

# Willingness to Communicate, Multilingualism and Interactions in Community Contexts

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# Willingness to Communicate, Multilingualism and Interactions in Community Contexts

**Alastair Henry and  
Peter D. MacIntyre**

DOI <https://doi.org/10.21832/HENRY1944>

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Names: Henry, Alastair, author. | MacIntyre, Peter D., author.

Title: Willingness to Communicate, Multilingualism and Interactions in  
Community Contexts/Alastair Henry and Peter D. MacIntyre.

Description: Bristol; Jackson: Multilingual Matters, 2023. | Series: Psychology  
of Language Learning and Teaching: 22 | Includes bibliographical references  
and index. | Summary: "This book examines the communication behaviours of  
individuals in multilingual community contexts. Using a complexity lens and  
the presentation of a revised 3D pyramid model, the authors demonstrate the  
dynamic nature of willingness to communicate over time and shed new light on  
processes that affect communication, migration and well-being"— Provided by  
publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023017421 (print) | LCCN 2023017422 (ebook) |  
ISBN 9781800411937 (paperback) | ISBN 9781800411944 (hardback) |  
ISBN 9781800411951 (pdf) | ISBN 9781800411968 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Multilingualism—Psychological aspects. | Multilingualism—Social  
aspects. | Language and languages—Study and teaching—Psychological aspects. |  
Language and languages—Study and teaching—Social aspects. | Interpersonal  
communication—Psychological aspects.

Classification: LCC P115.4 .H46 2023 (print) | LCC P115.4 (ebook) |  
DDC 306.44/6019—dc23/eng/20230627

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023017421>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023017422>

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13: 978-1-80041-194-4 (hbk)

ISBN-13: 978-1-80041-193-7 (pbk)

### **Multilingual Matters**

UK: St Nicholas House, 31-34 High Street, Bristol, BS1 2AW, UK.

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Website: <https://www.multilingual-matters.com>

Twitter: Multi\_Ling\_Mat

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Blog: <https://www.channelviewpublications.wordpress.com>

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where full certification has been granted to the printer concerned.

Typeset by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India.

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# Acknowledgements

There are many people who have contributed to this research, and to whom we are indebted. First and foremost, we would like to thank the eight women whose stories are told in this book. Amid the challenges of building a life in a new country, and with separation from loved ones made worse by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, you allowed us into your lives to carry out this research. We hope that the stories you told us will resonate with others who face the task of developing second language (L2) communication skills in challenging circumstances.

We are also indebted to the three teachers at Pinewood College who graciously allowed access to their classrooms, and to the college principals who supported this research at all stages. The graphic designers at Cordovan Communication enabled us to transform ideas about willingness to communicate (WTC) dynamics into 3D models and Linda Febring at University West and Molly McGillivray at Cape Breton University were our excellent research assistants. We also wish to express our gratitude to Laura Jordan, Rosie McEwan and Flo McClelland, the wonderful editorial team at Multilingual Matters, and to Stanzi Collier-Qureshy and Gomathy Ilammathe for their fantastic work on the proofs.

We also wish to acknowledge the passing of our friend Zoltán Dörnyei whose influential ideas and personal connections permeate this text. Discussions that led to the WTC pyramid were initiated in Budapest when Peter and Kimberly Noels visited Zoltán at Eötvös Loránd University in 1994. The ideas that emerged during that visit would later coalesce into the original pyramid model of WTC in a paper published in 1998 with Richard Clément. In recent years, Zoltán was instrumental in making Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) part of the mainstream conversation in second language acquisition with the *Motivational Dynamics* book, where Peter and Alastair joined him as co-editors. Without these seminal contributions the present book would not be possible. We miss you Zoltán.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the support of this project by the Swedish Research Council (*Vetenskapsrådet*) grant number 2018-03559.



# Foreword: From Two to Three Dimensions in WTC Research

Jean-Marc Dewaele

This book resonates with me as a person, a researcher and a teacher. I have sat through long and boring faculty meetings with zero WTC, realising that very often colleagues hold the floor simply to affirm their authority, rather than to communicate anything meaningful. I imagine that eager, overly talkative teachers may also keep the floor too long, which could come across as a filibuster to their students. In other words, speaking often goes beyond the intention of communicating. As a researcher, I have marvelled at the range of learner-internal and learner-external variables – and their possible interactions – that determine WTC in the classroom. The teacher plays a crucial role in fostering WTC (Dewaele, 2019; Dewaele & Pavelescu, 2021). But learners' emotions, personality profiles, dis/interest in the topic, their previous interactions with the teacher and with peers, and the classroom seating arrangements, can all determine whether they feel like saying something. There are also factors that have not yet been included in research on WTC. I would not be surprised if Ukrainian pupils currently shuttling between freezing classrooms and bomb shelters experience low WTC in their foreign language class, despite their teachers' best efforts. Or that hungry students might decline to participate in classroom activities. Or that traumatised children can be expected to behave like psychologically undamaged children. On a very different note, I imagine that comfy chairs in warm and welcoming classrooms might boost WTC, especially if a similarly warm, quiet, and comfortable workspace awaits at home.

I particularly like the authors' point that WTC has trait-like properties, yet can also be highly dynamic, depending on the context. The authors point out that WTC is about probability. There is a good probability that a talkative person will be talkative across contexts, while a less talkative person will be more likely to remain silent. Occasionally, however, people defy expectations and engage in unexpected behaviour which can lead them into new directions. Novelist Haruki Murakami has described how, after his studies at Waseda University, he ran a successful jazz bar in Tokyo, but had begun to wonder whether this was what he

wanted to do for the rest of his life. During a baseball game, he had the epiphany that he wanted to write:

The satisfying crack when bat met ball resounded through Jingu Stadium. Scattered applause resounded around me. In that instant, and based on no grounds whatsoever, it suddenly struck me: *I think I can write a novel*. I can still recall the exact sensation. It was as if something had come fluttering down from the sky and I had caught it cleanly in my hands. (Murakami, 2022: 27)

It is tempting to imagine a similar situation in a foreign language classroom, where a learner with very low WTC suddenly experiences a desire to say something, does so, enjoys the feeling of it and gradually becomes more talkative in class. Like the authors, researchers may also want to expand WTC research outside the classroom. Remaining silent in authentic communication contexts could result in real problems: not obtaining a housing benefit or missing out on a valuable social event. A decision to communicate – however difficult – can quickly lead to a realisation that it *is* possible to communicate successfully, even with a limited vocabulary and a foreign accent. Indeed, a successful communication event could reverberate into the person’s future. A linguistic ‘Jingu Stadium’ moment.

The research reported on in this book is theoretically, epistemologically and methodologically innovative. The longitudinal design, and the focus on WTC in two languages – Swedish and English – in specific communication events beyond the classroom, has allowed the authors to identify the combined effects of time, person and language. With a focus on development at a point when host country language skills were starting to evolve and, as a consequence, when affordances for communication were first beginning to materialise (Dewaele, 2010), one could compare the emergence of WTC in Swedish to the fragile flowering of *snödroppar* (snowdrops) in early spring in Sweden.

Drawing on an unusually rich dataset comprised of participants’ stories of communication events in community contexts, the authors reconceptualise the concept of WTC in multilingual contexts and propose a truly three-dimensional pyramid to replace the pioneering model in MacIntyre *et al.* (1998), which in fact was no more than a two-dimensional triangle. Both authors have also absorbed CDST (Dörnyei *et al.*, 2015). As the chapters in this book amply demonstrate, it has allowed them to revisit the basis of WTC research with fresh pairs of eyes.

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# **Part 1**

## **The WTC Construct and the Research Frontier**



# 1 Introduction

Communication lies at the heart of language learning. It is both the process by which learning is accomplished as well as, for most people, the ultimate goal of their learning endeavours. Being willing to communicate – when an opportunity arises – might be the single most important characteristic that a person can bring to the learning situation (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). While Skehan (1989) has argued that a learner must ‘talk in order to learn’, Larsen-Freeman (2007) reminds us that a person does not *learn* a language and then *use* it, but rather that they learn a language *by* using it. Although the close link between talking and learning can be well accepted by learners and teachers alike, there remains a wide variety of individual differences in *how* willing people are to use a language which they are in the process of learning. In situations that involve deciding whether to talk, and, when more than one language is available, which language to use, the complex psychology of the learner comes into play. The theory of willingness to communicate (WTC) describes how factors combine to lead a person to be willing, or less willing, to communicate.

In contexts of migration, communication extends beyond formal learning in language classrooms. A part of daily life, it can be central to processes of adaptation. In the chapters that follow, we examine the WTC of individuals who, through varying migration channels, had left one cultural/linguistic context to make a new life in another. In a globalising world, where digital technologies and lingua franca languages not only support transnational mobility but facilitate communication on arrival in a host country, choices made in communication events can accumulate in ways that have longer-term outcomes. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine all the potential consequences that attach to the ways in which adult migrants relate to a host country language, how they respond to the challenges of learning, and how they manage the constant negotiations that take place when interacting in community contexts. Is it possible to take a risk and communicate in the target language? Or is it better to play safe and to use a contact language (such as English), the facilitating affordances of digital tools (e.g. Google Translate), the mediation of a language broker, or, perhaps, simply to remain silent. Breaking new

ground, this book examines such types of decision-making, exploring how changes in WTC are tied to the learning of one language and the use of another, neither of which are the individual's native language.

### Where Does This Book Fit?

Defined as the readiness to initiate conversation, WTC was originally developed in the communication literature in the United States (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). Unsurprisingly, there was little reference to bilingual phenomena, such as code-switching and language choice (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b). Imported into second language acquisition (SLA) some 25 years ago (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998), the WTC concept has undergone considerable development. In the second language (L2) paradigm a re-orientation has been witnessed, moving away from the stability implied by the original trait-like conception to a more fluid and dynamic conceptualisation (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2020; Peng, 2022; Yasuhima, 2019). Indeed, research into WTC – which has used the ‘pyramid’ model (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) as a theoretical base (see Chapter 2) – has been in the vanguard of the ‘methodological’ and ‘complexity’ turns in SLA (Byrnes, 2013; Hult, 2010).

Methodologically, WTC has inspired new measures and novel ways of conducting research. While carefully constructed instruments measuring WTC were initially adapted to focus on communication in learning situations (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2001; Weaver, 2005), in recent years a more dynamic conceptualisation of WTC has emerged. In this framing, measures are designed to capture the complexity of interacting cognitive and emotional processes that converge upon each and every moment of a communication event. Recognition that WTC fluctuates in real time, and that there is a need to investigate changes *moment by moment*, idiodynamic methodologies have been developed (MacIntyre, 2012; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). In empirical work, these methods have been used to examine anxiety, motivation, perceived competence and other individual difference (ID) factors (MacIntyre & Ducker, 2022).

