for the teachers, classes and language tasks of the PP is reflected in her use of emotional expressions in her account of her PP period but now she expresses her disappointment "I feel I'm disappointed [small laugh]" (SS3:1) and her lonely struggle as a university student: "It (Biology)'s not very good but I'm trying to be better" (SS3:1).

However, in the GELL interview, only a few days later, she presents herself as a more engaged, hard-working student who needs "to memorize the vocabulary in all the lessons we have" (SS4/GELL:2). She recommends the best way to study as: "Revise everything you took in class. Spend a lot of time reading and writing" (SS4/GELL:3). Her effort and thoroughness comes across in one of her few accounts, prompted by me, of her study procedure:

> K: So when you go home after classes what do you usually do
> Ne: Revise all the things I took in class
> K: And what do you write
> Ne: I write when the teacher speaks
> K: You write down everything?
> Ne: Yes.
> K: Then when you go home
> Ne: I revise it   (Ne-SS4/GELL:3)

Nevine's student identity in SS5 is propelled by her vision of herself getting "the best bachelor's degree" (SS5:1) in the United States. Her sudden change in plan, to continue her undergraduate studies over there, is instigated, according to

Nevine, by her dissatisfaction with her student experience at Sharifa. She also presents herself as having a circle of friends in the States which contrasts with her expressed lack of social contacts at home. Even though our interview is conducted on Skype, I can detect her excitement about the prospect of leaving in her tone, her suppressed laughs and her facial expressions. Small Story 2 is an extract of SS5.

Small Story 2 (NeSS5:2-3) Escape narrative (Appendix D2:366-367)

Nevine's outsider status comes to a head in this narrative which she constructs as a convincing justification for her desire to abandon her university studies in Saudi Arabia and to leave for America. I am initiator and plot deviser in our exchange with short positive or negative responses put forward by Nevine and my strategies for getting her to talk more are to introduce two short narrative reports to challenge her positionings. Nevine's rather passive, brief presentation contrasts with her final agentive assertion that the life transforming decision to leave was reached by her personally.

Nevine introduces her negative picture with an understatement: "…everything's getting a little more complicated right now" (5) and goes on to stress the difficulty of her Science and Maths general courses. Surprisingly she includes Arabic as a Second Language as a difficult course for her, as if she has severed ties with her first language entirely. As I question her about different aspects of her university experience, Nevine briefly comments on her difficult courses (7-11), her lack of friends (24, 29), her aversion to certain teachers (46-49), the heavy workload (53, 55,58,60) and her disappointing results in the mid-term tests (62-63,67-68). Nevine develops a sense of detachment from her social environment which is still presented as new and strange even after two and a half months: she claims, with an ironic laugh, that she has made no new friends and only has her old PP friends, as if unable to move on socially (24,26). There is an empty space where helpful teachers once cared about her and her learning (79-80); now there is a lack of consultation with

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teachers as they are not always available (82-83). Indeed this lack of regular support is the reason Nevine gives for her decision to move to university in the States (81-86).

In terms of our interaction I tend to be the initiator of ideas and the continuer, in the sense that I input text into my inquiries with which Nevine can agree or disagree. For example, I make the link between Nevine's learning in ACS and preparation for study in the States:

> 19 K: Is that going to help you
> 20   when you go to America do you think?
> 21 Ne: Yeah absolutely

Due to Nevine's limited response, I also continually use strategies to get Nevine to talk more, such as asking her multiple questions which might allow for a more extended response (e.g. 1-3, 16-17). When I laughingly introduce a short narrative to challenge her 'no-friends' self-presentation, in which Nour reports seeing Nevine "always with friends"(28), Nevine refuses to ratify this version of her 'self': "No. It's not true, I'm sure" (29). I insist on contributing more to the plot by using the direct speech of the character, Nour, to further define my alternative narrative (30-33). Again Nevine summarily denies this (35). Here she is both describing herself as an alienated subject in her university environment and performing herself as withdrawn and non-communicative in her interaction with me also.

Nevine and I do not laugh in synchrony and there is little reflection or humour in her response. When I again use the account of another student in order to perhaps stimulate Nevine to talk more about her Islamic Studies class, she again contradicts my account. This time I refer to Alex's report that she has a problem with the Islamic teacher who "uses very difficult English words"(72). Nevine distinguishes her problem from that of her classmate:

> 76 Ne: No, when I told you I have a problem
> 77   I didn't mean with the man who teaches me
> 78   I mean the course is not good

Thus, as she does in her other small stories, Nevine carves out a different identity for herself from mainstream Saudi students who struggle with the language in academic English-medium courses. Her problem is presented as one of lack of interest in the general courses and an indifference towards most of her teachers and peers.

Nevine positions herself as agentively opting out of Sharifa: she is privileged within her sociocultural context as she has an available alternative which is not available to other Saudi female students. Nevine implies in this extract that her prospective future life and study in the States will address all the stated deficiencies of her current environment. Thus it acts as ample justification for her desire to 'escape' to America.

In SS6 she has returned for the second semester at Sharifa and Nevine constructs her 'failure' to execute her plan to continue her undergraduate studies in the States. First, she tells me that good American universities would not accept her credits from Sharifa university. Secondly, she claims that she had changed her mind about going to university in Texas and had set her sights on Harvard university but did not score high enough in the TOEFL examination to fulfil their requirements. Nevine thus presents her aims as unattainably high, perhaps in order to make her 'failure' seem more acceptable. Now she presents me with her 'change' in plan as a firm decision on her part: to graduate from Sharifa and then do her master's in the States. Nevine appears to be hiding her deep disappointment behind this positive presentation e.g. "I'm over it [smiling]" (SS6:1). My field notes on our meeting start thus: "I hardly recognised her. She looked so thin, frail, no make-up, hair pushed back behind her ears which stuck out on both sides of her emaciated face. Looked miserable with a shy smile. Feel like I have to keep things light-hearted. Decide not to record" (Ne-FN:5).

However, two and a half months into her second university year, a renewed, enthusiastic Nevine arrives at my house for our final conversation. She is back to positioning herself as a high-performing student, now claiming she achieves the

highest grades in most subjects. While emphasising the difficulty of the work, she seems self-assured now, talks more and laughs a lot. Even the account of her ACS3 teacher with his indifferent, mechanical teaching methods does not seem to phase her positive self-presentation as a student. Neither does her failure in the dreaded Statistics exam, which she has to retake, nor the "pain" of "getting value points" (UnCon:2), which she has no time for, deter her from her path to success. While Nevine communicates a sense of fulfilment as an English Literature student at Sharifa, she never loses sight of her goal: to maintain a 3.5 GPA in order to qualify for a Saudi scholarship to do her master's in the States.

8.3.4 Alienated identity

Nevine constructs herself as one who, at different times, rejects her social, cultural, linguistic, religious, educational and even family contexts. From the very beginning, she presents herself as an exceptional case due to her distinctive background, experience, aspirations and outlook. She takes on the trappings of her 'adopted' country, the United States, in food, dress and language and consistently positions herself as distinct from other Saudi, EL2 students. It is as if her living and studying in Saudi is a transient, preparation stage before her 'real' education and career in the US. At times, during the course of my data collection, Nevine even seemed alienated from the research project (and me). Nevine's written presentation gives more weight to her alienation as she develops her account in more detail in her email responses. It is only in our final conversation that Nevine seems to engage more with her local social and academic environment (and my research project).

From her informal interview Nevine presents herself as if 'in limbo': she lived in the States and yearns to go back there as soon as she graduates from Sharifa. In addition, from the point of view of her first language Arabic, as we have seen in **8.3.2,** she presents herself as a speaker of English which she claims exclusively as both her target and her appropriated language thus separating her from other young Saudi women. It is in the impromptu group (SS2) interview with her fellow students Sandra and Nour that Nevine can be seen to perform an outsider identity. First of all she has chosen not to attend the end-of-year party with

teachers and students who have brought Arabic savouries and cakes and are celebrating in a nearby classroom. She rather sits at the end of the table and throughout our discussion consumes her hamburger, fries and Coke and rarely speaks unless I address her in person. While Sandra and Nour animatedly discuss with me their concerns about university in English, Nevine takes no part in this discussion and marks a different space for herself by constructing, in few words, her future university study as unproblematic.

In the second part of the group interview I bring up the study abroad issue and Nevine takes part in a discussion with Sandra and Nour on the merits of learning English in a home or EL1 setting. As Sandra and Nour interact in an EL2 display, Nevine edges into the conversation and tells her story in Arabic using first-hand evidence to counter Nour's story supporting a study abroad argument. In response to Nour's allegation that her cousin can chat away in English after his sojourn in the States, Nevine changes footing with her rather intellectual remark: *"aḥisū hādhā* tongue *mū* education (I feel that is 'tongue' not education)" (SS2/Group-2:4). Her rather cosmopolitan codeswitching here seems out-of-sync with Nour's colloquial Arabic style. Only when Nevine seems to have lost her argument to Nour does she align herself with my suggestion that some people have a talent for languages: "yeah that's what I'm talking about right now" (SS2/Group-2:4).

Later on in the conversation in which the three girls discuss learning foreign languages, Nevine distances herself from the other two who agree on wanting to learn more languages in addition to English, as is currently common among Saudi females. Nevine insists on English being sufficient for her needs:

> S: {English now like normal language}
> No: {Some girl want to learn 4 language}
> Ne: *anā aḥis mā aḥtāj ataʿāllam lughah thanīā* (I feel I don't need
> to learn another language)　　　　(Ne-SS2/Group-2:8)

In maintaining her contribution in Arabic in discussion with Sandra and Nour, she seems to be enacting four positionings: a) positioning me outside the interaction, although for the other two I am deliberately positioned as audience by their use of EL2, b) positioning Sandra and Nour as EL2 learners and c)

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positioning herself as bilingual, in the sense that she speaks in the first language (either English or Arabic) of the person she is addressing, and d) as a more intellectual user of English, perhaps more on a par with me than with Sandra or Nour. As the conversation continues Nevine declares her dislike of Arabic study and in Small Story 3 Sandra teases her for her 'weak' Arabic. Nevine has already staved off, in an Arabic aside ("*mā titkallam* (Don't talk!) [laughs]" – SS2/Group-2:3) Sandra's earlier comment positioning her as an English speaker because she used to live in America. Thus Nevine foretells the baiting to come in Small Story 3.

Small Story 3: (Group/SS2-2:10-12) The 'Teasing Nevine' Narrative (App. D3:368-369) Although this can be seen as Sandra's narrative (see Sandra's Small Story 2) as it is she who initiates and provokes Nevine over her 'weak' Arabic, I focus on Nevine's performance in negotiating an identity 'space' for herself in relation to the other speakers. It is important to emphasise the informal nature of the meeting: although Sandra, Nour, Nevine and I discuss topics related to English, the atmosphere is upbeat and relaxed, appropriate perhaps for some lively banter.

When I invite the group to comment on the level of Nevine's Arabic (1), Sandra launches into an audacious assessment, comparing Nevine's Arabic to that of her domestic help (2). As we convulse with shocked laughter, Nevine attempts to stall Sandra's baiting: "*yā waylīk* (I'm warning you!)" (3). Sandra's provocation gains momentum as she criticises (using the third person) Nevine's Arabic speech (2), translation (4), handwriting (6) and her knowledge of Classical Arabic (14-19), leading to the hyperbolic suggestion: "…we must make a new language for Nevine and [Nour laughs] we want to make a book for this language *wāllāh* (really)"(20).

Nevine appears to take no offence to the baiting: she shares in the 'joke' and participates in the criticism, even completing Sandra's comments as if the latter is referring to someone else (14-19). Nevine even appears to enjoy her performance as 'victim' which takes on characteristics of an ancient drama with her Arabic theatrical expressions such as "*yā waylī* (I'm done for)"(11) indicating her submission to Sandra's 'onslaught'. In her almost continuous laughter and in her aiding and abetting of Sandra's critical remarks, Nevine establishes the exchange as a comedic, social 'event': at no point does she show any objection or personal affront to the criticism of her Arabic as if she does not hold the language close to her identity.

As an interactional accomplishment Nevine's 'teasing' is co-constructed by the group. When Sandra begins to slate her for her poor translation into Arabic, Nevine bursts into hysterical laughter and I attempt to be a restraining influence by remarking that Sandra also teases me for my Arabic. Nour also utters an exclamatory command: "[Laughing] =*khalāṣ* (That's enough!)"(7), in order to curb Sandra but to no avail, as the 'joke' has reached a point of no return. With a series of short dramatic lines, it rises to a peak as Sandra denigrates Nevine, who bemoans her fate (11). I make an appeal to Nour who manages quite skilfully to temper the 'onslaught' by evaluating Nevine's Arabic in a more measured way:
(13) No: No some words it's good. [All laughing still] But some words I think {maybe she's American}

Sandra acquiesces to Nour's more moderate evaluation (14) but then proceeds to plough into Nevine's 'poor' knowledge of Classical Arabic: her dramatic exclamation(18) is followed by Nevine's ratification (19) and so the comedic momentum rises once more. In response to my consequent serious instigation of her defence (21-29), Nevine puts up only a mild justification of her position as 'deficient' Arabic user: she confirms her international schooling: "… but I was in an American school an international school"(22). Interestingly, this reference to an American

school reflects back to Nour's earlier comment about Nevine:"…I think {maybe she's American}" (13) and seems to support her playful speculation about Nevine's 'real' identity. Nevine offers only a token claim of a Saudi Muslim background here: "I was studying Islamic Studies but a little bit" (28). Thus Nevine constructs herself as a student and a language learner/user who is different from Sandra and Nour in terms of their Muslim and AL1/EL2 identities and I reinforce this for the audience: "So Arabic was more like a foreign language, so of course her experience explains it" (29).

The rest of the group do not seem that interested in the 'justice' of the case, however. Sandra, perhaps harking back to my earlier comment about her laughing at my Arabic, now turns the tables on me: "OK miss but you also" (30). As a 'poor' Arabic speaker I now become the 'victim' much to the merriment of the others in the group, especially Nevine, who is perhaps relieved that she has now been replaced. I deflect the 'new' drama and refuse the position of the group entertainer especially if they are to make fun of my Arabic. Nevine and I are now both positioned in the 'outsider' camp but I am reluctant to relinquish my English researcher status.

In spite of being teased on grounds of nationality, first language and status, Nevine does not defend or assert a particular subject position in her interaction with Sandra and Nour. She seems not to construct Sandra's teasing as a serious provocation against her identity as an Arab, but as a joke, perhaps appropriate for an end-of-year spontaneous get-together. Nevine is distanced by Sandra's use of the third-person throughout her teasing and she, in turn, creates distance through her use of Arabic, melodramatic expressions.

In this group narrative Nevine occupies a different space in background, culture and ethnic affiliation from Sandra and Nour but this can be seen in her complicit response to their positioning of her rather than to any agentive self-positioning.

They both position her as 'deficient' AL1 speaker and attribute this to her 'outsider' status. Nevine positions herself as one of a growing number of Saudi students who have graduated from English-medium international schools and find Arabic study extremely challenging. As such, Nevine's self-positioning enters the ongoing debate over Arabic versus English-medium education at school and university levels in Saudi Arabia. Master discourses of young Saudis 'losing' their Arabic as a consequence of being brought up by foreign domestic workers are also evoked when Sandra compares the standard of Arabic of her "maid" (6,8) with that of Nevine.

After her transition to university, Nevine's sense of alienation to her institution and learning community seems to build further. As we have seen, she emphasises in SS3 that she has no new friends and works on her own in the classroom. This sense of alienation seems to rise to a head in SS5 when much of her performance acts as justification for her decision to move to the States and to continue her undergraduate education there.

Nevine develops a subject position as belonging to a different community. In Texas, where she intends to attend university, she has "two of my cousins and three of my friends, all of them American" (SS5:1). On a social level then, she imagines her life will be better: "I know a lot of people over there, really" (SS5:1). This contrasts with her picture of her local social life. Her sense of estrangement extends to her own family set-up: when she claims she is "happy to leave everything" (SS5:1) she includes her living arrangements: "I'm living with my mother here, so the accommodation is going to be better" (SS5:1). On my side, I am careful not to press her on family matters as her father's death and the social and emotional repercussions felt by her and her family still seem to me to loom large.

Escaping her local family and social situation can be seen as a sub-text of Nevine's plan. Only her maternal uncle in Saudi is presented as a significant other, perhaps as a father figure in her life, in an email following her SS5

interview. He has always stood up for her "in the worst circumstances" and "always gives me a hand whenever I need" (email: 01/12/2012). Another sub-text, which I read into this written presentation, is that Nevine has been through difficult times in Saudi. Her mother has not been quite as helpful as her uncle. Nevine presents her here as an atypical Arab mother who gives her "tough" advice and is "very happy" (email 01/12/2012) that she is leaving for the States.

As one who intends to uproot from her country, society, university and even family in order to follow her individual trajectory to a better life elsewhere, Nevine constructs a highly unconventional and unusual path for a young Saudi female. It is surprising that she maintains this subject position with such certainty in her email which continues SS5: "I'm very satisfied because I absolutely selected the right and best decision for my life" (email: 25/11/2012). She presents her decision to leave as a life-changing choice made freely by her without constraints or restrictions, such as economic implications or family commitments which might impede the realisation of her imagined self.

Nevine construes the society she is leaving behind as having little of value or benefit. She describes Saudi society as superficial: people only care about: "cars, parties, dresses, makeup and bla bla bla" and this displays their "real ignorance" (email:01/12/2012). She draws a pessimistic picture of the future of Saudi society and compares her imagined future in the States in naively optimistic terms, thus polarising these two imagined communities. Furthermore, she claims that Saudi society does not appreciate education and does not encourage students. American society is personified as one which "admires the education", "rise up the clever students" and is worthy of Nevine's efforts: "I want to present my education to a country that deserves what I'm doing" (email: 25/11/2012).

Nevine appears to sever her identity as a member of Saudi society as if her current educational and social context has become unhealthy and stultifying: "I don't want to waste my time here cause I'm starting feel frustrated and disappointed and I don't want to be like that" (email:01/12/2012). Not all the fault for her alienation is with Saudi society and education, however: Nevine

labels herself as "almost a withdrawn girl" (email: 25/11/2012) and as "antisocial" (email: 01/12/2012). She prefers to "stay alone in order to think wisely and I'm always like this"(email:17/12/2012). As well as presenting herself as having a 'loner' personality trait, she also describes her alienation as a failure of her individual accommodation with her society. Thus in her emails Nevine also performs a searching within herself for answers to her feelings of alienation.

In Nevine's oral account in SS6 there is very little sense of her belonging to her university environment: she claims she has no attachments to teachers and has "nothing in common with the Saudi girls" (SS6:2). She expresses her intention to 'break away' from living with her grandmother and to find her own, independent accommodation, which would be highly unusual for a single Saudi female. Nevine also solicits my help in finding her a homestay American or British family and in her application to take part in a leadership conference in the States as a representative of Sharifa University. She is not successful in any of these endeavours but they reflect her continued presentation of a young woman seeking to transcend her identity as a conventional Saudi female student.

Nevine disappears for the rest of the academic year only to emerge in the summer holiday in emails and on Facebook as a happy-go-lucky vacationer in San Francisco, with her two male cousins who "adore" her as "they do not have a sister" (UnCon:1). Her summer in the States seems to have revived her for her second year at university and to have reinforced her goals by helping her see an end in sight: "I'm gonna graduate after the next year and begin achieving my goal and my new life in the states. (email: 04/10/2013). Parallel to this 'renewal', Nevine imbues our research relationship (and our friendship) with new energy. She now bombards me with phone texts and emails urging me to meet her and visits me at my house for the final conversation of my research.

In our final conversation Nevine still looks very thin but happy and her manner is upbeat and invigorated especially when she talks about the prospect of graduating in "a year and a semester" (UnCon:1) and going to John Hopkins or a

similar university in the States. I have noted that in my estimation she is unlikely to achieve either of these, but Nevine tends always to present an ideal future self which seems unrealistic. Now that I have read an autobiographical piece of writing of Nevine's, we discuss her family relationships and she tells me that she has always had problems with her mother who was negligent "but now I am able to talk about it" (UnCon:1). Nevine offers a more balanced linguistic self-presentation in our final conversation: as a bilingual, she chats away happily with her cousins in Arabic on the phone and engages in more extensive conversations with me in English. Thus Nevine's alienated self seems to have effected a temporary compromise with her current learning and living situation.

8.3.5 Writer of English

Nevine's writer of English identity surfaces through most of our interactions and feeds into her other identities as language learner and user, as student and as outsider. It is through her writing that she presents her validation as a language learner and student and when this writer self appears suppressed, as in our interviews in her freshman year, a discontentment pervades her talk. Nevine's preference for writing leads to a change in method of data collection so that her emails become an important vehicle of written presentation. Though her more extensive written response appears more heartfelt and less mechanical than her oral one at the beginning, on further analysis it is a qualitatively different kind of presentation. As her reader self seems to catch up with her writer self in her second year, her presentation as a literary character is given full rein and a kind of fictionalised self is created through her writing.

On the other hand, this linking between her reader and writer identities also has the effect of enriching and expanding on our interaction as interlocutors. The identity Nevine claims throughout her account of learning and using English is one of writer. In her first post-activity interview she presents her Writing skill as more developed than her Speaking or Reading. Furthermore, in my observation of her working in Activity 1, Nevine acted as secretary for her group, writing the story of their role play but not acting in it herself: "The rest of the group feed in ideas. Nevine dictates and writes the scenario in English while the others try to

keep up with her" (Activity 1:14). Her attachment to English writing sets her apart from other students in the PP classroom who generally find it very challenging and need her help.

Nevine continues this focus on herself as a writer of English when reviewing her work at the PP once she is at university in SS3. As an example of Ms A's "very clever" (SS3:2) exam question, Nevine explains a writing task which was to write a whole paragraph on the subject of homelessness. As a result she comments: "Some of the students got very weak grades of course" (SS3:2), implying that she herself did well. Also when she praises Ms L's classes due to the frequent reading and writing tasks they did, she claims that she performed very well on the essays as she enjoys writing them so much. Thus, although Nevine does not discuss the writing process itself, she tends to comment on instances of her writing to show her successful language learning.

Reading has tended to lag behind writing in Nevine's account but in the GELL interview she insists that she reads and writes continually, even in her spare time. However she does not seem to challenge herself with her reading and only likes to read "easy novels" (SS4/GELL:4). This is some advance on SS1, in which she told me that she never reads for pleasure. Now she rates reading as important on the GELL sheet: "because if I do read I can learn more English" (SS4/GELL:4). This is the first time that Nevine suggests she is reading and perhaps also writing fiction.

Regarding her self-presentation in interviews SS5 and SS6, during her freshman year, Nevine's writer identity appears to become submerged in her dissatisfaction with the general courses such as Computer Studies, Statistics and Arabic which do not allow her the growth she seeks as a writer. Only ACS gives her the writing practice and techniques she sees as useful. However, her emergence as a reader of English Literature in our final conversation in her second university year does feed into her writer identity, which can now be seen to blossom in her talk and in the autobiographical pieces she has written as part of her non-fiction reading and writing course.

Nevine's emails became important sources of data particularly her post-SS5 email responses to my interview questions. She seemed eager to spend time writing her answers as if this was a source of enjoyment: in an email before her second set of answers she wrote "I love writing more than u can imagine" (email 30/11/2012). As I then questioned her further on the same points in two subsequent emails, she was able to expand in some detail on her self-presentation. While not a vocal narrator, perhaps in her writing Nevine had the time to make those literary connections which helped her create a creditable and interesting persona.

Presenting herself, her family, her aspirations through writing brought my investigation to a different level: although her tone, appearance and facial expressions were now lost, Nevine gained a new voice, a more critical, emotional voice which seemed to position me more as confidante and herself more as agent in her life choices. She was eager to send me her autobiographies so that I might see her achievements as a writer. Interestingly, she presents herself in them as an outsider to her society even when writing about her elementary school experiences. The negligence of her parents seems exaggerated in her writing and her past life is presented as a nightmarish struggle. Out of this struggle the 'I' emerges, resolute and determined to be appreciated and acknowledged as a successful writer and academic in the best universities.

Likewise, in her account of her imagined self, five years from now, which she sent me as an email attachment before our final conversation, Nevine creates a highly idealised future self to contrast with the picture of her as a miserable, isolated child. Nevine frequently uses literary turns of phrase to embellish her writing and her over-elaborate and often stilted use of metaphor and language has the effect of distancing the reader from her vision, for example: "I pass the tormented bridge to success and I completely move to a radiant terminal" (email: 26/10/2013). Writing in English has become Nevine's vehicle of expression for her glorified future self.

8.3.6 Summary of Nevine's big narratives and small stories

Throughout the interviews, Nevine develops a different ELLU and student identity from her peers in terms of her past, present and future and builds a sense of personal and social alienation which intensifies after her transition to university particularly in her email communications. While her final presentation in her second university year shows her accommodation and engagement as a literary reader and writer, Nevine still marks herself as different from other EL2 students. Furthermore, in the performance of one who rejects her local community and invents an American persona, Nevine constructs a highly unconventional role as a young Saudi woman.

While Nevine comes across as a rather flat character in her construction of identity due to the paucity of narratives and the lack of an oral performance dimension, subject positions emerge in her conversations with other EL2 learners and in her written self-presentations. In her first small story, for example, she speaks as one who engages and socialises as interpreter and explainer in a group activity and in her emails she adopts an agentive position in taking steps to emigrate which seems to conflict with her usual passive role as language learner and student. The small stories also unpack the awkwardness in our interview interactions. For example, my attempts to hook Nevine with snippets of other participant stories in her 'Escape' narrative meet with rather stony denial, suggesting that she is both resisting her role as interviewee and as member of an Arab EL2 group. In our final conversation, Nevine positions me as an older friend with a common love of literature and indicates that she is only comfortable talking to me when our interaction remains on a friendly footing.

CHAPTER 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Introduction

Combining insights from their ongoing big story and from selected small stories, this Discussion chapter seeks to bring together the main issues in terms of the identity construction of my four participants, its links to social identity and its relationship with the turbulence and struggles of the transition process. This chapter also sets the issues in the context of the identity, narrative and transition literature in the field of applied linguistics.

When language learners speak, Norton (2013:50) claims, "…they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world". As we have seen, the identities of my four participants were constantly being re-organised within their common categories of language learner and student. As language learners and students, their identity constructions and performances are shown to be closely connected to their changing investments in learning and using English and these investments can also be seen in relation to other facets of emerging identity such as gendered and ethnolinguistic subject positions.

Table 9.1 - Salient Identities in Big Narrative

ALEX	SANDRA	NOUR	NEVINE
ELLU*	ELLU	ELLU	ELLU
General Student	Student	Student	Student
Translation Student/ Future Translator	Counsellor/ Psychological Self	Social Commentator	Alienated Self
Oppositional Student	Quiet Loner	Mediator	English Writer
Family Member		Mother	

* English Language Learner/ User

The salient identity positions they took up in their accounts, in addition to those of ELLU and student, are shown in Table 9.1. These identities represent temporarily 'fixed' subjectivities which remain constant, develop or change over time and space (Block, 2007). Alex stands out from the others in that three of her main subject positions relate to her student identity, indicating a consistent focus on this aspect of her performance. Sandra and Nour root their identities as EL2 learners and young women in their societies, while Alex and Nevine can both be seen as outsiders to their learning and cultural contexts in their respective oppositional and alienated identities.

Participants' different salient identities link to their ELLU and student identities in conflicting or reinforcing ways. For example, Alex's subject position as family member can be seen to conflict with her general student identity, in that her self-positioning as student is at times compromised by family cultural constraints. On the other hand, Sandra's counsellor or psychological subject position is presented as enhancing her ELLU identity when she strives to understand English texts of a psychological nature on-line so that she may guide her 'delinquent' brother in his obsession with girls.

These salient identities are not all constant: there is a sense of chronology in the order of categories and of movement within the categories. For example Alex's oppositional student and family member identities and Sandra's quiet loner identity developed after the transition to university, as part of their renegotiation and reappraisal of self as university students. Nevine's alienated self took on a positive aspect in our final conversation, while Nour's narrated mediator identity took a downturn in the last interview. However there are also consistencies across the big identities: Nour continually positioned her daughter as the embodiment of her wished-for self and performed the role of steadfast, ambitious mother. Alex was also consistent in her self-construction as Translation student and future professional translator, although she did raise doubts over her own capabilities at the end of her final interview.

The different trajectories of participants' communicated satisfaction as language learners and English-medium students, reflected in the interview titles, can be compared in Table 9.2 below.

Table 9.2. <u>Learning Trajectories in the Big Narrative</u>

A. <u>Preliminary Programme</u>

	<u>ALEX</u>	<u>SANDRA</u>	<u>NOUR</u>	<u>NEVINE</u>
SS1	A satisfied PP2 English learner.	Finding a niche.	Taking new challenges on board with help.	Productive but detached.
SS2	Some cracks in system beginning to show.	Learning more and more.	G*- Urgent need to improve.	G - Outgrowing the PP.
SS3	I've completed the PP year but haven't moved far.	Reaching for the sky.	Moving closer to my dream.	(SS3 after transition)

* Group interview

B. <u>University</u>

	<u>ALEX</u>	<u>SANDRA</u>	<u>NOUR</u>	<u>NEVINE</u>
SS4	This boundary crossing is harder than I thought.	My Muslim identity & future concerns.	Too much on my plate now.	(SS3)Encountering problems. (SS4)Sustaining an English writer self.
SS5	Reaching dangerpoint.	Problems of the university fledgling.	Getting very hard but motivation unwaned.	Reaching for all-round ideal self in U.S.
SS6	Moving on with some strategy.	Moderate success in facing new challenges.	Still struggling to cope with the new.	Resigned but dissatisfied at Sharifa.
SS7	Rising to the challenges now.			(unrec. con.)Building a new Eng. Lit. self.

The big narrative of the participants as language learners and users are represented as somewhat similar in that they all projected a reasonably satisfied sense of self in their first interview; however, while Nour and Sandra expressed a heightened level of well-being by SS3, Alex and Nevine both indicated that they were not being sufficiently stretched in PP2. Subsequently all participants' ELLU and student identities appear to have undergone a sudden slump after their transition from the PP to university, which was critically communicated in SS4 (Nevine's SS3) and performed with varying dramatic intensity in SS5, at least two months later. The performed quest for a reparation and reconstitution of identity within the university learning community (SS6 and Alex's SS7) varied considerably between participants. As we can see, Nevine's overall presentation of her trajectory contrasts markedly with that of the other three.

These representations indicate general developments and movements in participants' presentations of learner trajectories but tell us little about the ambivalence and contradictions which formed part of their big narratives. The small stories give a more nuanced view: these narratives mark a particular turning point, change in identity presentation or exposition of a problem and/or struggle in the course of the participants' learning. The analysis of the small stories enhanced my understanding of the complex, shifting subject positions which participants navigated in interaction.

In my case study chapters I used Norton's (2013: 45) description of identity - "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" - to inform my analysis of participants' identity constructions. Norton's description comprises the referential component of participant talk: it takes in the content, the temporal aspect and the influence of larger social structures on identity work in different settings. However, it seems to leave out a whole dimension which is important to my investigation, namely the manner of presentation of content, the way in which it

emerges from the interactive context and the production of identity in the doing (Pennycook, 2001).

My study suggests that a mere thematic narrative analysis does not provide a rich enough understanding of participants' identity constructions. Through self-presentation, narrative positioning and performance devices participants communicated evaluative stances and agency, both in terms of the roles they assigned to themselves and others in story worlds and their roles as storytellers in interaction (Moita-Lopes, 2006; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). For example, through performing the duped and later angry student role in her story world in interaction with me, Alex counteracted both the deceptive voices of the PP and my enacted position as defender of the institution and created a complex oppositional identity (see Alex's 'Bad PP narrative, pp 151-153).

9.2   Relationship with English

I will first examine how participants located themselves as EL2 learners in discourses of English and then how they positioned themselves within the context of the interview. These two sections provide a frame for their identity constructions. All four participants generally expressed their affiliation to English and their commitment to further learning of the language. I found no evidence in participants' accounts of the English versus Islam and versus Arabic discourses discussed in **2.3.1** and **2.3.2**. In agreement with Kabel's (2007) response to Karmani's (2005b) vitriolic attack on English as an imperialistic language, I found that my participants gave voice to their "emergent agencies and subjectivities" (Kabel, 2007:136) in their second language, thus appropriating English for their agendas of self-presentation and resistance.

The nature and degree of their expressed affiliation seemed to depend on how they related English to their consistent or changing short-term and long-term goals and how they positioned English in relation to their 'inheritance' language, Arabic in the interactional context. Actual language use and learners' social identity constructions often contradict the assumption that ethnic groups inherit language traditions (Leung, Harris and Rampton 1997). Nevine, for

example, presented herself as neither affiliated nor expert in her language of 'inheritance' and in the course of interviews constructed and negotiated an ethnolinguistic identity of outsider.

Alex expressed an affective connection to English but, at the same time, as an ex-state school student, voiced her satisfaction with her Arabic knowledge and achievement in her claim to a future translator identity. She presented an education in English as a mark of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), leading to professional gains and the public acknowledgement of her hoped-for expertise in spoken English. Indeed, Alex's affiliation to English is constructed in her final interview, as an identification with Arab female English speakers who can disguise their inherited ethnolinguistic identities by taking on English 'expertise' identities in public (see A-'Ideal and possible self' narrative-pp 158-160).

Similarly, throughout the interviews, Nour stressed the importance of English as cultural, social and economic capital for her and her daughter and for the civilizing influence of English on her culture and community. Nour also constructed her society as in the process of becoming multilingual and, in the group interview, presented herself as aspiring to be multilingual also. Her imagined community (Anderson, 1991) of Saudi Arabia as a society is constructed as moving forward and her position is constructed as one of facilitator and mediator of its progress.