In relation to other developments in SLA – notably the ‘social’ and ‘multilingual’ turns (Block, 2003; May, 2014) – WTC research does not enjoy the same ‘frontrunner’ status. Like many other ID constructs, WTC has rarely been investigated outside the language classroom, even though for many learners it is in contexts *beyond* formal learning that the desire and confidence to communicate in an L2 can most fully develop (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Previous studies have not considered how WTC operates in multilingual contexts, and in situations where communication can be initiated in a language other than the target language.

Addressing these gaps in the research by examining WTC beyond the classroom, and aligning WTC with ‘turns’ towards investigating language acquisition in community contexts and multilingual settings, this book reports on a longitudinal qualitative study in a migration setting

where communication could take place in a target language (Swedish) or in a contact language (English). Aligned with complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) and its person–context focus (Van der Steen *et al.*, 2012; van Geert, 2020), this book investigates shifting patterns of Swedish WTC and English WTC at the individual level, over time, and as processes in motion.

In terms of design, the research reported on aligns with an emerging trend in SLA that seeks to develop methods that can provide nuanced, in-depth explanations of how ID factors affect L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2022). In line with research where context sensitive approaches are used to shed light on the dynamic, situated and context-dependent nature of IDs (Gao, 2022), the study has a person-focused design. Drawing on participant-generated accounts of communication in naturalistic contexts, it is prefaced on extended contact with study participants over time. Although IDs are generally examined using quantitative methods, context sensitive approaches have significant potential. As De Costa *et al.* (2022: 437) have made clear, such methods ‘afford L2 researchers with unique insights into the *nature* of the ID itself, how that ID may *surface and evolve over time*, and also how the ID may *interact with and/or be affected by* a variety of social and contextual factors’ (emphasis added). Referencing an increasing use of narrative methodologies in SLA, Gao (2022: 413) makes a similar point, arguing that IDs ‘can no longer be simply accounted for by what is involved in cognitive processing, since individual learners’ cognition is recognized to be profoundly mediated by contextual conditions and sociocultural processes’. Because IDs ‘emerge from the interplay between individuals’ volition/cognition and their sociocultural conditions’, Gao (2022: 417) underscores the important role that narrative methods can play in generating ‘nuanced accounts of individual differences variables and their mediation of language learners’ learning’. Building on quantitative work in a multilingual setting which revealed the interconnectedness of L<sub>x</sub> WTC and L<sub>y</sub> WTC (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b), and employing qualitative longitudinal methods where participant-generated narrative data is collected over time (Neale, 2020, 2021), in this monograph we seek to map and to understand WTC as an idiosyncratic, shifting and contextually sensitive phenomenon.

### **What Does This Book Do?**

In the project reported on in this book, we invited eight women who had migrated to Sweden and who were speakers of English to describe experiences of everyday communication events over an eight-month period when functional skills in Swedish were beginning to develop. Commencing the research at a point when we expected that willingness to communicate in Swedish might first emerge, we traced the development of Swedish WTC and English WTC as proficiency in Swedish increased. We examined communication experiences in proximity to situations when

choices about speaking (or not speaking) were actualised, and where a participant could find themselves asking the question, ‘should I initiate communication in English, or should I try and communicate in Swedish?’

Beyond documenting the experiences of the research participants and seeking understandings of communication behaviour in relation to their differing personalities, migration circumstances and family situations, in the later chapters of the book we expand the original pyramid model of WTC (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) into a 3D conceptualisation. Drawing on the insights gained from ‘walking alongside’ the participants as their target language and communication skills developed, and taking account of developments in SLA during the 25-year period since the model’s inception, we offer a revised conceptualisation that allows for the examination of processes that lead to WTC when two (or more) languages are available for communication. Reflecting both the soft assembly of WTC in individual communication events *and* how communication preferences pattern over time, we explore the interior of the pyramid to conceptualise a series of internal ‘corridors’ that link an individual’s experiences across languages, and that impact on communication processes in real-time communication situations.

The book begins with a description of the concept of WTC as originally proposed, and charts how the conceptualisation has changed over the years (Chapter 2). In Part 2, the first chapter (Chapter 3) provides the background to the research project, and reports on associated research which focused on the dynamics of growth and loss for Swedish and English WTC (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b). In Chapter 4, we outline the project’s methodology, the context sensitivity of the qualitative longitudinal design and the use of participant-generated narrative data (Neale, 2020, 2021). In Chapter 5 we introduce the participants, their aims and aspirations, their family situations and their migration circumstances. Drawing on stories about communication events recounted by the women over the eight-month research period, the chapters in Part 3 explore WTC trajectories and the ways in which patterns of communication were shaped by individual, family, social and structural factors. In Part 4, we use these explorations as a means of developing WTC theory, extending its relevance to multilingual and community contexts. We begin, in Chapter 10, by re-examining the key definitional elements of the WTC construct: being willing to communicate at a specific *time*, with a specific *person* and using a specific *language*. Next, in Chapter 11, we introduce a three-dimensional model of WTC that more fully takes advantage of the pyramid metaphor. In Chapter 12 we expand our focus. Here we zoom out to consider factors at a higher-scale level that could influence WTC in the investigated setting, and show how spatial perspectives are important for understanding WTC in community contexts. Finally, Chapter 13 examines the ethics of a longitudinal undertaking that involved closely following participants as their lives unfolded. We underscore the need for ethical sensitivity when establishing and maintaining relationships, and in the reporting of research findings.

## 2 The Pyramid Model and the Dynamic Turn in WTC Research

When learning a language, choosing whether to communicate might be the most important decision a person can make. Responding to opportunities for meaningful communication in everyday contexts can be especially valuable in migration contexts, when a person can find themselves in environments where the target language (TL) is encountered, and when they have the goal of establishing a new life. Even in technologically advanced societies, a multitude of daily tasks – from shopping for groceries to discussing health with a physician – are accomplished primarily by oral communication. Daily speech acts are intimately connected to language or, more specifically, to language choice. This is when a person’s willingness to communicate in the TL or in another available language – a lingua franca or a contact language – can come into sharp relief. Beyond accomplishing the communication tasks of daily life, it is generally accepted that people need to talk in order to learn a language (Skehan, 1989). As Larsen-Freeman (2007: 578) has explained, it is ‘not that you learn something and then you use it; neither is it that you use something and then you learn it. Instead, it is in the using that you learn—they are inseparable’.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) can be defined in terms of the *probability* that an individual would choose to initiate communication given an opportunity (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). WTC is a concept rich in the way it both implicates and integrates psychological and social processes. As discussed in Chapter 1, WTC was originally conceptualised as a communication trait emphasising the stable patterns people tend to show over time. Reflecting typical patterns of differences among individuals in their willingness to initiate a conversation, some people are recognised as more talkative and others less so. When additional languages are added to the mix, the psychological situation becomes more complex. Given the wide differences between communicating in the first language compared to another language – especially when a person is in the early stages of the learning process – levels of WTC are necessarily fluid and based on the fit between the person and the affordances of the context (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). As the

individual makes language choices in shifting situations, the various factors that influence WTC wax and wane continuously, meaning that WTC fluctuates in real time.

The idea of a constant tension – combinations of push and pull factors that underlie WTC – was introduced some 25 years ago to the second language (L2) literature by MacIntyre *et al.* (1998), who proposed what has become known as ‘the pyramid model of WTC’ (see Figure 2.1). Identifying more than 30 major concepts relevant to WTC – and even more if we take into consideration how each of the influences can be broken down – the model focuses on integrating social psychological and language communication factors. In emphasising the influence of the immediate situation – that is, who is available for a conversation, what is to be said, how strong the need is to say something and whether the speaker feels confident about initiating the conversation – the pyramid model constituted a significant departure from the first language (L1) WTC literature. In contrast to L1 conceptualisations, the pyramid represents a dynamic integration of considerations that take place continuously in real time. As subsequent research has shown, WTC can change substantially from one moment to the next (MacIntyre, 2020; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). Moreover, each communication event is recognised as forming part of the longer-term processes of change that comprise *language development* (Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

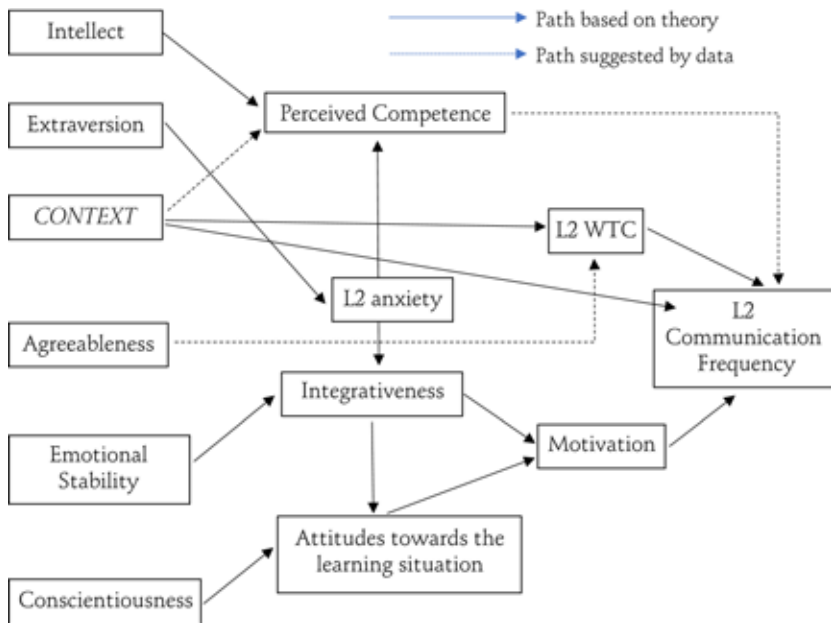


Figure 2.1 A hybrid model of L2 WTC and motivation

With a focus on clarifying the value of the *trait* approach, and explicating the theoretical basis for the *dynamic* approach, this chapter offers a discussion of how thinking about WTC has progressed. We address how the literature on WTC has changed, how new conceptualisations have emerged and how insights into the ways in which WTC affects the process of language development have progressed.

### Revisiting the Trait Approach

Before considering how the dynamic approach changes our ways of thinking about WTC, we must first consider how the trait approach has been (mis)understood. ‘Trait’ might be seen as implying a singular, unchanging quality. In respect to WTC, it is important to clarify what is meant by ‘trait’. The argument has been forcefully articulated by McCroskey and Baer (1985):

Underlying the construct of willingness to communicate is the assumption that this is a personality-based, trait-like predisposition which is relatively consistent across a variety of communication contexts and types of receivers. For us to argue the predisposition is trait-like, then, it is necessary that the level of a person’s willingness to communicate in one communication context (like small group interaction) is correlated with the person’s willingness in other communication contexts (such as public speaking, talking in meetings and talking in dyads). Further, it is necessary that the level of a person’s willingness to communicate with one type of receiver (like acquaintances) is correlated with the person’s willingness to communicate with other types of receivers (such as friends and strangers).

This assumption does not mandate that a person be equally willing to communicate in all contexts or with all receivers, only that the level of willingness in various contexts and with various receivers be correlated. Thus, if Person A is much more willing to communicate in small groups than in a public speaking context, the underlying assumption is not necessarily violated. However, if Person A is more willing to communicate than Person B in one context, it is assumed that Person A will be more willing to communicate than Person B in other contexts as well. If no such regularity exists when data are aggregated for a large number of people, willingness to communicate in one context will not be predictive of willingness to communicate in another context and willingness to communicate with one type of receiver will not be predictive of willingness to communicate with another type of receiver. In this event, the data would invalidate the assumption of a trait-like predisposition and necessitate we redirect attention to predispositions that are context-based and/or receiver-based or forgo the predispositional approach in favor of a purely situational explanation of willingness to communicate. (McCroskey & Baer, 1985: 5–6)

The point that McCroskey and Baer (1985) make is that the defining feature of WTC as a trait is not immutability; more appropriately, it is that relative WTC in *one* context should be correlated with relative WTC in *other* contexts. That is, individuals with comparatively high WTC in one context would be expected to be high in other contexts as well, even if their level of WTC changes from one situation to another. WTC has never been defined as ‘monolithic’ or invariant, except in strawman-type arguments where an implausibly stable trait concept of WTC is set in contrast to a more flexible, rapidly changing, dynamic concept. Trait research has supported both the ‘differences-across-contexts’ and the ‘cross-situational consistency’ that are described by McCroskey and Baer in the excerpt quoted above.

In general, and as might be expected, WTC shows differences across contexts: it is rated highest when speaking in dyads and lowest for public speaking in front of an audience, and higher with friends and lower among strangers. Normative data for the WTC scale in different contexts is shown in Table 2.1 (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). Differences in WTC have also been reported in relation to variations in settings. For instance, the WTC patterns for Sweden and the United States exhibit similarities and differences (as shown in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3). As McCroskey and Richmond (1990) have observed, cultural differences in levels of WTC are to be expected, yet the relative situational differences among individuals within any given culture are likely to be stable. Moreover, the authors emphasise that individual differences in WTC should be interpreted within the patterns and expectations for a given culture, and can be defined either more broadly (e.g. at the nation-state level), or more narrowly (at the level of specific groups, such as recent migrants).

Much of the initial research was correlational in nature, showing that higher WTC is associated with greater extraversion, positive self-esteem and higher self-perceived communication competence, and with

**Table 2.1** Normative means, standard deviations and reliabilities for WTC scores

WTC score	Mean	SD	Reliability
Total WTC score	65.2	15.1	0.92
Context subscores			
Public	54.2	21.3	0.74
Meeting	59.7	19.9	0.70
Group	70.8	16.3	0.65
Dyad	76.2	15.6	0.68
Receiver subscores			
Stranger	38.5	21.5	0.84
Acquaintance	72.5	18.3	0.79
Friend	84.7	14.0	0.76

**Table 2.2** Comparative means of college students from various countries

WTC score	United States	Sweden	Australia	Micronesia	Finland	Estonia
Total WTC score	65.2	58.1	56.6	47.3	54.6	54.8
Context subscores						
Public	54.2	53.3	46.0	47.0	51.8	53.6
Meeting	59.7	52.2	53.1	37.4	49.4	51.5
Group	70.8	63.3	63.3	55.2	59.8	61.8
Dyad	76.2	63.3	63.8	49.6	72.9	51.9
Receiver subscores						
Stranger	38.5	37.4	38.8	22.9	35.1	38.5
Acquaintance	72.5	62.8	61.0	44.4	60.7	63.3
Friend	84.7	73.8	75.9	74.5	68.1	62.2

**Table 2.3** Correlations among measures by country

Measures	United States	Sweden	Australia	Micronesia
WTC/PRCA	-0.52	-0.44	-0.49	-0.52
WTC/SPCC	0.59	0.44	0.57	0.80
WTC/Introversion	-0.29	-0.43	-	-0.40
PRCA/SPCC	-0.63	-0.52	-0.64	-0.49
PRCA/Introversion	0.33	0.40	-	0.37
SPCC/Introversion	-0.37	-0.26	-	0.36

Note: PRCA = Personal report of communication apprehension; SPCC = Self-perceived communication competence (McCroskey *et al.*, 1990).

lower communication apprehension, anomie and cultural alienation (summarised by McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). These relationships helped to establish the validity of the WTC concept and its measurement. Importantly, it should be noted that all the factors relevant to WTC in a first language – plus many more – are also relevant to L2 WTC.

### Trait WTC in a Target Language

Research into L2 WTC from a trait perspective has made substantial progress. An early study examined how L2 WTC fits with other communication-related concepts implicated in L2 use (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Using path analysis, the researchers proposed a hybrid model composed of personality traits, motivation for L2 learning, L2 communication-traits, L2 WTC and L2 use. The model proposes that basic personality traits (the ‘Big Five’ such as introversion-extraversion and emotional stability) influence the development of L2 motivation and L2 communication traits, specifically, perceived competence and anxiety (these proposed to be the two most direct influences on L1 WTC) (see McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). The model was inspired by combining a

model of L1 WTC (MacIntyre, 1994) with a model of motivation to learn a second language (Gardner, 1988). The results of the modelling are set out in Figure 2.1.

This hybrid model provided the groundwork for the pyramid model of WTC (including the semi-triangular shape if one imagines Figure 2.1 turned 90 degrees to the left). Importantly, the results demonstrate that models from the second language acquisition (SLA) domain ‘can be integrated successfully with [models] from the [L1] communication domain... [t]hese areas are often isolated from each other, and their synthesis shows that potentially powerful models can emerge from the convergence of knowledge in various domains’ (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996: 21).

Much of the early research on trait L2 WTC was conducted in Canada among English speakers learning French. Data showed that TL immersion students were more willing to talk in the L2 than traditional French as a second language students (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2002). Seeing one’s friends as willing to communicate in the L2 was associated with a learner who was more willing to communicate (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2001). A social context that provides a choice to communicate was found to increase WTC (Clément *et al.*, 2003). WTC has also been shown to predict the initiation of communication in both L1 and L2, and to be correlated with personality traits (such as extraversion) and other factors (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2007).

As the results of research accumulated, work investigating WTC began to emerge in language learning settings around the world. In a context very different from Canada, Yashima *et al.* (2004) found that Japanese student sojourners visiting the United States who were more willing to communicate benefited more from the time spent abroad when they returned home. The researchers suggest that higher WTC prior to departure led to behaviours that invited communication in the host community. They conclude, in part, that ‘[t]hose who communicated with hosts more frequently and for a greater amount of time seem to have had a higher degree of satisfaction in human relationships, experienced less difficulty in making friends and perceived their adjustment to the host country to be better than those who engaged in communication less frequently’ (Yashima *et al.*, 2004: 141).

The literature on L2 trait WTC has matured well, and its research base continues to build (for important overviews of the literature, see Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017; Yashima, 2019). Between 2000 and 2015, a sufficient number of published projects allowed for a meta-analysis of three ‘high evidence correlates’ of L2 WTC: motivation, language anxiety and perceived competence. Reviewing findings from more than 50 studies of trait-level WTC in the L2, a meta-analysis by Elahi Shrivani *et al.* (2019) showed that all three key concepts in MacIntyre and Charos’s (1996) original model (motivation, language anxiety and perceived competence) are consistently correlated with WTC. The

meta-analysis further suggested that L2 WTC is more highly correlated with perceived communicative competence than with language anxiety or motivation.

In the paper introducing the pyramid model, MacIntyre *et al.* (1998) suggested that L2 WTC is not simply a transfer of L1 WTC; communicating in different languages dramatically changes the psychological situation. Factors such as the linguistic context and experience play a dynamic and pivotal role *in situ*, affecting the relationship of WTC with anxiety, perceived communicative competence and motivation. In Chapter 11, we expand on the ideas outlined in the pyramid model, elaborating further the ways in which they interact with each other.

As the L2 WTC literature expanded, and with focus trained on understanding the processes through which WTC is generated, the early emphasis on personality diminished in favour of other factors that contribute to language development, such as motivation processes, developing competencies within the learning context and the role of emotions. Analysis of language learning and speaking contexts showed that there is a wider range of potentially relevant factors affecting TL WTC (compared to L1 WTC), and that these lead to additional complexity and uncertainty:

The differences between L1 and L2 WTC may be due to the uncertainty inherent in L2 use that interacts in a more complex manner with those variables that influence L1 WTC. For example, among most adults, a much greater range in communicative competence would be found in the L2, as compared to the L1. By definition, L1 speakers have achieved a great deal of competence with that language. However, L2 competence level can range from almost no L2 competence (0%) to full L2 competence (100%). In addition, L2 use carries a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use. (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998: 546)

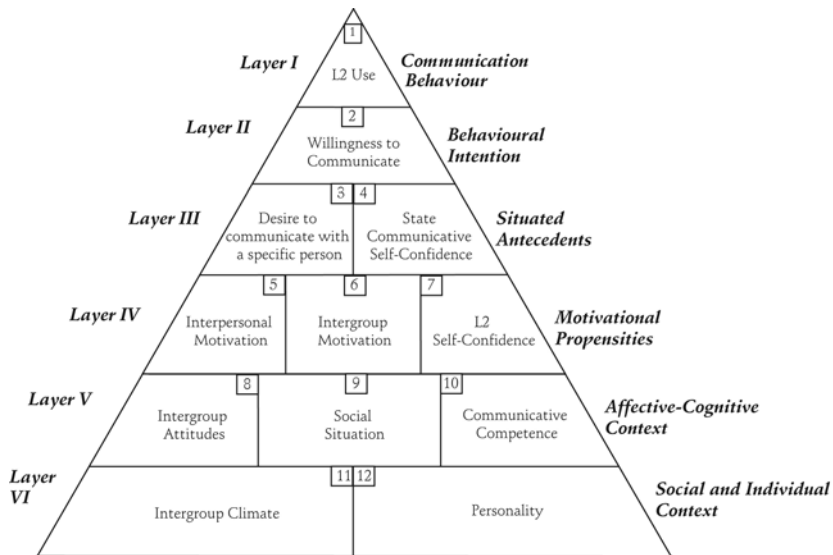
Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that research into WTC in a TL has emphasised dynamics and change, rather than stabilities associated with personality traits. By the same token, it is important not to consider trait and dynamically focused approaches as mutually exclusive; they are simply different ways of investigating the same topic, each with the potential to yield complementary insights about WTC. The important thing to keep in mind is that they operate along different timescales (MacIntyre, 2020).