Sandra, on the other hand, presented her orientation to English as ambivalent and unstable. In the group interview she constructed the language as a stepping-stone to the learning of other languages and expressed her past dislike of English. However, in PP2 and PP3 she associated her communication in English with her newfound self-confidence and wellbeing and, as the female Japanese EFL students in McMahill's (1997, 2001) study, made positive associations between English and the voicing of her feelings and opinions. In positioning her inheritance language, Arabic, as complicated and obstructive to communication in her 'Arabic problem' narrative (see pp 168-171), Sandra

constructed the relationship between language and identity as a site of struggle and ambivalence (Norton, 2013 [2000]).

Nevine stands apart from the other three participants in her rejection of her 'inheritance' ethnolinguistic identity; at the same time, she presented an exclusive American English-affiliated 'multimodal' identity in language, dress, food and behaviour (Block, 2007) and in her depiction of her family, her future goals and her imagined identity. Although Nevine displayed her ability to converse and argue in Arabic with Sandra and Nour in the group interview, she presented herself as one in the process of developing, "a strong affiliation to and expertise in another language community" (Block, 2007:40).

These learners' investments in English can be seen as complex and unstable (Norton, 2013). When Sandra chose to project her 'spiritual' identity in SS4, for example, her investment in being a worthy Muslim seemed to supersede that of learning English. Nour also paid less attention to her investment in learning English when the key element in her survival as a university student became her ability to negotiate marks with her teachers. Likewise, Alex's act of compromise with her family culture at the end of her final interview appeared to reduce her professed investment in reaching near-native status as an English speaker and in becoming an outstanding translator. Only Nevine consistently upheld her commitment to improving her English in order to accrue the necessary linguistic capital to fulfil her imagined self at a prestigious university in the States. Thus participant identity dimensions are closely interrelated, in that language identity cannot be understood without an understanding of other facets such as constructions of religious, student or imagined identities (Block, 2007).

9.3 Developing an EL2 research relationship

My orientation to interviews as social practice in addition to their status as research instruments (Talmy, 2010) led me to view participants' accounts as shaped by our course of interactions and by the nature of our developing research relationship. In terms of the language of our interaction, my

participants were made aware that they could switch to Arabic at any time, but they all seemed to prefer to interact with me in English, as other researchers (e.g. Vitanova, 2002; Rugen, 2013) found in their conversations with their EL2 participants. Alex and Nevine hardly ever used Arabic with me; Sandra frequently peppered her English with *yaʿnī* and occasionally negotiated the English meaning of Arabic words or introduced me to Arabic terms. Even Nour gradually let go of Arabic except for Islamic expressions like *inshāʾAllāh* and *al-ḥamdulillāh.* Alex and Sandra commented on the benefits of our interaction to their growing EL2 oral competence as part of our thriving, mutually productive relationship, as they claimed to perceive it.

Nour used Arabic frequently in our pre-transition interviews and this appeared to enhance the communicative impact of our talk. She constructed our interaction from the first interview as a social encounter and in SS1 and SS2 used translingual practices as communicative and rhetorical strategies (Canagarajah, 2013) in order to inform, persuade, entertain and 'bond' with me. As such she enacted a mediator identity in her use of language, in the performance of her social identity and in her socializing strategies which drew me in and helped to align our positions. Thus Nour's big identity as mediator between her Arabic and English worlds is indexed in her role as teller in our interaction (Georgakopoulou, 2006).

Sandra also seemed to view our interview interaction as a social event and as a forum for revealing the self in her EL2. She was also the only one of the four to incorporate 'autobiographical memory' in her narrative which suggests that the reflective 'big story' genre in oral narratives may be culture-specific (Bell, 2011). As our interviews and conversations from SS3 onwards all took place outside the university context at Sandra's request, our interaction was apt to stray from the topic of formal language learning to the realm of her out-of-learning context. Thus the 'engagement site' (Georgakopoulou 2007) had a bearing on the nature of our interaction and on Sandra's self-presentation. She frequently related her EL2 learning to her family situation and even positioned me in SS3 as having an important role in her language learning as both

encouraging her and witnessing her progress. At times Sandra laid claim to the interview agenda, even, in my estimation, by pushing the limits of the research interview on religious and political matters.

Alex's expectations and participation in the interview process seemed rather different. In insisting on always talking to me in a quiet PP classroom, in restricting her talk to a close response to my questions in the early interviews and in using English exclusively, Alex appeared to construct our interviews as a serious opportunity for EL2 conversational practice. As Alex positioned herself as my cultural informant and positioned me as outsider audience, she developed an EL2 voice as critical of institutional practices and of her family culture. Her narratives became long, dramatic monologues while my role was, to some extent, reduced to that of backchanneller and sounding-board.

In this context Nevine again stands out from the other three in that she did not flourish in the more formal interview situation. Due to the dearth of storytelling in her response Nevine's case study is shorter than the rest, in spite of my broad definition of narrative as "a range of verbal utterances and interactions" (Watson, 2012:461). She tended not to give details and not to argue, discuss, narrate or joke which surprised me as I expected her to reach out to me as an EL1 speaker. Her cursory answers indicated her lack of engagement as if she found my questioning of her language learning rather intimidating. From my side I tended to use a rather rigid interviewing style with the result that our roles as interviewer and interviewee failed to develop. The awkwardness of our interview interaction comes across, particularly in SS3 (see Appendix H4). However, in the more informal group interview, Nevine did develop a narrative and an argument when debating with Sandra and Nour in Arabic. Unlike Nour and Sandra, Nevine tended to separate her use of English and Arabic, depending on the first language of her interlocutor. It seemed that Nevine looked to me for nurturing, 'expert' advice and friendship through English and at times seemed to reject a role as research interviewee.

In spite of the 'constraints' of my interview questions which positioned them as interviewees with the capacity to talk about their experiences of learning and using English (Miller, 2011), my four participants could be seen to cooperate with my agenda or to resist, extend or even replace it during the course of the interviews. Interview site was also seen to have an impact in terms of how they constructed their interviewee roles. The quality and quantity of responses seemed to depend less on language proficiency and more on expectations and framing of our interviews as particular social interactions and also on the type of person participants sought to present to me (Pavlenko, 2007). Alex, Nour and Sandra all developed a narrative response in their EL2 as an appropriate genre for identity display and dramatization and involvement strategies were seen as part of their storytelling style (Tannen, 2007; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012); only Nevine held back, indicating that she did not view the formal interview situation as appropriate for narrative performance and English conversation, in spite of my attempts to get her to expand on her responses.

9.4 Performing an identity

I now move on to discuss how participants performed their identities in the interactional context. I have used the concepts of voice and speaking position to understand the performance of identity in interviews and conversations (see **3.2.3**). The concept of voice can capture how speakers enact agency in their 'identity work' (Ribeiro, 2006) particularly through their emotional and intentional orientations. Vitanova's (2013[2005]) immigrant-participants claimed their second language voices by evaluating the world around them. Vitanova (2013[2005]) uses the Bakhtinian term 'emotional-volitional tone' to denote the "complex of one's feelings, desires, and moral evaluations" (p. 158) which makes speaker responses unique. Similarly, Thesen (1997) found that through their voices in interviews, students agentively positioned themselves within (or outside) institutional and cultural discourses of power and orchestrated their own new, complex and impassioned discourses.

Like Vitanova's Eastern European participants when they first arrive in the US, Alex and Nour narrated their critical experience of loss of voice. Alex presented

a shocked demoralized self in the new, English-medium university classroom and Nour constructed herself as a university student silenced by her teacher in her final narratives, thus dramatizing her position as 'victim' losing against the system. These emotional displays can be seen as strategies of resistance towards institutional structures. Furthermore, Alex, Nour and Sandra used humour such as the exaggerated imitation of others' voices and 'paralinguistic exaggeration' (Tannen, 2007[1987]) in order to parody characters in their narratives and to bring out their own evaluative and moral stances. The irony of Alex's voice in her comments on patriarchal confinement and Nour's ridiculing of teachers' voices through sound effects are examples of humorous performances which Vitanova (2013[2005]), following Bakhtin (1984), brings out as characteristic of second language voices of resistance.

Through their multivocality participants played multiple roles including that of interlocutor to situate themselves in the 'here and now' of the interview (Koven, 2012). Alex, for example, played a role as protagonist in the drama and as appraiser of her actions in the telling of the 'Good Islamic Presentation' narrative (pp 142-144). I would also draw attention to the strategic aspects of voice in narrative identity construction in interaction. In order to convince me that the Physical Education (PE) teacher was 'bad' with students, Nour artfully structured her 'Bad PE' narrative (pp 217-219)) in three parts: in the first two parts Nour was observer and 'animator' (Goffman, 1981) of voices but not the 'author'. In the final scene, the teacher's cold, cursory refusal in response to Nour's ultra-polite speech pleading with her to allow failing students to repeat the mid-term PE exam, drove Nour's point home to me as her audience. Then, as is characteristic of Nour's narratives, she changed 'footing' (Goffman, 1981) and in humorous alignment with me, joked at herself for choosing the PE course when most students had warned her against that particular teacher. Nour communicated a poignancy through the individual, tragi-comic tone of her voice which drew me into her story world and to her defensive position as student and language learner.

Participants took up positions both in their story worlds and in the interview context. Baynham (2006) favours the notion of 'speaking position' over voice because it captures how identity is constructed in discourse by speakers taking up certain social roles and how they are positioned by social categories beyond the local context of the interview. Alex, for example, built on the oppositional identity which she began to construct in earlier interviews and in the 'Bad PP' narrative (pp151-153), enacted her own ethnic, oppositional identity from her speaking position as disadvantaged student due to restrictions on the granting of student scholarships to non-Saudis. Using multiple, conflicting and emotionally charged voices in her diatribe against the institution to support her argument, she showed how the narrative resource of constructed dialogue "is a central linguistic tool for constructing speaking positions" (Baynham, 2006: 385). Thus, through her speaking position as enlightened opposer of the PP, she was able to give voice, in the interviews, to her ethnic struggle for acquiring symbolic capital in the wider Saudi context of inequitable social structures.

Unlike Alex, Sandra's second language voice was rarely heard in a collective, academic story world. Her learner voice tended to be private and, at times, self-motivating and even self-critical in line with her construction of a psychological self. Her individualised self-presentation might seem comparable to Elyas' (2011, 2014) findings in his study of narrative EFL identity among male Saudi students who, he claims, identified with a Western individual master narrative and viewed their language learning as an individual rather than a collective responsibility. His written student narratives, he claims, showed little conception of collective Arab or Islamic culture. In contrast, in the narrative context of our interaction, Sandra performed both the 'inaudible' Saudi female voice of Islamic conservative discourse and the strident, defiant one resisting master gender discourses and representing the voices of ambitious young Saudi women. Her speaking position also became more political (see S-'Men and women in Saudi' narrative – pp186-189).

The private voice of Sandra's frequently conflicted psychological self and her critical public voice both link to social categories of middle-class, Saudi female

as Sandra positioned herself as a confident second language speaker and informant on the gendered, political, linguistic and religious discourses of her society. However, she displayed a unique combination of conventional and rebellious voice types (Ivanic and Camps, 2001) and frequently chose to construct different, often contradictory aspects of self, thus creating a distinctive second language voice in the interviews.

Nevine's speaking position in interaction, on the other hand, seemed to emerge less from the self-presentation in her words but more through her self-positioning (and positioning by others) as distinct from the other participants and as distanced from her family, her 'inheritance' language, her learning community, Saudi society and even the research interviews. In this sense she defined herself and was defined through what she was not (Baynham, 2006) e.g. she was not a Saudi school graduate, had minimal Arabic and Islamic education and presented a different imagined self. Nevine was positioned by Sandra and Nour and positioned herself in the 'Teasing Nevine' narrative (pp262-265) as one of the international school graduates who have 'lost' their Arabic, which can be seen as part of a master ideological debate in Saudi society resulting from a subtractive view of bilingualism (van den Hoven, 2014), as discussed in **2.3.1.**

Since the 'Teasing Nevine' narrative is informed by discourses of Arabic loss it can also be seen as an example of identity constituted performatively. Through speech acts of affiliation or disaffiliation with conventionally acceptable levels of Arabic in spoken, written and classical forms which link to ethnic, educational and social status, the participants took up positions from which their subjectivities came into being. Competing discourses of maintaining or losing Arabic were provocatively and humorously worked in the conversation, particularly through Sandra's repeated accusatory jibes aimed at Nevine's weak Arabic so that the latter's identity as an Arabic deserter/quasi American was invoked.

To sum up, my study suggests that the concept of second-language voice is an important one, particularly in the delineation of my participants' 'moving'

identity as second language learners/students in their story worlds and in their interviewee roles. However, an understanding of participant 'speaking position' (Baynham, 2006) is also important in order to view participant identity in relation to their social worlds, as they positioned themselves as supporters or resisters of dominant discourses in interaction. All four participants built, in outspoken or subtler ways, second language speaking positions and voices of resistance to others (including me), to the institution or to their social and cultural contexts, reflecting tension and conflicts between self-positionings and their positioning by wider social discourses.

They also built on earlier voices and reinforced or counteracted earlier speaking positions. As noted by Barkhuizen (2010) and Rugen (2013), who conducted a narrative positioning analysis of student teachers' small stories (see **3.2.2.2**), considering small stories in relation to previous stories and in the context of the long-term big narrative helps to make sense of participant discourse. Similarly, Baynham (2006) argues that interpretation of participant discourse not only takes place in the immediate context but in the accumulation of meaning across contexts. For example, the collective, ironic student voice of Nour's 'Bad PE' narrative (pp217-219) gives way to the lonely performance of her predicament in the 'Bad CS' narrative (pp220-223) so her failed negotiations with the teacher became a more tragic story of loss of voice. Her discourse of self-justification, humiliation then powerless acceptance of the CS teacher's unfair positioning of her as lazy, played a crucial role in the emergence of her subject position as a marginalized university student struggling to claim legitimacy in her learning community.

9.5 Constructions of past, present and future EL2 identities

As expected, participants constructed multiple, shifting identities in their accounts of language learning and studying at an English-medium institution. The semi-structured interviews marked stages along each participant's 'learning career' (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000). Participants reconstructed their past and present learning experiences and identities from new vantage points along the way and their future selves through the construction and

reconstruction of imagined selves as members of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991; Kanno and Norton, 2003). While referring to identity positions and identity changes in their accounts, participants also enacted various 'displays' of identity at different stages of their learning careers in which new subject positions emerged and old ones were reconstituted. I will examine participants' self-presentations across their learning careers in order to bring out both the continuity and fluidity in identity constructions.

Overall, Nour and Alex constructed themselves as agentive learners and students, with a 'person-to-world' orientation (Bamberg, 2011), whereas Sandra and Nevine positioned themselves as more passive learners and thus projected a 'world-to-person' orientation. However, the playing out of the 'agency dilemma' (Bamberg, 2011) was seen to be unstable. Nevine, for example, presented both her impending move to the States in SS5 and her revised plan to delay her move until after graduation in SS6 as her own strategic, independent decision-making. Sandra frequently presented herself as a quiet, passive student but in superimposing her EL2 agenda in the role of 'self-as-Muslim' (see 'Muslim' narrative –pp177-179), claimed a forceful imagined religious identity overriding my inquiries about her academic and professional ambitions. Furthermore, the professed fatalism in Alex's and Nour's accounts of future selves seemed to reduce the sense of agency in their accounts. These examples point to the inconsistency in presentation as victim or agent in participants' accounts and the indeterminacy of their identity positions in this regard.

As a stage in their language learning careers, Alex, Nour and Sandra presented their current PP learning as a personal, educational and social investment, in contrast with their past language learning at school, whereas Nevine's long-term goals affected her orientation towards the PP as a limited source of cultural or linguistic capital. My four participants presented themselves to me mostly as committed past English learners, which in three cases (Alex, Sandra and Nour) caused them to stand out from their school peers but their English learning 'baggage' was constructed as a stumbling block to further learning. With some exceptions, these three constructed their school English teachers as uncaring, disaffected and even

cynical. As PP students however, Alex and Nour presented themselves as EL2 language learners who sought collective identities as engaged members of their learning communities, whereas Nevine positioned herself as different from her EL2 group especially in the group interview. Sandra constructed herself as an individual basking in her rich PP2 learning experience. In addition, seeds of later identity positions were sown in early interview accounts of PP learning: for example, Alex's frequently expressed desire to work with higher-level students anticipates the process of her later social and academic integration at university. This 'foretelling' enhances the coherence of participant accounts across interviews.

In moving me away from their academic contexts to talk about themselves as members of their families and societies, Sandra and Nour constructed their language learning as part of a wide cultural discourse. Alex and Nevine, on the other hand, chose to construct themselves as serious, high-aiming students with consistent long-term personal goals. As Duff (2010) contends in her study of socialisation into new L2-mediated communities, learners' membership of primary communities, such as family and friends, or their engagements with individual and social future goals, affect their participation and engagement in new learning communities. Alex's commitment to her academic community is reflected both in her big student-related identities and in the majority of her small story settings. Nour constructed herself as an accruer of social and symbolic capital through her investment in language learning and university study whereas Sandra constructed herself as an individual who enjoyed communicating in English, was a counsellor/adviser to her fellow students, family and friends, but was not consistently committed to her academic learning community.

In the small stories emerged subject positions which problematized the coherence of the bigger narrative. We have seen how Sandra positioned herself as Saudi/Muslim female-as-agent in two small stories which clashed with her continual self-presentation as a quiet, passive student and person. In Nevine's first small story (pp244-247), and in my observation of her working on the first activity, we saw her emerge as engaging and socializing with her group in her

position as Arabic-English interpreter and explainer which conflicted with her continual self-presentation as socially and linguistically alienated. Alex presented herself consistently as an agentive language learner and student but in her 'Bad incident in the bookstore' narrative (pp144-146) she artfully absolved herself of agency and lost herself in the 'collectively guilty' act and in her 'Bad PE' narrative (pp135-137), she cast Nour as her alter-ego directly confronting the teacher to redress their student grievances.

Nour is agent/negotiator/mediator throughout her narratives until her final 'demise' in the 'Bad CS' narrative (pp220-223). However, in our post-transition 'backstage' conversations she presented a conflicted, incapacitated self as her 'external' identities threatened her survival as student. Thus participant self-presentations in interviews can be seen as shows to persuade audience(s) in social interactions (Goffman, 1959) and through the negotiation of these self-presentations, participants build a sense of a coherent self (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). However, this coherent self is at times challenged by subject positions which emerge in narrative performances and in backstage conversations. Participants as social actors in backstage settings can express other aspects of self, perhaps not appropriate for more public performances (Goffman, 1959). Recorded interviews can be seen as 'frontstage' interactions as their audiences can be extensive: both Sandra and Alex expressed a desire in our informal conversations to be 'known' by an outside audience through the publication of our interviews in my thesis.

9.6 Transitional Identities
9.6.1 Transition to university
Learning transitions to higher-level institutions in a learning career "cannot be understood without consideration of the way the learner constructs their identity and how this changes over time" (Scott et al, 2013: 8). There are commonalities in participants' accounts, such as the initial linguistic and academic 'shock' of the university classroom for Alex and Nour and the pressures of social and academic integration for all four participants. On the other hand there are also variations in identity shifts and in new subject

positions taken up as they enter and participate in a new community with its own rules and practices (Wenger, 1998).

While transition to university was constructed as an emotional, social and academic upheaval by all four participants, they told different stories of transition and performed their tellings with varying degrees of dramatic intensity. The educational transition literature, which investigates mostly home student perspectives of transition to university in English-speaking countries (e.g. Peel, 2000; Beard, Clegg and Smith, 2007; Yorke and Longden, 2008), tends to emphasise the social challenges, such as forming peer networks and quality relationships with teachers. Beard et al (2007) also bring out the enormous emotional upheaval of transition as expressed in participants' written responses. These student accounts on transition to university in EL1 settings emphasise similar challenges to those brought out by my participants, such as the impersonal university setting and pressures to work independently. Alex and Nour, however, dramatized the linguistic challenges with a similar intensity to those in Malcolm's (2013) study of Arab medical students at an English-medium university in Bahrain.

Transition to Sharifa University was not presented by participants as the cultural 'border crossing' which Hatherley-Greene (2012) constructs to describe the transition of Emirati students to their English-medium university. Sharifa University is less of a 'Western' environment: most faculty members are Arabs and most non-Arab, expatriate faculty are Muslim. Alex's accounts refer to translingual practices in the classroom and teachers' acceptance of limited use of Arabic on assessments, thus modifying the English-medium learning context. However, participants did not present Sharifa University as providing the easy familiarity and nurture which they associated with the PP. Holden (2015) suggests that a strong sense of 'cultural belonging' is an important factor contributing to academic integration (see **3.4.3**.) but my participants tended not to construct themselves as valued members of the Sharifa University community in spite of the common cultural background of faculty and students.

Both Alex and Nevine foregrounded the problems of social integration in their initial accounts of transition. Nevine repeatedly referred to her lack of friends. Alex performed a dramatic, emotional loss of identity in her SS5. Similarly to Malcolm's (2013) students, who expressed feelings of intimidation at attending lectures with international school graduates, she constructed a collective, embarrassed silence among her ex-PP peer group in the university classroom of proficient EL2 students and a destabilization of self as student and language learner. Similarly, in their study of beginning master's students in transition in the UK, Scott et al (2013:57) found that many students "described 'peaks' and 'troughs' in their feelings of confidence" and used phrases such as "an emotional rollercoaster" and "a crisis of confidence" to express these. As an EL2 learner Alex performed her emotions (Zembylas, 2003) using simple language but gained her effects through a build-up of negatives which reduced her actions and her very self to 'nothing' (see A-SS5-Appendix H1). Her frequent use of intensifiers and ironic laughter both displayed her current evaluation of the narrated event and connected her to the interactional here-and-now (Koven, 2012).

Alex's consequent failure in the PE mid-term exam led to a further trough in her learning career which, with her excellent school and PP credentials, was performed as a blow to her student identity. Like Malcolm's (2013) first-year medical students, Alex now had to settle for a diminished status as an average achiever. However, the critical nature of Alex's exam failure and her positioning of the 'bad' PE teacher are called into question when, shortly after, she enthusiastically described interesting group work in later PE classes with the same teacher. This sudden reversal drew my attention to the transience and the fragility of instantaneous narrative positionings in the small stories.

Alex's performance of incapacitation after transition was the most dramatic and emotional of the four participants. While Alex and Nour constructed their transitions as a collective striving to join a new learning community, Sandra constructed her transition as that of an individual learner; a transition in which she must learn to deal with increased responsibilities, expectations and commitment;

in other words, her transition was constructed as a maturation process within the university context. Unlike Alex and Nour, Sandra did not come forward with any strategies for meeting social and academic demands and, as Nevine, did not look to her peers for support or collaborative learning. Indeed, Sandra's 'Apathetic disposition' narrative (pp196-197) can be seen as both a withdrawal into self to escape the social challenges of transition and as a long-term psychological disposition.

Both Alex and Nevine performed an escape narrative in SS5 as outlet to their transition identity trouble which they also linked to their imagined identities: Alex considered a more creditable student status in the less socially restricted environment of Jordan and Nevine longed for a more nurturing social milieu as a student in America. In both narratives Alex and Nevine positioned their outsider selves in imagined communities which promised a better life. Neither provided a 'real' solution however and both finally accommodated to their local learning context. Sandra, from her part, performed symbolic escape narratives, first into her identity position as Muslim and then into herself as anti-social individual. Nour also retreated into her stable identities as mother, as family breadwinner and status seeker in our informal conversation soon after transition. She also presented, now with heightened urgency, her intentions to travel and study abroad. It was social, cultural, academic or economic structures which were presented as impeding participant movements out of the country: Sandra had no male guardian to accompany her abroad, Nour could not afford to travel, Alex feared family commitments in Jordan and Nevine found it too difficult to gain a place at a renowned American university.

As persistent 'activist' and negotiator in her encounter with social and institutional structures, however, Nour took up an agentive subject position in her fast-paced account showing her determination to cling to her university student status. She demonstrated the importance of teacher-student negotiation of grades and how the management of social relations and mediation was a vital part of her performance as a 'novice' university student. Malcolm (2013) also found that due to their previous experience at school, many Arab students still

considered the awarding of marks as open to teacher-student negotiation at university. Scott et al (2013) emphasise that learning transitions require a negotiation with university tutors and other staff, especially since learners bring with them experiences from past learning contexts. Teacher-student negotiation, which led to successful outcomes in previous learning contexts, needed to be reconstituted at university and these changes of strategy necessitated a shift in learner identity. As Morita (2004) found in his study of learners' socialization into new academic classrooms, negotiating identities and roles was a major part of this socialization process.

9.6.2 Constructing a university student identity

In addition to the reconstitution of roles, an important part of joining a new learning community is negotiating and agreeing with new learning practices and arrangements which are not static but changing (Scott et al, 2013). In her 'Bad CS' narrative, for example, Nour showed her resistance to the practice of teachers enforcing deadline penalties and of coercing students to work in groups on their projects. She displayed a problematic assimilation of university rules and practices which is similar to what Hughes (2010) calls 'operational identity incongruence' with a new learning group or community. Nour declared a change in herself as no longer wanting to work in groups and used her narrative performance to support her declared stance. However, in the conversation following the narrative, she proceeded to show her delight and relief in the collaboration with ex-PP students allowed in Psychology. This contradiction in self-presentation suggested to me that her struggles emanated from a continued need of peer (and teacher) support in her university studies in a more nurturing learning environment.

Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) found that critical turning points in learning careers lead to reappraisals of self in new ways (see **3.4.4**). After their initial efforts to navigate their transition to university, Nour's student identity took a downhill turn in terms of her engagement and belonging to her learning community (Wenger, 1998), while Alex created a new identity as a novice member of a university learning group. The lonely victim stance of Nour's 'Bad

CS' narrative marked a critical turning point which contrasts with Alex's critical turning point in SS6: Alex performed a daring, effective second language voice in the university classroom showing her beginning to successfully take on new operational and linguistic practices (e.g. A-'Good Islamic presentation' narrative, pp140-142). However, in this small story the tenuousness of her position as novice member came to the fore in Alex's performance.

Alex presented herself as the most strategic and active of the four in dealing with linguistic and academic challenges. In order to model her learning on the more advanced university students and to join their collaborative working groups, she took on new subject positions as social climber and risk-taker within her university community exemplifying how "student identities are formed and reformed throughout the transitional process" (Scott et al, 2013:74). Alex was the only one to present herself as actively seeking to move out of the ex-PP social group and join her new university learning/discourse community. Nour, Sandra and Nevine, on the other hand, still presented themselves as members of their ex-PP community, even in SS6, without the ability or willingness to make new learning relationships in their university 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998).

A learning career perspective views academic activity as inherently social (Scott et al, 2013) and Alex showed that, in making new social relationships within her university community and in 'daring' to learn through interaction with more proficient students, she constructed her path to linguistic and academic progress. Alex identified key transitions in her strategy of modelling her learning on that of advanced groups: from memorising to understanding, from writing notes in Arabic to note taking in English and from translating study material into Arabic to 'manipulating' her EL2 for class presentations. These transitions suggest that Alex was negotiating knowledge-related congruence with new learning groups (Hughes, 2010) (see **3.4.7**) through learning appropriate uses of academic discourse from her interactions with 'expert' students (Duff, 2010).

In her account of the acknowledgement of the 'expert' students of her progress in understanding, Alex implied that, as 'novice', she had been granted legitimacy by her learning group and that her former 'stumblings' had become opportunities for learning rather than cause "for dismissal, neglect or exclusion" (Wenger, 1998: 101). Nour, on the other hand, narrated her experience as non-participation and positioned her peers and some teachers as not granting her the legitimacy to be treated as a potential member (Wenger, 1998). Hughes (2010) argues that individuals must reconcile their learning identities to their wider social identities such as their socioeconomic status. Hughes' (2010) concept of identity incongruence can help explain Nour's inability to gain peripheral status, as her lower social class and state school background seemed to hinder her social, operational and knowledge-related adjustment to new learning groups at a private university.

As Alhawsawi (2013) found in his study of the sociocultural context of Saudi students, families with low socioeconomic status did not provide students with the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) required to engage with the linguistic demands and the different teaching approaches and practices of an English-medium university. While Nour displayed agency in acquiring cultural capital through out-of-class learning, social networking and seeking regular support, in her final small story and her backstage confidences, she presented a vulnerable, failing student self. Furthermore, narratives of learning should be understood in relation to experiences outside the learning context which impact on learners' changing dispositions (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000) and I would point to economic factors and family pressures as negative influences on Nour's learning career, especially after transition.

Viewing identity construction as 'balancing the self' across communities of practice, with some more central than others (Preece, 2009), helps explain Sandra's self-presentation as a student who is not fully invested in becoming socialised into her academic community (Duff, 2007). Nevine, also, continues to present her lack of engagement with her present learning community due to her commitment to her alternative imagined community. Furthermore, like

Thesen's (1997) students, who at times invested more in their own social lives rather than in their academic identities due to their alienation from the university curriculum, Sandra, Nevine and Alex also showed resistance to the university system of studying general subjects for life-long learning in the freshman year, when they had previously associated university learning with study for their majors.

To sum up, social integration in these case studies appears to be an important feature of successful transition, facilitating both academic and linguistic engagement in order to meet university standards and to participate in new learning practices. Hughes (2010) emphasised that students in transition have to continually negotiate and renegotiate their identity congruence with new learning groups. However, contrary to Hughes' findings, which prioritized knowledge-related congruence, it was social integration, in terms of making new relationships and interacting and working with new learning groups, which appeared to lead to the construction of operational and knowledge-related congruence..

A narrative of identity transformation was seen to be an important aspect of transition. Alex took on emboldened subject positions which related to her previous self-presentations of active and collective ELLU and student identities but contrasted with her earlier reticent, cautious narratives of self and observed classroom behaviour. While still not a confident, settled-in member of her learning community, in the interplay between being positioned by the structures and demands of the university and her "actively constructed, contested and negotiated" (Taylor, 2007) identity as a university freshman student, she positioned herself as well on the way to claiming membership.

On the other hand, Sandra's counsellor/psychological self and Nour's mediator/negotiator self did not flourish in the university context and there was insufficient indication in our final interactions that they were taking up more participatory subject positions. Nevine did perform a new emotional and academic engagement in her Literature studies in our last conversation, which gave rein to

her English writer and imagined identities, but there was little mention of peer relationships or engagement with university practices so, in this sense, her identity as a Sharifa student availing herself of temporary benefits to her learning career remained peripheral.

9.7 Imagined communities and imagined identities

In their narratives of future self all four participants projected roles and identities for themselves which connected to presentations of their past and current selves and reflected their ongoing hopes, desires and aspirations. As language learners/users they showed varying engagements with their university community, but they also made connections with future imagined communities (Anderson, 1991; Kanno and Norton, 2003) indicating that the concept of learning career might best be stretched to future identity projections, as well as constructions of past and present identities. Alex's consistent sense of belonging to her Translation 'department', for example, figures in all stages of her identity trajectory, both in discursive situations as told and in her self-positionings in interviews.

Although terms such as 'ideal self' and 'ought-to self' (Markus and Nurius, 1986) are useful descriptors of future self-projections, I found the link between ideal self and motivation to be complex and unstable in the accounts of my participants. Concepts such as 'ideal self' and 'possible self' can be more usefully applied to individuals in specific social and cultural contexts and situations of telling rather than as psychological models of self-motivation. Discourse curtailments in participant accounts of future selves in the final interviews, for example, drew my attention to the distance Nour, Alex and Sandra were creating between their imagined and current identities. Alex emphasised that she was 'now' telling me only what she wished for, implying that it was unlikely to be realised; Sandra tempered her account of living alone with prohibitive family expectations; and Nour kept repeating her motif of 'I can't now but maybe later *inshāʾAllāh'.*

The concepts of 'imagined community' and 'imagined identity' (Norton, 2013) more effectively explain participants' changing investments in language learning and their performances of future selves. In her final interview, for example, Alex presented her aspirations to become a member of an imagined community of Arab near-native English speakers and presented membership of this community as the culmination of her language learning career. Thus Alex's imagined community here is one which straddles both her language learning community and the outside world of Arab English speakers. She further developed her future self as English user as publicly admired and also as acknowledged for her outstanding translation work. However, Alex's subject position as member of her Palestinian community in her final small story (A-'Ideal and possible self' narrative pp158-160) curtailed her account of imagined identity. Possible selves can reveal the inventive, creative self but also reflect the extent to which the self is socially constrained (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Alex seemed to revert to a kind of 'default self', one perhaps that she was expected to become (Dörnyei, 2009) in line with her family culture. Her Palestinian husband would expect her to work from home so Alex would integrate her professional translator identity with that of wife and mother. Thus Alex's imagined identity enacted a compromise, in her final narrative, between her imagined community of the 'cream' of proficient English speakers and translators at university and her ethnic and cultural community.

Similarly, Nour related English closely to her future imagined self in her career narrative as interpreter and in her expressed desire for her daughter to attend an international school. In spite of Nour's account of her struggling identity as a university student, she resists a position as failing student through her desire to be part of an imagined community (Darvin and Norton, 2015). Nour imagined herself as an educated, professional member of her society and a modern, middle-class Saudi woman. Both Sandra and Nour constructed themselves as members of a changing Saudi society; in that sense they made claims to a national identity as an imagined community (Anderson, 1991), in which as individuals we "imagine ourselves bonded with our fellow citizens across time and space" (Norton, 2013:8). Nour's imagined identity was constructed as an

effective linguistic resource for her family and by extension for her people by mediating for them through English. Her hopes and desires for further study in English and higher social status are presented as compromised not by family constraints as much as by economic hardship. Her continual reminders to me of this in her 'Daughter's future' narrative (pp236-238) point to the unreachability of her imagined self.