### **The Pyramid Model of WTC**

The pyramid model was originally described as heuristic. Functioning as a starting point, it was not intended to provide a complete account of all

relevant processes (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998; see Figure 2.2). The six layers of the model are organised by time and breadth-of-concept. Long-term, stable and enduring variables are located at the base of the pyramid. These influences are grouped into the broad dimensions of personality and intergroup climate. Such processes change slowly (if at all). While their influence may be ubiquitous, subtle changes might take place in various communication contexts. On the one hand, socialisation processes take place within a particular intergroup climate, and can reflect long-established patterns of contact that may include friendly relations and/or tensions among language groups. Indeed, intergroup issues – cooperation and conflict – can span generations. On the other hand, personality traits often have heritability components that are based in a person’s genetic endowment. To the extent that personality is partially inherited, its groundwork is established even before we are born.

Moving up the pyramid, the variables are more circumscribed; that is, they exert an influence in a more limited range of situations, and change over shorter-term periods compared to the factors in the foundational layer (Layer VI). What might be thought of as the broad pattern of TL development is located under communication competence (box 10 in Layer V). The effect of locating language learning here is to acknowledge it as a critically important factor – although far from the only contributor – in creating communication competence. The model proposes that differences among social situations or negative intergroup attitudes can exert an impact on the process of generating WTC. As the model takes



**Figure 2.2** The pyramid model of Willingness to Communicate (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998)

on more dynamic properties, the next level (Layer IV) encompasses concepts that are even more limited in cross-situational scope. Here, L2 self-confidence reflects the combined effects of the tension between perceived competence and language anxiety. The net effect of integrating the processes within box 7 is that some competent speakers may experience anxiety that makes them unwilling to talk. As the myriad influences in the local context change (e.g. topic, interlocutors, nonverbal behaviour) so do the emergent levels of confidence (becoming higher or lower). Also at this level are the motivations for interpersonal and intergroup interaction. Broad motivations for affiliation and control refer, respectively, to the desire to meet people and to exert influence on them; at this level, affiliation and control motives interact with self-confidence. The combination of processes here leads to the desire to talk with – or avoid talking to – a specific person present in the communication context. How much we want to initiate talk depends, in part, on the people with whom we come into contact.

The pyramid reaches a convergence at the top, reflecting a point in time at which a person can choose to communicate (or not). Moments in time are inherently fleeting; here-and-gone, they are replaced by the next moment and supersede one another in a never-ending progression over time. WTC captures an intention to communicate when an opportunity arises, something that can happen at almost any moment. The behavioural intention to talk is an emergent state of mind influenced by interactions among the many personal, contextual and time-bound factors that underlie it. Language competence certainly plays a role; however, linguistic ability is just part of an integrated whole that may or may not lead to WTC. Put another way, a person who may be *able* to communicate may not be *willing* to do so.

Examining the volitional act of initiating communication, MacIntyre (2007) discussed the tension between driving and restraining forces implicated by the pyramid model. The driving forces lead towards higher WTC; however, they are constantly integrated with (pitted against) restraining forces within the same person. A sudden spike in anxiety can affect even a confident speaker, potentially producing a dramatic reduction in WTC (for an example, see the description of Low Anxiety Person #2 [‘LAP2’] in Gregersen *et al.*, 2014). Combining the notion of having something to say with the self-confidence to say it creates the behavioural intention to communicate at a particular time, which is the essence of WTC. The pyramid model addressed the need to synthesise and organise a growing number of influences on WTC, especially in transitioning to L2 communication, including those implicated in intergroup relations, such as identity, context, culture, developing language competencies, managing anxiety and the motivation to learn (e.g. Elahi Shrivani *et al.*, 2019; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017; Yashima, 2019; Zarrinabadi & Haidary, 2014).

As the list of potential influences on WTC grew, the need to develop theoretical accounts of how various factors interact became more pressing. There was, however, a disconnect between the original, trait-oriented conceptualisation and the way WTC was described as emerging from the interaction of numerous influences. A single study cannot possibly map all the factors affecting WTC. Rather, the accumulating body of literature pointed to a need to conceptualise how the different influences might – potentially – fit together. A process-oriented account of WTC was needed, especially in light of the situational volatility associated with being willing and unwilling to communicate in a TL. Although some researchers approached the task with a quantitative modelling approach – similar to the path models that had been offered previously by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) – there was an emerging group of researchers who took on a more dynamic approach, exploring how WTC is influenced by the communication situation, and how influences could change over a relatively short period of time. This is what we might call the ‘dynamic turn’ in WTC research.

### **The Dynamic Turn in WTC Research**

There are several ways in which WTC theory reflected in the pyramid model was conceptually distinct from the types of research being done in the trait tradition emanating from the original L1 research. Qualitative studies (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; Peng & Woodrow, 2010) that were conducted in Asian contexts can be credited with shifting the emphasis towards the interactions between persons, and emphasising the influence of the context in which learners are operating. One of the key issues emerging from the qualitative studies of WTC was the need to highlight how differences in communication situations affect WTC, both inside and outside the classroom.

The authors of these qualitative studies have argued that using methods that generate rich and nuanced descriptions of WTC might expand the list of potential influences far beyond the factors considered by McCroskey and Richmond (1991). For example, Kang (2005) proposed that WTC could be mediated by a sense of security, excitement and responsibility. These mediating factors were shown to be similar to factors highlighted in the pyramid model, although expressed with different points of emphasis. Using a primarily qualitative approach, Cao and Philp (2006) reported little association between WTC, as measured by the McCroskey and Richmond (trait) WTC scale, and oral communication behaviour in pair work, group work and whole class activities. While the sample size was far too small to draw firm conclusions about correlations, or to generalise about the nature of the identified influences, the study pointed to substantial variability across contexts within the same classroom (pair work, group work and whole class communication). The

implication was that the specific teaching/interactional context matters. As McCroskey and Richmond (1991) stated, even though it is the relative stability of WTC across situations which is emphasised, contextual differences must be acknowledged.

These early qualitative studies emphasised the boundaries and limitations of the trait approach, as transferred to SLA from the L1 communication literature. It became clear that, as incipient language skills are developing, there can be a dramatic difference between communicating in one's native language and a second or additional languages. The qualitative results also showed that differences in the local context interact in both predictable and unpredictable ways to influence communication behaviour. These ideas led to the development of a more dynamic approach to WTC, an approach that deemphasised traits in favour of dynamic changes as a function of the situation. Whereas McCroskey and Richmond (1991) employed the epistemology of a trait-like approach, the emerging dynamic approach involved a more process-oriented way of thinking that required a different theoretical starting point.

### **Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST)**

CDST provides a conceptual toolbox appropriate to examine the processes of WTC. While the pyramid model predated the arrival of CDST in applied linguistics by approximately a decade (CDST's emergence marked by the publication of Larsen-Freeman and Cameron's [2008] landmark volume), the underlying ideas are remarkably compatible. Although a complete review of CDST is beyond the scope of the present chapter, there are key concepts that must be highlighted to aid understanding of the processes at play.

Unlike the trait approach, CDST emphasises how systems interact to produce change in states; interactions among the relevant elements of social, physiological, cognitive and emotion systems produce the state of being willing, or unwilling, to communicate (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). WTC can thus be seen as a state of mind that emerges from the interactions among many different cognitive, emotional, linguistic and social systems (to name a few) that push a person towards and pull them away from the readiness to talk. Each of these systems is itself made up of subsystems, often with shared components or elements.

Systems-in-action can be difficult to define with the type of precision that a trait approach enjoys. The respiration system is an example of a subsystem which has its own subsystems. Breathing is a fundamental activity that sustains life through the coordinated action with other systems: the lungs interact with neurological, circulatory, skeletal-muscular and other systems of the body that involve the coordinated actions of brain, heart and muscles (including the diaphragm and rib muscles). The respiration system also contributes to other processes. While people

breathe when they talk, breathing can also be an important part of anxiety management. Deep breathing can calm an anxious learner, even as that same breath is used to talk. The elements that comprise a system are soft assembled or configured together for a purpose, and their continuous interactions produce an emerging state. Changes in any of the elements may change how they interact with each other, and which might (or might not) alter the overall emergent state, or how much WTC the person feels.

The feeling of being willing or unwilling to communicate is something that most people will recognise. The experience forms a coherent whole, more than just the sum of its parts. Emergent states such as WTC do not simply reduce to their separate parts, even if all the components could be confidently identified. WTC is not the same as extraversion or self-confidence. Nor is it the opposite of shyness or anxiety. Yet all these factors play some role in an individual's WTC. We can recognise that, underlying WTC, there are physiological, cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, language, contextual and other systems, each of which operates in its own way and can be considered a complex system in its own right. A nervous learner might be reluctant to speak but may do so anyway, as a means of learning, because they have something important to say, to accomplish a routine task, or for many other possible reasons.

In the pyramid model, the most immediate antecedents of WTC are self-confidence and the desire to say something to a specific person(s). Experiencing self-confidence is not the same as being willing to communicate; a person can be confident in their ability to talk even if there is no one they want to talk to at a particular moment. Further down the pyramid model, underlying the sense of self-confidence, is a tension between competing forces of perceived competence and anxiety about speaking. Perceived competence and anxiety each implicate a suite of underlying cognitive and emotion systems within the speaker, including prior language development. If we take anxiety, it is possible to break down the emotion system to suggest that anxiety itself results from interacting processes that link a combination of physiological processes, cognition, felt experience and behavioural tendencies (Reeve, 2015). We could continue onwards, breaking down the physiology of anxiety, to identify how sympathetic and parasympathetic phenomena coordinate physiological factors such as the respiration system, heart rate, digestion, hormones and neural activity. In turn, these physiological systems are influenced by being in a social setting, interacting with particular people who are behaving in a specific way.

The combination of all the relevant factors – including the various underlying driving and restraining forces – are constantly changing and being integrated moment by moment to produce the state identified as feeling relatively willing or unwilling to communicate. Hypothetically, even a small change in any one of these process (e.g. an embarrassing

verbal gaffe) can create a cascading effect that quickly reconfigures the system from a state of being willing, to being unwilling to communicate. In contrast, even a large verbal gaffe might produce no discernible effect on the WTC system if, for example, it was followed by an appropriate repair, such as an understanding smile or shared laugh.

The emergent state of WTC continuously results from the simultaneous configuring of numerous processes. However, for at least two reasons, it is not entirely predictable. First, an interaction suggests that the effect of one factor on WTC changes depending on the levels of one or more other factors or parameters. However, in practice, identifying all the relevant factors is difficult (if not impossible). Second, even if all the factors could be identified, and continuously measured with sufficient precision to calculate the results of an interaction, the nature of how they combine might be unknown. Are the factors combined in a way that is additive, multiplicative, exponential or in some other sense? In Japan, a teacher's exaggerated honorific bow to his student could be taken as an embarrassing cultural transgression, or, within a particular classroom, as an enjoyable insider's joke (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016).

One of the tenets of CDST is that complex systems are open to unanticipated influences, indicating that it is not possible to develop a comprehensive list of *all* the factors that could potentially affect WTC. Each individual speaker brings unique lifetime experiences to a situation (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020). Even if a study could identify all the relevant processes – or even a handful of the most relevant processes operating simultaneously – tracking and accurately measuring changes over even a short timespan seems impossible. Moreover, even if we could specify an equation that can mathematically describe the relationship among factors affecting WTC, there is no guarantee that the relationship itself is invariant across situations (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2021). Due to idiosyncratic interactions that are based on each individual's unique set of experiences, the effects of changes in the underlying systems can be difficult to predict in advance.

Yet the processes underlying WTC are not *entirely* random, and we can assume that regular patterns or signature dynamics *can* be identified as the system self-organises. Given the continuous processes that produce WTC, each state emerges in part out of the previous state in a constantly flowing stream. In this sense, the system will show regularities. Systems have tendencies that mean that they can settle into regular patterns known as attractor states. The name 'attractor' might seem to suggest that the states are desirable. However, this is not the case; a brother and sister who 'fight like a cat and dog' have a relationship that may have settled into a regular, but unpleasant attractor state. Thus, the defining feature of attractors is their regularity, not their pleasantness. There can be multiple attractor states to which systems are drawn and are likely to remain for a period of time. However, below the surface, even within a

relatively settled system, change is taking place constantly as time passes. This is one reason why systems will move out of attractor states. Broadly speaking, language development can be conceptualised as a state space of attractors, where a high degree of variability or instability might be signalling a shift to a new state.

## Timescales

Change in WTC may occur gradually over time, or it might reflect a sudden and dramatic shift. A phase shift or threshold effect involves moving between qualitatively different attractor states, as when levels of WTC reliably shift. A shift in WTC can happen quickly and unconsciously, as well as being a very deliberate, thoughtful process (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2020). Some learners transition into speaking without much prior consideration; they seem to jump spontaneously into almost any available conversation. Equally, a different pattern of phase shifts can cause an unwilling communicator – who one day decides that her silence is holding her back from learning a new language – to enact a deliberate plan to talk more often (despite restraining forces such as anxiety, or fear of embarrassment). Many other patterns of shifting among attractor states are possible over varying timescales.

Timescales are critically important in CDST. If we look at the trait-level research on WTC, the timescale is long. However, the CDST approach emphasises that WTC, and its antecedents, can change quickly over a very short time (moment by moment), even on a per-second timescale (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). The dynamics underlying WTC can be seen operating in brief narratives. In the following excerpt (from MacIntyre, 2020), a young French immersion student early in her second language development was visiting a craft show with her mother. A French-speaking friend of the mother approached them to say hello. Although this was an opportunity to use French outside the classroom, the young learner hesitated; she appeared to be conflicted about speaking French:

I was most unwilling to speak French when I was at a craft show with my mom and she met someone who spoke French. Mom introduced me to her friend, and vice versa. I felt like saying hello in French, willing, but I felt I would make a mistake. I don't feel comfortable talking with strangers, unwilling. And I would though if I had another opportunity. (MacIntyre, 2020: 117)

Taken from a learner diary, the above extract describes unwillingness to communicate, and implicates at least two timescales. The young learner was on a long-term track towards becoming proficient in French. However, in the moment at the craft show, she was conflicted, wanting

to speak but choosing not to do so. In this brief narrative she mentions discomfort in the presence of strangers and a fear of making mistakes, both of which can be tied to several of the processes underlying WTC (including personality, interpersonal motivation, situational constraints, anxiety-arousal and her level of language skill). Discomfort with strangers in this specific social situation possibly implicates the relative age difference; the student was only 12 years old, while her potential interlocutor was an adult. There may also be some level of shyness in her personality. The fear of making a mistake can be tied to experiencing high state anxiety and low perceived competence (which might be based on the learner being in the first year of the French immersion programme at school, and the adult speaker's perceived higher competence in French). As the young learner suggested, if those same interacting forces, pulling in different directions, came together during another opportunity, a different communicative result might well occur.

The study from which this example is drawn included 300 diary entries (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2011). Initially, the goal was to document and to differentiate the types of situations in which learners feel willing to communicate from those in which they feel unwilling. However, in the diary entries, there was much overlap between the descriptions of situations leading to willingness and unwillingness. The differences were subtle, and a reliable identification of driving and restraining forces proved difficult. Rather, the fit between the person and the situation, established in the moment, was seen as determinant.

The moment of decision to communicate can be likened to a 'crossing of the Rubicon', in which a learner essentially says, 'Yes, I'm willing to jump into conversation' (Dörnyei, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007). The idea of 'crossing the Rubicon' reflects a feeling that one is about to enter an area of uncertainty – possibly even danger – when initiating TL communication. Once spoken, words are irrevocable; once initiated, the start of a conversation in the TL cannot be undone. This is the dilemma of trying to use language even as one is learning it. Being willing to cross the metaphorical communication Rubicon integrates approach and avoidance processes, each of which is fluctuating as time unfolds.

When an opportunity to communicate arrives, the decision to communicate is both indicative of one's experience as a learner and may help determine the pathway for future success:

Authentic communication in a L2 can be seen as the result of a complex system of interrelated variables. We treat communication behaviour in a broad sense, which includes such activities as speaking up in class, reading L2 newspapers, watching L2 television, or utilizing a L2 on the job. Often, language teachers do not have the capacity to create this array of opportunities for L2 communication. We would argue that the ultimate goal of the learning process should be to engender in language

students the willingness to seek out communication opportunities and the willingness actually to communicate in them. That is, a proper objective for L2 education is to create WTC. A program that fails to produce students who are willing to use the language is simply a failed program. (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998: 547)

### Changes Over the Shortest Timescales: The Idiodynamic Research

Theorists have described WTC as permeating every facet of life (Richmond & Roach, 1992). The trait approach adopted from native language communication does not work on a timescale that allows the study of interacting factors that occur moment by moment. The dynamics of change at the individual level requires a novel approach, with new research methods developed to examine in detail what is happening within persons. As noted above, timescales are critically important to this work. To address this need, MacIntyre (2012) developed the *idiodynamic* method. In this term, ‘idio’ implies a focus on the individual, while ‘dynamic’ connotes a focus on fluctuations. The method is designed to examine communication events in which WTC fluctuates very quickly, such as an interview or during an L2 conversation. Immediately after the communication event, which is video recorded, the research participant watches the recording, using specially designed software that allows them to make ratings continuously, using up and down arrows on the computer keyboard. After watching and rating the video, the participant is invited to examine reasons for fluctuations in WTC ratings in an immediately subsequent interview. The first such study was conducted by MacIntyre and Legatto (2011). Looking back on this study, MacIntyre (2020) noted an especially interesting instance of a rapid change in WTC:

Mabel was trying to figure out how to say the number 80 in French. She could not remember it; she knew it was a compound word construction, but she couldn’t retrieve the vocabulary item. The research assistant running the experiment asked if she wanted to be told the troublesome number, but Mabel declined. She went on for a relatively long time struggling to try to remember ‘80’. Eventually she gave up and said to the research assistant, ‘You’re going to tell me this after the experiment’s over’. She struggled in a way that no other student did in that particular study, and in a way probably few students would have endured. What was unusual about Mabel? Was she exceptionally stubborn, highly determined, frustrated, or embarrassed? What was going on at that moment during which she would not give up? Meta-cognitively she was aware that she knew the correct word, but the vocabulary retrieval process was disrupted. In her interview, she said she knows her numbers, but after 70 she couldn’t think about 80 or 90, and her WTC dropped. (MacIntyre, 2020: 122)

Here, Mabel, the research participant, could not articulate the exact reason, or combination of reasons, for her behaviour in this situation. This, MacIntyre surmises, was partly because some of the processes operate below conscious awareness, and partly because other relevant influences come and go rapidly – as fleeting thoughts or reactions – or what Seymour Epstein has called ‘vibes’, a topic which we return to in Part 4 of the book.

The idiodynamic method uses a combination of ratings (quantitative data) and interviews (qualitative data) to examine how and why WTC fluctuates in real time. While the numerical ratings allow researchers to examine how the relationship between WTC and other factors changes over a short time, the interview process seeks explanations for change. A recent study showed that WTC is sometimes strongly negatively related to anxiety, as would be expected based on the trait literature reviewed before. However, the same study shows that, within the same learners, WTC can also have a strong positive relationship with anxiety, when both are increasing together. At other times, WTC is not correlated with anxiety, as the relative strength of other influences takes priority (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2022). Further, idiodynamic data shows that learners and observers can see things differently. Gregersen *et al.* (2017) found that self-ratings can diverge from ratings made by teachers and peers, in part because only the learner knows their own internal cues and thoughts (reactions that are not transparent to observers). However, at times an observer (a teacher or a peer) might see something that even the learner/speaker is not aware of, cannot explain, or does not notice. Gregersen and MacIntyre (2017) argue that idiodynamics can be used as a self-reflective technique to examine the factors that influence communication, to better understand oneself as a learner, or indeed as a teacher. For these reasons – and many more – it is important to examine WTC processes within the individual.

### **Dynamics Over Longer Timescales**

While idiodynamic research has yielded unique insights into the moment-to-moment fluctuations in pyramid model variables that impact on a language learner’s willingness to communicate over the shortest timescales, less is known about changes in WTC over longer timescales, and the combinations of factors that precipitate change. This is not confined to the L2 paradigm. A similar state of affairs exists in communication science, where little is known about longer-term changes in L1 WTC. As Hodis *et al.* (2010) make clear, although (L1) WTC research can be traced back to the late 1980s (McCroskey, 1986; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987), there is not yet a full description of the developmental processes that underlie changes in WTC over time. Largely, this is because research has made almost exclusive use of cross-sectional

designs, and has tested networks of relationships that link WTC with its predictors and correlates at single points in time. In consequence, it has failed (so far) to identify ‘fundamental differences existing between static and dynamic influences of predictors’ (Hodis *et al.*, 2010: 251).

Together, the strides made in conceptualising and investigating WTC across shorter timescales (MacIntyre, 2020), but the lack of corresponding work investigating WTC dynamics over longer time windows, provide the impetus for the research that we will report on. Recognising further that, in the early stages of the language learning process, WTC develops over a timescale that is best measured in weeks and months, that communication behaviour needs to be investigated in the context of community-based speech events (as a means of complementing work in labs and classrooms), and that in a globalised world we need to know more about the dynamically shifting patterns of WTC in situations where languages other than a TL can be used for communication, our research seeks to understand the development of WTC over a longer timescale, and in a multilingual context. In the next section of the book, we set out the research objectives and describe the project’s methodology.