Like Nour's, Sandra's imagined self was rooted 'here' but not consistently as a member of an imagined community: at times she identified with her Muslim or Arabic community, but each time it was an individualized version that she performed. In some future narratives she imagined herself living far away from her family in her own private home, which she constructed as a microcosm of her future world. In her professed desire for female privacy she positioned herself through the "construction of an idealised individuated home" (Taylor, 2010:133). She also imagined opening her own office as a successful, independent translator. However, family constraints, particularly marriage expectations, reduced the wished-for self to a more possible, or 'default' one. Sandra had presented herself as opposed to her family's wishes, but, like Alex, finally compromised with married life and presented her imagined self as working from home and helping her husband with his translation queries.

In contrast, Nevine's imagined self would live, study and work in an idealised social environment which was her imagined community in the States where she expected to be valued and appreciated as a student and as a professional. This imagined identity zooms in and out as Nevine presented herself on the brink of realizing her imagined self in the States in SS5 but then in SS6, when her plans were thwarted, she constructed distance between her actual and imagined selves. Nevine's written account of her future self in five years' time is over-idealised to such a degree that its link to her present self seems to hang on a very fine thread. In it she narrated her future accomplishments as if there were no question of failure. Even as the manifestation of Nevine's identity as a creative writer, it is too elaborate and stylized. Then, in our final conversation,

Nevine presented her study and life context to me as quasi-American, as if modelling her immediate context on her imagined one.

By exploring the subject positions which the four project onto their future selves, we can see that "imagination is an integral part of ongoing identity work" (Block, 2007:20), in which the self is expanded to create new self-images (Wenger, 1998). Nour aspired to become a member of the educated middle classes through her English education and Sandra defined and re-defined her future identity as pious, charitable Muslim, as committed student, as successful career woman etc. so that there was less sense of a consistent, dynamic imagined identity. Alex's imagined self reached the culmination of her Translation student identities and of her English user self. Nour, Sandra and Alex projected their future higher status selves as living in perhaps a more globalised and multilingual Saudi Arabia but performed imagined identities which were, in the end, rooted and compromised by their social, economic and cultural context. Only Nevine projected her ideal self as living, studying and working outside the local context and constructed an imminent imagined identity. Thus we can see that affiliations with imagined communities, as Norton (2013) emphasises, have a huge impact on participants' investments in learning and on their learning trajectories and, I would add, on the performance of their future selves.

9.8 Social identity
9.8.1 Membership of social groups
In their accounts my participants took up subject positions as members of social groups and communities through the content of their talk and through their linguistic, narrative and interactional discourse choices (De Fina, 2006).
Alex, for example, performed a collective language learner and student identity as state school graduate, as PP learner and after transition to university, as a member of a disgruntled ex-PP group. Then, as we saw, she presented herself discursively working with more advanced university students thus claiming peripheral membership (Lave and Wenger, 1991) of new university groups. Even Sandra, in her projection of self as a 'curious', individual psychological case, still claimed

membership of a community of young Saudi women with agendas of personal and professional improvement. Nour also tapped into local middle-class discourses of female advancement in her narratives but Nevine, in her projection of an alienated identity, positioned herself as outside these wider discourses.

All four demarcated their social groupings in interaction, particularly in their positioning of me as a cultural outsider. Thus performances of ELLU and student identity, particularly in the small stories, can be seen as closely linked to gender, religious, ethnic, ethnolinguistic and social class subject positions. Furthermore, these subject positions are implicated in the development of congruent identities with groups and communities (Scott et al, 2013). This suggests that identity transformations in participants' accounts of their learning careers should be seen in the context of their self-positionings as members of social groups. However participants were also seen to resist social and community practices and ideological master narratives in order to create new discourses of identity for themselves.

9.8.2   Religious identity

In relating the construction of identities to wider social categories, there is also a question of participant's choice of membership category. As we saw in **2.1,** one's Muslim identity is accorded great significance in dominant discourses of what it means to be a Saudi, or an Arab Muslim living in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, one would expect participants to project this aspect of social identity in their accounts. Surprisingly, only Sandra chose to present her Muslim identity (particularly in her Small Stories 3 and 5) and to relate it to herself as language learner and as human being. It is understandable that Nevine uses her deficiency in Islamic education as a mark of social alienation and perhaps Nour's claim to an identity as mediator makes a Muslim self-projection inappropriate in the context of our interaction. However, it is difficult to explain Alex's dismissive orientation to Islamic teaching and discussion at university. Interestingly, in her 'Good Islamic presentation' narrative Alex showed no interest in the Islamic content of the class and focused solely on her subject position as novice university student.

Sandra, on the other hand, retreated into her Muslim identity for almost the whole of SS4, the first interview after transition, and avoided responding to my questions about her initial university experiences. In her construction of religious identity Sandra's performance in her 'Muslim' narrative (pp177-179) can be seen as agentive in her orchestration of multiple Islamic discourses. At the same time, similarly to Thesen's (1997) South African participant, Robert who instructed her on his religion, Sandra constructed her Muslim identity in relation to me as a white non-Muslim 'other'. She did this both through her didactic Islamic/Arabic discourse and in her self-presentation in our interaction as enlightened, outward-looking Muslim. Her subject position as a Saudi Muslim woman also emerged in her 'Islamic class' narrative (pp188-190) in which she positioned herself among those who disapprove of recording women's voices and showed her engagement in the content and method of Islamic teaching. Sandra took on a footing as 'principal' (Goffman, 1981) rather than 'animator' in her self-presentation in this small story.

It could also be argued, from a performativity perspective, that her subjectivity as a young Muslim woman emerged from Islamic discourses of the female voice as *'awrah*, of female dependence and of male guardianship which she invoked in her accounts. It seemed to me that, as well as being positioned by wider ideological discourses, participants also made strategic choices over which aspects of social identity to prioritize in interaction and invoked local roles as part of their negotiation with their interlocutors (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012).

9.8.3 Gender identity

It was in their gendered self-positionings that participants displayed both their individual voices of resistance as well as their silencing by others as female language learners, students, family members and young Arab women living in Saudi Arabia. Gender subject positions emerged in the small stories, although they also appeared as a subtext running through the big narratives. Nour, for example, did not refer to her identity as a young Saudi female as such, but in her self-positioning as heroic survivor, as supporter of her family, as single mother and in her expressed desire for continued independence for herself and her daughter, carved out a 'counter' female role which did not conform to

conventional "socially constructed notions of femininities and masculinities" (Block, 2007: 43). Furthermore, through the ongoing matrilineal discourse of nurture and aspiration to know the 'other', brought out in Nour's 'Earth dream' and 'Daughter's future' narratives, her subjectivity as 'feminist' mother came into being.

Alex and Sandra, on the other hand, appeared to conform to ascribed Islamic dominant discourses in their repeated acts of identity as dependent females, although the tensions between their accounts of personal, academic and professional goals and their positioning by ideological discourses of gender emerged in their small stories. Their identities as Arab young women were performatively constituted by their references to family insistence that they prioritize marriage over study and career. The marriage versus study opposition, as patriarchal discourse, came to the fore in their accounts and, while they contested them by positioning themselves as eager students and future professionals, in their final accounts, both Alex and Sandra seemed to effect a compromise with their family and culture over the marriage question. However, while not expressing subversive attitudes towards patriarchal discourses, like the Arab Bedouin women in Abu-Lughod's (2008[1993]) anthropological study, Alex and Sandra used conflicting voices and humour in their accounts which could be seen as contributing to "the undoing of patriarchy" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009: 88).

As Moita-Lopes (2006) shows in his study of discourses of masculinity and femininity in a focus group discussion in a Brazilian classroom, narrators often use their own and their characters' voices to convey positions which they might not openly assert as their point of view. In her 'Jordan' narrative (pp 154-156), Alex used constructed speech to give voice to her oppositional stance towards gender discourses, which she performed as in conflict with her study aims. Her father's commanding patriarchal voice, ordering his family to fulfil obligations and preventing them from 'straying' from female spaces, drowned out her own dissenting one. In her plaintive appellation of gender: "Oh it's hard/very hard for me because I'm a girl" (64,65), Alex both bemoaned her imagined enforced

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role as caregiver of her grandparents while studying in Jordan and also provided me with a reason for her decision not to move there. Patriarchal discourses would demand a much higher toll on her study time as a granddaughter than they presently did on her brother's as grandson.

Like the sister in Moita-Lopes' (2006) study, Alex's mother was not given a voice in the narrative but was the one entrusted with Alex's confidences; Alex never directly confronted her father in the narrated event but our ironic co-reflections suggested her oppositional stance towards gender discourses. Her sad final statement in the 'Jordan' narrative:"It's here in home/It's there in home" can also be seen as a performative speech act in that it names what it purports to be, that is the social exclusion of Arab women. The sense of resistance comes through in the ironic use of parallelism.

Surprisingly, Alex's self-presentation was one of an Arab woman who is more confined to 'female' spaces than the Saudi participants: Sandra, Nour and Nevine frequently positioned themselves in public settings. We saw in **9.4** how Sandra performed the strident, resistant gendered voice in her 'Men and women in Saudi' narrative (pp186-189), by contrasting in hyperbolic style the indifferent voice of apathetic men with voices of assertive goal-driven women. Her essentialised, polarised exposition of Saudi gender is entertaining but it can also be seen to reflect local gender divisions (see **2.2.1**). This discourse of acute gender differentiation is brought out in both Sandra's and Nour's accounts: men are characterised as lazy and lacking in drive, while women are more committed and more motivated learners. Such 'brought along' (Baynham, 2015) gendered identities can be seen in relation to discourses of female academic and professional achievement in Saudi Arabia.

Sandra also constructed identity through opposition (Baynham 2006), by positioning herself as one of the ambitious women vociferously counteracting the voices of patriarchal male relatives urging her to prioritise marriage over her studies. However, in the same interview, Sandra positioned herself as the conventional, publicly inaudible Muslim woman in her 'Islamic class' narrative

(pp190-192). While these contrasting gender discourses may seem contradictory, they bring out Sandra's agentive second language voice in interaction as she merged with some discourses and resisted others (Thesen, 1997).

The link between gender identity and language learning, which Norton (2013) emphasises in her study of immigrant women's language learning experiences in Canada, was also shown in several participant accounts. Sociocultural discourses of increasing tertiary study options and rising professional opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia (see **2.2.2**) influenced participants' investments, desires and imagined selves. Nour's own aspirations to work in the king's council or in a Saudi embassy abroad were brought up in her SS3 interview in a wave of self-confidence but they also reflected growing 'feminist' discourses of creating higher-level posts for women (see **2.2.1**). In her 'Daughter's future' narrative (pp236-238), in her final interview, Nour closely related an English education to her daughter's future independence, success and happiness. Her vision could be seen as controversial in terms of conservative Islamic ideologies but it also indicated, in the context of Nour's narrative of a progressing society, that she was keying in to discourses of female advancement in urban areas of the country. Interestingly, Nour's ambitions for her daughter's future 'emancipation' contrast with the lack of parental support and solidarity presented in all four participant accounts of their learning careers and their imagined identities.

Contrary to the other three, Nevine did not project herself as a member of her sociocultural community. As a young Saudi woman she gave and gave off characteristics and orientations to the world which seemed highly unusual: she discussed her background, family and future opportunities as completely out of sync with conventional Saudi female roles. In her professed ignorance of Islam, her seeming lack of family commitment and her professed opposition to the other participants' aspirations to be multilingual and successful women within their own cultures and societies, Nevine situated herself outside Saudi gender discourses.

9.8.4 Ethnicity

The performance of gender identity can also be seen as intrinsically linked to other facets of identity such as ethnicity and social class (Block, 2007). Alex made links between her conflicted ethnic identity, gendered and student identities. She positioned herself as a disadvantaged student due to her ethnicity but placed blame on the learning institutions in her narratives rather than on the country's rules concerning non-Saudi Arabs (see **2.1**). While describing her family as Jordanian-Palestinian, this identity seemed ascribed rather than 'inhabited' (Blommaert, 2005), in that it was one which she linked to her father's patriarchal voice preventing her from discovering her 'native' land of Jordan. In her 'Jordan' narrative (pp154-156) Alex used characters and conflicting voices to perform the struggle between her aspirations as student and her family culture and to unpack her conflicted ethnic identity in conversation with me as cultural outsider. Alex's emotional attachment to Saudi Arabia, despite its more restricted opportunities, came across as a subtext and her sad, gently ironic voice seemed to succumb to the powerful social structures which confined her. The construction of Alex's ethnic identity fluctuated in interaction: she positioned herself as affiliated to an Arab, Saudi, Jordanian or Palestinian ethnicity at different times, thus these categories were neither absolute nor fixed but continuously renegotiated (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012).

9.8.5 Social class

Gender and EL2 identities could be seen as linked to that of social class in performance.We have already seen how both Sandra and Nour identified with the new Saudi woman. However, Sandra created a broader ethnic and linguistic space than Nour in that she said that she aspired to be like the women of the Gulf who she claimed spoke English fluently, not for professional or economic gain, but for personal improvement. She described English as a common language and positioned herself as already belonging to a family and community of English-speakers. As Alhawsawi's (2013) middle class Saudi EFL students, Sandra brought the cultural capital of a university-educated mother, a private school education and home tutors to support her learning at Sharifa University.

Her middle-class identity emerged in Nour's 'English for secrets' narrative (pp231-233) when Sandra joked that she needed to learn a more 'exotic' language to keep boyfriend-related secrets whereas Nour positioned her own family, and that of her school friend in the story, as non-English speakers. Saudi discourses of social class and gender can thus be seen to inform this 'English for secrets' narrative. Interestingly, although Sandra's middle-class background might explain her seemingly greater acceptance of new learning practices at university, it did not appear to support her construction of an academic student identity.

9.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed participant constructions of identity both in their self-presentations and narrative performances over time and in the subject positions which emerged in the small stories and even in some backstage conversations. Performance was understood in terms of the use of second language voice and the speaking positions taken up by participants which facilitated a balanced view of the roles of social structure and agency in identity construction. Narrative identity was also considered as performatively constituted in that participants took up positions from wider cultural and ideological discourses in their talk. The interactional accomplishment of both the talk and the telling of narratives in the interviews and conversations was also seen as important to an understanding of identity construction. This multi-layered view produced a nuanced picture which is, in some ways, missing from previous studies of university student identity in Saudi Arabia.

In their accounts, participants located themselves in discourses of language use such as Arabic loss through international schooling and affiliation to English in its relation to the social advancement of Saudi women. Subject positions as ambitious, multilingual, professional Arab women emerged from their presentations of imagined communities and future selves but were also compromised by their self-positioning within patriarchal discourses of early marriage and family obligation. Sandra orchestrated Islamic discourses in her

narrative performance of identity but took up a speaking position as a forceful defender of Saudi female ambition and professionalism.

Discourses of social class and ethnicity also informed the small stories: Nour keyed into Saudi middle-class discourses of 'professional' English and female independence while Alex resisted her positioning by Arab, ethnic and 'family culture' discourses which conflicted with her goals as student and translator. Contrary to the rest, Nevine distanced herself from her ascribed identity as an Arab, Muslim young woman and inhabited an identity as Arabic 'deserter' and quasi-American.

Transition to university was presented as a turbulent stage in a learning career which required identity negotiation and transformation in order to engage with a new learning/discourse community. The destabilisation of identity facilitated discourses of resistance and the construction of new narratives in the post-transition interviews. Transition was marked by critical turning points and escape narratives, which linked to participants' imagined communities, acted as some respite. Social integration was shown as critical in the engagement and participation of novice students but only Alex constructed her transitional identity as one which sought to engage with new learning groups in order to gain legitimacy as a university student. Possible explanations for the lack of engagement with learning groups and practices in self-presentations were put forward. Identity renegotiation in transition had to be seen in the context of participants' self-positionings as members of families and communities outside the learning context.

CHAPTER 10   THE 'FINAL' CHAPTER

10.1   Questioning the big narrative and the small stories

An examination of the big narrative of each participant and an analysis of selected small stories has created a multi-layered, contradictory and at times ambiguous picture of my case study participants' emergent subjectivities and ongoing identities. Barkhuizen (2010) found that bringing in the macro-context of the big narrative data enhanced his analysis of a pre-service teacher's small story. I took my analysis one step further in bringing together my understandings from the big narrative and small stories in order to create a complex, conflicting or complementary account which could capture the long-term movements as well as the moments of identity construction. This investigation of identity was characterised by both the continuities of self-presentation and by the fragility and fluidity of subject positions.

By analysing participant performance and positioning in narratives I was able to bring out the emotional/volitional as well as the interactive/positional aspects of identity construction. A performativity approach also highlighted how discourses of gender, language use and religion constituted the subject, in the sense that subject positions were shaped by ideological discourses which were reinvented and contested in the discursive moment (Baynham, 2015). In spite of the complexity of my data, the temporal, contextual, situational, close-up and interactional perspectives afford a richly nuanced understanding of my participants' identities as language learners, university students and young Arab women, living and learning in a particular socio-historic context. Drawing conclusions from such a complex picture, without reducing its richness and complexity, is certainly a challenging task.

I will now look again at the research questions with which I sought to investigate constructions of participant identity among these four young Arab women.

1. How do participants at a women's English-medium Saudi university construct their past, present and future identities as EL2 learners, speakers and students?
    Secondary questions which emerged in the course of the research were:
    a) How do participants construct identity in a second language?

b) How do participants achieve identities as EL2 learners/students in interviews?

c) What role do imagined communities/identities play in the construction of EL2 learner/student/speaker identity?

Participants' self-constructions as EL2 learners were framed by their professed affiliations to English and they took up different and shifting positions within discourses of English and Arabic in their sociocultural context. Speaking English and studying in English were seen as providing Arab women with cultural and symbolic capital but each participant constructed her ethnolinguistic identity differently: Sandra positioned herself as a member of a Saudi middle-class family who were already English speakers while Nour presented herself as aspiring to reach a higher status within her society as student and speaker of English. Alex sought to obtain a higher level of education through English-medium studies and to pursue her imagined identity as Arabic-English translator. Nevine was the only one who disregarded and rejected her 'inheritance' relationship with Arabic in her self-presentation and focused only on her development as a student of English.

Participants constructed the research relationship and the interview space in different ways and interactional roles taken up in interviews shaped the nature and development of their accounts. Each of the four participants constructed a unique identity trajectory as a second language learner/student/young woman moving through PP2 to Sharifa University. They constructed their identities in their self-presentations and in their positionings of self and others both in the story worlds they created and in the local context of the interviews and conversations. Narratives were shown to be rich sites for identity performance in three cases, while Nevine constructed an identity through minimal self-positioning in talk and through her positioning by others. Furthermore, through their constructions of imagined communities and imagined selves, participants reconstructed their past and present identities and their future selves.

Alex constructed her learning career as developing over time and as leading from a largely disadvantaged past in terms of education towards a consistently imagined

identity as translator and EL2 speaker. There was a sense of moving forward in her self-presentation as language learner, from a learner of words in the early interviews to a manipulator of language in her later accounts. Through her use of performance devices, such as rhetorical speech and conflicting voices, she created a sense of impassioned agency in her EL2 learning and also developed a powerful, argumentative second language voice in the interviews. Her imagined community of highly proficient Arab EL2 speakers and translators gave direction and coherence to the movement of identity across her learning trajectory.

Nour also achieved coherence in her continuous reference to her imagined social advancement through English, to her identity as mother, and in her construction of a mediator identity in her linguistic and cultural mediation between Arabic and English, both in her storyworlds and in our interaction. Nour constructed herself as a language learner and student in need of regular teacher and peer support but maintained a sense of agency in her account of negotiations to achieve a pass mark. It was Nour's imagined community of professional, multilingual, independent middle-class Saudi women which appeared to drive her identity as an EL2 learner. She effectively developed a voice as an EL2 student through her self-positioning as observer, witness, spokesperson and even silenced student in narratives set in her learning context. Nour also used humour and irony to show resistance to institutional discourses and to construct alignment and sociability in interaction.

Sandra gave an individualised, 'psychological' account of herself as language learner. She constructed herself as a quiet, detached classroom learner and her learning as a series of personal revelations. Sandra's consistent self-presentation as a quiet recluse seemed to contradict her talkativeness in interviews and her strong, provocative second language voice as my cultural informant on her society, language and religion. The presentation of her imagined identity seemed unstable in that she wavered between a desire to belong to a primary community of Saudi women and a craving for her own private space. This impacted on her learner/student identity as she rarely appeared to be fully invested in her academic learning.

Nevine constructed her past, present and future EL2 identity differently from the other participants: she positioned herself and was positioned as Saudi/Arabic 'deserter' moving towards her imagined identity as 'American'. As language learner and PP student Nevine positioned herself as helper of other EL2 learners through Arabic and as needing a higher level of EL2 instruction in order to raise her language level to that required by her imagined American university community. Due to the awkwardness of our interview interaction, there was little narrative performance in Nevine's talk but in the group interview she defended her position as international school graduate and seemed to accept the labelling of her as weak Arabic speaker and 'American' by Sandra and Nour.

2. How do participants relate these identities to wider social categories in their accounts?

   Secondary questions which emerged were:

   a) How do they position themselves within their sociocultural context?
   b) To what extent do participants construct agentive spaces within social structures in their accounts?

As we have seen, participants claimed membership of social groups and imagined communities in their self-presentations and emergent subject positions and related these to their investments in learning English. Alex, Nour and Sandra were students who had chosen to major in English and Translation which reflected both their agentive investment in their bilingualism and also their accommodation with family and community discourses regarding suitable careers for women. Facets of social identity such as ethnicity, social class and gender often emerged as closely interrelated and were also implicated, especially in the small stories, in the performance of learner/student identities, either as enhancing or conflicting with them. Tensions frequently emerged which reflected competing discourses in the wider social context, for example, between the forward-looking, more career-oriented gender discourses of the private universities versus the traditional concerns of delayed marriage for young women.

Participants made strategic choices over which aspects of social identity to prioritize in interaction. By demarcating their social groupings, they often positioned themselves as my cultural informants. Unexpectedly, Sandra was the only one of the four to bring in her Muslim identity to her construction of self in interaction with her white, Anglophone, non-Muslim interlocutor, but her individualised and recipient-designed accounts worked to create an agentive space within the social category of Muslim. Using a performativity approach, I was able to see how Saudi Islamic discourses informed Sandra's narratives and how she critically defined her Islamic boundaries in the discursive moment. However, by focusing on the artful performance of identity with its didactic and rhetorical devices, its emotive anecdotes, its moralizing and spiritual voices and its strategic changes in footing, a nuanced understanding of Sandra's emergent identity as a young Muslim woman and EL2 interlocutor in the local context of the interview could be achieved.

A performativity approach to gender discourses also brought out how participants' subject positions as young Arab women related to their EL2 learner/student/speaker identities. Nour's discourse, which related female independence to 'professional' English for example, called her less traditional and more 'feminist' mother identity into being. Nour also linked matrilineal discourses of learning about the 'other' to learning and using English. Furthermore, in her narratives of social commentary, Nour positioned herself within discourses of national progress in which proficiency in English played an important part.

Alex's repeated acts as an Arab daughter invoked her identity as a female student dependent on her parents' restrictive outlook and rules. Discourses of early marriage and family obligation threatened Alex's student and professional identity. Furthermore the conflicted ethnic identity which emerged from her narratives also impacted on her learner/student identity: Alex brought out her disadvantaged status as a non-Saudi in her emotionally charged oppositional narratives and constructed herself almost wistfully as a young Arab woman caught between two worlds but unable to take advantage of either.

Sandra positioned herself as an EL2 learner/student in relation to her Saudi middle-class gendered identity. While focusing on her personal fulfilment in EL2 learning and speaking, Sandra also presented an imagined identity as a multilingual, young woman of the Gulf. The marriage discourse challenged her student identity and her professed desire for her own private home but in the final interview, as Alex, Sandra seemed to enact a disappointing (to me) accommodation with family expectations. Nevine, in contrast to the other three, did not position herself within Saudi/Arab discourses of ethnicity, family, gender or imagined communities. Her EL2 learning only served her ambition to become a student and resident in the United States. In her emails she constructed her Saudi world as superficial and stagnant and, contrary to Nour's optimistic account, painted a pessimistic picture of the Saudi Arabia of the future. In inventing an American persona Nevine took up a subject position as a highly unconventional young Saudi woman.

Thus participants' accounts of female aspiration and ambition in Saudi Arabia linked to their EL2 learning and use and reflected local developments in increasing educational and professional opportunities for women. However, using irony, hyperbole and parody to bring out their evaluative stances, participants performed narratives of opposition to patriarchal and institutional discourses which constrained their imagined identities as students, professionals and ambitious Arab women. The structure and multivocality of these narratives were audience-designed and brought out subtexts of resistance. More nuanced subject positions in terms of ethnicity and social class also emerged from my analysis of positioning and performance in participant narratives.

3. How does the transition to a new learning community affect participants' self-constructions as EL2 learners, speakers and students?
   Secondary questions were:
   a) How do they perform their transitions to university?
   b) What strategies/new subject positions do they take up in order to facilitate their engagement with their new learning community?

c) Can consistencies be detected in participant accounts of their
language learning and studying across contexts?

Transition was seen as a negotiation of new identity positions in a learning career, as
entering and participating in a community of practice, in this case, a new learning
community, and as socialization into a new discourse community. As expected,
transition to university marked a disruptive stage in participants' learning careers in
terms of social, linguistic and academic integration, but they told very different
stories of transition and performed critical turning points which reflected their
individual coping mechanisms. Identity negotiation and renegotiation were an
important part of these narratives as participants took up subject positions which
related to their changing investments in their new learning/discourse community.
Transitions as destabilising narrative events also seemed to facilitate discourses of
resistance and the construction of new narratives of opposition.

The social and linguistic challenges of transition to university were brought out in
dramatic and even anguished performances by Alex and Nour, both of whom had
attended state schools. Past institutions of learning lost their credibility as
participants reappraised the PP as inadequate preparation for university. Sandra
complained about studying new subjects in English, while Nevine expressed her
dislike of the general studies courses.

Narratives of hypothetical or symbolic escape acted as an outlet for the emotional,
social, linguistic and academic challenges of transition. Alex and Nevine constructed
imagined communities which might more easily accommodate their imagined
identities as students while Sandra and Nour retreated into a more 'stable' self as
Muslim or mother. These escape narratives linked closely to structural constraints in
that cultural, religious, academic and economic discourses were presented as
restricting participant movements outside their present 'spaces'.

Socialization into their discourse community meant learning appropriate uses of
academic discourse and new cultural practices from interactions with expert
students. Participants prioritised problems of social integration in their early post-

transition narratives and in the final interviews social integration was seen to be a defining feature of successful linguistic and academic transition. Only Alex consistently enacted social, linguistic and academic strategies which enabled her to be granted legitimacy as a novice community member. Identity congruence in terms of social identity and past education was a factor in social and academic integration, although it was Alex's agentive action and identity transformation that facilitated her performance of community engagement and belonging.

Alex took up new subject positions as risk-taker and social climber in her narrative performances after transition to facilitate this community engagement. Although Sandra seemed to find her university experience challenging but enriching, she did not present herself as employing social or academic strategies in order to join and work with her university peers and presented herself as not fully invested in a Sharifa university student identity. Nour attempted to take up a more independent student identity but her negotiation with new learner practices and her management of social relations were not always presented as successful. Even in her final interview her struggles in adjusting to a largely 'unsupportive' learning environment formed part of her transition narrative. Nevine was again the exception in her self-presentation as linguistically capable but as socially and academically disaffected from her studies. In spite of her final narrative of individual engagement with her newly acquired English literature self, Nevine still did not present herself as socially integrated into her university learning/discourse community.

Small stories gave more nuanced, emotional accounts of transition such as the tragic 'demise' of Nour's credibility as a student and Sandra's retreat from her social environment into her apathetic self. These performances indicated that past identities acted as stumbling blocks which obstructed the emergence of participatory subject positions at university. They drew attention to the importance of cultivating a different kind of relationship with teachers and peers at university. In backstage conversations Alex, Sandra and Nour also told a more 'private' story of identity renegotiation in relation to external pressures while Nevine added an identity layer in her emails and text messages.

There was however consistency in identity construction across learning contexts. Alex and Nour continued to offer agentive accounts of collective struggles and social strategies, while Sandra and Nevine constructed more detached, individualised student identities. Alex's rapid identity repair after the 'identity trouble' (Taylor, 2007) of transition served to re-establish her committed, hardworking and competent student identity. Furthermore, after transition, she built on early constructions of herself as the type of language learner who prefers to work with more advanced students and made this an important source of learning at university. Sandra also continued to present herself as the quiet, passive, stoic learner at university, Nour consistently performed herself as a learner in need of peer and teacher support and Nevine's self-presentation as alienated student intensified at university.

Transition served to facilitate the intensification and to broaden the scope of participants' second language voices and speaking positions as language learners, students and young Arab women within the forum of the interview. New subject positions as family members, Saudi citizens or immigrants emerged from our interaction. Alex's narratives, for example, became oppositional and critical towards what she saw as cultural and institutional constraints. Participants carved out agentive spaces in their evaluative and at times emotional performances of transition using a variety of narrative and dramatic techniques. The performance of silence and silencing, for example, had both a dramatic and moral impact on the construction of student and gender identities. Constructed dialogue in English was a device frequently used by Alex and Nour in order to convey their evaluative stances towards 'bad' teachers who were positioned as inflexible in the teacher-student negotiation of marks at university. Furthermore, this technique of conflicting voices or double voicing was often used to counteract wider cultural discourses of female restriction.

10.2 Contribution to research on EL2 learners in Saudi higher education

Sociocultural studies of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia have tended to view identity as rather static and as showing an identification with either a modern, globalised master narrative or a traditional Arab/Islamic one. Almutairi (2007) interpreted the results of her mixed-methods study of first year Saudi female students of English as

showing that students lacked strategy and goals in their learning and conformed to traditional teacher-controlled methods, which reflected their conservative family culture and stereotypes of appropriate female behaviour. However, in their focus group discussions, Almutairi's (2007) student participants did show resistance to traditional forms of teaching/learning and made creative, far reaching suggestions for a more stimulating, learner-centred classroom. Thus a greater focus on talk-in-interaction can challenge unifying, stereotypical constructions of Saudi female learners by highlighting their agency and their identity negotiation within structural constraints.

Elyas (2011,2014) tends to view discourses of English in Saudi society in terms of globalisation and individuality or Arab/Islamic identity and analyses written student narratives in terms of their identification with either of these master narratives. The narrative construction of self as a language learner is much more than a matter of bringing together learner I-statements in relation to aspects of cultural identity, as seems to be the case in Elyas' (2011,2014) study. His first-year male Education students were highly critical of past and present EFL teaching/learning in Saudi Arabia and focused on their individual responsibility for learning English through social media etc. Similarly, my participants ridiculed the poor attitude of school English teachers, presented their past learning at the PP as inadequate and sometimes criticised university teachers for not taking their low level of English into account. Even though they were critical of their society, this did not mean that they were aligned to 'western' individualism and not to their Arabic, Saudi or Islamic identities. In their oral presentations participants merged with some ideological discourses and resisted others, thus creating their own second language speaking positions in interaction.

My study of EL2 identity brought out the interactional goals of speakers in their presentation of self and in terms of the function of the narrative in interaction (Pavlenko, 2007). Since narratives in interviews were seen as coconstructions, narrative identity emerged in the discursive moment rather than in isolated self-constructions. Considering the wider context, not only did interviewees continually renegotiate their positions in complex, competing ideological discourses but they

also showed how, as subjects, they were positioned by these discourses. Thus, through an innovative analysis of narrative, interaction, performance and positioning in participants' big narratives and small stories across a series of interviews conducted over a year, I was able to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the shifting identities of my EL2 participants.

My performance-positioning methodology also illuminated the student experience of transition from the PP to an English-medium university in a home context. While private institutions can be seen as facilitators of female advancement in Saudi Arabia, linguistic limitations, especially of ex-government school students, were performed as destabilizing experiences which led to discourses of despondency and resistance. Past EL2 teaching/learning in Saudi schools was presented as a stumbling block to successful transition. Alex's transitional narrative suggested that only a brave, concerted effort on the part of the student to join new learning groups could facilitate the learning of academic uses of language and practices from expert students. Participants' self-positionings in communities beyond the university context, particularly in imagined communities relating to nation, ethnicity, religion, social class and family, had an impact on the performance of transition. However, while participants took refuge in escape narratives, these did not, in the end, offer participants 'real' alternatives in their life choices as young Saudi women.

10.3 Female EL2 learners, students and speakers in a Saudi context

My study has explored language learners/English-medium students and their worlds in a particular local context. While participants positioned themselves within the increasingly dominant globalizing discourses of Saudi Arabia as a country in transition, their ascribed identities as young Saudi or Jordanian-Palestinian Muslim women learning and studying in English at a Saudi university were challenged by the identities they 'inhabited' (Blommaert, 2006) in their self-presentations. Relations with the outside world, for example, were not presented as a constraining influence on national and cultural identity, indeed mediator subject positions emerged which enhanced the encounter with the 'other'.

Also, local stereotypes of Saudi women as submissive, dependent and non-assertive (see **1.4**) were not borne out in my study. Research into EL2 learning in Saudi Arabia tends to focus on the negative learning behaviours of students (e.g. Syed, 2003; Almutairi, 2007) but Almutairi also makes the important point that student learning preferences are largely ignored in pedagogical discourses. My participants constructed tertiary education as their right and carved out ambitious futures for themselves in line with discourses of increasing educational and professional choices for women in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, in the presentations and performances of their narratives of transition, participants' voices were often discounted in the story worlds of their learning contexts.