## **Part 2**

# **The Research Project**



# 3 Language Choice and Willingness to Communicate in a Swedish Context

In this chapter we begin by sketching the background to the project and setting out the project's aims. We then report on findings from previous research examining the influence of English on the communication practices of adult learners of Swedish (Henry, 2016a, 2016b). Thereafter, we present two companion studies to the current project which focused on the dynamics of growth and loss for Swedish and English willingness to communicate (WTC) (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b).

## Background

Integrating into a new society is a challenging endeavour. Because language skills are the key to entry into the labour market, developing proficiency in a host-country language is of crucial importance (Lundborg, 2013). In Sweden, English provides an effective communication option in nearly all situations in everyday life. For immigrants who arrive in Sweden with prior knowledge of the English language, English facilitates social interaction and is a valued asset in communication with state agency representatives (Bolton & Meirkord, 2013). However, after an initial orientation period, continuing to communicate in English can present problems for adults who hope to develop proficiency in Swedish; interaction in a target language (TL) is not only the desired outcome of learning, but also the *means* through which language is acquired (Gрегersen & MacIntyre, 2014; van Lier, 1996). Simply put, whenever an opportunity for TL communication arises, the individual is faced with a choice: 'Should I try and speak Swedish, or should I play safe and stick to English?' Choices have significance beyond a particular communication event. When English is chosen, an opportunity to develop skills in Swedish is lost. Over time, the accumulating effects of preferring to communicate in English in social interactions has the potential to delay, or even to prevent, the acquisition of functional Swedish (Henry, 2016a).

Ironically, the language skills most at risk when a person chooses to communicate in English are those that can be of the greatest importance.

Research from Canada shows that it is the skills gained in informal social interaction that are most important for successful integration (Derwing & Munro, 2013). In fact, as Derwing and Munro (2013: 180) have observed, language skills gained solely from educational programmes are generally ‘insufficient to ensure full integration’. Rather, it is the ‘soft’ language skills of comprehensibility (listeners’ perceived difficulty of understanding), fluency (listeners’ perceptions of the flow of the speaker’s language output) and accent (the perceived degree of difference from the local language variety) that are crucial in determining how well, and how quickly, migrants are able to establish themselves in society (Derwing *et al.*, 2014).

Since the successful acquisition of fluency and comprehensibility takes place outside formal education, choosing to communicate in English rather than Swedish is a decision of some importance. As in other countries of destination where social structures result in high levels of segregation, in Sweden adult migrants can find that there are few opportunities to interact with speakers of Swedish (an issue which we will return to in Chapter 12). With opportunities for developing the skills of fluency and comprehensibility limited by the social effects of segregation, willingness to communicate in the target language and the seeking out of communication opportunities to practise TL skills can have far-reaching consequences, not only for language development, but also for possibilities to become established in society through the labour market.

## Project Aims

In the second half of the 20th century, Sweden transformed from a largely monolingual, monocultural society to one where nearly a fifth of the population was born abroad (Statistics Sweden, 2020), and where some 200 languages are currently spoken (Institute for Language and Folklore, 2020). In this context, English has an important function as a contact language (a language used by people who do not share a common native language or who may have different cultural frames of reference; Canagarajah, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2005). While it is proclaimed in the Language Act that ‘Swedish is the main language in Sweden’ and ‘the common language in society that everyone has access to and that can be used in all sectors of society’ (Swedish Government, 2009), in the transactions of everyday life English provides a fully functional communication option. Even if in political discourse Swedish is positioned as ‘the springboard into society’, with failure to learn Swedish being ‘disastrous for both society and the individual’ (Björklund *et al.*, 2013), it remains the case that English provides a means by which people can function adequately in many domains of life. It is against this background, and with the aim of exploring willingness to communicate in community contexts where the language learner is faced with choices that extend beyond

‘whether or not to communicate’, and additionally include the language in which communication should be initiated, that we applied for funding from the Swedish Research Council. In support of the application, we drew on findings from two studies investigating the communication choices of adult migrants who had arrived in Sweden with language repertoires that included English (Henry, 2016a, 2016b).

### **Researching Adult Language Learners’ Communication Choices**

With a participant group of 14 adult learners of Swedish who were speakers of English, Henry (2016a, 2016b) carried out interview-based research investigating communication experiences in community contexts. The participants were enrolled on language programmes for adult migrants with post upper-secondary education, and had intermediate level skills in Swedish (CEFR B1-level). The purpose of these programmes was that students should be able to quickly develop the language skills needed to establish themselves on the labour market, or to enrol on programmes of higher education. Criteria for participation in the research were: (i) being in Sweden for less than two years, (ii) having self-assessed communicative competence in English, and (iii) not being a speaker of English from birth. Aged between 23 and 59, the participants’ professional experience spanned from high-prestige professions, such as medicine and law, to media production and technology development. Two semi-structured interviews were carried out with each participant. Questions focused on the challenges of learning Swedish, opportunities to speak Swedish beyond the classroom, and whether knowledge of other languages facilitated or hindered the learning process and communication with speakers of Swedish.

### **Investigating the affordances of English**

In the first study (Henry, 2016a), communicative and learning affordances associated with English were investigated. The purpose was (i) to create an inventory of enabling and constraining affordances associated with English in relation to social interaction and the learning and acquisition of Swedish, and (ii) to consider the implications that affordances could have for language development. Findings revealed affordances associated with English – both enablements and constraints – in four domains: a social domain (affordances in everyday interactions), a material domain (affordances in digital media), a classroom domain (affordances associated with formal learning environments) and a cognitive domain (affordances associated with language processing and processes of learning). The affordances associated with English were numerous and complexly interrelated. Generally, participants recognised and appreciated the learning and communication benefits associated with knowing English. However, it also appeared that English could have a longer-term

constraining effect on the acquisition of Swedish. Specifically, English was suggested to delay the point in time when a participant felt comfortable speaking Swedish, and the point when they felt prepared to communicate in Swedish.

It further emerged that perceptions of English as being a facilitator of, or hindrance to communication and learning, could differ between situations. The ways in which a person attunes to an affordance does not take place in a decontextualised or objective manner. Rather, an affordance becomes such because of the person's ability to recognise and react to a particular feature of the environment at a particular point in time (Greeno, 1998). In the research it became clear that the ways in which a learning or communication affordance associated with English was perceived by a participant could differ as a consequence of the person's motivational and affective state. That is, in combination with trait personality characteristics, the dynamical interaction of factors such as anxiety, motivation, perceptions of competence and willingness to communicate, all seemed likely to impact on whether English was viewed as an asset or a barrier in developing skills in Swedish.

To gain further understanding of these results, and how enabling and constraining influences associated with English could differ not just between people, but also between situations, Grosjean's (1998, 2001) theory of language mode offered a valuable lens. In language mode theory, a bilingual's languages are conceptualised as being cognitively active to varying degrees. A continuum exists where, at one end, the individual can be in a complete or almost complete monolingual mode. However, when interacting with a bilingual interlocutor who shares two (or more) of the person's languages, and in contexts where language mixing might take place, a person can be in complete or almost complete bilingual mode. For the participants in this study – individuals who, in addition to English, had also developed competence in Swedish – responses in the interviews indicated that they could often find themselves in bilingual mode in social interactions. That is, they were prepared to switch languages if they felt that the conditions of the situation, the accommodations of the interlocutor, and their current affective state (confident/not confident) made this possible.

Although the study was carried out with a limited sample of purposefully selected participants who were at a particular stage in their learning, it would appear that a person who is involved in acquiring a TL in a context where English provides affordances for communication and learning is likely to be aware of these alternately enabling and constraining influences. Over time, patterns of attuning to affordances in particular ways can arise. These patterns are likely to influence willingness to communicate in the TL. For people who have a tendency to play safe in social interaction and to communicate in English, the development of Swedish WTC (and by extension, TL development) can be hindered. Thus, while

English can be an *enabling affordance* in communication, it can be a *constraining affordance* in relation to TL development. WTC influences language development, and a pattern of preferring to communicate in English, or of readily shifting to English during a communication event, can have negative consequences for the development of important TL skills (Derwing *et al.*, 2014).

### Differing experiences of English as a resource

In the second study, focus was directed to specific situations where communication choices arose, and, in these communication events, how participants experienced the sense of making choices between languages (Henry, 2016b). To engage with the participants' stories and their reflections on communication experiences, theories of positioning (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), performativity (Pennycook, 2010) and the indexicality of language resources (Blommaert, 2010) were used. These perspectives enabled understanding of how the deployment of language resources could be understood as situated in social systems, and as flexibly negotiated in relation to structural conditions.

The study revealed how, as a communicative resource, the value of English could differ depending on the speaker's background. Choices about communicating in English or in Swedish were not simply questions that involved assessments of communicative competence; they additionally involved processes of positioning, and the performance of identities. It became clear from recounted experiences of communication events that spoken English could be differently valued, and that the 'value' attaching to a particular type of English depended not only on the speaker's accent, but also on their educational background, ethnicity and integration aspirations. As a result, participants' perceptions of having opportunities to use English in the facilitation of communication could differ dramatically. For participants with a high-quality university education, who sought professional work, and who could express themselves with sophistication, English could constitute a highly valuable resource and an almost universally viable communication option. For others, however, English could have a different value. Even though, in terms of communicative efficiency, English might provide a superior option to Swedish, communicating in English was perceived to have potentially negative consequences in relation to ways in which the participant experienced being positioned by an interlocutor.

As in other studies (e.g. Norton, 2000, 2013; Yates, 2011), participants described how, beyond interactions in the classroom and in immediate family relations (for those with a TL-speaking partner), opportunities to communicate with speakers of Swedish were limited. Often, the only opportunities for extended interaction took place in the context of meetings in public agencies, such as the offices of employment

or social security services. In these often high-stakes encounters, choices about whether to speak in English or in Swedish extended beyond pragmatic decisions concerning communicative efficiency. For participants lacking favoured backgrounds and without high-prestige aspirations – for example, to continue in postgraduate education – an interview at the office of a government or municipal agency involved the need to position themselves in ways that could reduce the risk of Othering, and which could guard against prejudicial treatment. An appointment with an employment counsellor, or a social welfare interview, could constitute a context where it was necessary for a participant to position themselves in a positive way, and to ‘enact’ a favourable identity (for example, a ‘citizen in-the-making’ who is employable through fluency in the register of labour, or a ‘good migrant’ who has understood that proficiency in Swedish provides the key to integration).

However, for participants whose English had a higher value, and who had a desirable educational background and aspirations, communicating in English was not experienced as posing a threat. Rather, communicating in English could involve a form of identity protection. In Norton’s (2000/2013) study of migrant women in Canada, the participants with academic backgrounds were often uncomfortable speaking English, especially with native speakers, since doing so meant that they became positioned as immigrants. As one of Norton’s participants explained, ‘some Canadians are fed up with people who are not able to communicate well in English’ (Norton, 2013: 92).

In the context in which Henry’s (2016b) study was carried out, the participants with highly educated backgrounds described a similar feeling, experiencing that it felt better to speak in English (rather than Swedish), and that by communicating in English they could project a positive identity. As one participant explained:

English always helps me, I think. Because still now I can say ‘if I don’t feel myself to explain in Swedish’, err, there are many places where they don’t have the time to listen to our Swedish, like I’m not perfect, so it’s better to direct talk in English so the other authorities they also become glad, and I think they talk more nicely when you speak English. Yes, I think some people they appreciate if you can, they appreciate if you speak English, than you speak broken Swedish.

(Henry, 2016b: 452)

The findings of these studies (Henry, 2016a, 2016b) suggest that for adult language learners with English in their repertoires, opportunities to develop skills in Swedish are influenced by evaluations of the consequences attaching to choices about communicating in English or in Swedish. Given that hardly any research has been carried out into adult language learners’ communication choices in contexts where English

functions as a lingua franca or a contact language, these studies provide a useful backdrop against which WTC can be explored in a multilingual setting, and how it can be researched using contextually sensitive and dynamically focused longitudinal designs.

### **Exploring WTC Dynamics Using an Intensive, Individual-Level, Mixed Methods Approach**

Continuing this line of work, and during a period when it was anticipated that shifts in WTC propensities might be observed, we carried out two studies which examined the probabilities of initiating communication in Swedish and in English (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b). Data in these studies was generated by six adult language learners of Swedish whose language repertoires included English. At the start of the period of investigation, participants commonly used English in communication events.

In these studies, the aim was to investigate changes in communication behaviour at a point when functional skills in Swedish might first begin to emerge, and when confidence to communicate in Swedish (rather than English) might first develop. To carry out these investigations, it was necessary to follow a group of participants during this (potentially) transitional stage. We decided to work with a group of participants who had just begun a fast-track programme for migrants with higher education and/or professional backgrounds, and who were motivated to learn Swedish and wanted to progress quickly with their studies. For many of the students, enrolment on the programme was combined with studies on regular programmes of language education offered to adult language learners. These programmes, which are described later in the chapter, provide language education at basic and intermediate levels. Among the group we followed, students were also enrolled on Swedish for Immigrants courses (SFI C and D), or Swedish as a Second Language basic and advanced courses (SAS Basic-level, and SAS 1–3). The criteria for inclusion in the research were that the person: (i) had not been living in Sweden for more than 18 months, (ii) possessed functional communication skills in English at CEFR-B1 or above and (iii) was not a native speaker.

Because we were interested in studying evolutionary patterns for WTC for both English and Swedish, and because we wanted to examine these patterns at the *developmental timescale* – that is, the rate at which growth and loss in English WTC and Swedish WTC might be expected to take place – data was collected on a fortnightly basis. Using an online questionnaire, participants were invited to record their WTC for Swedish and for English for as long as they felt it was meaningful to do so, and up to a maximum period of 12 months.

To measure the participants' communication orientations, we used the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) scale (McCroskey, 1992, 1997). The WTC scale contains 20 items. While 12 items describe communicating with friends, acquaintances and strangers (in dyads, small groups,

large groups and in public), eight items describe communication with specific communication partners. Two mirror-imaged scales were used: one to measure WTC for English (EWTC) and the other to measure WTC for Swedish (SWTC). The items on these scales describe situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate; for example, ‘*when talking in a small group of acquaintances*’. Focused on probabilities, the response scales invite participants to indicate the percentage of times that they would choose to communicate in each situation (0 = never, to 100 = always).

In addition to the WTC scales, the questionnaire also contained an open-ended item. Here, participants were invited to describe situations during the two preceding weeks when they had experienced the sense of having made a choice about communicating in English or Swedish. We monitored the responses to these open-ended questions and, when a participant described an event which seemed to shed light on a possible change in communication-initiation behaviours, we arranged an interview. In addition – and particularly for participants who did not often provide event descriptions – we conducted interviews at strategically spaced points. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the nature and possible sources of observed changes in WTC.

### The developmental dynamics of Swedish and English WTC

In the first study (Henry *et al.*, 2021a), we were interested in investigating processes of *intra-individual development*. Specifically, we wanted to look at the shape of developmental patterns associated with English WTC and Swedish WTC. Over a period of months, we wanted to identify changes in the total level of WTC, and in relative levels of WTC for each language. For these objectives, we analysed the data using change point analysis (CPA) and moving window of correlation analysis.

CPA is a method appropriate for studying dynamics in contexts of language development (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2017; Taylor, 2000). CPA enables the analysis of changes in time series data where parametric assumptions cannot be made. CPA identifies points or ‘thresholds’ along a distribution of values on either side of which characteristics can vary. Importantly, CPA makes it possible to identify both stable states, and changes from one state of relative stability to another (Steenbeek *et al.*, 2012).

A moving window of correlation analysis is a technique which can be used to describe how a relationship between two variables changes over time, the aim being ‘to make the interaction between the variables more visible’ (Verspoor *et al.*, 2011: 95). Using this method, correlations are computed for pairs of values, the size of the ‘moving window’ being established at an arbitrary length. By examining the values of the correlations that are produced as the window moves, it is possible to determine whether the relationship between the variables is stable, if it changes, and if so, by how much the relationship differs over time.

Together, the change point and moving window correlation analyses revealed interrelated changes in propensities for choosing to communicate in English in relation to choosing to communicate in Swedish, and differing patterns of dynamic stability and instability. While WTC in Swedish increased and WTC in English declined for all participants, the rate of increase and the rate of decrease varied between individuals. This seemed likely to reflect a combination of individual and situational factors that uniquely affected each participant.

While we were able to observe differences in participants' overall WTC trajectories, and while significant changes in WTC propensities for initiating communication in Swedish and in English occurred at different points, and to a different extent, commonalities were also observed. We found an overall consistency in interrelated tendencies for Swedish WTC to increase, and for English WTC to decline. This pattern suggests that WTC is highly adaptive, and that it can be understood in terms of changing probabilities. As experiences change, and as linguistic knowledge develops, it appears that there may come tipping points where the 'learner' becomes a 'speaker', and where the probability of using English in everyday interactions begins to decline. Over time, a stable state may arise where, even though English can remain available for use, it is mostly 'deactivated', as Swedish becomes the language in which the person is normally most willing to communicate. In demonstrating how WTC can fluctuate week by week during a transitional stage in the development of communication skills, we were able to show how English can have an initially important function as an affordance for communication in community contexts, but how, with the passing of time, this function can become less important.

### Person–context dynamics

In our second study (Henry *et al.*, 2021b), we continued the exploration of participants' English and Swedish WTC trajectories. Here, however, we wanted to examine the things that were taking place in participants' lives around the times where the CPA had revealed an observable change in WTC. Equating a shift in observed values as an indication that WTC had moved into a new state, and that a new behavioural mode had emerged, we wanted to explore the nature and possible sources of an observed change. To do this, we adopted a person–context dynamics perspective, and used a person- and process-oriented methodology (Van der Steen *et al.*, 2012; van Geert, 2020). The aim was to investigate WTC as a changing state that unfolds within an active process, and to examine development (growth and loss) as a process in motion. From a person–context dynamics perspective, the social context is not viewed as an outside influence, but as part of a continuous person–environment loop in which the person is an adaptive agent (Van der Steen *et al.*, 2012; van Geert, 2020).

In this study, we focused on two participants, Betty and Clara (both pseudonyms). Betty was married to a Swedish citizen. She had met her husband while he was on a business trip in Southeast Asia. Clara was an asylum-seeker from a North-East African country. She had arrived in Sweden through a UNHCR programme. These participants were selected because they had generated data over the longest time period (some 12 months), because they both took part in in-depth interviews throughout the period (three with Betty, six with Clara), and because the CPA analyses revealed very different WTC trajectories. For Clara, Swedish WTC increased substantially, and for a time was higher than English WTC. For Betty, English WTC remained substantially higher than Swedish WTC. The sequencing of the observed changes also differed. While for Betty the changes in Swedish WTC and English WTC occurred in close proximity, for Clara changes in Swedish WTC and English WTC were sequential, an upwards shift in Swedish WTC preceding a downwards shift in English WTC.

For Betty, the significant positive shift in Swedish WTC and the corresponding negative shift in English WTC did not signal any major or discontinuous change. Rather, the change points drew attention to a period in her life where gradual changes in willingness to communicate were taking place. From the interview data, we could see how accumulated positive experiences of communicating in Swedish with newfound social acquaintances meant that a gradual, non-dramatic shift took place. The positive changes taking place in Betty's life had the effect of weakening her propensity to use English in social interaction and, in a similar way, strengthening the likelihood that she would initiate communication in Swedish.

For Clara, the changes identified by the CPA were dramatic. First, a large increase in Swedish WTC was observed. This was followed some months later by a decrease in English WTC. Separated in time, and of some magnitude, the observed changes indicate that during a critical period of language acquisition – in Clara's case, where functional skills in Swedish first began to develop and when her self-confidence began to grow – sudden shifts can take place in a multilingual person's communication behaviour. For Clara, the rapid, nongradual increase in her confidence and willingness to communicate in Swedish reflected the progress she was making in her learning. However, even while Clara's willingness to communicate in Swedish dramatically increased, and she found herself communicating in Swedish with increasing frequency, English maintained a strong background presence in her WTC system. Eventually, there came a time when Clara realised that the function of English had begun to change. In an interview carried out at a point in time when she had successfully completed an important course in her basic education (SAS Basic-level, see Chapter 4), and was due to start a work experience placement, she reflected on how English no longer seemed to play a

prominent role in everyday communication. She described how she now never used English when shopping, and how in meetings with staff in public agencies English was mostly a fallback option. She recalled how, a few days prior to the interview, she had told a fellow student that she felt that she was forgetting her English. This recognition prompted her to recall the words of a former teacher who had told her that English could be ‘parked’: put to one side to be called on only when needed.