There was also little evidence of parental support for participant educational and professional aspirations as Hatherley-Greene (2012) found in his study of Emirati students and as Khan (2011) and Seghayer (2014) also identified as a learning constraint in the Saudi school context. Yamani (2000) describes a widening gap between private educational experience which encourages female aspirations and traditional family roles (see **2.2.2**). However, Nour's narrative construction of her daughter's future identity as an independent, well-educated young woman and the construction of herself as family breadwinner and as nurturing, ambitious mother challenge macrolevel discourses of family and gender. Thus an examination of how participants performed their identities at microlevel challenged macrolevel constructions of female EL2 learners/students in Saudi Arabia.

Participant narratives showed that discourses against delayed marriage to pursue an education still affected young women's lives in Saudi Arabia, although my participants presented themselves as fully invested in their tertiary education rather than marriage. While options for women in the job market have increased considerably and participants frequently gave voice to their professional aspirations, a disapproval of gender integrated workplaces lurked in the background and female jobs and careers were presented as sometimes conflicting with family and community. Thus competing discourses of female advancement and suppression informed participant identity construction.

In terms of competing English versus Arabic master narratives, my participants positioned themselves as comfortable bilinguals through their translingual discourses and mediator subject positions. There was little evidence of the subtractive view of bilingualism which emerged in researcher approaches in their studies of language 'preference' among university students (e.g. Al-Jarf, 2008). While discourses of Arabic loss did inform participant narratives, an English-medium education was not positioned within ideological discourses of Arabic, religious and national identity preservation. Participants constructed an EL2 identity which appropriated English in order to create discourses of resistance and to reinforce their agency as educated, modern young Arab women.

In spite of state scholarships to study at private universities which seem to reflect a transition towards wider female participation, we cannot yet talk about the "deterritorialized and unbounded" spaces in which Darvin and Norton (2015:36) claim that language acquisition takes place and which lead to more globalised and mobile identities. Although Alex, Nour and Nevine, and to a lesser extent Sandra, can be seen as pioneers in their agentive struggle against social structures which exclude them, Alex, Nour and Sandra still presented their relationship to their world and their understanding of future possibilities as positioned, in the end, by conservative, patriarchal discourses. By the final conversation even Nevine, who was on an individual path of identity construction, seemed to make a short-term accommodation to a social context which she had presented as insufferable and stultifying in her emails.

10.4 Implications and limitations of my study

The aim of my study is not to make recommendations for improved student orientation programmes at Sharifa University. However, I am struck by the distance constructed in my participants' accounts of transition between the academic and linguistic worlds of learner and learning institution. By incorporating the struggles and identity work which emerged from their accounts into "educational understandings" (Thesen, 1997:507) of student transition, universities might be in a better position to facilitate and offer support during this critical period. Furthermore, identity studies of teachers in English-medium universities in Saudi Arabia would

provide complementary insights. Teachers are often AL1 speakers who are required to teach predominantly Saudi students in a second or foreign language. How they see themselves as university teachers and what allowances they make for learners' past education and Arabic knowledge are crucial questions in need of investigation in relation to learner and teacher identity.

Regarding the limitations of my study, I consider my interpretations of participant narratives to be influenced by my Western, more secular orientation. For example, my analysis of imagined identity and community probably does not pay enough attention to the 'anything is possible' *inshā'Allāh* ideology of my participant narratives in which the question of eventually acquiring material and symbolic resources remains in God's hands. Furthermore, social structures which confer 'cultural capital' and 'identity congruence' could be seen as having limited explanatory power. For example, with Alex's non-Saudi status, state school background and restrictive family culture we might have expected her marginalisation at a private university. However, Alex presents herself as a young Arab woman seeking to prove her excellence and worth within a family culture which does not encourage female members to pursue higher-level studies or careers. Thus what drives Alex is her need for acknowledgement and her sense of individual agency within an exacting social, cultural and academic context. I also have doubts over my interpretations of participant constructions of identity. Participant interpretations, at times, differed from my own and I might not have given them the significance they merited; for example, Sandra's frequent constructions of an individual, psychological self were at variance with my social constructionist orientation, consequently I tended to repeatedly position her as an isolated member of her learning community.

10.5 The final stage and moving on

The ending of a story holds significance for tellers and audience and narrative researchers rely on the ending of a story in order to make sense of it (Mishler, 2006).

Alex: 'the social strategist in action'
Nour: 'struggling courageously to stay above water'
Sandra: 'on a fluctuating path of personal discovery'

Nevine: 'finding a temporary niche'

In the above phrases I have encapsulated how I see the final, still moving stage of each participant's learning career. These metaphoric descriptions are based on my understanding of the identities they related and performed in their final interviews and conversations. However, their identity narratives continued in our communications long after the end of the research period and still continue to be told right up to the present day. Alex recently graduated from Sharifa, thus completing her degree course in three years, as she had planned. Nevine, after three years still has one semester left, which she puts down to her gaps in Arabic and Islamic Studies, both compulsory subjects in all Saudi degree courses. Unfortunately, Nour and Sandra were not able to keep up the necessary grade point average (GPA) in order to maintain their state scholarships and had to leave Sharifa after the end of the second year. Sandra moved to a business college and tells me she is much happier about her studies. She has lost weight, regularly goes to the gym and seems brighter and more positive about her life and her family. Nour was obliged to find work as soon as she left Sharifa and the last time I spoke to her she was working as a security officer at a shopping mall. She seemed disillusioned and still talked about returning to Sharifa. Her latest plan, as related to me in a telephone call, is to emigrate to Australia with her daughter in search of a better life although I doubt she will be able to, considering local restrictions on female movement out of the country. Thus two participants were unsuccessful in terms of their subsequent status as Sharifa University students.

10.6 Final words

A methodological implication of my study is that great caution is needed in the interpretation of interview data. While a performative/self-presentational analysis produces a nuanced account of identity, it also problematizes participant accounts as reflections of a 'truth'. Since identities are continually reconstituted in interaction and speakers engage in a continual process of self-lamination in their narrative performances (Baynham, 2006), establishing an identity position is a challenging task. Participants revalorize their previous learning experiences and continually reposition themselves as language learners/users, students and interlocutors so that their presentations and performances create a moving picture of self. In

investigating my research questions, I sought to build a solid understanding of my case study participants' identities as EL2 learners, speakers and students within their social context. However, my characterizations and descriptions were problematized by the emergence of new and ambivalent subject positions. It is Thesen's (1997) concept of 'identity in movement' which comes close to capturing the ongoing struggles of participants in their search for an agentive space and an individual identity as they make sense of transitions and the challenges faced by the researcher in identifying those spaces and identities.

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APPENDIX A   Alex's Small Stories

1. **Alex** Bad PE SS5

1 A: But I have a doctor [small laugh] she teach me PE
2 K: Yes
3 A: Err (P) she's a bad teacher [laughs as if embarrassed]
4 K: Sandra said the same thing
5 A: She told you? [Laughs]
6 K: Yes. And also Nour
7 A: Nour is in the same class as me
8 K: But I think Sandra has the same teacher
9 A: Yes it's the same teacher. She's <u>so</u> bad [rather gleefully]
10 K: But why is she bad
11 A: In all my life I didn't see a teacher like her!
12 K: Oh dear! [Laughs]
13 A: Really, you can't imagine. You can't
14 K: So tell me why. Why do you say she's bad
15 A: Well
16 K: How does she teach you
17 A: Her accent is <u>so</u> bad.
18   When she teach us she just reads from the slides OK?
19   And she says "Oh, excuse me girls. My accent is not that well
20   and when I read from the slides, when I read quickly,
21   I can't say the word in the correct way." So=
22 K: =I see
23 A: I didn't see a teacher like her in my life!
24 K: But she's an Arab isn't she?
25 A: Yes
26 K: She should speak to you {in Arabic}
27 A: {She's Jordanian} [Laughs]
28 K: She's Jordanian?   [A & K laugh together]
29   She should speak to you in Arabic if her English is not so good=
30 A: =Yes she speak in Arabic
31   when we ask her something we didn't understand
32   Yes she explain for us.
33   But her English!
34   She must teach us in English
35 K: Yes.
36 A: Her exam was so bad <u>so bad</u> SO BAD.
37   Even I go to my advisor and cried
38 K: So you told your advisor?
39 A: Yes I told her and she told me "WHAT HAPPENED"
40   I start crying [laughs] in front of her.
41 K: Yes
42 A: I can't believe myself but I don't want to cry in front of the girls.
43   I didn't want to cry in front of the girls in the exam

44   so when I get out from the mid-term exam I go to Dr S [laughs]
45   and I start crying
46   She told me "[in a loud voice] No ḥabībī (my darling), sit down.
47   What happened"
48   All the advisors know about this teacher
49 K: Oh so they know. But will they do anything?
50 A: They talked to her.
51   She didn't, she don't hear from anyone.
52   Imagine that I get 9 from 20
53 K: Yeah?
54 A: [Quietly] I failed
55   I failed the mid-term exam
56   I can't tell my parents
57   I can't tell them
58 K: Oh my goodness!
59 A: And there are some teachers
60   a huge number of teachers actually
61   if-if the students get under 12 OK?
62   they repeat the exam for him
63 K: OK
64 A: She didn't.
65 K: She didn't repeat the exam
66   But what was the exam
67 A: It's hard
68   we didn't understand the question even you know
69 K: Is it about the body?
70 A: Yes it's the body
71 K: Like Biology?
72 A: No she give us a lot to study.
73   We get confused when we study this and this.
74   It's something not related to each other.
75   We get confused.
76   We cannot focus, this is number one.
77   Number two in the exam we couldn't understand
78   what she mean by this question
79 K: Yes
80 A: That we give her point 1 2 3 that we explain
81 K: Yes
82 A: Or— we didn't understand.
83 K: And did you speak to her?
84 A: Yes Nour speak to her
85   because Nour take a 5 even
86 K: I see OK
87 A: She (Nour) told her that "I don't do anything
88   not extra work nothing
89   and I don't want to repeat the exam"
90   and she told her "When you fail in the final exam
91   come back to me and I will do something"
92   Nour told her "When I fail in the final exam

93   I will come back to this university
94   when I get out from <u>her</u>"
95   And Nour is on a scholarship
96   and it's hard for her.
97 K: Yeah yeah.
98 A: I don't know how she think actually
99   My problem is that I didn't listen to the girls
100   when they told me she's bad
101   {I thought they didn't study well}
102 K: {Oh so they told you?}
103 A: Yes.
104 K: Oh so the older girls the girls who---
105 A: YES. ASK ANY GIRLS [Laughs]IN COLLEGE
106 K: They will tell you.
107 A: They will tell you "Yes, I know *duktūrah* H"
108 K: But do you have to do that subject
109   Or can you not take it?
110 A : Yes I have to
111   but imagine that it's one credit
112   Dr S tell me: "Why she do this for you
113   and it's one credit"
114   And it's PE!
115 K: Yes it's for you to get fit=
116 A: =Yes it should be easy
117   and it should be I don't know=
118 K: =Fun as well
119 A: Yes.

2. **Alex** Good Islamic Presentation SS6

1 K: Er-r do you speak more in class than before?
2   Before you told me that you don't speak much in class.
3   Do you speak more now do you think?
4 A: Er-r in Islam with the presentation
5   so I did it very well
6   I didn't imagine myself I will do it that well [laughing]
7 K: [Laughing] good
8 A: Because you know er-r just I do the er-r conclusion
9   yes the conclusion
10   so I understand the ideas
11   so when I start talk suddenly my voice it was loudly yes
12   and when the girls stop talking [laughing]
13 K: [Laughing] They were listening to you
14 A: Yes [loudly and half-laughing] so I was scared in myself
15   but I hope that they follow me
16   I didn't read except one word from it
17   so this is very good
18 K: Excellent

19 A: You should do eye contact while you're presenting
20   so I look at the doctor and he says: "No continue"
21   so I finish my ((xxx)) what I should say
22   and I said two sentence more
23   but it was good
24 K: Good
25 A: I showed him that I understand the idea from this
26 K: What were you talking about
27 A: About erm Islamic and environment
28 K: Ah that's very interesting
29: A: Yes

3.   **Alex** Bad Incident in the Bookstore SS3

1   A: No I don't have any difficulties
2   except one problem it was with Dr M in Translation.
3   I told you that before.
4   K: Yes so did that change?
5   Did it get better or worse?
6   A: No, it get in a bad way
7   because we didn't translate anything from his book
8   we just translate it in the library
9   K: Translated where?
10 A: In the library, in the bookstore
11 K: Ok, so---
12 A: This is something bad.
13 K: Could you explain that more? What did you do exactly
14 A: OK, it's too hard for us to translate it ourselves
15   I translated in the beginning of the semester maybe 10 lines
16   It took one week or two week to translate it
17   and till now I didn't remember the word
18   to translate it in a nice way
19   so I didn't translate this because it was 4 pages
20   no not 4 pages it was 6 pages
21   It was so difficult for us
22   We translated it by someone from the bookstore
23 K: Do you mean that you went to the bookstore?
24 A: Yes.
25 K: And you did your translation inside the bookstore?
26 A: No, we give it to someone who translate it for us
27   To the man who work in the bookstore
28 K: I see. Why was that, it was too difficult?
29 A: It was too difficult.
30   It was not simple words.
31   It was so difficult
32   how can I say it
33   it's not words I use it everyday
34   It's something difficult

35 K: Was it scientific?
36 A: Yes it was scientific exactly
37 K: I see. So what happened in the exam then
38 A: Erm the exam was nice
39   this is what I remember
...
40 K: I see. And was your result OK in the exam?
41 A: Yes I took A+
42 K: [laughs with surprise] Oh that was good
43 A: Yes

4. **Alex** Bad PP SS7

1 K: So how do you feel about the PP now
2 A: I still hate it [K laughs]
3   Oh my God! [A shrieks] Oh I still hate it a lot
4   I really hate it a lot a lot a lot
5 K: Can you tell me why
6 A: [quietly] It's a whole year
7   it's gone from me you know
8   and when I went to the PP
9   when I want to just (P)
10   When I want to talk about the PP and college
11   it's really different (K: yeah)
12   When I talk about the PP
13   believe me it's a few things
14   and when we entered the PP
15   it just comes to mind
16   and they say to you [in pretentious voice]:
17   "It's better to learn in the PP
18   it'll be easier for you in the university
19   or the college"
20   [back to normal voice] but it's not actually
21   It's a little bit of studying
22 K: But didn't you improve your language?
23 A: With the teachers we haven't speak a lot
24   with teachers even ya'nī we study
25   just to talk a normal thing you know
26   (K: mmm) or we haven't do any conversations with them
27   You know this is their policy
28   and this is their system.
29   I don't say that the teachers who teach me wasn't good
30   They are very good
31   and they teach me everything
32   that the PP told them to teach me (K: yeah)
33   but the system of the PP
34   what they teach us
35   it's really wrong

36   I feel that it's wrong
37 K: The PP is supposed to be a bridge
38   between school and university
39   It is supposed to improve your English
40   and also teach you study skills you know
41   like time management
42   to come to class on time,
43   how to meet deadlines=
44 A: =It's things, even the girls
45   they know about time management
46   and to be on time
47   or they know the deadline
48   or other girls they don't care about that
49   so it's not necessary to teach us that
50   You know the school is here [indicates point]
51   and the PP is here [indicates point not far from first]
52   Yes they teach us some words
53   but we forget it actually
54   Even if we still remember it
55   we use it now
56   When we start college
57   we knew that we use the
58   words we learn it from the PP
59   but it's not the picture
60   that they put it in our mind (K: ah!)
61   If you ask any girl who was in my class in the PP
62   we really feel bad for that year
63   We all had this opinion
64   that the PP is good and
65   they give us the picture that [feigning concern]
66   " it will really help you when you enter the college"
67   and you feel it's better (K: mmm)
68   and when I was in the PP
69   they told me in the second semester
70   in PP1 I took maybe 93 (per cent) (K: yeah)
71   and somebody told me I can pass the PP2
72   and go to the college (K: really?)
73   I felt [in naïve voice]"Oh no, I don't want to pass PP2
74   I want to study"
75   because they told us that
76   "Some girls they come from school to college immediately
77   they don't study the introduction of something (K: yes)
78   of Business for example
79   but now you study Introduction to Business
80   now you study introduction to everything"
81 K: But that should help you
82 A: It's not necessary
83   It help me yeah
84   I have some background

85   but it will not, it's not different, you know
86   it will not give me a lot of different or a lot of things
87   Yeah I have a background
88   or some information about (K: yeah yeah) introduction
89   but if my teacher now teach me that
90   it will not take him a whole semester
91   to teach me these things
…
92 K: So you think to do an intensive language course would be better
93 A: Yes I told my mother that
94   "maybe if I took this whole year
95   and I study in courses outside
96   I guess that I would be better"
97   but I wasn't sure that
98   if I took courses outside
99   I will come back and I will make the TOEFL
100   and I not be passed from the TOEFL you know (K: yes)
101   so this was the problem
102 K: And did you tell your parents what you think of the PP?
103 A: Just I told my mother
104   because my father he will feel sorry about that
105   he will feel [with intensity]"Oh my God you waste all that money!
106   And you know this semester you give him 20,000 (Saudi Riyals)
107   For the year 40,000
108   For what. For what information"
109   "*yaʕnī* for 40,000 what you give me for information
110   You learn me essay OK. And then what"
111   You know I can't tell my father that (K: yeah)
112   He will feel that [with even more intensity]:
113   "Oh my God! How we follow them
114   or how we just listen to him"
115   Sometimes the University it says
116   it's make you confusing about them you know
117   Sometimes [conspiratorially] she do some things---
118 K:[Laughs with embarrassment] OK and then the last question

     5. **Alex** Jordan SS5

1 A: …Now I feel different
2   but I can't say
3   it's a large difference or a huge difference
4   because when I compare myself
5   with this my brother and this my friend
6   no there's no comparing
7   I can't compare because we are
8   you know something like high school
9   you feel that you are {in a limited place}
10 K: {restricted?}

11 A: You can't just get out wherever you want or you want
12   It may be necessary to work with one boy maybe=
13 K: =Yes
14 A: So she (my friend) told me
15   that it's a lot *ya'nī* it's different
16 K: Yes
17 A: Different from high school
18 K: Maybe you're learning about life more there
19 A: Yes
20 K: Whereas here it's just your studies
21 A: Yes, I just start thinking
22   I told you that my father told me
23   that I prefer to go to study to Jordan?
24 K: You told me yeah
25 A: But I start thinking
26   if I study there how will I be now
27   I'm sure the study of Jordan it will be more useful for me
28   because the study there it's hard
29   it's more harder
30   but –er I can't [slows down]
31   I will be so busy
32   because I will live with my -er grandfather and grandmother
33   and it's so hard to study in the family home
34   you know I must be in their home
35 K: I see
36 A: Because even our culture there
37   that I should be there if some visitor go to them
38   I shouldn't let my grandmother work anything at home
39 K: I see
40 A: Even here my father now
41   he call my brother there
42   so "Do this do this do this."
43 K: Yes
44 A: I told my mother
45   "No I can't stay. I'm here better
46   because I=
47 K: =Couldn't you live with your brother over there?
48 A: (P) Well, my brother is live in our home
49 K: =Oh! He lives=
50 A: You know they are in the same=
51 K: =building?
52 A: Yes. It's the same building
53   so he is every time with them.
54 K: I see.
55 A: When they want something
56   "Oh can you go to this market and get something?"
57   He is always {out of home}
58 K: {You have to say yes} I see
59 A: I told my mother

60   "How does he study, how he study"
61   Because always when they want to go somewhere
62   always "Oh Jamal you have to come with us"
63 K: I see
64 A: Oh it's hard
65   very hard for me because I'm a girl
66 K: Yeah but I think you've changed a little bit
67   because you told me before
68   that you didn't want to study in Jordan
69   so you've changed a little
70 A: Yes, I- when I heard from my brother
71   and I have a friend
72   she study in Palestine
73   the same as Jordan
74 K: The same system
75 A: Yes and when I heard from them
76   I just start thinking:
77   Why I didn't go there to study
78   But they live in a happy place
79   They want to live in this place
80   but I don't want
81   I can't believe
82   even when I went there in the summer
83   just one week and I start crying
84   I want to come back to here
85   This I can't
86   because we are there still there at home
87   My dad my father always tell us
88   "I'm here just to see my parents" so---
89 K: So you don't really go out?=
90 A: =No no never
91   We don't know anything about there
92   Or maybe with family
93   I go with my auntie maybe to her home
94   just like that
95 K: I see
96 A: It's here in home
97   It's there in home
98 K: Home to home [smiles]
99 A: Yes

6. **Alex** Ideal and Possible Self SS7

1 K: I want you to imagine you yourself after 5 years OK?
2   So *inshāʾAllāh* you've finished the university (A: [laughs])
3   Where do you see yourself
4   What are you doing
5   Use your imagination

6   but make it something that could be true
7   Do you know what I mean?
8   A: OK [smiles as if it's a game]
9   so something that could be realistic in my life
10   I saw myself in college
11   I don't know if I get married in the last year in college
12   but I wanted to see myself as the girls now
13   who are talking English easily
14   and I can talk to everyone you know
15   and I have this real accent
16   The accent you know it's just
17   it's not always the language
18   Some girls they really have the real accent
19   a good accent when they talk
20 K: But you have a good accent.
21 A: No the other girls
22   it's more better than me you know
23 K: It's good because you didn't learn English in England (A: yes)
24   Your accent is fine
25   You speak clearly
26   I understand everything you say
27 A: I mean do you know when some Saudi women
28   who talk English and you know
29   OK she's a Saudi woman
30   or an Egyptian woman (K: yeah)
31   I mean some girls when you hear them
32   if you heard them on the phone
33   you would not guess that they are an Arabic people
34 K: You would like to speak like them?
35 A: I would like to be like them
36 K: Why
37 A: I guess I will achieve something
38   Or I will prove to myself that I'm like them
39   I did something
40   I have this accent
41   I learned something from these 4 years
42   and really if I talk to someone
43   he will say "Oh my God! You are good!"
44 A: Even I just saw myself if I wanted to work
45   and I wish that when they see my translation
46   they ya'nī they don't see it as a normal one.
47   They think that "Oh you are really good in this
48   it's really your department
49   and you're really good in that"
50   you know (K: I see) and so much, I don't know
51   I don't think that when I graduate from college
52   I will immediately study master
53   I see myself in the last year from college
54   I'm married or I'm engaged you know (K: yeah)

55   and if I'm married
56   I don't know what's his mind, my husband (K: right)
57   I don't know if he will accept I study master or if I work
58   I don't know you know so (K: [dubiously] right)
59   I'm just now telling you what I wish about my study
60   what I wish (K: yeah)
61   I wish really that
…
62 K: OK. If you were working in a company
63   you would work with men right?
64 A: Err I would like to work in home
65   I guess that is better for me
66   and better for my family (K: [dubiously] OK)
67   Because this is the thing
68   that I will persuade my husband
69   that "OK I'm with you"
70   Maybe I will have children
71   and I'm working at <u>home</u>
72   So I can divide myself (K: I see)
73   but really I think it's very hard
74   I think my husband will not accept
75   we're Palestinian people you know
76   we not that open mind
77   we are not that thing
78   He will not accept that
79   I will be working from the morning till the afternoon
80   I don't know till what (K: I see)
81   you know (K: so do you see=)
82   = and I accept myself [raises voice]
83   that I work in home
84   and my <u>department</u> is like that
85   my Translation (K: yah)
86   you can work at home
87   it's not different than the office
88   It's the same thing
89   I will translate.

APPENDIX B   Sandra's Small Stories

1. **Sandra** Arabic Problem SS2

Part A (p.5-6)
1 K: How are you getting on with the Translation studies
2   How's it going
3 S: E-erm it's nice
4   but there is some problem with me
5   I'm not speaking well in Arabic
6   not in English in Arabic
7   Sometimes I don't know
8   how to explain to you what I want to say
9   That's not my problem
10   [speaking fast] That's from mama and I took it
11   I don't know from where mama has problem
12   even with her Arabic language
13   I don't know why
14   Also I took it, also my sister
15   We find something
16   we don't know how to speak in right way in Arabic
17   How can I translate something in English to my language
18   That is my problem.
19   I try to do well
20   but sometimes I just tell mama
21   "Why you don't speak well in Arabic
22   Why. That's your language.
23   Why you don't know how to describe
24   Why you don't know how to use the word in a right way"
25   I don't know.
26 K: So I wonder
27   What do you think the problem is
28   Is it that you know the word
29   but it doesn't come into your mind?=
30 S: =No. I (P) I know the word
31   but I try to give you my opinion
32   but you will still
33   but you will not understand quickly
34   I have to tell you any examples for anything *ya'nī*
35   really, I just find some problems
36   some issue for how I can give you my opinion
37   just I have a problem
38   but my family now they understand
39   but the others the friends my teacher
40   day-after-day they know what is my problem
41   Also Dr M now he tell me "you have problem translating into Arabic."
42   I tell him: "Yes [laughing] how I can"
.....

Part B (p.7-8)
1 K: So would you think of changing if you find a problem?
2   Would you think of changing subject?
3 S: No no. I'm just trying to be nice
4   because that is very problem if I want to work in anywhere
5   for example company in school in university.
6   That is very hard
7   and for me I feel that is bad
8   when I know something
9   but I don't know how to explain.
10   (P) You know also when my friends,
11   they always ask me to explain the lesson
12   explain something.
13   I don't know how to say it in Arabic
14   and this problem I'm not trying to make better *ya'nī*
15   *al-ḥamdulillāh* now when I explain something
16   they understand because I'm now doing better
17   I'm always trying to study.
18   Yes, not study, yes maybe study.
19   Maybe you can say study.
20 K: So do you think learning more English
21   has an effect on this problem you have in Arabic?
22   Does it have an effect?
23 S: I think sometimes
24   not sometimes now I feel really
25   the English is very easy
26   and the Arabic the language is (P) complicated
27   because, I don't know why
28   but now in English I <u>can</u> speak well
29   I can tell you ah my opinion
30   I <u>can</u> speak.
31   But in Arabic
32   [seriously] I found problems
33   I don't know how to tell you what I want
34   what I want to say.

   2. **Sandra** Teasing Nevine Group-2

(1)   K: …[To S & No] So how is Nevine's Arabic, do you feel it's the same as all the girls?=

(2)   S: =No maybe when she speak she speak like you know the maids when she does speak

[Everyone bursts out laughing].

(3)   Ne: [Laughing loudly] *yā waylīk* (I'm warning you!)

(4)   S: *wāllāh* (Really!). She speak like them. Also when she translates something sometimes I think—

[Ne is in hysterics]

(5) K: And she (Sandra) laughs at me when I speak Arabic.

[Nevine continues laughing]

(6) S: Are you sure that is Arabic? And her handwriting *wāllāh* (really) she, sometimes *ya'nī* I feel my maid she=

(7) No: [Laughing] = *khalāṣ* (That's enough!)

(8) S: My maid she speaks better and she write better. No Nevine no she's=

(9) K: =She's what

(10) S: She's bad. She's bad.

(11) Ne: *yā waylī* (I'm done for)

(12) K: Oh my goodness! Nour what do you say

(13) No: No some words it's good.

[All laughing still] But some words I think {maybe she's American}.

(14) S: {In a normal way} In a normal way she can speak well (K: yes) but in Arabic in=

(15) Ne: =like Arabic the formal language

(16) K: Classical Arabic?

(17) Ne: Yes classical

(18) S: Ou-u!

(19) Ne: [laughing] Horrible!

(20) S: Really I think we must make a new language for Nevine and [Nour laughs] we want to make a book for this language *wāllāh* (really). [Nevine is still laughing]

(21) K: [To Nevine] But you finished Saudi school didn't you?

(22) Ne: Yeah but I was in an American school an international school

(23) K: It was international so everything was in English yeah?

(24) Ne: Yeah.

(25) K: So that's why OK. But from what age did you go to the international school?

(26) Ne: KG1 KG2.

(27) K: Right so you didn't go to any Saudi schools?

(28) Ne: I was studying Islamic Studies but a little bit

(29) K: So Arabic was more like a foreign language? So of course her experience explains it

(30) S: OK miss but you also

(31) K: My Arabic is not good.
[All laugh]

(32) S: Let's hear you. We just listen.
[the 3 laugh] Tell us a story in Arabic.

(33) K: *lā mā aʿrif* (No I don't know)
[Nevine laughs out loud] I can't say a story!
 [All laugh]

(34) S: OK just a few words.

(35) No: Yeah.

(36) S: *yāllāh* (Come on). Say something.

(37) K: OK but let me turn off the recorder

3.   **Sandra** Muslim SS4

1 K: So you don't plan to start work
2   until after you've finished your doctorate?
3 S: Mmm or if I could *inshāʾAllāh* study and work
4   no problem for me
5   because I also just think about me
6   about my life
7   Also I think about one thing *yaʿnī*
8   it is the most important
9   I just want to make something after I died
10   all the people remember me
11   like I make building for poor people (K: yes)
12   because I need this *yaʿnī*
13   after I'm dead they tell
14   "Sandra, she was a good person
15   and then she make all this for us"
16   Do you understand me?
17 K: Yes. I understand you.
18 S: I have many things I want to do
19   because I want the people
20   when they remember me
21   they remember me in a good way
22   Because the people here usually
23   the person when he die
24   the important thing is what he done (K: that's right)
25   Because of that *yaʿnī*
26   I just think about this

27   I want just to finish my study quickly
28   I just want make like that
29   because I need to do something like this.
30 K: I see. So that's your main goal is it?
31   Is that more important (S: no)
32   than being a translator?
33 S: No, I don't have.
34   Just all my goal is do good things that help me
35   that give me good things when I'm dead. (K: Yes)
36   The name in Arabic is *ajar* (rewards)
37   *ya'nī* if you do good things
38   you will not get it in *dunyā* (life)
39   but in the *akhirah* (afterlife)
40   If you do good now
41   you will not take it now
42   but you will take it after you're dead (K: I see)
43   This helps me to get to *jannah* (heaven)
44   You understand me?
45   (K: Yeah) Like that.
46 K: But what about from the point of view of working
47   If you get your doctorate
48   You told me before that you might do your master's
49   outside Saudi Arabia
50 S: Yes I say like that
51   but my father he is not allow for me
52   because I don't have a big brother
53   I'm the only one (K: yes)
54   Because I don't have
55   and because also mama she tell me
56   "You are not the kind of people
57   that can live without his family."
58   I cannot live alone.
59 K: You agree with that
60 S: Yes because one time
61   I go to Medina with my grandfather
62   and in that 3 days I was suffering I know.
63   I miss my mom
64   I miss my sisters
65   I just call them and then I cry
66   I am not one of these people
67   who can stay away from his people.
68 K: Yeah it would be hard
69   And what about work now
70   What work do you see yourself doing
71   after you've finished your studies
72 S: I just try to work in a big company
73   or in a *safārah* (embassy)
74   I just like to work in somewhere
75   where I feel I will learn more things (K: yes)

76		It's help me to memorize the English
77		so I don't forget
78		instead of just practising (K: yeah good)
79		But I don't have goal
80		like I want to make company
81		or I have my own business
82		no I don't have anything like that
83		I just want to make something for poor people
84		because one time I can't sleep for one or two days
85		because I see two small kids
86		they was inside the garbage
87	K:	Where. In a poor part of town?
88	S:	Yeah I think they're from *ṣūmāl* (Somalia)
89		or somewhere like that
90		They were inside the garbage
91		looking for food
92		and at that time I feel so sad
93		and *yaʿnī* I can't sleep
94		Maybe I stay like that in (for) 3 days
95		I just tell Mama "Mama they are very sad *yaʿnī*."
96		Maybe that time really I was so sad
97		Because of that I don't think about business like that
98		I just think of (to) myself
99		these people need someone think of them (K: yes)
100		And also my religion [stumbles over word]
101		my Islam
102		it's learn me to be a good person
103		and show love to people better than (to) myself
104		Sometimes I feel here it's very bad *yaʿnī*
105		All Muslim people they can
106		but they don't care for these people
107		But outside I saw like Angelina Jolie (K: yeah)
108		She do many good things for the people inside Africa like that
109		and I feel she's a good woman really
110		because she think of these people.

4. **Sandra** Men and Women in Saudi SS6

1	K:	...do you think it's easier for men to be translators
2		or do men and women have an equal chance to work as translators?
3	S:	(P)The man *yaʿnī* I see my father he's not
4		he didn't like to *yaʿnī* know English well
5		He can translate but just for help someone like that
6		but not *yaʿnī* this is his job
7	K:	So do you think women like to be translators
8		more than men? (S: yah) Why
9	S:	Look here in Saudi Arabia *yaʿnī*
10		the man he didn't focus just in one goal like women

11   he just want finish his studying
12   and then he got a job
13   but what kind of job
14   anything
15   Maybe he will get Accounting
16   he go to Marketing
17   he go to Business
18   So what is your goal
19   [quietly] "Anything"
20   But women they <u>have</u> goals *yaʿnī*
21   " I want to be a pharmacist
22   I want to be a translator
23   I will be a doctor"*yaʿnī*
24   The woman she have goal
25   and she want and she want get it.
26 K: Do you mean women have higher goals than men
27   (S: yeah) Why do you think so
28 S: (P) Really I don't know
29   but *yaʿnī* this is what is happen *yaʿnī*
30 K: you mean in Saudi society (S: yah)
31   OK do you think it was always like this?
32 S: I don't know about before
33   but now *yaʿnī* I see some people they say
34   "Your study is not important
35   The more important thing is that you get married."
36   (K: Ah OK) For me I say
37   "No, for me it's better if I study and then get my job
38   and then look to my life get married anything
39   But the most important is studying" (K:mmm)
40   But the man *yaʿnī* like my cousin
41   he doesn't mind what he work
42   he work in bank OK
43   he can work in car (K: mechanic)
44   no car sales yah he can work in any company *yaʿnī*
45   he don't mind anything
46   but the woman no
47   she want work in a specific place in a special place.
48 K: Is that because men want to make money quickly?
49 S: No because they are lazy yah lazy
50   They don't have one goal to be rich
51   He just want get job have house
52   he can feed he can work he can go house
53   OK that's enough (K: I see).
54   If you see here most of the doctors in the college or in the university
55   are from Morocco from India from Syria from like that.
56   (P) You won't see Saudi doctors just 2 or 3 per cent.
57   Do you understand?
58 K: Yes I understand but why is that
59   I mean they're nearly all Arabs aren't they?

60 S: Yeah I don't know *ya'nī* for me I have (been) in this university
61   since 2 years by this week *ya'nī*
62   I have one year before and this is the second year.
63   I never seen a Saudi doctor
64   maybe just in our event I remember
65   maybe 5 doctors I see them
66   and when you look about their history
67   they didn't say "I lived in Saudi."
68   He say "I was in America"
69   "I was in London"
70   All the doctors here in Sharifa
71   "I was in America. I was in London. I live there
72   I just come here *ya'nī* for few days
73   and then I will come back there."
74   (K: Really?) Even every man in Saudi Arabia
75   who want become a big thing
76   he live outside and then he work outside
77   and *khalāṣ ya'nī* his life is there
78   not here (K: I see) because here *ya'nī*
79   nothing is help you to be
80   to get your goal
81 K: but for women it's different do you think?
82 S: Even for women.
83   Like here if someone can make an AC (air conditioner)
84   or make a small fan
85   or someone who can make medicine,
86   just from his own I don't know what
87   (K: an inventor, invent something) I will look
   [(P) as Sandra looks up word in her mobile phone]
88   Invent yeah. Here we don't have a centre for invention
89   We don't have
90   Here is not like outside
91   Like America they have a centre for everything
92   Here we don't have that you know
93   like as you say in general
94   the government are upset the people here in Saudi Arabia
95 K   the government upset the people
96 S   upset its mean *ya'nī* broke their dreams.

   5.   **Sandra** Islamic Class SS6

   1 S: …Yeah, for me, I <u>can</u> focus
   2   but in Islam only one class I can't
   3 K: The teacher's difficult
   4 S: He's not difficult
   5   but the word is very complicated and too long
   6   and I'm just confused about that
   7   I'm just *ya'nī* in this class

8   I must do one thing (P)
9   I just do first hear you or writing like that
10   I can't really
11 K: you can't listen understand and write
12 S: yah I remember the last semester
13   he was explaining something
14   and then I record this class
15   I record it in my iPod
16   and then when I come to home I just
17   I was then at that time I was understand it
18   But I can't every class record
19   because they are ladies
20   they speak, like that it's not good *ya'nī*
21   it's not fine even if I delete this voice
22   (K: I see) *ya'nī* it's not nice
23 K: the ladies don't like to be recorded
24 S: For me if I see someone record
25   I will not speak (K: really?)
26   for me yeah because *ya'nī* everything
27   [in louder voice] I don't like it to happen with me
28   I will not do it with the other girls
29   (K: I see) yeah just in that first class *ya'nī*
30   he's the one who speak and then I record.
31   When my friend start talking
32   in that case I stop recording
33 K: Does Dr M speak very quickly?
34 S: No but his voice is too low
35   and in his class I feel sometimes I was sleep
36   His voice always is too low.
37 K: The Islam he talks about is not as you learnt
38   about Islam at school right?
39   It's different (S: yah)
40   How is it different
41 S: In school just they teach me the important things
42   just you know few minutes like topics *ya'nī*
43   they just learn us about in Islam you must do this and that
44   because you will be like that OK
45   and another thing
46   you must cover your hair
47   you must do that
48   this is *ḥarām*
49   this is *ḥalāl*
50   like a few things (K: mmm)
51   and just topics but here no
52   some thing we <u>took</u> it *ya'nī*
53 K : What does he talk about
54 S: He talk in our study in my last class
55   he was talking about
56   what if when I was outside and then

57   if I see a bottle of wine in front of me
58   what I can do. Can I touch it?
59   Can I stay on the table the one it have?
60   Like that we was say
61 K: So can you discuss it
62   or does he just tell you?
63 S: No he ask and then he discuss
64   and then he explains
65   like that *ya'nī* he's good
66   but the only problem thing in his voice
67   his voice is low
68 K: But can you say "Excuse me
69   but I don't agree with you
70   I think this"?
71 S: Yeah yeah you can
72   He's very lovely and he's very nice.

6.   **Sandra** Apathetic Disposition SS5

 1 K: So my last question is:
 2   do you think you've changed in any way since the PP?
 3 S: Yeah [disconsolately] because now
 4   I'm just thinking about myself
 5   what I'm gonna do [in tragic tone]
 6   I'm gonna fail
 7   I can't do it, like that
 8   and then I say "No I can
 9   I will help myself [in tragic monotone]
10   I will ask Allah to help me
11   I will work well
12   I will work too much" like that
13 K: so you don't feel so confident now
14 S: no, and also by the way
15   now now I have a break more than the PP
16   but even now in my break
17   I don't like to stay with anyone
18   I just want to stay alone
19   *ya'nī* I stay in my break at 10 o'clock
20   I stay just one hour alone
21   If someone comes and sit with me
22   I get out because I don't have
23   *ya'nī* I'm not in the mood to stay
24   with my friend (K: Why) like that
25   I feel (P) (K: depressed?) yah no not
26   unhappy or sad it's like you know
27   I'm not in the mood.
28   Also if I'm hungry,
29   I'll cut my leg before going to dining

30   [K laughs] and then come back
31   I will <u>never</u> do it
32   [Comic tone] one time I was very hungry
33   Where did I go
34   [Speaking fast] I just go in my class
35   I didn't eat
36   She tell me "Why don't you come and eat"
37   I tell her "It's hot and there's sun it's very far
38   Do you want me to pass this big space
39   just for eating? [Laughing] Are you crazy?
40   I stay here. I don't have a problem."
41 K: Is it because you find the university hard?
42 S: Erm it's hard
43   not because of this university itself no
44   because of me
45   because I'm now in the university
46   because now I'm big
47   I must take more responsibility like that (K: mmm)
48   and now mine is like erm
49   I can take more no problem
50   Give me and I can take, no problem
51   I can wait (K: you're patient)
52 S: I don't know *ṣabr* (patience)
53   I'm patient yes too much a lot
54   (K: you're very patient) yah very patient
55   you know like when I was tired
56   this arm was hurt me because of the AC (air conditioner)
57   I didn't go to hospital
58   but this was very painful (K: that's not good)
59   yes I know but do you want me to go to hospital
60   [in fed-up voice] and stay waiting for doctors
61   and then get out without nothing? No
62   maybe just a few days
63   and then I will become fine
64   Like that I am.
65 K: So is this just now
66   or from September?
67 S: No no no. I am like that
68   since I was small *yaʿnī*
69   Since the time I come to this life I am like that
70   But now I am more than before
71   because of university (K: mmm).
72   And sometimes I feel headache
73   I want get Panadol
74   I ask my friend "Do you have?"
75   and she tell me no I say "OK *khalāṣ*."
76   OK my auntie she tell me "Ask the nurse."
77   I tell her [speaking very fast]"Tsk tsk I'm so tired.
78   Do you want me to ask the nurse?

79   No *khalāṣ* no problem"
80 K: We say in English "I can't be bothered"=
81 S: =No it's not bothered
82   you know like lazy [in whiny voice]
83   "Oh you want me ask her? *khalāṣ* no"
84   and then she told me "Ooo I don't have water
85   Do you want me go outside and bring water?"
86   [S speaks very fast] "No need no need"
87   you know it's very lazy
88 K: Yeah but is it because you're still in your freshman year?
89 S: Now now I feel that if I finish this year
90   and then start study my major
91   I think I will be fine
92   or I will be more exciting (excited)
93   but now I feel so lazy
94   I don't want to do anything
95   I just want waiting for my classes
96   just stay go for my courses like that

APPENDIX C   Nour's Small Stories

1. **Nour** Earth Dream SS1

1 K: So communication is very important to you.
2 No: Yeah important now
3   Now very important
4 K: Do you like to speak to English people
5   to American people?
6 No: Yeah
7 K: Why
8 No: Because the access (accent) good
9 K: Just the accent
10   or you like to know—
11 No: Maybe I like it the American
12 K: Can you tell me why?
13 No: [Laughs shyly] My dream
14   I don't know. Because every
15   *ya'nī min anā ṣaghīrah*   (I mean from the time I
16   *kunt asm'a dāīmān yitkallam innū Amrīkā*   was young I used to
17   is the earth dream   always hear people say
                                                      that America)

18 K: *mīn qālat hadhā abūkī*   (Was it your father who said that?)

19 No: *lā kānat ihnā ma'ānā*
20   *illī rabatnā jiddatī*   (No it was our grandmother who raised us)

21 K: Your grandmother.
22 No: My grandmother
23   *waf'ā Allāh yerḥamhā*   (She died God bless her soul)
24   *hiyā taqūl dāīmān Amrīkā*
25   earth dream   (She always used to say "America is the
                                                      earth dream")
26   She want—I love my grandmother
27   but she want everyone
28   *mīn awlād'hā yiṭal'ahā Amrīkā*
29   *bas tishūf'hā*   (of her children to take her to America
                                        just to see it)
30 K: [Laughs]
31 No: *Bas tishūf'hā*   (Just to see it)
32   "I want to see America"
33   But she is die yeah
34   Not see America.
35 K: Why did she want to see America
36 No: I don't know why
37   but when I was 5 or 6 years old
38   *anā kam marrah asāl'hā*

| 39 | *laysh intī tibghī tishūfī Amrīkā* | (I asked her so many times "Why do you want to see America") |
| 40 | *bas abgha ashūf Amrīkā* | ("I just want to see America") |

41 K: What about you and your daughter
42   Do you speak to your daughter about America?
43 No: No because maybe go in the America
44   maybe no go
45   She is inside the dream like me
46   but *'ashān lammā al-insān yiḥib al-balad*

47	*yiḥib al-nās*	(because if a person likes the country they like its people)
48 K:	*aywah akīd*	(Yes of course)
49 No:	*fā lammā yishūf al-nās nafsū yiqūl*	(So when he sees the people, inside him he says)

50   Ah! I love it America
51   "Hi how are you"
52   "You are very kind"
53   Maybe they tell me:
54   "No I am French
55   or I am Germany or—"
56   "Oh!" I tell them
57   "thank you"
58   and I am going [laughs]
59 K: [Laughs] That's funny

2. **Nour** Bad PE SS5

1 No: I tell the advisor
2   she is tell me:
3   "Go to *duktūrah*—" another advisor
4   I forget name
5   I go in the—yeah *dra* R
6   every time she's meeting
7   "I have class
8   I cannot stay"
9   Like that
10   I want to drop this PE
11   I can't continue
12   Alex she is crying
13 K: I know
14 No: all students
15   not she and me
16   all students she's
17   better in English
18   but cannot do exam.
19 K: It's difficult?
20 No: Yes it's <u>difficult</u>

21   She put it question for university
22   not freshmen
23 K: you're freshmen
24 No: Yah different from questions
25   true and false, choose correct word, like that
26   We never take exam like that
27 K: The questions were difficult?
28 No: Yeah we cannot understand
29   what she need [raises voice]
30   She need like the Math
31   or need division (K: definition?)
32   definition or need reasons or need solve
33   [Pleading] <u>What you need</u>
34 K: Only in the exam?
35 No: In mid-term (exam)
36   She not give us quiz
37   no quiz only classes
38   classes maybe 2 classes in 1 week
39   or 3 classes I don't have schedule
40   but after that it's mid-term (exam)
41 K: But in the classroom
42   what does she do in the classroom
43 No: Together with me in class 2 American
44   one her name is M
45   and second I forget name
46   M American cannot understand [ironic voice] huh everything
47   she cannot understand [raises voice]
48   She take it the mid-term paper:
49   "What you need. What you need."
50   she tell Dr A (the invigilator)
51   Dr A say "Don't talk in the exam"
52   But she say
53   "I don't understand the paper"
54   I see like that
55   Dr A tell me
56   "Nour turn (round)"
57   but she's American
58   she cannot solve
59   and I Arabic slow [laughs aloud]
60   Really! [in high pitch] I cannot!
61 K: But can you ask her in class
62   "Excuse me I don't understand
63   Can you explain it?"
64 No: She tell [with great affectation] "her-her-her
65   another student cannot tell her?"
66   Like that (K: Oh!). "Her-her-her
67   can anybody explain her?"
68   Oh my God!
69   I keep it silent

70 K: Is she Saudi?
71 No: *Urdunī* (Jordanian) maybe
72 K: But she speaks in English to you
73 No: English only. She not speak the Arabic
74   I go in the office
75   "Please *duktūrah*
76   I cannot understand everything
77   Please maybe repeat
78   All maybe understand
79   but me and some students
80   not understand everything
81   Please say in simple word
82   because (so) I understand"
83   she [in indifferent voice]"7 everything 7 Nour"
84   I cannot
85   Sometimes [laughs] forget name yeah?
86 K: Of course
87 No: I cannot say it's the PE
88   because very nice subject yeah?
89 K: Yeah do you do exercise?
90 No: Yeah exercise
91   all the body you're loving the subject
92   But the teacher!
93   Everybody "no no no
94   not take it now the PE"
95   Maybe after going *Dra* H
96   I take it the PE
97 K: Right it's a problem
98 No: All my friends Nevine and Rana and Sandra
99   all not take it the PE
100   Only me and Alex [extensive laughter]
101 K: [Laughing] That's a <u>big</u> problem!

3. **Nour** Bad CS SS6

1   K: ...So can you choose who to work with
2   or does the teacher choose who you work with?
3   No: No no you choose. Freedom
4   K: So you can choose the girls who=
5   No: =Yeah but new student
6   I don't know the girl with me
7   who's the work or not work
8   she's serious or not serious I don't know
9   but I tell her (APS teacher)"I <u>want</u> alone work in all the presentations"
10   but she tell me maybe I lose 3 marks
11   (K: if you work alone) yes
12   It's a rule. She tell me like that
13   "the rule 4 maximum 5 students work together

14   One student want to work alone

15   OK she lose 2 or 3 marks" like that

16 K: You told me before that you like to work in a group

17   remember you told me that? (No: yah)

18   Not alone [laughs] remember?

19   But now you said=

20 No: =I change my mind really.

21   I write in my Blackberry [laughs]

22   I change mind really

23   because before I want to work together in group

24   but now after [to S] *aysh aqūl tajrubah* (how do you say 'experience')

25   (K: you can say it in Arabic)

26   Before the [stumbling] expectation or something like that

27   I change mind

28   because not all in the group work together (K: yes)

29   Some student really go to the sea go to fun

30   go in the restaurant

31   and (I) work <u>alone</u>

32   (K: Yeah it's not fair)

33   Yah I do like this in C.S. (Computer Studies)

34   I work on magazine (K: research?)

35   yes I work alone all this one

36   I send it to Blackboard

37   She tell me "Nour all the students, not me, send before 12 OK I accept

38   After 12 you lose 1 mark"

39   I tell her "OK, I sent it 11.58

40   only 2 minutes *yaʿnī fī waqt* (so there's still time)

41   It don't arrive because I don't know problem maybe 12 and 20

42   or 15 minutes

43   and I lost 2 marks me

44   and <u>all </u>students full marks. (K: Why)

45   I go and ask her like that [indignant] "Why (P)

46   I work <u>myself </u>not all students

47   All students take it full mark

48   and me, not fair."

49   She tell me "2 marks?

50   What's wrong Nour"

51   I tell her "because 2 marks is big thing"

52   But all students really sleeping

53   go in the sea go in the restaurant

54   I stay in my home

55   write the homework (K: yes)

56   not homework like project

57   for mid-term 20 marks

58 K: It's very important

59 No: Yes. I tell her "In final exam 20 and in this 18

60   20 good I accept my marks"

61   She tell me "OK why you angry"

62   I tell her "Because I am doing all of this myself"

63 K: So all the group they get the same grade?
64 No: Yeah all the group they take it 20
65   me 18 (K: I see)
66   because she tell me:
67   "You sent it in Blackboard you"
68 K: So do you all put it on Blackboard?
69 No: No there is one in group
70   like the advisor the group send it
71 K: So why the others got a full mark
72 No: Because she's tell me like that
73   she's opinion, tell me
74   "maybe this student she send early
75   but you Nour you're lazy
76   so you send it late"
77   I tell her [weakly]"No"
78 K: What project is this
79 No: Project for CS
80   I tell her "OK" [dejected]
81 K: So that's a problem isn't it
82 No: But I'm feel sad
83   So I tell her now in APS
84   "Please I want to work alone"
85   She tell me "Maybe you lose 2 marks
86   or 3 marks you working alone
87   Work together"
88   So I choose some student
89   This is *inshā'Allāh* good

4. **Nour** Study Abroad SS2/Group-2

(1)K: Can't you be good at English and live and study in Saudi Arabia?

(2)S: Maybe.

(3)No: No no no.

(4)K: What do you think

(5)No: Oh no because between Arabic and English but in America only English (K: Yes) I must talk to somebody outside or inside or call him anywhere. I told him in English only. Because the study better.

(6)K: Where is it better

(7)No: In America better.

(8)S: No here it's better because here [laughs]=

(9)No: {It's difficult}

(10)S: {because} here you speak a little bit of Arabic and then [laughs] but there you must guess this word what it's mean. Maybe you get the meaning in the wrong way like that. (No: No no) But here {I feel it's, there}

(11)No: [Forcefully] <u>No.</u>} My cousin study here English Literature *al-bakalūrīās* (bachelors) finished, vacation, but he cannot one sentence he tell me. (K: He can't speak?) Yeah.

(12)S: Yeah {but the teaching—

(13)No: {But after that he go to America 3 months now *māshāʾAllāh* he can't stop ter-ter-ter-ter [laughs]

(14)Ne: [Quietly] *mū sharṭ* (Not necessarily)

(15)S: {Here sometimes the study is very bad.

(16)No: {*lā kaslān* (No, he's lazy) *taʿrifī al-awlād kaslānīn* (you know the boys they're lazy). (Ne: *bas yaʿnī* (But I mean)) *yiḥfaẓū yiktabū khalāṣ wā yirjaʿū=* (They memorize then they write and that's all and they come back to=).

(17)S: =OK *yā ḥabībī* (Ok my dear)

(18)Ne: [quietly] *mū sharṭ. lammā anā kunt fī Amrīkā fī nās yaʿnī ʿārifah yidrisū English courses mumkin 3 years ṭayib?* (Not necessarily. When I was in America there were people you know taking English courses for about 3 years OK?). *tijilisī maʿa al-walad mā yaʿrif marra yitkallam wāllāh yaʿrif yuktub wāllāh yaʿrif yaqrāʾ* (You sit with the boy he doesn't know how to speak or how to write or how to read) *bī thalāthah sinīn yʾākhudh TOEFL takhayal (*in 3 years they take the TOEFL just imagine).

(19)No: Ah *hūwa hinā hināk mumkin bas—* (He was here and went there maybe just to—)

(20)Ne: *lā hināk. mū sharṭ* (No he was there. It's not necessarily true). *aḥisū hadhā* tongue *mū* education (I feel that is tongue not education).

(21)No: *hūwa aqūlik ʿashān rāḥ yishtaghil hināka ghaṣbān ʿannū yitaʿllam al-lughah bas hunā akhadh al-bakalūrīās wā mā aḥibhā* (The one I'm telling you it's because he went to work there he had no choice but to learn the language but here he did his bachelor's degree but didn't like it).

(22)Ne: *fī al-nihāyā hiyā* (That's at the end).

(23)K: Or do you think it's something to do with some people are good at languages? Some people find it easy to learn English. Some people find it difficult to learn. Is it a natural=

(24)No: =Some people=

(25)Ne: =Yeah that's what I'm talking about right now.

(26)S: =You know before I see the French is very easy and before I was really hate the English.

(27)No: Yeah. Some students hate the English.

(28)K: Really? Why

(29)No: {Because they think it's difficult.

(30)S: {I think the French is easier more than English.

(31)K: They think it's difficult.

(32)No: Difficult yeah and I can't I can't. He mind like that. I cannot doing and stop mind.

5. **Nour** English for Secrets SS2/Group-2

(1)K: What about girls

(2)S: The girl in Saudi they like to study but not just English *y'anī* they—

(3)No: [Laughs] They like stories.

(4)S: They like learn more things. But the boys here no. They are *māshā'Allāh* loser very loser [all laugh]

(5)K: [Laughs] They're losers?

(6)S: *māshā'Allāh.*

(7)No: Some girls they need take the language but it is for secret with the friends only [laughs]. She need like that.

(8)K: Oh for secrets? [All laugh]

(9)S: For secrets.

(10)No: Yeah and the girl's family she cannot understand [laughs] the language. Yeah maybe she use the phone or the computer

(11)K: So she only speaks English?

(12)No: Yeah English or French. But not I want the English language or I want the French language no.

(13)K: So she's not serious like I want it for my job or—

(14)No,S: No no [laughing]

(15)K: For secrets that's <u>interesting</u>!

(16)S: Me and my cousin we always just decide how we can learn like Mexican language.

(17)K: Spanish. In Mexico they speak Spanish.

(18)S: Yeah. They say this language is hard for our family. They will find it hard because they don't know what is this language. They will just look for no problem this language is very far *ya'nī*. And sometimes I feel I will *inshāʾAllāh*.

(19)No: I have a lovely story, I have my friend—

    [Sandra starts talking to Nevine in Arabic]

(20)K: Yes. I like stories. Sandra Nevine she's telling us a story.

(21)No: [laughs shyly] She need to study in English but in secret because it's her boyfriend but her mother—

(22)S: Who

(23)No: *ṣadīqātī fil madrasah* (my friend at school) intermediate school [laughs] (K: OK) but with the boyfriend together they study the English [laughs]. Everyday he talked to her in mobile. She's mother [laughs]—

(24)S: Her mother.

(25)No: Her mother go and study English [laughs].

(26)K: [Laughs] Her mother also went to study English.

(27)No: Yeah. She listen and listen and listen but she cannot know what talk the boy [laughing so much she can hardly speak now]

(28)K: So that's a reason to study English to check on your daughter.

(29)No: Yes. [No, Ne & K laugh together]

(30)S: No *wāllāhi* (I swear) when I will decide

        (Sandra continues talking to Nevine in Arabic)

(31)No*: kānat makhṭūbah* (She was engaged).

(32)K: Oh they got married after?

(33)No: Yeah, they got—

(34)K: Engaged.

        [Sandra & Nevine talk in Arabic & laugh]

(35)No : Engaged and after that married. After 2 months married.

6. **Nour** Daughter's Future SS6

1. K: OK, and what do you wish for your daughter after 5 years.
2.   What's the best for your daughter.
3. No: I want she's learning better
4.   and she go in the nice school
5   international of course
6.   because good the language in international.
7.   I see that student maybe 16 or 17, 18 or 19 years
8.   she's better (than) me

9.   because she's study in international school
10.   but expensive I cannot now
11.   but after that maybe I fixing my life
12.   I fixing my daughter life.
13. K: So what do you want her to be
14.   What kind of work do you want her to do
15. No: I want she's comfortable with anything
16.   She doesn't need anybody
17. K: independent=
18. No: =yes. I want she has better life (than) me.
19. K: Do you want her to live here in Saudi
20.   or do you want her to experience other places?
21. No: [weakly] No no she's live here.
22. K: You'll be happy for her to live here
23. No: Yes. With my family yes.
24. K: And would you like her to travel?
25. No: Yes I want to but I cannot now.
26.   Maybe after that *inshāʾAllāh*
27. K: You'd like your daughter to travel?
28. No: Yes I want to travel England or America
29.   or any place
30.   maybe *Turkīā* or Egypt
31.   but I cannot now [with a little laugh]
32.   maybe after
33.   because she see another country
34.   she get open mind
35.   she knows the history here and history here
36.   and famous place
37.   the pyramids in Egypt
38.   she have story
39.   she's tell some students in school
40.   "Yes I go in here and I go in here"
41.   but she's no go [small laugh]in any place
42.   only like Chucky Cheese
43.   or McDonalds or the park
44.   maybe have little story
45. K: you want to expand her knowledge
46. No: yes yes!
47. K: But if she goes to international school
48.   will you be worried
49.   that her Arabic maybe won't be very good? =
50. No: =No she's now
51.   maybe after 5 years I dunno
52.   maybe 5 years maybe 6 years
53.   maybe less maybe more
54.   I dunno but *inshāʾAllāh*
55.   She's now (in) government school
56.   she take it more Arabic
57.   After that maybe go in the international

58.   intermediate or high school (K: yes)
59.   she's both
60.   she's have Arabic and have English
61   K: yes that's good
62. No: yes *inshāʾAllāh*

1. **Nevine** Explaining her Role in Activity 1 PA1

1 K: So in the activity you did what did <u>you</u> do exactly
2   Like did you discuss with the group did you act?
3   Tell me a little about what you did
4 Ne: I just did the explanation for the social problem
5   I wrote the explanation
6   I explained for the instructor
7   and they acted.
8 K: So you didn't talk to the other girls in your group?
9 Ne: Yeah we did actually together
10 K: That's what I'm asking you
11 Ne: Yes we discussed the ideas together
12   and I gave them the explanation
13   They are acting.
14 K: Alright so you didn't act?
15 Ne: No.
16 K: Why not
17 Ne: I don't know
18   They are actors [laughs]
19 K: Sorry?
20 Ne: They are choosing
21 K: OK so when you were discussing
22   did you speak mostly in English or Arabic?
23 Ne: Ah some students didn't understand English sometimes
24   so I have to speak Arabic that's why
25 K: So do you speak Arabic sometimes to them?
26 Ne: Here?
27 K: Yeah
28 Ne: Sometimes but when I was in the other section
29   my section cause we are 2 sections mixed together
30   I was in the other section
31   My section they are
32   there wasn't a lot of girls speak Arabic (English)
33   so that's why I was explaining more.
34 K: Ah so you were speaking more English there?
35   So why do you speak more Arabic
36 Ne: Cause in the other section there were a lot of beginner girls
37   They don't understand English well that's why.
38 K: [with confused expression] Oh so you spoke more Arabic?
39 Ne: Yeah we just mixed the last week.
40 K : OK so what's the difference between the sections
41 Ne: My old (new) section was speaking English more than the others
42   The other section they didn't speak English well
43   but they did understand sometimes
44 K : OK so in your group
45   who were you working with today

46 Ne: Ah. Err (P)
47 K: Because they're new to you. Nour I think.
48 Ne: [Slowly] Nour and Sandra and Alexandra
49 K: So what did everybody do
50   Do you think you did most of the talking?
51   How did you share the {responsibilities}
52 Ne: {Ah Nour gave us} the story
53   and Sandra and Alex acted the play [laughs]
54 K: And what about you
55 Ne: I'm just explaining to the teacher.
56 K: OK. Now I noticed that Nour speaks quite a lot in class doesn't she?
57 Ne: The girl in front of me?
58 K: Yes Nour with the red top
59 Ne: Yah yah
60 K: She speaks quite a lot
61   but quite a lot of it is Arabic.
62 Ne: Yah.
63 K: So why is that
64 Ne: Because she's a beginner in English
65   and she didn't understand English well that's why
66   She just learned=
67 K: =So do you feel that you're a beginner?
68 Ne: [with surprise] Me? I don't know [laughs].
69   I'm in the middle.
70 K: In the middle. So you're quite good in the class=
71 Ne: =yeah
72 K: So what did you think of this activity today
73   Was it useful?
74 Ne: Yeah it was useful.
75 K: Why
76 Ne: Cause it helps the student to build our vocabulary
77   and build the English language as well
78 K: OK and what about working in a group
79   Do you prefer working in a group?
80 Ne: Yes like to share the ideas
81   and (P) that's all
82 K: Did you enjoy the activity?
83 Ne: Mmm I did.
84 K: Why
85 Ne: [Laughs] Cause I'm with my friends
86   and we were having fun also
87 K: What did you learn do you think
88   Did you learn anything new?
89 Ne: Erm (P) just to be responsible more
90   more responsible with the social problems
91   that's all.

2. **Nevine** Escape SS5

1 K: And tell me about your studies so far in the University
2   Do you feel it's better than the PP?
3   Are you learning more things?
4 Ne: Yeah I'm learning more things
5   but you know everything's getting a little more complicated right now
6 K: More complicated?
7 Ne: Yeah. I got a lot of courses
8   that I didn't want to take them
9   like Biology Math Computer Science
10   It's very difficult for me
11   as well Arabic as a Second Language
12 K: Yeah so which subjects are you enjoying
13   Are you enjoying anything?
14 Ne: The ACS
15 K: The ACS
16   And do you think you're learning in the ACS class?
17   Are you learning more English there?
18 Ne: Yeah that's absolutely sure [laughs]
19 K: Is that going to help you
20   when you go to America do you think
21 Ne: Yeah absolutely
22 K: And what about socializing in the University
23   Have you made new friends there?
24 Ne: No no [laughs]
25 K : Really?
26 Ne: [laughing] Yeah.
27 K: Because Nour says whenever she sees you in the university
28   you're always with friends [laughs]
29 Ne: No. It's not true I'm sure.
30 K: [Laughs] She said "When Nevine first came to the PP
31   she was always alone
32   and gradually she got more and more friends
33   and now she's always with friends" [laughs]
34   Is that true?
35 Ne: No.
36 K: So who are your friends now
37 Ne: Nour and Lama and Alex
38   the same you know as in the PP
39 K: Really?
40 Ne: The same girls
41 K: What about the teachers
42   How do you get on with the teachers
43 Ne: They're not all good.
44 K: Which ones do you find difficult
45   and which ones are nice
46 Ne: Difficult? The Math teacher and the Computer teacher
47   he's very very strict.

48 K: Really?
49 Ne: He's difficult and boring
50   Everything, a <u>horrible</u> course.
    ...
51 K: Do you find there's a lot more work
52   in the university than in the PP?
53 Ne: Yeah a lot more
54 K: Do you have a lot more homework?
55 Ne: Yeah
56 K: How many hours
57   do you work roughly every night
58 Ne: Maybe from 5pm till 10pm.
59 K: That's a lot
60 Ne: [Laughs] I know.
61 K: So how were the mid-term tests
62 Ne: It wasn't very good
63   The Math it wasn't very good
64   I did very well in the ACS
65 K: Right
66 Ne: And in the Islamic as well and Biology
67   Except the Math and Computer Science
68   They weren't good.
69 K: How is the Islamic studies going
70 Ne: It's not very good but it's not hard
71 K: Alex says her Islamic teacher
72   uses very difficult English words
73   Do you have him?
74 Ne: Yeah I'm with her in the same class
75 K: She has a problem
76 Ne: No when I told you I have a problem
77   I didn't mean with the man who teaches me
78   I mean the course is not good.
    ...
79 K: Are the instructors helpful like in the PP?
80 Ne: No they are not so helpful
81 K: If you have a problem say with your homework
82   can you go and see the instructor?
83 Ne: No not all the times
84 K: That makes it a bit hard doesn't it?
85 Ne: Yeah, that's the problem with the college
86   so I decided to leave to the States
87   cause really I can complete my…
[Sound tapers off

3. **Nevine** Teasing Nevine SS2/Group-2

(1) K: …[To S & No] So how is Nevine's Arabic, do you feel it's the same as all the girls?=

(2) S: =No maybe when she speak she speak like you know the maids when she does speak

[Everyone bursts out laughing]

(3) Ne: [Laughing loudly] *yā waylīk* (I'm warning you!)

(4) S: *wāllāh* (Really!) She speak like them. Also when she translates something sometimes I think—

[Ne is in hysterics]

(5) K: And she (Sandra) laughs at me when I speak Arabic.

[Nevine continues laughing]

(6) S: Are you sure that is Arabic? And her handwriting *wāllāh* (really) she, sometimes *ya'nī* I feel my maid she=

(7) No: [Laughing] = *khalāṣ* (That's enough!)

(8) S: My maid she speaks better and she write better. No Nevine no she's=

(9) K: =She's what

(10) S: She's bad. She's bad.

(11) Ne: *yā waylī* (I'm done for)

(12) K: Oh my goodness! Nour what do you say

(13) No: No some words it's good.
 [All laughing still] But some words I think {maybe she's American}.

(14) S: {In a normal way} In a normal way she can speak well (K: yes) but in Arabic in=

(15) Ne: =like Arabic the formal language.

(16) K: Classical Arabic?

(17) Ne: Yes Classical.

(18) S: Ou-u!

(19) Ne: [laughing] Horrible

(20) S: Really I think we must make a new language for Nevine and [Nour laughs] we want to make a book for this language *wāllāh* (really). [Nevine is still laughing]

(21) K: [laughs] But you finished Saudi school didn't you?

(22) Ne: Yeah but I was in an American school an international school

(23) K: It was international so everything was in English yeah?

(24) Ne: Yeah.

(25) K: So that's why OK. But from what age did you go to the international school?

(26) Ne: KG1 KG2

(27) K: Right so you didn't go to any Saudi schools?

(28) Ne: I was studying Islamic Studies but a little bit

(29) K: So Arabic was more like a foreign language? So of course her experience explains it

(30) S: OK miss but you also

(31) K: My Arabic is not good.

[All laugh]

(32) S: Let's hear you. We just listen

[the 3 laugh] Tell us a story in Arabic.

(33) K: *lā mā aʿrif* (No I don't know)

[Nevine laughs out loud]

APPENDIX E Forms and Interview Questions

1. Participant Information Sheet (distributed in English and Arabic)

A Research Project on the Experience of Learning English in Saudi Arabia
(February- April 2012)

Information for Student Participants

My name is Mrs Kathy Kent and I am a researcher from the University of London working towards my PhD. This leaflet tells you about my research. I hope it will be useful and I would be happy to answer any questions you have.

Why is the research being done?
So I can find out about the classroom English learning experience of Saudi female students at school and at university.

Who will be in the project?
My participants will be 5 or 6 young adult female learners doing a course of study in English at Sharifa PP. Participants should have completed their studies at a public or private Saudi school and be able to communicate their ideas in English.

What will happen during the research?
I will ask you to tell me about your past experience learning English in Saudi intermediate school and high school, your present experience at Sharifa PP so far and your plans and goals for future learning.

I would also like to observe you working on some class activities and then talk to you about what happened during the activity.

Our interviews should last about 45 minutes and take place about once every two weeks.

If you agree, I will record the activities and the interviews and type them up later. I am not looking for right or wrong answers, only for what everyone thinks.

We will use English for the interviews but you may use Arabic if you can't think of a suitable English word or phrase.

2. Participant Consent Form

STUDENT CONSENT FORM (in Arabic)

AN INVESTIGATION OF LANGUAGE LEARNER EXPERIENCE
(January-May 2012)

I have understood the information about the research.

_____ Please Tick

I will allow the researcher to observe me in class.

_____Please Tick

I agree to be interviewed.

_____Please Tick

I will allow the researcher to audio-record me in class and during interviews.

_____Please Tick

I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time.

_____Please Tick

I understand that taking part in the research will not affect my grades.

_____Please Tick

NAME _____

SIGNED _____

3. Biodata Form

BIODATA

(Please fill out in English)

NAME _____

AGE _____

NATIONALITY _____

NATIONALITY

OF PARENTS _____

HAVE YOU LIVED IN SAUDI ARABIA ALL YOUR LIFE? _____

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS. _____

_____

SCHOOL

 FOR HOW MANY YEARS DID YOU ATTEND SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA?

 _____

PLEASE SPECIFY THE TYPE OF SCHOOL(S) YOU ATTENDED (Government, Private, International) AND THE GRADES (School Years) YOU COMPLETED IN EACH TYPE.

_____

_____

_____

WHEN DID YOU START LEARNING ENGLISH AT SCHOOL?

_____

DID YOU DO ANY ENGLISH COURSES OUTSIDE SCHOOL DURING YOUR SCHOOL YEARS? IF SO, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS.

_____

SHARIFA

ARE YOU A STUDENT AT THE PP OR AT THE UNIVERSITY?

_____

IN WHICH COLLEGE ARE YOU STUDYING? _____

HOW LONG HAVE YOU STUDIED AT SHARIFA? GIVE DETAILS

_____

4. Informal Interview Questions

Informal Interview
Please speak freely and openly and if you can't say it in English, say it in Arabic.

 Life History
Tell me a little about yourself.
Where do you live?
What do your parents do?
How many brothers and sisters?
What do they do?
Who speaks/has studied in English in your family?

Goals and Motives
Do you feel motivated generally to learn English? Why/Why not?
What are your future plans?
Your personal goals?
Your professional/study goals?
Do you need English to achieve these personal/study/work goals?
 If so, what level and skill?
What do you think is the best way for you to learn more English?

School - General
When did you graduate from high school?
Did you enjoy school?
What did you most enjoy/dislike?
Describe yourself as a student.
Tell me a story about school eg. something that happened in the classroom or between you and a particular teacher.

School - English
When did you start learning English?
Did you like English then?
How did you rate yourself as a student of English?
Who helped you learn English most of all?
How have you learnt most of the English you know?

Sharifa
Tell me about your experience adjusting to university life.
What major are you studying or do you intend to study?
Why do you need to improve your English?
Are you happy with your English learning so far at Sharifa?
How do you rate yourself as a student of English at Sharifa?
What do you think you still have to learn regarding English in order to do well at university?
Will your English learning continue after university? How?

<u>Student semi-structured Interview 1 (SS1)</u>

Check some items from informal interview to clarify.

I really enjoyed talking to you last____. You told me about your background and how English fits with your personal and student goals. Today I'll like you to tell me more about your experience of learning English while you were at school and since coming to the PP both inside and outside the classroom. Remember you can use Arabic if you can't think of the words in English.

General questions about English:

1. You said that improving your English is important for you to achieve your goals. Do you think most young women in Saudi Arabia feel the same way?

2. Do you think learning more English and studying in English has an effect on your Arabic? On your culture?

General questions about learning English:

1. Where is the best place to learn English? The best situation?

2. Imagine that I was a student who wants to learn English in Jeddah. What advice would you give me?

3. What have you found to be the best ways of learning English?

4. Are there other ways you'd like to try which you think might work for you?

5. Can you describe for me your idea of a good English teacher? A good English learner?

English at School:

1. Let's go back to the period before high school. Tell me a little about your experience. Did you enjoy English? Why/Why not? In what ways did you learn in the classroom? Outside the classroom? Any significant person?

2. Now could you tell me about your experience of learning English at high school. Was it different in any way? How did the teacher teach? Did you learn from her? How?/Why not? Did you want to learn more English? Why/Why not? How did you learn outside the classroom? How much did you know when you graduated?

English at Sharifa PP:

1. Tell me a little about your first experiences in PP1. What did you expect? How did you adjust in the beginning?
2. Did you achieve what you hoped in PP1? How could you have done better?
3. Did you feel comfortable with the other students in your class in PP1?
4. Thinking about learning English specifically, how was the classroom experience different from school?
5. How are the teaching methods/your relationship with your teacher different from high school?
6. What are your responsibilities as a learner here?
7. Which class activities or learning tasks do you think helped you learn English most?
8. Did you have any difficulties?
9. Now you are in PP2 has anything changed?
10. Do you feel you have improved since the beginning of the semester? In what way?
11. Which activities have been most interesting or useful?
12. Do you like participating in class? If so, how? If not, why not?
13. What would you like to do more of in English class e.g. grammar, reading etc.? Why?
14. Do you like working on your own or with your classmates?
15. If a PP1 student asks you how she could be a better learner, what would you tell her?
16. Do you learn English out-of-class at Sharifa? If so, how?
17. Please tell me about your English learning experiences outside campus.

6   The GELL sheet (distributed in English and Arabic)

<u>Which abilities and qualities should you have to be
a GOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER?</u>

Intelligent

Have a special talent

Motivated

Chance to practise English

Have a good memory

Active

A good listener

Study hard

A good communicator

Self-confident

Like your teacher

Learn about the culture

Well-organised

Self-disciplined

Committed

Like reading

Choose 10 of the above abilities/qualities and rate them in order of importance with 1 being the most important.

Please explain why you chose those you did as important and why some are not so important.

Please add any qualities/abilities you think are important to being a successful learner of English.

YOU MAY WRITE IN ARABIC OR ENGLISH OR IN A MIXTURE OF BOTH ENGLISH AND ARABIC.

1. Alex

Alexandra (Alex) was 19 years old at the beginning of the research project and
at the beginning of the second semester of the preparatory programme.
Although Alexandra and her mother were born in Jeddah and have lived here all
their lives, Alex's parents are Jordanian-Palestinian by nationality. Her father
works with a team of lawyers, one of whom is American, although he is not a
lawyer himself. He speaks English well but her mother doesn't speak English at
all and doesn't work outside the home. Alex is the eldest of 3 siblings, a sister
and 2 brothers, who all attend school.

Alex completed PP1 in the Humanities section in the first semester and is now
in PP2. She wants to major in English and Translation. Her parents did not
encourage her to study this subject at the beginning, as they didn't think her
English was good enough, but are impressed with her excellent grades so far
and have changed their minds. She loves translation and would like to work as a
translator in a big company. When she finishes university she hopes to get a
master's degree in English and Translation from Sharifa, but she is not sure if
they offer this.

Alex says it is important to learn English as it is a 2nd language in Saudi Arabia
and it is a method of communicating. For example you can communicate with
French people in Jeddah who know English. Using the Internet effectively is a
measure of success more than studying English and speaking activities in class.
To improve your English you should get teachers to help you, she advises, read
more, listen more and watch English movies without Arabic subtitles.

Alex graduated from high school last summer. She attended only Saudi
government schools at elementary, intermediate and secondary level. She
misses her school friends a lot: she had a close group of friends there who used
to share secrets. She does not feel comfortable around the girls at Sharifa and
has no close friends.

At school she was a serious student but she hated Chemistry. She began learning English in 7th grade but claims: "I wasn't intelligent in English". There wasn't enough English at school and she didn't learn much. She got good grades in English examinations as they had to learn a paragraph by heart and she could study for it. She used to score 97% but knew that this didn't mean she was good at English. Apart from school Alex has never done any English courses.

At school she didn't talk much, except with her friends, but at the PP she talks much more as they are encouraged to use their minds and to express their opinions. She found it quite easy to adjust to life at Sharifa after school: the teachers are very good and supportive, but if she had a close friend she would like it more. She considers herself to be a very good student in general at Sharifa: she understands everything and writes down and learns new words. She regularly scores 92% on tests.

Alex prefers to work alone although the teachers usually encourage students to work with a group. She says she doesn't like working with a group as the weaker students tend to depend on her. However, she accepts that she did learn a lot of English through friends who were more proficient and from her father who speaks English well.

One method which Alex uses to learn more English is to talk to herself and she does this a lot, especially in front of the mirror. She imagines that she is speaking to someone. She also re-reads and translates the English she has studied that day at the PP. She thinks that she has improved her speaking a little since starting at Sharifa but needs to learn more vocabulary in order to do well at university. She was recently at a lecture about Islam in the World held at the University Hall and given by a well-known professor. She wasn't able to understand much as he used difficult words and she felt rather frustrated when the professor made a joke, which she didn't understand, and the audience laughed.

2. Sandra

Sandra was 19 years old at the beginning of the research period. Both her parents are Saudi. She was born in the south of Saudi Arabia. Her parents got divorced when she was 5 years old and then she went to live first with her grandparents for 3 years and then with her father in Abha for 6 years. She was unhappy living with her father because her stepmother was "offensive" to her. She now lives with her mother, who speaks some English, and her stepfather who speaks English well. Her mother has 2 daughters and one son with her stepfather (since writing this narrative her mother has given birth to a baby boy) and her father has 2 sons and 1 daughter with her stepmother. She feels that she is not close to either of her parents. She is closer to her 2 uncles who are 35 and 40 years old. She also admires her grandfather because of his charity work such as building homes for poor people. She remembers her grandmother also with affection, who died when she was 8.

Sandra graduated from high school last summer. She completed PP1 at Sharifa PP in the Fall Semester and she is presently in PP2, Humanities section. She wants to study English and Translation at Sharifa University. She enjoys learning languages and sees it as her favourite hobby. She would like to learn German and French in addition to English. Her passion is Psychology but she has decided to study the subject on her own.

Her personal goal is to be a good person and help others especially the poor. She wants to be friends with people of all nationalities. A personal reason for wanting to improve her English is that her uncles who live in the US will be returning to Saudi Arabia in 5 years and they don't speak any Arabic. She would like to do further studies in Psychology after graduating from university. This will have to be in Saudi Arabia as she doesn't have anyone to accompany her abroad. She first started reading about Psychology because she was hoping to get help with her own problems. Her motive for advanced studies is that she wants to help others to cope with similar problems she's had.

She started learning English when she was around 5: she had a Filipino nanny while living with her father who spoke to her in English. She didn't like English when she was at school and didn't learn much because the teachers only spoke Arabic and didn't help her improve. Most of her English she learnt from her uncles, one of whom speaks German, French and some Hindi. Sandra started learning English formally in Kindergarten and attended private schools throughout her school life. She feels that the English teaching and learning was "bad" as they always taught the "same rules", the teachers always spoke Arabic and their pronunciation was not good. Also, "the teachers could never give you an idea of your standard."

Sandra hated her high school because her Library teacher told her mother some bad things about her. She remembers feeling anxious and "afraid" a lot of the time at school and attributes this to her troubled home life. Sandra considers herself to be a quiet person; she doesn't like "to make noise". She admits that she does miss school and her school friends sometimes.

Sandra thinks that her English has improved since coming to Sharifa PP and reports "a happy feel" about the place. The teachers never speak Arabic, like Ms A, they talk to you and tell you what your standard is. Teachers are good judges of your standard in English. They make you try even if what you say in English has no meaning. Ms L does this also. Even in PP1 all the teachers speak to students in English inside and outside class. At home Sandra reads Psychology books she has borrowed from the PP library in English, frequently watches English movies and likes listening to slow English songs but dislikes rap music. She feels she needs more speaking practice and to learn more words. Due to her nervous disposition, she often misses words out. After university, Sandra intends to continue learning English and to learn to speak more languages like her uncles.

3. Nour

Nour was 21 years old at the beginning of the research period. She was born and has lived in Jeddah all her life but her family roots are in the south of Saudi Arabia. Her parents are both Saudi but they are divorced and she lives with her mother and her 5-yr old daughter. She has 5 brothers and 5 sisters and she is a middle child. Nobody in her family speaks English, although she does have a cousin who is an English teacher in the south of Saudi Arabia. Nour got married when she was 13 and still in intermediate school. Because of her husband's philandering Nour went to court and filed for a divorce which took her 7 years to get. Although she has had proposals, she is determined never to get married again and to work hard so that her daughter and her can have a good life.

Nour started working from a young age: she would come back from school around 2pm, eat and sleep for an hour and then start work at 4. She usually worked until midnight and did most of her school homework at work. She thinks she got through this OK because of her young age. (She does have a stomach problem though and is often ill).

In 1999, 13 years ago, she worked as a receptionist at a clinic. She wanted to study nursing but her brother didn't want her to as she would have to mix with men. In 2002 she worked for a diamond company, both because she needed the money and because she wanted to be independent. Later she worked for a toyshop. In 2007 she started working at a large, new private hospital as a receptionist and she worked there for 4 years. She also studied English there for one and a half years as the British Council run courses for employees.

Since coming to Sharifa at the beginning of this academic year, Nour has devoted her time to studying, although she does occasionally work as a singer in wedding halls at weekends in order to make ends meet. Her mother takes care of her daughter. Nour is happy now she is at university as "finally I step into my dream". She is on a scholarship of SR5,000 a semester (about half the fees). She doesn't receive financial support from anyone in the family as she says they all

have their own problems. She might have a problem paying the fees next semester.

Nour thinks she is a good student: she tries and studies hard for her future. She intended to study English Literature (but now she has changed her major to Translation) in order to improve her English and she would like to work as an interpreter at a hospital. Her dream is to go to America and "to write English stories in Hollywood". She loves English but she feels shy to speak as sometimes her friends laugh at her.

To learn more she reads storybooks, watches movies and listens to music especially to Michael Jackson. She watches Channel 2 a lot and MBC3 which shows Barnie and cartoons. Nour also talks to native English speakers: she used to speak to nurses and doctors at the hospital where she worked and to an American lady who is a physiotherapist there. At the Sharifa PP, she can learn more English by studying, listening, trying hard and talking to everyone.

She attended government schools throughout. In intermediate school they learnt only English letters and in high school they learnt some words, but now she's at Sharifa she is having conversations and doing listening. She liked English at school but most of the girls didn't because the English teacher would often sleep on her desk and not teach English well. Several girls didn't like English because they thought it was very difficult. Their attitude was that English wasn't their language so they didn't care about it. They didn't think it was important and only studied English to gain the necessary marks for the school certificate.

The course Nour did with the British Council (she reached Level 6, Elementary) helped improve her English especially her writing. However, she still needs to improve all her skills. She often finds it difficult to understand what is being said when she listens to the radio, so listening is an area that she needs to work on.

4. Nevine

Nevine was 20 years old at the beginning of the research period. Her father was Saudi and her mother is Saudi-Egyptian. Her father died 5 or 6 years ago and since then she has lived with her Egyptian grandmother in Jeddah but she sees her mother, who lives alone, every weekend. She has 1 sister who is 10 years older than her, has 3 children and lives in Florida. 2 years ago Nevine stayed with her sister, who was studying for her master's degree, for 8 months and has come to think of Miami, Florida as her home. Nadine studied English at a language institute in the U.S. She feels 'homesick' for the States, misses her sister and friends and wants to go back after she graduates from Sharifa University to do her master's degree.

Nevine plans to study English Literature at Sharifa University, get her masters and her PhD in the States and then run her own English language institute for foreign students there. Her work goal is to be an English instructor at university. Although her Arabic is good, she usually speaks to her mother and sister in English. However, she did not score high enough in the TOEFL to go straight to university (her score was 445 out of 700), so she was required to do PP1 and PP2. She has been at the Sharifa PP since September and has completed PP1, which she found quite easy. She first enrolled to do Translation as her major but afterwards changed to English Literature.

Nevine graduated from Saudi school 2 years ago. She has always been to private schools in Jeddah. Her high school was more like an international school as they studied Maths, Biology and Physics in English and the rest of the subjects in Arabic. Nevine liked all her teachers: they were "kindly, helpful and creative" and particularly liked her English teacher who was Lebanese and taught her a lot of English grammar. She was a hard-working student at school and always scored high grades. She remembers her graduation party in which she got gifts from her teachers.

Nevine started learning English when she was in KG2 (Kindergarden). Although she did learn a little English at elementary school, it was in intermediate school

that she started learning properly. Her sister supported her learning by studying with her and she misses her a lot. She has learnt English mostly on her own by talking to family and friends but also by practising her reading and writing with her university instructor.

At the PP, she feels she gets a lot of English practice in her Psychology classes. She is learning more vocabulary and "practising writing and thinking". She feels she is good at speaking and writing but she needs to read more literature like the works of William Shakespeare, which she says are not all difficult. She needs time to improve her English: she needs to learn to be "flexible to deal with people" and to learn more grammar. Her main aim is to get higher grades. She got an A for English in PP1 but wants to achieve an A* in PP2.

APPENDIX G   Participant Schedules

1. Alex

WHEN?	SETTING	DATA GENRE	HOW LONG?
22 Feb 2012	n/a	Biodata	n/a
22 Feb	DPP's office	Informal interview	30 min
25 Feb	PP classroom	Semi-structured interview 1 (SS1)	36.27
29 Feb	PP classroom	Observation of Activity 1 in Listening & Speaking class	1 hr
29 Feb	DPP's office	Post-activity interview 1 (PA1)	4.20
10-31March 2012: mid-year examinations and mid-year break			
9 April 2012	PP classroom	SS2	35.08
10 April	PP classroom	Observation of A2	50 min
10 April	DPP's office	PA2 (Group)	16.09
22 April	PP classroom	Observation of A3	48 min
23 April	DPP's classroom	PA3	11.54
1 May-9 May: Final examinations. End of academic year			
16 June	On Skype	SS3	25.55
SUMMER BREAK			
10 Sept, 17 Oct &21 Oct 2012	n/a	Email responses to Good English Language Learner (GELL) sheet	n/a
10 Sept	PP classroom	SS4	17.43
20 Nov	PP classroom	SS5	49.16
16 Dec	PP classroom	SS6	36.36
26-Dec 2012-25 Jan 2013: mid-year examinations and mid-year break			
6 Feb 2013	PP classroom	SS7	46.35

2. Sandra

WHEN?	SETTING	DATA GENRE	HOW LONG?
22 Feb 2012	n/a	Biodata	n/a
22 Feb	DPP's office	Informal interview	30 min
25 Feb	PP classroom	Semi-structured interview 1 (SS1)	41.51
29 Feb	PP classroom	Observation of Activity 1 in Listening and Speaking class	1 hr
29 Feb	DPP's office	Post-activity interview 1	11.44
10-31 March 2012: mid-year examinations and mid-year break			
4 April 2012	PP classroom	SS2	30.17
10 April	PP classroom	Observation of A2	50 min
10 April	DPP's office	PA2 (Group)	16.09
22 April	PP classroom	Observation of A3	48 min
23 April	PP classroom	PA3	21.32
25 April	PP classroom	Discussion on English (Group: S, No, Ne)	25.48
1-9 May: Final examinations. End of academic year			
15 May	My office at home	SS3	48.13
7 June	Sandra's living room at home	Good English Language Learner (GELL) interview	Unrec: 7 min Rec: 21.23
SUMMER BREAK			
11 Sept 2012	My living room	SS4	35.52
19 Nov 2012	My living room	SS5	1.01.42
15 Dec 2012	My living room	Unrecorded conversation 1	1.30
26 Dec 2012-25 Jan 2013:mid-year examinations and mid-year break			
5 Feb 2013	Sandra's living room	SS6	1.15.38

3. Nour

WHEN?	SETTING	DATA GENRE	HOW LONG
29 Feb 2012	PP classroom	Observation of Activity 1 in Listening and Speaking class	1 hr
7 March	n/a	Biodata	n/a
7 March	PP classroom	Informal Interview	35 min
10-31 March 2012: mid-year examinations and mid-year break			
10 April	PP classroom	Observation of A2	50 min
10 April	DPP's office	PA2 (Group)	16.09
10 April	PP classroom	Semi-structured interview 1 (SS1)	30.37
22 April	PP classroom	Observation of A3	48 min
25 April	PP classroom	PA3 and SS2 Discussion on English (Group: No, S, Ne)	25.48
1-9 May 2012: Final examinations. End of academic year			
24 June	My office at home	SS3	44.04
SUMMER BREAK			
10 Sept 2012	Foyer of PP building	Unrecorded conversation 1/SS4	45 min
15 Sept	n/a	Written comments on Good English Language Learner (GELL) sheet	n/a
25 Nov	Foyer of PP building	Unrecorded conversation 2	30 min
15 Dec	My living room	SS5	24.03
26 Dec 2012-25 Jan 2013: mid-year examinations and mid-year break			
3 Feb 2013	My living room	SS6 (with Sandra)	1.02.45

4. Nevine

WHEN?	SETTING	DATA GENRE	HOW LONG?
29 Feb 2012	PP classroom	Observation of Activity 1 in Listening and Speaking class	1 hr
29 Feb	DPP's office	Post-activity interview 1	10.13
3 March	n/a	Biodata	n/a
3 March	PP classroom	Informal interview	15.08
3 March	PP classroom	Semi-structured interview 1 (SS1)	17.56
10-31 March 2012: mid-year examinations and mid-year break			
10 April	PP classroom	Observation of A2	1 hr
10 April	DPP's office	PA2 (group)	16.09
22 April	PP classroom	Observation of A3	48 min
25 April	PP classroom	PA3 & SS2/Group: No, S, Ne)	25.48
1-9 May 2012 Final exams. End of academic year			
SUMMER BREAK			
11 September	PP classroom	SS3	18.37
16 September	PP classroom	Good English Language Learner (GELL) interview/SS4	17.21
25 Nov 2012	On Skype	SS5 (completed by email: 25 Nov, 1 Dec,17 Dec)	13.01
26 Dec 2012-25 Jan 2013: mid-yr exams & break			
20 Feb 2013	PP classroom	SS6 (unrecorded)	30 min
Final Exams			
4-23 Oct 2013	n/a	Series of emails	
26 Oct	n/a	Att. to email: "Nevine later"	n/a
17 Nov	My living room	Unrecorded conversation 1	1 hr

APPENDIX H   Sample Participant Interview Transcripts

1. Alex SS5

20 November 2012 2.30 Sharifa PP classroom (49' 16")

K: OK, Alexandra, tell me a little about your studies now at the university.

A: Well, it's interesting. I tell you that I have 17 credits but now I start to think it's hard for me to study 17 credits in one semester. It's general subjects but I have a lot of stress. The mid-term exam I study for mid-term exam for 3 weeks. Other girls they have 12 maybe 13 credits. They do the courses for a week and a half. (K: Yes) It's just, it's too much for me. (K: OK) Now this is bad. This is the most bad week in my life. Because I didn't study anything no quiz no assignment no homework nothing. Just yesterday I study the things for the whole week. Even in the weekend I didn't study anything.

K: Do you mean you're not studying for your tests but you're studying for=

A: =the homework? No nothing [laughs nervously]

K: Oh, so what do you do when you go {home}

A: {NOTHING} It's just, I can't study. I'm stuck. I can't study. When I open my book or when I open something I feel that I can't study anything.

K: Really?   You're stressed {are you?}

A: {Yes.} Just yesterday I study because I have a quiz at 9 so I just study for the quiz=(K: =OK) Then I have a presentation. Just yesterday I start studying.

K: And why do you think you're so stressed. Is it too many subjects? Or—

A: I think it's because I have 3 hard subjects: Computer Science PE and Biology. I think I can do 17 credits in one semester but not 3 hard subjects like this.

K: OK so which subjects are easier

A: Easier from them? (K: Yeah) Err Biology.

K: But apart from those 3 which subjects are easy. Like ACS is that easier for you? ACS?

A: Err ACS or APS. It's about presentations. It's all of it about presentations.

K: I think you do ACS1 with Ms T (A: Yes) Is it easy or—

A: Yes. It's not hard. But it's a lot of assignments. Every Sunday and every Tuesday. It's Sunday, oh, you have assignment you have homework you have quiz

K: Is it too much do you think?

A: I think it's not too much for this subject. But if I have a lot of homework in this day it will be stress for me. (K: Oh I see) Because I have on Sunday and Tuesday another subject another subject APS it's about presentation.

K: APS what does that stand for

A: To do presentations just to do presentations or a report.

K: Is it useful?

A: Yes I think it's useful because it introduce you to another girls. I think I become more better in front of another people.

K: Good, more confident?

A: Yes, more confident.

K: So are you doing any other subjects? You're doing this APS, ACS, Biology, Computer Science—

A: PE Maths.

K: Are you doing Arabic?

A: Yes Arabic Islamic. 8.

K: You're doing 8 subjects (A: Yes.) That's a lot isn't it? So do you think next semester you will do less?

A: Yes maybe 5 subjects or 6.

K: So do you feel you're learning a lot of things since you started university? Are you learning a lot?

A: I think I learn but if I didn't study in PP here and I study in courses, it will be better. (K: Really?) Because I feel so so bad to study one year here in the PP. Actually all of the PP girls say that because we are nothing in college, nothing. We can't talk to the teacher or anyone. When we saw the girls they were from international schools they *māshā'Allāh* speak English very very well so we can't talk, we can't tell the doctor or ask him something in front of the other girls. (K: I see) So if someone ask me I will tell them don't go to PP.

K: So what would you advise them to do.

A: Do courses.

K: Courses in English like at the British Council?

A: Yes. Or maybe here Cambridge, they told me about it. (K: Really?) Yes for English.

K: So you don't think the PP was very helpful = (A: =No) I see

A: Because -er I give him 40,000 (Saudi riyals). It's lost in the air.

K: Really? [with concern]. You think it's a waste of money.

A: Yes. [Angrily] a lot of money.

K: So how could they improve. How could they make it better.

A: [quietly] I don't know. I don't know.

K: But do you think they need to prepare you better for university?=

A: =Sure. They do show us how we can write essay or how we can deal with our time show us how the exam will be and something like that (K: Yeah) But it's not enough. It's not enough. (K: You need much more) Yes.

K: So do you have a lot more work now in the university than you had {in the PP?}

A: {Oh yes} [followed by nervous, uncontrolled laughter which seems to express the words 'Oh my God']

K: So was this a shock for you?= (A: =Yes.) You weren't expecting so much=

A: =No. I expect a lot of homework yes but I expect that my language is very good so that I can act with the work (K: I see) But my language is not good.

K: You don't feel that your language is good enough (A: No.)

K: And are there certain subjects which are harder because you don't know enough English?

A: Biology and Computer Science.

K: You need to know more English to follow—

A: Yes and PE.

K: And what do you think is the most difficult thing about studying in the university

A: I think the time (K: the time?) because I'm here at 8am and I go to my home usually at 4pm so it's hard and we study for mid-term while we still take classes and assignments and quizzes so this was hard for me because it's 3 weeks of mid-terms, assignments, quizzes so I can't---

K: So when were the mid-term exams? Before Haj?

A: Yes before.

K: I didn't realize that. So your final exams will be—

A: After 3 weeks or 4 weeks because we're taking general subjects so they put it the first then they put the majors like Translation or Literature.

K: Yes. Do you feel bad because you're not studying your major?

A: Yes. I went even for the plan in the Translation department and they put general studies even in the second semester also so I choose the plan but they told me if I want to study Translation for example Introduction to Translation, I must sign a paper that I'm responsible for this and the university told me that I can't do it but I did it.

K: You did it. When would you do it normally, in the second year

A: In the second year.

K: But you want to do it=

A: =in the second semester because I want to study in the summer. (K: I see) because I can't, because in the plan they put 15 or 16 hours every semester. I think I can't do it (K: you can't do it) So I must study the major in the second semester, because they don't teach us the majors in summer because all the doctors is not here (K: I see) So I will take in summer for example Arabic Islamic History and something like that

K: I see so next semester you can focus on Translation=(A: =Yes.)And in the summer you can focus on Arabic=(A: =Yes yes.) That sounds like a good idea.
    Now how much support do you get at university. In PP2 I know Ms L was your supervisor. (A: Yes.) Do you have someone similar in the university someone you can go and see if you have a problem you can go and discuss your problems?

A: Not really. It depend on the doctor. Some doctors are so sweet actually (K: Yes) They ask you for your problems and they try to solve it with you, for example Ms A she teach us Biology and the first question she— it was hard for us because our language is not that well and in the mid-term exam it was so easy. She told us "This is for your language." (K: I see yes) And she told us

"If you forgot this word and you can't remember it but you know it in Arabic then write it for me and I will accept it as right." (K: Ah that's good) But not all the paper actually maybe 2 answers. (K: That was kind)

A: But I have a doctor [small laugh] she teach me PE (K: Yes) Err she's a bad teacher [laughs as if embarrassed]

K: Sandra said the same thing.

A: She told you? [Laughs]

K: Yes. And also Nour.

A: Nour is in the same class as me

K: But I think Sandra has the same teacher.

A: Yes it's the same teacher. She's so bad [rather gleefully]

K: But why is she bad

A: In all my life I didn't see a teacher like her!

K: Oh dear! [Laughs]

A: Really, you can't imagine. You can't.

K: So tell me why. Why do you say she's bad

A: Well (K: How does she teach you) Her accent is so bad. When she teach us she just reads from the slides OK? And she says: "Oh excuse me girls. My accent is not that well and when I read the slides when I read quickly I can't say the word in the correct way." So= (K: =I see) I didn't see a teacher like her in my life.

K: But she's an Arab isn't she? (A: Yes) She should speak to you {in Arabic}

A: {She's Jordanian} [Laughs]

K: She's Jordanian?

[A & K laugh together]

K: She should speak to you in Arabic if her English is not so good=

A: =Yes she speak in Arabic when we ask her something we didn't understand. Yes she explain for us. But her English! She must teach us in English. (K:Yes) Her exam was so bad, so bad, SO BAD. Even I go to my advisor and cried (K: So you told your advisor?) Yes and she told me: "WHAT HAPPENED" I start crying [laughs] in front of her. (K: Yes) I can't believe myself but I don't want to cry in front of the girls. I didn't want to cry in front of the girls in the exam so when I get out from the mid-term exam, I go to Dr S [laughs] and I start crying. She told me [in a loud voice] "No ḥabībī (my darling), sit down. What happened" All the advisors know about this teacher.

K: Oh so they know. But will they do anything?

A: They talked to her. She didn't she don't hear from anyone. Imagine that I get 9 from 20 (K: yeah?) [Quietly] I failed. I failed the mid-term exam. I can't tell my parents. I can't tell them. (K: Oh my goodness!) And there are some teachers, if-if the students get under 12 OK? they repeat the exam for him. (K: OK) She didn't.

K: She didn't repeat the exam. But what was the exam

A: It's hard. We didn't understand the question even you know (K: Is it about the body?) Yes it's the body. (K: Like Biology?) No she give us a lot to study. We get confused when we study this and this. It's something not related to each other. We get confused. We cannot focus. This is number one. Number two in the exam, we couldn't understand what she mean by this question. (K: Yes) That we give her point 1 2 3 that we explain (K: yes) or— we didn't understand.

K: And did you speak to her?

A: Yes Nour speak to her because Nour take a 5 even. (K: I see OK.) She told her that "I don't do anything not extra work nothing and I don't want to repeat the exam" and she told her "When you fail in the final exam come back to me and I will do something." Nour told her "When I fail in the final exam I will come back to this university when I get out from <u>her</u>." And Nour is on a scholarship and it's hard for her (K: yeah yeah.) I don't know how she think actually. My problem is that I didn't listen to the girls when they told me she is bad. {I thought they didn't study well}

K: {Oh so they told you?} (A: Yes.) Oh so the older girls the girls who—

A: YES. ASK ANY GIRLS IN COLLEGE [Laughs]

K: They will tell you.

A: They will tell you "Yes, I know *duktūrah* H".

K: But do you have to do that subject or can you not take it?

A: I have to but imagine that it's one credit. The Miss tell me "Why she do this for you and it's one credit" And it's PE.

K: Yes, it's for you to get fit=

A: =Yes, it should be easy and it should be I don't know (K: Fun as well) Yes.

K: OK tell me now about your friends. Have you made new friends now in the university?

A: No. Just – I-I have a little bit of friends but I can't say that it's close friends (K: right) It's maybe a roommate it's not close for me. It's just we talk to each other (K: Yeah) just in class or when I see her (K: Yes) I say "*assalāmu 'alaykum* (Peace be with you)" or "How do you feel". Just like that.

K: But you don't see them outside the university? (A: No no.) But what about the girls that were in the PP with you are you more friendly with them?= (A: =Yes) So you're still friends. (A: Yes we're still friends) Good. Do you see <u>them </u>outside university? (A: No.) Sandra told me the same thing that she doesn't see any of the girls outside university. She just goes home then studies

A: I don't I don't know actually if they see each other

K: Mmm. But do you talk on Blackberry?

A: On What's App and everyday (K: you talk everyday?) everyday with girls they are with me in the class they are with me in ACS class in Math class so yes we talk to each other.

K: So you feel comfortable with the other girls=

A: =Yes, sure because I have I know in the ACS class maybe 2 girls I know in this class.

K: So that's better than in the PP because you told me in the PP that in the beginning you didn't have any. Do you remember?

A: Yes. But I mean a friend a close friend (K: Yes) She know my habits she know my secrets (K: yeah) *ya'nī* this is what I mean by close friend

K: So you don't really have a very close friend here. (A: Here? No.) But you have your friends outside= (A: =Yes sure.)

K: Good that's great. And what about your parents and your brothers and sisters. You have 2 brothers right?

A: 3 brothers and 1 sister.

K: Do your parents give you a lot of support and encouragement with your studies? (A: How) What I mean is, not help, but do they say "Very good Alex well done." Do they encourage you?

A: I didn't show them my grades this semester [laughs]. This is the first time I do it. (K: OK) Because I'm not happy with my grades.

K: OK but your parents want you to study and— (A: Yes sure.) Good.
Now tell me about the classroom inside the classroom for your studies. Is it like the PP? Do you do the same kind of activities? Do you work in groups with other students? Is it the same or is it different?

A: No it's the same. It's usually the same. In ACS it's the same. We work in groups write the summary for something but not in all subjects. In Biology we can't do something like that, in Islamic. In Arabic yes we share our points to each other.

K: OK but what about activities like you did with Ms A (A: To move?) Yes (A: No no.) You don't do anything like that? (A: No.) And in ACS do you ever do you know like debates discussions like that or is it just?=

A: =Yes sure. She ask us for our opinion or when she want to teach us something she ask us first what we know about this (K: yes). Then we discuss it with her and (K: and then she tells you.) Yes

K: And does she tell you stories about her=

A: =Yes a lot of stories. Oh! [laughs] a lot of stories.

K: And what happened with the book (P) Do you remember last time you told me that you had to read a book?

A: I didn't read it actually [laughs] (K: Oh you didn't read it?) No I found it so hard. (K: Right) You know she told us that you open the book and just find 7 words that you didn't understand it in one page. I didn't find a book like that. (K: Really?) Because we can't take a book with level.

K: You mean an abridged book one that's made easier? (A: Yes) You have to read the original book. (A: Yes the original book.) So you didn't find anything. You should've asked me.

A: I buy a book and I start. I just read 3 or 4 pages from this book but it's hard *yaʿnī* every word I need to translate it. (K: Yes) And to write it down and I forget it.

K: Try looking up 10 words then try to get the general idea.

A: Yes but it's more than 10 words. I feel like I'm just studying. (K: Yes it's boring) Yes so I just saw a film, it has a book also but I saw the film and I can write what she wants about the book.

K: You had to write a blurb I think.

A: Yes a blurb. I submitted it to her today.

K: What was the film

A: It was about Pride and=

K: =Pride and Prejudice? (A: Yes) I know. I like it very much.

A: Yes [laughs] me too.

K: But it's quite hard to read (A: really?) Jane Austen books are hard. The English is quite hard.

A: I saw the film actually. We translated it with Doctor A last year. (K: Yes you {told me}) {Because of that} I love the story. (K: You know the story=) I know 2 chapters from the story

K: I really like the girl Elizabeth Bennett.

A: Yes [laughs] I like her. I like the mother actually.

K: Yes she's so funny.

[K&A laugh together]

A: Even my dad when he saw this movie. She want to find a man for each one of her daughters

K: That's how it really was in England during that time. Every mother wanted her daughter to marry a rich man (A: really? [laughs]) Not now (A: before). OK (P) What about the quizzes and the tests are they different from the PP? Are they about what you studied in class or= (A: =Yes.) They are.

A: For example look Ms T it's like the PP you know (K: OK) because it's an academic writing it's like the PP (K: yes). Other subjects like Biology she gives us slides to study it so we print it and study from it but we need to write everything she says in class. (K: Ah) It's not all in the paper. (K: It's not enough to study those notes) Yes because we need to, we need to study these things she say because she ask us about it in the exam. (K: Details?) Yes some details. We need to write with her everything everything which she wrote it in the board everything.

K: So is that difficult for you? (A: Yes I think) Because you're used to having a book aren't you?=

A: =Yes and when she say some word we don't know we don't know the spelling we don't know. After we take the quiz with her she start to know us well and she start to write every word in the board and she say "This is mean. This is her meaning." (K: Yes) She start to help us. In Islamic I have a quiz actually [laughs]. Yes he give us an article about he give us an article

and we must read it we must do a quiz from this article but it's just to read and understand the article and the quiz will be from our understanding. (K: I see) We can't study something. It's hard for us because, from where I will get the words that I will write about it.

K: I see I see. How are you finding Islamic Studies in English. Does that seem strange {that you're studying}—

A: {Yes} Yes because I guess he's talking British or=

K: =Oh he speaks British English. Where's he from

A: I don't know.

K: You don't see him.

A: I see him but I don't know actually

K: Is he dressed in a suit or a thobe?

A: No not a thobe. He dresses in pants and a shirt and a hat like this. I don't know his nationality.

K: Oh does he look Arab or does he look=

A: =No, he's not Arab but he speak Arabic, formal Arabic.

K: Oh Classical Arabic=

A: =Yes. But not in class.

K: Maybe he's an Islamic scholar is he?

A: Yes I think. They told me, one girl she told me that he's from Iran. I'm not sure. (K: Oh OK) But he's not Arab.

K: Sandra told me that she finds Islamic Studies difficult because in school, mostly you memorize (A: yes.) but this Islamic Studies is different.

A: Yes because we study different lessons not (as) in the school, which (is) ḥarām (forbidden) which (is) ḥalāl (allowed) or something. This is different we study about society how Islam affects our society or how we— something like that. (K: It's interesting) It's interesting but we didn't understand everything. It's hard to understand everything. His language is so hard in— I remember he say a word and some girls told him "So what does this word mean" He told her that its mean tafā'ūl (optimism) or something. She told him "Give me the spelling." (K: Yes) He told her "Never mind it's a British word." [Laughs] So why he speaks British in the class

K: Yeah. So do you ask questions to him sometimes? (A: Me, no) Why not

A: Because I told you that he talk British. (K: Yeah?) So even English I can't ask him question and because it's a large number of girls and they are perfect in English I feel I'm so= (K: =embarrassed?) I'm so shy I can't (K: That's a shame isn't it?) Yes.

K: Because you need to ask to check your understanding.

A: Yes I wish that.

K: Yeah yeah. OK and now do you feel that studying at university? Is it fitting in well with your future plans your future goals. (A: Fitting well?) Does it fit well? Do you remember before you told me "I love Translation"? (A: Yes) "I want to do this when I finish. I want to do my master's" and all this. Do you

still feel that your studies match your goals for the future? = (A: =Yes) So you still feel motivated?=

A: =Yes. But I feel scared when they told me that I need to sign this paper. I feel that— I can do this thing? Or not? I'm not sure

K: I see. Is it only you or others girls?

A: I don't know. The girls who was with me in the last year they are not like me. They didn't take 17 credits maybe 12 or 13. (K: I see) They are more comfortable. They have maybe 4 or 5 subjects so it's easy for them. (K: I see) And they don't want to take a major subject in the next semester. But I feel I want to end this degree in these 4 years because if I didn't study in summer I will take it in more than 4. I can't take 17 or 16 credits in next semester.

K: I see. Well you should ask Sandra because she told me that she also wants to do Translation. (A: Really?) Yeah. Ask her because maybe she wants to do it also. With 2 people it's easier. (A: It's easier) Good. What about outside the university, is there anything that's making your study difficult? Do you have any responsibilities outside university that takes your time? (A: No.) You don't have anything. That's {great}

A: {And I} told my mother that [laughs] that I can't study this week. I don't have, I don't know what happened to me but I can't study. She told me "What will you do if you get married while studying in university" [laughs]

K: What did you say

A: I told her that I know myself. I can't. I can't act with this responsible that I study from 8 to 3 or 4 and I come back to my home and, I can't, I can't.

K: You can't mix marriage with studying= (A: =No.) No you have to finish first=

A: =Yes. But you don't know what will happened

K: Yeah [laughs]. OK thinking back to the PP now from what you remember about the PP: who do you think helped you the most with your English learning, who helped you a lot I mean not only teachers but also the Director a classmate=

A: =No teachers. Teachers actually. Ms S and Ms A. (K: OK) Actually I have a lot. I learned from Ms L but she is so— she can't just be angry with the girls you know. When she told her "Oh Miss we can't do this quiz today" she say "OK my girls you will do it tomorrow" for example but with Ms S and Ms A we must submit it today we must study hard to get a high mark so I think I learnt a lot from them especially Ms S. She teach me to write an essay. I will not be this good if I didn't study with her last year.

K: She took you in PP1 I think (A: Yes, in PP1.) She taught you to write an essay in PP1?

A: Yes sure. Just for the final exam.

K: OK great. Now, you told me that you didn't think PP1 and PP2 prepared you very well for university. (P) And one of my questions is what could they do more to help you. You told me last time actually that you thought they should have another level (A: mmm). Maybe PP3?

A: I mean that they divide the girls well. I told you that Nevine study in the same class with me. It's unfair. (K: Yes) Because my level it's not like Nevine's *māshāʾAllāh.* She's very good. I don't know why she even study PP. That's the thing that make me think of taking the course in the last year because they told me that we— that you will do the TOEFL quiz again and I didn't know if I get a high mark or not. So I will get afraid that I will study courses and they will tell me "No you failed in TOEFL quiz". So what I will do. That's what make me study here.

K: That's why you did the PP course= (A: =Yes.) But did you do the TOEFL again when you {finished}?

A: {No} but if I study courses they will make me do it again.

K: It would be interesting to see what you would get now. (A: Yes [laughs nervously])

K: Because I think you have to get above 550 right?

A: I don't know. I'm not sure. But yes it would be so interesting. Just imagine myself if I study courses for one year in the most good place here to study courses how I will be now

K: Yeah. But I think your English is much better than when I first interviewed you the first time.

A: Sure but in college I'm nothing. I'm nothing.

K: You feel like you're nothing.

A: Yes. Even the girls I sit with they just stop listening to the Islamic teacher. They tell to themselves "No I can't" so they stop listening to him. At all.

K: How's Nour doing. Is she in any of your classes?

A: Yes it's so difficult. All the teachers know who is Nour. Because always she is in her office or his office "Teacher help me. I can't do this. It's too hard for my language." (K: Yes of course) But they help her actually.

K: I remember Nevine used to help her in the PP (A: In which class) In the Listening and Speaking class (A: Oh yes) I saw that Nevine explained things to her in class. (A: Yes yes.) Now she doesn't have Nevine to help her.

A: Yes and it's hard for her. It's hard for me. How will it be for her actually

K: Yeah OK. (P) Do you think you've changed? In what ways do you think you've changed since you started the PP. Do you see any changes in yourself? The way you study or the way you approach your studies?

A: (P) No [quietly] I think it's the same

K: Do you learn and study at home the same way? I remember the first time you told me you had a picture dictionary and you used to write down words from that. (A: Yes) Do you still think that's a good way or has your learning changed?

A: It's a good way but now if I want to translate everything it will take a lot of time so I stopped doing this thing. (K: Yeah) The problem is when I have an exam so I have a lot of lessons so I start first to translate this word and try to remember it and then study this. It's hard. It's too much for us.

K: So what do you do then if you haven't got time to do that =

A: =After the mid-term I start in this weekend I took 2 lessons in PE (K: Yeah)

A: After the mid-term I will study it *inshā'Allāh* this weekend because I don't want it to be very hard for me in the final=

K: =You don't want to be behind=

A: =Yes. Even I don't want to fail in the final (K: Of course not) I didn't show my grades to my parents because I told myself that if they say for example I get 80 from 100, they will not know that I failed the mid-term exam. (K: Yeah I see) It's something sad to tell your parents that you fail in the first semester in college.

K: But it's only one subject and it's not so important. I mean PE has nothing to do with—

A: But you FAILED [laughs].

K: It's the fact you failed= (A: =<u>Yes.</u>) You didn't fail before like at school (A: No no.) I can understand it.

A: Because of that they will be shocked from me.

K: Yeah. Can you think of any mistakes you made in the PP that now you don't make? (P) Mistakes like maybe you didn't do something in the right way. Or for example you wrote something in the past tense when you should have written it in the present tense. (A: Oh all of it) Can you think of mistakes you made in the PP that you don't make now?

A: I make it but but it was not when I was in the PP. I'm better now. Just sometimes I get confused and I forget to add –ed but *y'anī* (K: OK) it's much better than (in) the PP. (K: Your grammar?) Yes, it's a little bit more good.

K: What about Listening. Do you think it's better?

A: We don't take Listening now.

K: But maybe you don't do an exercise in Listening but listening to the teacher

A: Yes. To the teacher {it's better}

K: {It's very important}

A: It's better (K: Yeah) Even if I didn't understand this specific word I can understand the general idea that she ask us to do

K: Good. That's great. And do you have anymore ideas about how you can use your time out of the university out of class to help your learning? (P) At home can you use the internet or any resources to help you?

A: There are but I didn't use anyone.

K: Is it because you don't have time or=

A: =It's because when I start to study or when I finish my homeworks or to study for my quiz, I can't do anything

K: You feel tired=

A: =Yes, I feel *khalāṣ* (that's it)!

K: So what do you do then. When you're tired and you finish your work what do you do

A: Usually I start studying at 9pm so I finish it at 12 or at 1 so I just go to sleep.

K: Then when do you have to get up in the morning

A: At 6.

K: So you only get—

A: Because my driver will be at my home at 7am

K: So do you sleep in the afternoon? After lunch?

A: [Laughs] No no. Just when I start after this vacation the Haj vacation I was so lazy in the first week so everyday I just sleep afternoon. But now no. I don't have much time. I feel when I get home— I just arrive to my home at 4 o'clock or 3 o'clock for example I just sit out a little bit on my computer or Facebook. I just want to see my family [laughs] (K: Yes) I sit like that on the chair (K: Not doing anything) Yes I can't work at home. In this moment I can't work at home. I can't study (K: Yes) Maybe I will watch a little bit of TV (K: yes). But even if I— I have 2 choices, I sleep or I watch TV or sit a little bit in the home (K: yeah). So I can't study. If I have a lot of work I will start studying from 8 but more than that I can't.

K: Well it sounds like you have a lot to do now (A: yes). And do you think you work more independently now? (A: By myself?) Yeah now more than you did when you were in the PP?

A: (P) It's the same. Because I didn't depend on someone else.

K: Even in the PP you didn't (A: No. {Until now}). {I think} at the PP you didn't go and ask your supervisor for more help {did you?} (A: {No.}) Like when Ms L was your counsellor was it? (A: Our advisor?) Your advisor. You didn't used to go to her much to talk to her=

A: =No because I didn't need something to ask her about it.

K: Right. So you worked independently then. (A: Yes.)
     So now the final question is [in an amused tone] are you enjoying your year so far at university [laughs]?

A: [rather hysterical laughter] You're gonna ask me this question now?

K: [Laughs with embarrassment]

A: [Seriously now] I think there are a lot of different things between the college and the high school. (K: Ah!) You know the way you study the way you put your schedule on your own. Something good. When I compare myself with another girls from our friends I mean family friends when they study out= (K: =mmm) Our family friends they took their daughter to Jordan to study there so I feel that— They told me yesterday one of our friends she came here from Jordan she has a vacation she told me "Now I can compare between high school and university because there is you know a big difference between these two." But here there is no difference because you know there you start studying you know girls and boys there they have the habit you can get a lunch with your friends or maybe here *y'anī* here it's not allowed to get out from the university and go to a restaurant to eat with your friends. (K: Yes.) It's not logical here but there it's so easy. And my brother he study here now and he's so happy (K: He's here or in Jordan?) No

in Jordan. Yes, he's so happy and he says yes, there's lots of difference between high school and college. Now I feel different but I can't say it's a large difference or a huge difference because when I compare myself with this my brother and this my friend no there's no comparing. I can't compare because we are you know something like high school you feel that {you are in a limited place} (K: {restricted}) You can't get out wherever you want or you want it may be necessary to work with one boy maybe= (K: =Yes) So she told me that it's a lot *ya'nī* it's different (K: yes) different from high school.

K: Maybe you're learning about life more there (A: yes) whereas here it's just your studies.

A: Yes. I just start thinking. I told you that my father told me that I prefer to go to study to Jordan (K: You told me yeah.) But I start thinking if I study there how will I be now. I'm sure the study of Jordan it will be more useful for me because the study there it's hard it's more harder but err I can't [slows down] I will be so busy because I will live with my err grandfather and grandmother and it's so hard to study in the family home you know I must be in their home. (K: I see) because even our culture there that I should be there if some visitor go to them I shouldn't let my grandmother work anything at home. (K: I see) Even here my father now he call my brother there so "Do this do this do this." (K: Yes) I told my mother "No I can't stay. I'm here better" because I=

K: =Couldn't you live with your brother over there?

A: (P) Well my brother is live in our home= (K: =Oh! He lives=) You know they are in the same= (K: =building?) Yes. It's the same building so he is every time with them. (K: I see) When they want something "Oh can you go to this market and get something?" He is always {out of home}.

K: {You have to say yes}. I see

A: I told my mother "How does he study. How he study." Because always when they want to go somewhere always "Oh Jamal you have to come with us." (K: I see) Oh it's hard very hard for me because I'm a girl

K: But I think you've changed a little bit because you told me before that you didn't want to study in Jordan. So you've changed a little

A: Yes, I— when I heard from my brother and I have a friend she study in Palestine the same as Jordan (K: the same system) yes and when I heard from them I start thinking Why I didn't go there to study. But they live in a happy place. They want to live in this place but I don't want. I can't believe even when I went there this summer just one week and I start crying. I want to come back to here. This I can't because we are there still there at home. My dad my father always tell us "I'm here just to see my parents" so—

K: So you don't really go out?=

A: =No no never. We don't know anything about there. Or maybe with family, I go with my auntie maybe to her home just like that (K: I see). It's here in home it's there in home.

K: Home to home [smiles] (A: yes) OK thank-you.

2. Sandra SS5

Sat. 19th November 2012 2.30- My house- 1.01.42

K: OK Sandra, this is our 5th interview. Tell me about your studies now at the university

S: Erm it's interesting and nice. I feel some stress or different things because I take courses for first time in my life in English like Environment like Islam *yaʿnī* I feel it's fine if I study well and summarise the word it will be fine but I feel some stress for me (K: some problems) yeah some problems understanding the word and understanding erm the course because in high school I didn't take Chemistry or Biology or Math. I was in the other section (K: the Arts) yes the Arts. Because of that I feel even in Islam when the doctor he explain anything I understand just a little because I took this before but in Environment when the teacher say anything I feel like my brain stop thinking and I just want to relate it together because I need to understand what she say. But it's fine I can *al-ḥamdulillāh* I can pass the way.

K: Do you think Environment is more like a science then? More like Chemistry?

S: Yeah, because I didn't take this before but *al-ḥamdulillāh*

K: But I would think Islam would be easy for you because you've done all of it in Arabic before.

S: Yeah but the studying in school not just the English even the other courses it's like repeating (K: memorising) just the only thing they do and the only change they make it just write in the book. What's the name (of) this one (K: exercise book?) No what's the name (K: workbook?) No. Every book its have like you know its name the book here (K: the title?) Ya the title just the different they say for 1st intermediate 2nd like that and then they give you just *yaʿnī* like what (P) they didn't give you all the things we must do and we must don't do like that no they just give you this you know (K: information?) Ya just little information. *yaʿnī* when I was small they say you must not drink *al-kuḥūl* (alcohol) because it's like that and and and— (K: Ah!) Now just don't because it will let you don't care about yourself just.

K: So they gave you more reasons

S: Now every year they make it just 1 or 2 reasons. *yaʿnī* when I was saw the books for my friend before, she is older than me, when I see in the book Arabic its name *qawāʿid naḥū* (Grammar), when I saw she has many

exercises many things many erm explains (K: explanations) in her book. In my book just exercise 1 maybe. In the school they didn't give you something new (K: I see) the same thing. But they in every year make the book smaller than before just. Do you get my point?

K: Yes. So mostly at school you memorised the Quran and that=

S: =Yeah!

K: You didn't have discussions, explanations about=

S: =No no. Even in Islam what we take when I was in 1st intermediate or in 6th grade until 3rd high about, its name in Arabic ((xxx)) *al-nifāq* (hypocrisy) ((xxx)) everything else it's repeating nothing is new (K: I see). That's why in the university I face some problems because sometimes I feel that I have been Muslim without knowing anything *yaʿnī* (K: interesting) yeah and at university I tell the doctor "doctor do you know something, sometimes I feel like when I'm taking this class that I didn't become Muslim before" (K: strange!). I feel how a Muslim and there's a few things that didn't come to my mind its effect on my religion (K: yeah) and sometimes I feel really the teaching here in Saudi Arabia is very bad.

K: So now you can discuss things you can ask questions

S: Yeah he said about a few things that before we didn't imagine that is accounting to us *yaʿnī*

K: So it's very interesting for you then even if it's a bit difficult

S: Yeah because this is my religion and I need to know more things because I don't like to fall down when I travel or anything without I know.

K: Is it strange for you that you're studying it in English? (S: Yeah) To be learning more about your religion in English? It must seem strange.

S: Yeah yeah, but the learn in the school it's not just about English, every course is— Like in 3rd high I was love my teacher for Psychology. She was give us a class and then I tell her her name was Fawzia and [speaking fast] she was small she is my old (K: mmm). I tell her "*Fawzīah khalāṣ lā tidīnā dars al-yawm*" I tell him like "Fawzia enough don't give us today lesson." She said "OK but I will just give you just the idea." Then I tell her "OK OK I will read." Then I just said "OK *naḥna nifham yā banāt* (girls do we understand) and then my friends say "Yes OK we all understand so *yāllāh khalāṣ* (that's it come on) that's fine let's just stay and talk." So then all the class is passed when I was talk and she tell us about her job when she was in *Imārāt* (the Emirates) and what she do inside the *sijin* (K: prison) yes prison. (K: She was in the prison?) She is study Psychology. She must go to prison to interview with the princess (K: prisoners?) princess and prisoners (K: a princess?) Yeah (K: wow!) she was there yeah she was tell us *yaʿnī* a lot of things. It was very nice and it was very—

K: I didn't know you studied Psychology at school only in the PP

S: No I studied Psychology in school. (K: but only your school) No all the schools in the section of Arts they take Psychology and Literature and

Arabic. In the 2nd high we take Psychology it means *ʿelm al-nefs* and in 3rd high we take *ʿelm al-ijtimāʿ* (K: Social Sciences) yeah Social Science or Sociology like that. We then we just stay laughing. *yaʿnī* some people don't think about the learning in school. If we become friends with our teachers and even if her age is near to our age she will not force us or do with us like when she teach any student.

K: Do you think you actually learnt things in her lesson?

S: You know her lesson it was very easy *yaʿnī*. I don't know why they put this lesson (P) (K: in high school?) no why they take a lesson in something that is very silly and is very—. Even if you have a very low mind you can answer anything inside the final exam. It's very silly problem you know like smoking like the family who abuse their children like that. Something is very silly. (K: Everybody knows yeah?) What they are thinking when they say this is what you must learn. What do we learn inside. We know everything inside (K: I see so it's different from your other subjects) Yeah yeah

K: But did it help you when you studied Psychology in the PP?

S: I don't know because I changed my major but I don't think so because this was just in the beginning. Just if you want an introduction they give you everything you took it in school but the others when you go to the hard lesson I don't think so.

K: I see but are you still interested like before in Psychology?

S: Yeah but you know I am interesting but not like the people who study in many ways no I just like study to know the people from their talking and from their laughing what they have problem (K: not to study it as a subject) no no (K: just for life) yah yah. *yaʿnī* some people they think I took it *dawrāt* it's mean I'm a student and I take some (K: credits) yes I take it credits. There is my friend when he speak to me, you know, no one can know if he is sad or no. When he talk to me, I love that. I tell him: "Why are you sad" He tell me "Nothing." I tell him "No, you have a problem." He tell me "No nothing I'm fine." "Don't do that tell me what is the problem" (K: mmm). Also my uncles and most of my family and most of my friends think I'm studying that but I'm not studying that *yaʿnī* but that's what I feel for you (K: it's an understanding) yeah because I'm understanding you but because of that (K: yeah) I'm interested but not deep inside.

K: I see OK. Now I want to ask you about the work at the university. Is it much more work than in the PP?

S: Err no. In the PP we was take everything in one course now in ACS (K: I see) yes. Before we was take Listening and Speaking and Reading and Writing 4 courses. Now they take it in one course. But the Islam no it's very nice also the Environment I don't have hard work *yaʿnī* it's very good.

K: And do you have to go into the university every day? (S: Yeah) And do you have many hours of homework?

S: Erm from 9 to 4 just on (except for) Monday because I have just 2 classes

K: That's at university. But how about homework. How many hours do you spend doing homework

S: Ummm every week we must submit in ACS a news journal and a quiz about the missing word and meaning. The teacher ask us to bring a book blurb (K: you had to read a novel didn't you?) yeah I read. What else? It's not easy and it's not hard *yaʿnī* this all for yourself what you can do how you can write well or not

K: OK, great. What do you think is the hardest thing about studying at the university for you

S: Erm (P) if I was bad with my teachers they will [laughs], they will destroy me they will fail me. (K: Is there any teacher you don't like?) No I'm always trying to be lovely and good with everyone (K: you are always lovely!) [Both laugh] (K: So there's nothing difficult) No but my friends they have (K: really?) yeah and then I tell him I tell her "Please don't be bad with her because you need them." (K: So which teachers do they have problems with) Err it means fit it's exercise (PE) *yaʿnī* (K: it's a subject?) yes they make exercise and then they study about the body what our body need like that. Nour Nour she have that (K: she had a problem) yeah I told her *yaʿnī* this is what we say it in Arabic *lammā ʿindik shay min al-kalb qūllī yā sīdī.* I mean if you have some if you need some—If the dog if the dog (K: yes) have something for you I tell (call) him "Mister" [K laughs] I tell her "Nour don't forget [laughs] *lammā ʿindik shay min al-kalb qūllī yā sīdī."* She thinks she (the PE teacher) is dog [laughs] (K: she agrees with you) Yah. (K: So why does she have a problem?) Because this course every student they get this course they fail because the teacher she is do something it's easy but she make it harder she= (K: =Where is she from) I think she's Arabic, I don't know. I think she's from here (K: really?) yeah (K: but she speaks to you in English?) yes because we must learn every thing in English. (K: Do you sometimes feel like speaking to her in Arabic?) No I feel strange because *yaʿnī* what do you think yourself *yaʿnī? yaʿnī* you are not a doctor you are not a big thing you just teacher for exercise and for something it is not interesting why are you always forcing the students force the girls and when they do exercise she is smell if they sweat and then she go to smell them [K laughs] and tell them to go out (K: how embarrassing!} yeah. Nour she told me she's *ḥayawān* she's an animal [laughs] "she's *ḥayawānah ḥarām*" (she's a shameful animal). She say "these people are poor *ḥarām*." I tell her "*khalāṣ* ignore her." [laughs continuously] (K: [Seriously] So does everyone have to do it? Do you have an exam in it?) Mmm exam in body (K: how the body works) mmm [S still laughing quietly](K: but it could be interesting I suppose!) [S laughs as if I'm joking].

K: I want to ask you about the support. Remember in the PP if you needed extra help you could go to your advisor. Do you have the same support in the   university as the PP?

S: Yeah [tentatively] but if I need some help I don't go to Dr S I go to the doctor. Or if I have some problems with the course I go to the one who is responsible about all these doctors *ya'nī* but if I have problems with the doctors I go to my advisor. Her name is S she's from *Tūnis* or Morocco. (K: So everyone has an advisor) Mmm. Every major has an advisor. (K: But is it as friendly as the PP?) No because it's bigger and everyone in the university they have their own way (K: I see).

K: Do you have many friends in the university now?

S: Yeah I have but I don't have time *ya'nī* to stay with them and like that (K: Do you have new friends?) Yeah new but I don't have time to stay with them like that. (K: So you don't see them after class?) I see them but I like I mean it's better for me to stay with Nour and with my friend *ya'nī* from the PP Nour Tasneem Halima Niad Alex these girls. (K: Do you ever see them outside the university?) No I stay all the week in my home. Just between home-university university-home.

K: Could you see them if you wanted to?

S: Yes I could but I'm not the person *ya'nī* who like to go out and have some fun. I just like go to home. I don't like go to mall and buy something I don't want. If you want me to come to you I'll come to you in your home because I don't like in outside. (K: You don't like going out for a coffee?) No because I'm not smoke I don't want to go for coffee. Also the boys they are very silly and they just start flirt you in any way. This is very stupid things I don't like to go.

K: That's like my daughter she says the same thing. Now tell me about your parents your mother does she support you in your university work?

S: (P) No. You mean does she help me? (K: No does she encourage you and give you confidence?) No no. No because I am stubborn and my mother if she want me to do something she say it many times in 1 minute. "Go do it. Go do it. Why you do that. Why you make that. You must do this. You must give this one it's better for you." I don't like like that (K: mmm) (P) and also she just tell me "take care with your study." Sometimes I tell her: "Mama help me" and she tell me "No no you understand me wrong. I'm not good in English." I tell her "Oh my God I'm so sorry for you and then [laughs] I go out. (K: What about your grandfather) They just ask me "How do you do. It's fine or not?" Like this. They tell me always "Keep wearing your *'abāyah*" like that. It's OK but for me I don't like people they say me "Do like that for you make that." No I don't like (K: you want to do it by yourself) Mmm.

K: Now tell me about the classroom at the university. In the PP you could talk to your teachers you did activities you worked with the other girls. Is it the same in the university classroom?

S: Mmm the same. Not the same activities, different. (K: What do you do in ACS) In ACS like when we for example like Ms T she was tell us about the problems something you do it you think it's right but your parents see it's wrong (K: Yeah). She tell us when she was small the mother of her friend forget her and she's not stay in the school she came back to her home by walking alone. And then her mother she's cursing her like that. She was think this is a good thing (K: I don't understand). *ya'nī* if my brother Abdullah if I leave him in this shop (K: yeah), and I forget him I go to home. He must stay in this place I left him in because when I come back I found him (K: yeah). Abdullah he didn't stay he come to home alone. He do something it's right (K: yes) but it's wrong. What if someone kill him or steal him or anything. He doesn't think about something it's bigger he just think about "I can go home alone" (K: I see). We was discuss about this thing and then she tell us about how to do reading what we must do with some article and then we will discuss this article in class like that. (K: So you bring an article to class then what) Then the teacher say "If you want now read your article" and she say for example "Now write a summary." And then she will say "What is the summary in my opinion" (K: So you say your summary to the class) no she just read it. If she see me I wrote it well she say "OK" but if I wrote it wrong she say "Girls the summary is not like that for example when your friend she said "Blah blah blah" you must not do that you must do like this (K: she gives you feedback) yeah.

K: Do you do activities like the ones you did with Ms A like the roleplay (S: Who is Ms A?) Ms A in the PP (S: yeah yeah) do you remember the activities you did? (S: Yeah) Do you do anything like that?

S: No no. (K: Do you work with another girl?) Yeah I work with another girl in different activities not the same. (K: Like what) Like what for example when we write a book blurb, we are just 3 girls, here 2 girls, here 3 girls like that and then we discuss together how to write it and then we switch our work with the other girls. They see how do we write and then we see how do they write (K: so you exchange blurbs) yeah and if we see something wrong or something is missing, we speak about it. Like also when she said "What is the problem in this university what you should do. Give me a solution for the student that have a lot of work in a short time. What should she do. And then everyone just write 2 solution and then we exchange the paper and we say which is the one I say is better. (K: I see so you discuss it in pairs) not in pairs no maybe 3 girls at least 3 girls.

K: Do you enjoy working with the others?

S: Err I don't like but I cannot say I want to work alone because this is not something I can choose *ya'nī* if I want alone or with the others. This is something I must do. If I like it or not I must do.

K: Yes it might be harder to do alone. This way you can exchange ideas

S: Yeah yeah I know but you know I don't like because there is some girls they just want *ya'nī* speak they just want to say stories like that they didn't do well or they write it and they say "What do you like. Is it nice or what?" We work together we must discuss this thing together (K: mmm) but some girls no because of that I feel *ya'nī* OK it's fine [speeding up] OK OK it's fine OK OK [S & K laugh]

K: OK and do you think so far at university you've learnt many things? Many new things? (S: New things?) Yeah.

S: I understand I don't know anything. I thought I learned in the PP many things but in the PP nothing is help me just nothing is happened just I can understand people who speak quickly not all the time. I can speak I can read I can write also I can read the novel and understand everything but in university no just the one thing which has happened I improve myself in English just (K: really nothing else?) Nothing else because everything I took it in the PP just courses for improve my language like Listening Speaking Reading Writing just (K: so you mean in the PP you didn't learn many new things) no just what I need to improve my English just. (K: What about now in university) I understand I don't know anything. I thought I know many things but now I know you know what like *ya'nī* certainly I know about myself [laughs] that I don't know anything [K laughs]. I was just have a good language like that but I didn't understand because we took other lessons not just ACS. No we take Islam we take Environment CS we take Arabic. (K: Yeah but are you learning many new things in those subjects?) Yeah [tentatively] yeah I learn. (K: So you think you only did English Language at the PP?) Yeah *ya'nī* all my things I learn in the PP now I speak English well. This is all that I think (K: mmm). But in the university I shocked because I didn't think about that before (K: I see) and then I saw many things it's hard for me.

K: So do you feel your level of English now is good enough for you to do well in the courses at university? Do you have enough English do you think?

S: It's fine. It's not well *ya'nī* but it's fine [small laugh]. It help me to understand things many things.

K: And tell me about the quizzes and the tests. Are they the same as in the PP?

S: No. (K: How are they different) Err the way of writing the questions. Also something is very easy but *ya'nī* I feel just confused because I took it in first time. Because of that I feel some problems but it's fine *ya'nī* it's good. (K: But do they bring you the tests from the book?) We don't have book. We have just slides and if you heard something it's like information

in addition you just write it down (K: so you have to be careful to write everything down) yeah of course. Because in Environment the teacher she— most of the things in the quiz it's from the information she said *ya'nī*

K: OK and do you still feel that studying at the university fits in well with your future plans and goals?

S: Yeah it's it's OK but now I can't think about anything about my future because I didn't yet start learning, start taking my major subject. I didn't yet. This is just my freshman year.

K: Do you remember you told me it's very important to be motivated. Do remember 'motivation'? (S: Mmm) Do you still feel motivated?

S: This year I just put my motivation inside my drawer *ya'nī* (K: [Laughs] why) because I'm freshman this is not motivation *ya'nī* [laughs] just work just work but my motivation will come out from my drawer when I start next year (K: you said you want to finish quickly) yeah.

K: What about outside the university. Are there any problems outside the university? Anything to do with your family or social things that affect your learning at university? (S: No everything's the same and it's become better also.) Do you spend a long time taking care of your brother and sisters?

S: No just I love to take care of Abdullah because I love him. I feel this thing is fun for me. (K: What about Fahad) No [laughs] my sisters and Fahad ask me to summarize this one I tell them "Just read it and repeat and repeat" She tell me "I can't answer this question." I tell her "Read your subject from the beginning read it well." She tell me "No you give me the answer. I tell her "I don't know read." "Please help me!" "READ" then I go. She tell me "Please Sandra help me to write this one." "I don't know. I'm sleeping now *yāllāh* (hurry up) go." Everyday—

K: If you helped all of them you wouldn't have time for your own study (S: yeah) Now looking back—

S: Also the time in the PP I don't have break just my break at 12 o'clock but now I have. 9 o'clock I have class and then 10 break, 11 class, from 12 to 2 I have break and then 2 to 3 class and from 3 to 4 class. It's nice. It's not pressure.

K: OK let's think about the PP now looking back. Let's think about the people. Who helped you the most do you think with your English learning. Who helped you a lot. Who helped you a little and who didn't help you (S: About my teachers you mean?) Anybody teachers class-mates parents friends?

S: Just Ms L in Reading and Writing and Ms A in Listening and Speaking (K: they helped you the most?) no and also Dr S (K: how did she help you) When she ask me what I do in my job like that she told me "You're doing well. Take my advice do like that read like that." Also

Ms S (director's secretary) she give me advice but the other things no. *khalāṣ yaʿnī* (K: What about your teachers in PP1) Huh! You know my friend in the PP she told me "Listen if you study PP1 you just study it now. Take of it now but when you pass this semester you must forget everything you've done everything you took it." "Why" I tell her. She tell me "You will see why." And then really I feel like in PP1 I feel like I didn't take anything like it's (K: very easy for you) no it's not easy like an introduction. Introduction for everything but in PP2 they they start how to read how to do—

K: Do you feel satisfied with the PP? Can you think of any ways the PP could have helped you a bit more to prepare you for the university?

S: Err no because I have my friend she's failed for the university and her husband he told her "You will go back to PP" and she said "Listen if you let me go back to PP I know myself I will not do my order" because it was a semester for playing like that (K: mmm) but if you let me go to freshman 1 I will be responsible for my things because this is the real life. (K: Who did she say that to) Err her name is M she say this to her husband he is a doctor in university in America and he's a very excellent guy he's now studying for his doctorate. (K: But he wanted her to go back to PP why) Because her English is not good. She told him "If you let me go back to PP I know myself I will not be serious."

K: So do you think you take more responsibility for your learning at university?

S: Yah. We must get value points we must get grades we must—a lot of orders. Sometimes when you think about it it is easy but when you want to do it it's tiring it's not easy (K: it's more tiring than the PP) yeah.

K: Do you work more independently now?

S: What do you mean (K: Do you work on your own?) Like use websites and social= (K: =yeah more than you did at the PP) I told you before I don't like to go back to websites or the dictionary. I just like to do my work from my notes and from what I took it do you remember? (K: Yeah) The teacher just say "Go to this website." I don't like *yaʿnī* even I don't like computers. I don't need computers like that. No reason but I hate computers. Since I was small mama she told me "Learn do like that." I tell her "Mama I hate computers. I don't want to study computers." She told me "You will need that." I told her "OK when I need I will study that." (K: But you're studying it now aren't you?) Yes and it's very boring. Sometimes in the class I feel like I want to cry because everybody's cross. She tell us "I will make this course it's easy for you like that" but I tell her "What about the people who doesn't like this course who hate this course" She say "I will let them love it." "Ah OK." [laughs] (K: But you have to do the course) Yes you have to.

K: OK and can you think of any mistakes you made in the PP that

you wouldn't make now? Not only grammar mistakes I mean any mistakes

S: Yeah. I was very stupid when they said (in the PP) "Go to Sharifa Hall. You must get value points" and then I go and I stay maybe 1 hour or 2 hours just listening to something for me is not interesting. I just say myself I will get points I will stay I will just listen to music like that and then after that my friend she tell me "Why you do that. You don't need, just you need in college." I said "What really? I was just worried I am just working too much and do everything just for what. For nothing." (K: So value points give you a higher grade?) Yeah *yaʿnī* if I got for example B in ACS these value points will maybe help me to get A (K: really?) Yeah or B+ like that (K: and is there a maximum number you can get?) (P) Err it's up to 15%, 25 from my subjects and my work with my course and the rest by working go to lecture in Sharifa Hall like that (K: and what are the lectures about) Oh something it's very boring [K laughs] like the doctor he come one time, this is fine but I don't have to know, like one time about Alzheimer, the doctor he was a Saudi man and he say " You know I feel so happy because I see more people come to my event. I was so happy and then one of the teachers she told me - Please don't be happy because we are like—" How do you say if I give you money you will do (K: bribe?) yes he tell "I heard about the bribe for value points" and then [laughs] we all laughed and said "Yeah [lowering her voice] right." (He said) "I know you do it for value points not for you." (K: Oh dear poor man!) No it's OK it's good he know.

K: When I started the research Dr S said she will give you value points. Did she give you?

S: No we don't need that in the PP. I don't know anything about that.

K: So my last question is do you think you've changed in any way since the PP?

S: Yeah [disconsolately] because now I'm just thinking about myself what I'm gonna do [in tragic tone] I'm gonna fail I can't do it like that and then I say "No, I can I will help myself [in tragic monotone] I will ask Allah to help me I will work well I will work too much like that (K: so you don't feel so confident now) no and also by the way now I now I have a break more than the PP but even now in my break I don't like to stay with anyone I just want to stay alone. *yaʿnī* I stay in my break at 10 o'clock I stay just one hour alone. If someone comes and sit with me I get out because I don't have *yaʿnī* I'm not in the mood to stay with my friend. (K: Why) Like that. I feel (P) (K: depressed?) yah no not unhappy or sad it's like you know I'm not in the mood. Also if I'm hungry I'll cut my leg before going to dining [K laughs] and then come back. I will <u>never</u> do it. [Comic tone]one time I was very hungry. Where did I go [speaking fast] I just go in my class I didn't eat she tell me "Why don't you come and eat" I tell her "It's hot and there's sun it's very far. Do you want me to pass this big space just for eating?

[Laughing] Are you crazy? I stay here. I don't have a problem." (K: Is it because you find the university hard?) Erm it's hard not because of this university itself no because of me because I'm now in the university now I'm big I must take more responsibility like that (K: mmm) and now mine is like, erm I can take more, no problem. Give me and I can take no problem I can wait (K: you're patient) I don't know *ṣabr* (patience) I'm patient yes too much a lot (K: you're very patient) yah very patient you know like when I was tired this arm was hurt me because of the AC (air conditioner) I didn't go to hospital but this was very painful (K: that's not good) yes I know but do you want me to go to hospital and [in fed up voice] stay waiting for doctors and then get out without nothing? No maybe just a few days and then I will become fine. Like that I am. (K: So is this just now or from September?) No no no. I am like that since I was small *yaʿnī.* Since the time I come to this life I am like that. But now I am more than before because of university (K: mmm). And sometimes I feel headache I want get Panadol, I ask my friend "Do you have?" and she tell me no I say "OK *khalāṣ.*" OK my auntie she tell me "Ask the nurse." I tell her "Tsk tsk I'm so tired. Do you want to ask the nurse? No *khalāṣ* no problem" (K: We say in English "I can't be bothered"=) =No it's not bothered you know it's like lazy [in whiny voice]"Oh you want me to ask her? *khalāṣ* no." Like that and then she told me "Ooo do you want me to go outside and bring water?" [S speaks very fast] "No need no need" you know it's very lazy

K: Yeah but is it because you're still in your freshman year?
S: Now now I feel that if I finish this year and then start study my major I think I will be fine or I will be more exciting (excited) but now I feel so lazy I don't want to do anything I just want waiting for my classes just stay and go for my courses like that
K: So your motivation has gone down hasn't it? (S: motivation?) your drive (S: mmm yeah it's gone down). So maybe next year— (S: yeah maybe next year—) [K & S laugh] OK thanks Sandra.

3. Nour SS5

               Dec 15th 2012 My house 3pm-24.03'

K: OK Nour tell me now about your studies in the university. Is it hard?
No: Yah. All times the study hard. They need students have responsibility for assignments. Maybe nobody help you. Only help yourself. (K: I see) Maybe little student help but they cannot help all time.
K: But if you need help where do you go
No: You go teacher or library or restaurant (on campus) maybe see the

friends maybe sit together help. Maybe in class cannot help because the doctors the teachers is fast talk many many many information inside the class. You cannot tell the student "What you do" *ya'nī* not understand everything (K: Yes). Like this you can't talk together student and listen the teacher.

K: Can you put your hand up and ask?

No: Yes she's repeat maybe more times she repeat.

K: But your advisor—

No: Doctor Sx.

K: Do you go and see her if you have a problem?

No: Yah. I talk with her because I have 3 subjects Biology Islamic PE I get not better mark. Biology I get 4 and a half in 20 (K: in the exam?) Yes. Very very bad. But my advisor Dr Sx she go to Dr I, Biology, maybe she give extra work. I go and talk to her and she was OK. I do extrawork *al-ḥamdulillāh*. Islamic, Dr Sy, I talk to advisor, she go to the doctor give me extra work. I do it *al-ḥamdulillāh.* She give me higher grade I take it grade 8 or 7 (K: very good). But PE she refuse. (K: Why) Because she tell she give me extra work many students need extra work.

K: There is a problem with this teacher?

No: Yeah. All the students say *Dra* H she is not good with the students.

K: Why do you think she is not good

No: Maybe it's the last year she teach at Sharifa University I don't know. I tell the advisor she is tell me "Go to *duktūrah* —" another advisor forget name. I go in the— yeah *Dra* R every time she's meeting "I have class" "I cannot stay." Like that. I want to drop this PE. I can't continue. Alex she is crying (K: I know) all students not she and me all students she's better in English but cannot do exam. (K: It's difficult?) Yes it's difficult. She put it question for university not freshmen (K: you're freshmen). Yah different from questions true/false choose correct word like that (K: yes). We never take exam like that. (K: The questions were difficult?) Yeah. We cannot understand what she need [raises voice]. She need like the Math or need division (K: definition?) definition or need reasons or need solve. [Pleading] What you need. (K: Only in the exam?) In mid-term. She not give us quiz no quiz only classes classes maybe 2 classes in 1 week or 3 classes I don't have schedule but after that it's mid-term (exam)

K: But in the classroom what does she do in the classroom

No: With me in class 2 American one her name is M and second I forget name. M cannot understand [ironic voice]huh everything she cannot understand [raises voice]. She take it the mid-term paper "What you need. What you need" she tell Dr A (the invigilator). Dr A say "Don't talk in the exam." But she say"I don't understand the

paper." I see like that. Dr A tell me "Nour turn (around)". But she's American she cannot solve and I Arabic slow [laughs aloud] Really! [in high pitch] I cannot!

K: But can you ask her in class "Excuse me I don't understand. Can you explain it?"

No: She tell "her-her-her another student cannot tell her?" Like that (K: oh!). [No laughs again] "Her-her can anybody explain her?" Oh my God! I keep it silent. (K: Is she Saudi?) *Urdunī* (Jordanian) maybe. (K: But she speaks in English to you) English only. She not speak the Arabic. I go in the office "Please *duktūrah* I cannot understand everything. Please maybe repeat. All maybe understand but me and some students not understand everything. Please say in simple word because (so) I understand" She [in indifferent voice]"7 everything 7 Nour." I cannot. Sometimes [laughs] forget name yeah? (K: Of course) I cannot say it's the PE because very nice subject yeah? (K: Yeah do you do exercise?) Yeah exercise all the body you're loving the subject. But the teacher— Everybody "no no no not take it now the PE". Maybe after going *Dra* H I take it the PE. (K: Right it's a problem) All my friends Nevine and Lama and Sandra all not take it the PE. Only me and Alex [extensive laughter].

K: [Laughing] That's a <u>big</u> problem! Tell me about English the ACS.

No: Oh better now *al-ḥamdulillāh*, because I like it the subject. You know why? Because grammar and vocabulary how can make a sentence a paragraph an essay an article (K: so a lot of writing) yah. (K: What about speaking) Yes good *al-ḥamdulillāh*. Doctor A "First time Nour you study hard, you study hard but now Nour you're better" *al-ḥamdulillāh* (K: Good you have—) motivation *ḥāfiz* (K: your motivation is good yeah?) [No laughs] Yeah motivation *ḥāfiz*. I take it my motivation (K: Good you like ACS) and Biology I take it the half grade but I like it this subject because (teacher's name) she's very nice. She tell us about human body. (K: You like the subject you like the teacher) Yes and my grade is better. But you cannot like the teacher. I like it the subject but I cannot like it the teacher I cannot get good grade

K: So if you don't like the teacher you can't get good grades (No: Yes) Do you do Maths?

No: [Smiles] Oh Maths very nice. I take it *māsh'Allāh* excellent. (K: Good) The high grade [laughs]. I take in Maths in oh many many subjects. (K: Computer Science) Yes Computer Science I take high grade. [No shows K schedule] You see. (K: My God! You're busy!) Yes [laughs a little hysterically] I cannot move like that. Islamic Biology PE Maths Basketball ACS Arabic Club CS. I have another one I didn't write here Office Admission. I work Office Admission. (K: Really?) Yes I take it 10

value points. (K: You help in admissions) Yes with some students. (K: That's excellent). Yes Monday 2 until 3 o'clock 1 hour only. (K: So which students do you help) Student freshmen don't speak English *atkallam ʿArabī* (I speak in Arabic) or I translate some word.

K: So tell me in the class do you feel that your English is good enough to understand or do you feel the other students speak English much better than you? How do you feel

No: I feel much better because some students *māsh'Allāh* is international like in the subject the ACS maybe 3 or 4 freshmen all them 3 years university 2 years (K: really?) 4 years. (K: So they speak well?) Yes. She talk Dr A any word "Yes yes I understand I understand." I talk to Dr A "I'm not understand." She says "Stop please because the girl freshman student." (K: Good) Yes she's a good *duktūrah.*

K: And do you speak English or are you shy? =

No: =No no I speak English maybe I good or wrong I speak (K: very good). She [small laugh] like me because Nour not shy.

K: Good because Alex told me that sometimes she feels shy to speak because the other girls in her class—

No: Yes they speak very well but I am not shy (K: good). I love it like that I'm not shy [laughs]

K: Good. Now tell me about your friends at the university. Do you have the same friends from the PP or did you make new friends?

No: Yes some student new but all the old in the PP. (K: you prefer?) Yes I sit together talk together send the email or message but new students only help together (K: I see so you don't send them messages) No no. But maybe some students (K: you're still new) Yes but she is I see in university different than PP. In PP maybe 3 or 4 maybe Lama Halima some student he need the help but he cannot help but he need. But in university student come don't know you (K: mmm) *mā taʿrif tijī ʿalá ṭūl tibgha tsāʿdik* (they don't know you but they come up and want to help you straightaway). (K: OK in the university) Yes. In PP there is but some not bigger but in university bigger in student maybe 4 or 5 inside the class and outside the class he need help you. (K: She likes to help you?) Yeah. But in the PP all student like freshman. He need to take the new vocabulary new information. All the same (K: the same level). Yes but in university maybe inside the class here 2 years here 3 years he knows many information he say "OK see first you cannot understand I help you. After the class I help you" (K: good). Many girls like that. Maybe in the homework you see [No shows K paper] this is an article summarising today ACS (K: yeah) together 2 students work together (with me) in summarizing. She tell me student "Nour give me I write this one. She write. I not know she's name. She is write everything [laughs].

K: So this is an activity. You have to summarise an article (No: yeah). So do you work in a group usually? (No: Not usually.) You work alone?

No: Yeah. The *duktūrah* understands what (who) is very good what (who) in the middle

K: Yeah but you said to me last time "I prefer to work in a group with other students."

No: Yes before first month group group group together (K: yeah). But now after the mid-term it changing (K: ah) yeah because some students tell "I don't like it doctor write with the group." Some teachers change some teacher not change. *Dra* A still like that "Work together. You like work together. OK work alone. (K: So you choose?) Yes. In Maths work together, extra work anything, work together all student.

K: Do you do activities like in the PP in Ms A's class? You remember you did a role play (No: Yes) and you had to answer 10 questions (No: about pollution yeah?) You don't do activities like this in the university?

No: In the university there is activity but only paper or presentation. But about your life no.

K: But would you like to do more activities like this?

No: The PP just simple word simple extra work and everything is simple. Maybe it's like freshman students yah? But in university no different. You're student university not student high school all the time talk to you like that the teacher. [No looks at her watch]

K: And I'd just like to ask you the last question are you enjoying the university?

No: Yes yes because it's different. You cannot enjoy all time maybe half time I enjoy inside the university because now Environment and now Basketball. I like the exercise anything exercise I like it. But before in the PP you cannot go in the— Yeah I go in the Basketball but I cannot play. (K: You couldn't play) Yeah. But now I playing but I not have time. (K: Do you have more pressure this year?) Yah yah because more subjects and I building my house (K: yeah) yes my daughter she's bigger now she need now study everyday. (K: So you study with her?) Yes do you know how many subjects this year? (K: How many)14 subjects! (K: 14?) Yes one four. (K: She's in Grade 1?) Yes. Difficult. She cannot understand everything. Science Maths Arabic Quran everything <u>difficult.</u>

K: She has more subjects than you! [Both laugh] (No: Yes) OK Nour thank you very much.

4. <u>Nevine SS3</u>

11 Sept. 2012 2pm Sharifa PP classroom 18.37'

K: OK Nevine so how do you feel now that you've just started the college

Ne: [Has a bad cold] I feel quite happy but I didn't make friends with the girls till now.

K: Why is that

Ne: Maybe because they are new girls

K: They're new yeah.

Ne: And I have only 2 friends from my old class.

K: So did you sit together with them?

Ne: Yeah.

K: Yeah. So do you expect to make more friends?

Ne: Yeah or maybe no because every lecture has a different class and different girls.

K: I see. And so far how do you find the classes

Ne: I have some problems with the courses

K: OK tell me about them

Ne: In the Islamic course there are some difficulties to pass

K: And the Islamic course do they teach it in Arabic?

Ne: No in English but some things are very new. I didn't hear about them.

K: OK. Did you study Islamic Studies at school?

Ne: No.

K: You were in an international school and they didn't have Islamic Studies?

[Ne shakes her head]

K: Oh really? So how does that make you feel? (P) The other girls know it do they?

Ne: Yeah. I feel I'm disappointed [small laugh]

K: But other classes you understand fine

Ne: Yeah.

K: What about Biology and—

Ne: It's not very good but I'm trying to be better

K: So why is it not good

Ne: [with a little laugh] Because I don't like Biology.

K: But you understand the English

Ne: Yes I understand it well.

K: So which of your subjects do you like

Ne: When I choose my major I choose English because I only want to study English. I don't want to study Maths and Biology that's why.

K: But are there any other subjects that you like that you're studying here?

Ne: Only ACS.

K: What are you doing in ACS

Ne: Reading novels doing assignments paragraphs and so on.

K: Are you doing any study skills?

Ne: Not yet.

K: OK. And at school you used to speak English with your friends didn't you? What about here

Ne: No. Arabic.

K: You've got a bad throat.

Ne: [with a small laugh] Yeah

K: OK we won't talk for very long then. So when you were at the PP did it help you with your studies at college now?

Ne: No.

K: Why not

Ne: It doesn't prepare you for college.

K: What could they do to help you prepare more

Ne: Improve the level of English maybe because it's very weak

K: Is it all weak reading writing listening and speaking?

Ne: It's all the same I think.

K: What level do you think it is

Ne: Intermediate.

K: Isn't that OK for university?

Ne: No it's too low.

K: OK now let's think back to your time at the PP because I didn't speak to you before and after your exams. Were you happy with your results in the final exams?

Ne: Yeah I got A+.

K: Well done. So were the final exams quite easy?

Ne: Yeah.

K: What do you think you gained in the Listening and Speaking class with Ms A. Do you think you learnt a lot?

Ne: Yeah I love her classes.

K: Why

Ne: I don't know. She's very lovely and she has a special way to teach.

K: Ah! How does she teach

Ne: Um she's very serious. She doesn't laugh a lot.

K: Oh you don't like teachers who laugh a lot?

Ne: [laughs] No. She's a good teacher.

K: What makes her a good teacher

Ne: Her questions in the exam were very clever.

K: Do you remember any of the questions?

Ne: For example in one of her examinations she wrote a title I think it was about homelessness and she wanted us to write a whole paragraph about this word you know. Some of the students got very weak grades of course.

K: Did you write about homelessness here?

Ne: No I wrote about homelessness in the United States.

K: What did you write do you remember?

Ne: I don't remember exactly but I wrote about a video I saw about homelessness.

K: A video that you watched in class?

Ne: No I watched it at home.

K: Great. And at the PP you had mid-term exams and final exams two weeks each. Do you think too much time is taken up with exams?

Ne: Not too much time. That time is appropriate.

K: So why is it important to spend so much time on exams

Ne: I don't know. We have lots of material and lots of hours.

K: But what are the exams for

Ne: To help us with our English

K: And you said the Listening and Speaking class was really good. What about your Reading and Writing class

Ne: It's very good.

K: Why is it good

Ne: Ms L she gives us a lot of quizzes all the time and we were reading a lot and writing essays.

K: How did you do with the essay

Ne: Very good. I like writing essays.

K: Good. What about in Psychology class in the 2nd semester

Ne: It was good as well.

K: Did you do anymore activities?

Ne: We did a presentation about the whole course.

K: So what was your presentation about

Ne: It was about what we'd studied. What does it mean the word psychology, that's what I presented.

K: What about in Critical Thinking?

Ne: It was good.

K: What was it about

Ne: Grammar and articles

K: What reading articles?

Ne: No not reading, articles and questions. It was very difficult for some of the students.

K: And what about in the exam

Ne: He gave us I think an article and some questions and some translation

K: Oh some translation as well

Ne: Yeah.

K: So what about in the subject Translation. Did you do Translation?

Ne: Yeah.

K: How did you find that exam

Ne: A little bit confused

K: You were a little bit confused. Why

Ne: Erm I'm trying to memorize all the papers and—

K: Some people said that the doctor who took you for Translation in PP2 he made it a bit difficult. Do you agree?

Ne: No I did well.

K: But during the semester did you find it difficult?

Ne: No I loved the doctor in Critical Thinking.

K: But what about Translation

Ne: We didn't have Translation as a course in the second semester.

K: No?

Ne: It was the first semester with the doctor.

K: But you didn't have it in the second?

Ne: No. I have Translation as a question on the course.

K: So you didn't have that doctor who used to use passages from his book?

Ne: That was for assignments for extra value points I think. We didn't study it in the class and we didn't take it in the class.

K: OK so you didn't have that in the exam?

Ne: No.

K: No. OK you did activities like presentations which you said are useful.

Ne: Yeah.

K: What other activities are useful to do in the classroom

Ne: More writing.

K: Is there anything you used to do at school that they don't do here?

Ne: No.

K: And what about at home. You said that sometimes you watch movies.

Ne: Yeah.

K: Do you still do that?

Ne: Yeah.

K: What kind of movies

Ne: Titanic.

Ke: Titanic? You're still watching that?

Ne: [laughs] Yeah

K: Do you watch new movies?

Ne: Yeah like Sweet November. It's not very new and Days of our Lives.

K: Yes I know that movie. And do you speak English outside the university?

Ne: Sometimes. Yeah with the waiters McDonalds—

K: But not at home?

Ne: Maybe with the maid. She's Filipino.

K: No one in your family?

Ne: Yeah with my uncle's daughters.

K: Your cousins. Why do you speak English to them

Ne: They were living in England and they come from one year ago because— erm—

K: So do they go to school here?

Ne: Yeah but not here. In X (another city).

K: So you don't see them much.

Ne: No maybe every month.

K: OK great. (P) You said that you like working in a group.

Ne: Yeah.

K: Now that you're in college do you work in groups?

Ne: Not yet

K: Do you want to work in a group?

Ne: It's OK. I don't mind

K: Do you prefer to work on your own?

Ne: Individual working.

K: You like individual working? Why

Ne: Because I have no friends right now.

K: But in the PP you were helping some students weren't you?

Ne: Yeah.

K: Would you like to do that again?

Ne: Maybe

K: Here some girls come directly to the university. They don't go to the PP. So do you find most of the girls speak English?

Ne: One of them. She's Indian.

K: OK. And when do you expect to graduate? In 3 years? 4 years?

Ne: No [laughs]. After 2 years.

K: 2 years? How can you finish so quickly

Ne: Summer courses.

K: So you're going to do summer courses so you can finish quickly. Then what are you going to do [Nevine laughs] I know [laughs]. You want to do a master's right? In America?

Ne: [laughs] Yeah.

K: Do you want to continue with English Literature?

Ne: No maybe I want to continue with English Language teaching

K: Yes you said you wanted to open a school

Ne: Yeah.

K: And you said you need to learn more grammar and more vocabulary. Do you still need that do you think?

Ne: Yeah.

K: And also you said that you want to be more flexible with people. [Nevine laughs] What did you mean by that

Ne: Err-I mean to accommodate yeah—

K: Accommodate what

Ne: More friendly maybe

K: You want to be more friendly? Right. And do you think anyone can learn to speak English well if they study hard?

Ne: Yeah sure.

K: You don't think it's important to have a special talent?

Ne: Yeah

K: What's more important to have a special talent or to study hard

Ne: To study hard.

K: And one last question what did you think of the books you used in the PP

Ne: Up till now we have no books.

K: No the books you had in the PP the Reading the Listening and Speaking books

Ne: Oh they were very good.

K: OK thank you Nevine.

Ne: You're welcome.

APPENDIX I   Sample analysis and analytic summary

1. Sample Analysis
A. Sample interview excerpt

Nour SS5:1

SS5 takes place three and a half months after Nour's transition to university. My sitting-room. Sandra has just left so we are alone.

K: OK Nour tell me now about your studies in the university.
Is it hard?

No: Yah. All times the study hard. They need students have responsibility for assignments. Maybe nobody help you. Only help yourself. (K: I see). Maybe little student help but they cannot help all time.

K: But if you need help where do you go

No: You go teacher or library or restaurant (on campus) maybe see the friends maybe sit together help. Maybe in class cannot help because the doctors the teachers is fast talk many many many information inside the class. You cannot tell the student "What you do" *yaʿnī* not understand everything (K: yes). Like this you can't talk together student and listen the teacher.

K: Can you put your hand up and ask?

No: Yes she's repeat maybe more times she repeat.

K: But your advisor—

No: Doctor Sx.

K: Do you go and see her if you have a problem

No: Yah. I talk with her because I have 3 subjects Biology Islamic PE I get not better mark. Biology I get 4 and a half in 20 (K: in the exam?) Yes. Very very bad. But my advisor Dr Sx she go to Dr I, Biology, maybe she give extra work. I go and talk to her and she was OK. I do extra work *al-ḥamdulillāh*. Islamic, Dr Sy, I talk to advisor, she go to the doctor give me extra work. I do it *al-ḥamdulillāh*. She give me higher grade I take it grade 8 or 7 (K: very good).

B. Analysis

Nour SS5:1

Regular: narrative-thematic
Italics: interaction
Bold caps: dramaturgical/performative

Prologue: It's hard

In pre-interview chat Nour has told me things are really hard at uni so my question "is it hard?" (SS5:1) is asked so she can expound on her problems.

Nour's main problem is that she cannot access regular support, especially in her new learning context, the university, where students are expected to work independently.

EMO: DEJECTED ATT: CONCERNED. OBJ: KEEP UP WITH UNIVERSITY STUDIES BUT CONS ARE:

1. "THEY NEED" STS TO WORK MORE INDEPENDENTLY SO "NOBODY HELP YOU. ONLY HELP YOURSELF."
2. OTHER STS CAN'T HELP IN CLASS AS HAVE TO LISTEN TO TEACHER WHO GIVES OUT A LOT OF INFO. VERY FAST "MANY, MANY, MANY INFORMATION".

CONSTRUCTS SELF AS URGENTLY IN NEED OF HELP. FREQUENT USE OF RELIGIOUS PHRASES IN ARABIC SEEMS TO INCREASE HER VULNERABILITY.

Scene 1: Support at uni

STRAT: USE SUPPORT SITES: TEACHER, LIBRARY, CAFETERIA "MAYBE SEE THE FRIENDS, MAYBE SIT TOGETHER, HELP" BUT HELP IRREGULAR.

TEACHERS CONSTRUCTED AS GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE IN CLASS: "SHE'S REPEAT MAYBE MORE TIMES SHE'S REPEAT." ADVISOR: MEDIATING ROLE BETWEEN STS & TS:

NARRATIVE 1: HUSTLING FOR BETTER MARKS. NOUR SAYS DID BADLY IN BIOLOGY, ISLAMIC, FITNESS. SHE'S DIRECT ABOUT BAD RESULTS: 4 ½ OUT OF 20 IN BIOLOGY "VERY, VERY BAD". STRATS: RECOURSES TO BETTERING MARK. T GAVE HER EXTRA WORK & RAISED GRADE, SAME IN ISLAMIC STUDIES. PRESENTS SELF AS RESPONSIVE, ACTIVE: STRING OF ACTION WORDS: "I DO EXTRA WORK. I TALK TO ADVISOR. I DO IT AL-ḤAMDULILLĀH. SHE GIVE ME HIGHER GRADE"(SS5:1). NOUR AS AGENTIVE, AS HUSTLER, AS SURVIVOR.

Our interaction is fast-paced, Nour seems to understand my questions well now. Perhaps I'm more aware as listener & more familiar with context. I try not to show judgement over low marks only approval when Nour tells me she improved on mark.

NOUR PRESENTS HERSELF AS AGENTIVE IN HER PURSUIT OF HIGHER MARK. SHE IS 'SYSTEM-WISE' KNOWS HOW TO USE IT. USE OF "GIVE" AND "TAKE".

2. Analytic Summary

In Prologue constructs self as in desperate need of help with university studies. DEJECTED, ANXIOUS. CONS: 1. expected to work more independently, 2. can't get in-class peer help, 3. irregular out-of-class help - FREQUENT USE OF 'MAYBE' SENSE OF UNRELIABILITY. Constructs teachers as supportive, advisor as mediator.

Narrative 1: EMPHASISES HER "VERY VERY BAD" EXAM RESULTS THEN PERFORMS HERSELF AS AGENTIVE IN PURSUIT OF HIGHER MARKS - USES STRING OF ACTION WORDS, PACE QUICKENS & SHOWS THAT HER ACTIONS PAID OFF E.G. "SHE GIVE ME HIGHER GRADE". NOUR AS AGENTIVE, SYSTEM-WISE HUSTLER & SURVIVOR. *I don't show judgement over her account of teachers giving students extra work to improve on marks. Praise her for her 'achievement'.*

(The Library of Congress, 2012)

(Adapted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Arabic)

Letter	Name	ALA-LC
ء[1]	hamzah	ʾ
ا[2]	alif	ā
ب	bāʾ	b
ت	tāʾ	t
ث	thāʾ	th
ج	jīm	j
ح	ḥāʾ	ḥ
خ	khāʾ	kh
د	dāl	d
ذ	dhāl	dh
ر	rāʾ	r
ز	zayn/ zāy	z
س	sīn	s
ش	shīn	sh
ص	ṣād	ṣ
ض	ḍād	ḍ
ط	ṭāʾ	ṭ
ظ	ẓāʾ	ẓ
ع	ʿayn	ʿ
غ	ghayn	gh
ف	fāʾ	f
ق	qāf	q
ك	kāf	k
ل	lām	l
م	mīm	m
ن	nūn	n
ه	hāʾ	h
و	wāw	w; ū; aw
ي	yāʾ	y; ī; ay
ة	tāʾ marbūṭah	h; t
ى	alif maqṣūrah	á
ال	alif lām	al-

Note the romanization *Allāh* alone and in combination e.g. *māshāʾAllāh*.

The prime symbol ꞌis used to separate two consonants when they do not form a

digraph e.g. *akramatꞌhā* in which the *t* and the *h* are two distinct consonantal sounds.

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[1] In initial position *hamzah* is not represented in romanization.

[2] *alif* is not represented when used to support *hamzah*.