The close-up examination facilitated by the person–context dynamics perspective (Van der Steen *et al.*, 2012; van Geert, 2020), and use of a mixed-methods, longitudinal, process-oriented approach, meant that we could observe WTC development as a process in motion. We were able to see how, with the passing of time, the role of English differed between the participants. While both participants had developed skills in Swedish sufficient to enable them to hold everyday conversations – including the carrying out of a research interview with a trusted person – for Betty, English remained the default language for communication in the types of situations made salient in the WTC questionnaire. For Clara, however, Swedish had approached a point where it had become the more generally used language in communication situations. While WTC in Swedish was generally greater towards the end of the period, English remained a background presence and provided an important communication resource in demanding interactions.

### **Studying Growth and Loss in Willingness to Communicate as a Process in Motion**

The studies described in this chapter show how, in a multilingual setting, a contact language can have enabling and constraining effects on TL communication and development (Henry, 2016a, 2016b). They revealed how, in migration contexts, willingness to communicate in a target language and willingness to communicate in a contact language can be interrelated, and how process trajectories are likely to be interconnected. They also show how changes in WTC can be gradual or nongradual, and how a significant change in TL WTC or in contact language WTC can be related to changes taking place in a language learner’s life (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b). The research reported on in subsequent chapters represents the next stage in this programme of work. Using a person-focused qualitative longitudinal design (Neale, 2020, 2021), and drawing on participant-generated data in which interactions in communication events were described in close proximity to an event’s occurrence, the aim was to study WTC as a process in motion, and to provide insights into process dynamics.

# 4 The Project Design and the Research Process

In this chapter we present the design of the project and describe the research process. First, we recap on the purpose of the research. Next, we sketch out the study's background. Here we offer an overview of the provision of language education for adult migrants in Sweden. We then describe the site at which the project was carried out, how this education provider was selected and the process of recruiting the research participants. Thereafter, we describe the research methodology and the adoption of a qualitative longitudinal (QL) approach (Neale, 2012, 2017, 2020, 2021). After presenting the tenets of QL research, we explain how it informed the study's design, and how QL principles were applied when generating and analysing the data.

## **Purpose and Design: Studying WTC Development as a Process in Motion**

As we explained in the preceding chapter, in many non-Anglophone countries English can function as a contact language in daily interactions. For recently arrived migrants who have yet to develop skills in Swedish, English can facilitate social interaction. While English can be a valuable asset, use of English in communication with target language (TL) speakers can have negative consequences, as opportunities to communicate in Swedish can be lost. Over time, this can act as a constraint on TL development (Henry, 2016a). Against this background, the purpose of the research was to investigate willingness to communicate (WTC) in a community context where a language learner can be faced with choices that extend beyond whether to communicate with a particular person, in a particular situation, and at a particular time (as conceptualised in the WTC definition, MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). In settings where communication in a contact language or a lingua franca is possible, choices can additionally extend to the language in which communication might be initiated.

Similar to the longitudinal work described in the previous chapter (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b), we wanted to investigate the communication behaviour of adults engaged in the process of developing skills in

Swedish. With focus trained on a period when functional skills in Swedish might first be expected to develop, the aim was to trace WTC development for specific individuals over time. Recognising that WTC arises in communication events, and that patterns of growth and loss develop situation by situation, we wanted to examine experiences of English and Swedish WTC in proximity to events where choices about communication were actualised, and where participants might have found themselves asking the question, ‘should I begin to communicate in English, or should I try to start in Swedish?’

For these reasons, we needed a design that would enable us to study the evolutionary patterns of individual learners – the enhancement and attenuation of WTC – as these processes were taking place. Following Duff (2019: 17), who has called for individual-focused studies in multilingual and transnational contexts, and for ‘longitudinal, case-based research drawing on different source (sub-)disciplines that can be triangulated in integrated and innovative ways’, we wanted to trace and understand WTC development in relation to changing experiences of communication during a prespecified time window. This required use of a qualitative methodology where time formed the explicit focus of analytical engagement (rather than an abstraction denoting a project’s duration), and where a focal process (WTC growth and loss) could be situated within the wider dimension of time.

QL research (Neale, 2007, 2012, 2020, 2021) provides these opportunities. With a focus on developmental processes, QL methodologies seek to generate accounts of change and understandings of the processes of growth and loss within a stream of time. In a QL study, time is the central consideration at all stages of the research process; the past and the future are always relevant in attempts to understand the present. In QL research, the shadow of time will be cast from both directions simultaneously. A QL study will seek to show ‘how experiences accumulate over time, and how they might affect later orientations and actions’ (the shadow of the past), and ‘how an individual’s anticipation of the future, including expectations, specific time horizons and planning perspectives shape current actions and decision-making’ (the shadow of the future) (Hollstein, 2021: 9).

## QL Research

In qualitative paradigms, longitudinal research has a long tradition (e.g. Chamberlayne *et al.*, 2000; Kemper & Royce, 2002; Saldaña, 2003). In second language acquisition (SLA), longitudinal case studies have played an important role in shaping understandings of developmental phenomena (Duff, 2008). However, it is only within the last 20 years that distinctive methodologies have been developed to guide the design of studies where qualitative data is generated and analysed sequentially during

a period of interest (Neale, 2012; Neale & Flowerdew, 2003), and more recently still that QL research has been delineated and systematised into a robust collection of strategies that can direct empirical research (Neale, 2020, 2021; see also Hollstein, 2021; Nevedal *et al.*, 2019).

Drawing on an expanding body of empirical work where QL techniques have been applied across a range of disciplines, including sociology, education, health science and migration studies, Neale (2020, 2021) has developed a comprehensive set of QL methods. The central concern in Neale's methodological work – and the hallmark of a QL study – is a focus on time. In QL research, temporal perspectives pervade the research process. As Neale (2020: 45) explains, in a QL study, 'every dimension of the process is temporally fashioned and informed, from the construction of research questions and the longitudinal frame for a study, to issues of sampling, ethics, data generation and analysis'.

In most QL projects, a carefully chosen window of time will be singled out for focus. A time window can vary from a few weeks, several months and upwards to a period of years. Since research designs display variation in relation to the time window, there will also be variation in relation to the tempo at which data generation takes place. In a QL study, the scope of inquiry and period of data generation can range from an intense phase of focused engagement – where data might be generated intensively over a period of weeks in a 'condensed' form of QL (as described by Nevedal *et al.*, 2019) – to a longer-term engagement where data is collected in strategically spaced waves. As Neale (2020) has explained:

At one extreme, people may be traced *intensively* through particular transitions via frequent or continuous visits to the field. At its most intensive, QL research takes the form of ethnographic immersion. This affords a greater depth of engagement, yielding insights into the rhythms, tenor and synchronicities of daily lives, and the minutiae of change. In these contexts, rather than repeated *waves* of data generation, which imply periodicity, the process is more akin to a *stream* or *flow* of data and insights, which are gathered in 'drops or ripples'. (Neale, 2020: 52, emphasis in the original)

In intensive forms of QL, insights accumulate diachronically and are bound up within the flow of time. In such studies, objectives are not so much about generating understandings of a phenomenon *per se*, but are rather directed at understanding the process characteristics of development that becomes observable as time unfolds.

### Periods of transition

Intensive designs have particular value when the focus of QL research is on change that takes place during a period of *transition*. Indeed, in a

QL study, the time window will often be determined in relation to the anticipated trajectory of the developmental phenomenon. For example, in a QL study the focal transition might be the ‘before’ and ‘after’ periods connected to a hospital admission, the experience of becoming a parent or the processes of being made redundant. Since the objective is to track individuals through a disjunctive experience that involves a passage from one circumstance or status to another, the study’s design will need to be synchronised with the duration of the transition.

Since transitions unfold at varying levels of intensity, a QL design needs to be sensitive to the momentum of change. As change can take place through states of continuity and stability, as well as through states of disruption and volatility, strategies for data generation need to be flexibly aligned with the changing flow of such shifts. Equally, a transitionary period will be embedded within a person’s longer-term life trajectory. Because the trajectory of a transition and the trajectory of the life course can affect each other in reciprocal ways, designs need to enable discovery of patterns of convergence and divergence (Neale, 2020).

### Person-focused inquiry; ‘Walking alongside people as their lives unfold’

Typically, QL research takes the form of small-scale studies where the experiences of a generally limited number of individuals are tracked over shorter timeframes, and where situated and biographical data is generated (Neale, 2020, 2021). As a person-focused form of longitudinal enquiry, QL research can be likened to the process of ‘walking alongside people as their lives unfold’ (Neale, 2020: 10; see also Neale & Flowerdew, 2003). With an emphasis on micro-level analyses, and with the aim of building theoretical understanding from the bottom up, in a QL study ‘the concern is not simply with those concrete events, changes and transitions that can be measured in precise ways’. Rather, the research interest lies in attempts to understand ‘the agency of individuals in crafting these processes, the sensibilities and moral reasoning that underpin them, the strategies that people use to make sense of the past and navigate the future, and the local cultures which give shape to these processes’ (Neale, 2020: 9).

### Three axes of comparison

Alongside the focus on time and a concern with individual cases, QL research also involves working with themes. As Neale (2021: 274) has made clear, in a QL study analysis ‘is based on an articulation of case, thematic and processual readings of a dataset’. Consequently, engagement with data will be structured along three *axes of comparison*: cases, themes and time. Analytical engagement along these axes enables multiple facets of a dataset to be discerned. It has the advantage of generating

‘holistic insights into dynamic processes, and creating a balance between breadth and depth of vision, and between short and longer-term time horizons’ (Neale, 2020: 111). Affording equal priority to cases, themes and time, QL research seeks understanding of the complex intersections between these elements. It demands an iterative form of engagement, with multiple readings of the data along the intersections of each of the three axes.

While a QL study will always traverse across cases, themes and time, there will be variation in relation to the way in which findings are structured. In this regard, much will depend on a project’s disciplinary and epistemological departure points:

Researchers will need to take into account its epistemological groundings, the research questions that drive it and the design and sampling decisions that shape it, not least, the priority accorded to breadth or depth of investigation. For example, researchers working with very small samples, or using a psycho-social lens are more likely to structure their findings around *individual cases*, within which thematic and temporal insights are embedded. (Neale, 2020: 117, emphasis added)

Even in QL studies with a larger number of participants, cases may still form the *axis of comparison* around which explication revolves. Even though progress through a period of transition is likely to differ between the individuals within a sampled group, commonalities may still be shared between cases. In such circumstances, findings might be structured around individual cases that, in the writing up of findings, are presented in groups or categories.

### Data generation and internal coherence

In QL research, ‘the selected methods can strongly affect what is identified as change or stability’ (Hollstein, 2021: 15). Because QL research has an interest in studying cases, themes and time, studies need to be designed in ways where developmental dynamics can be explored in relation to both inter- and intra-individual variability (Hollstein, 2021). To enable the experiences of different individuals (cases) to be studied as unique trajectories (time) that together can shed light on process characteristics of focal phenomena (themes), the dataset needs to possess *internal coherence* (Neale, 2020). Strategies for generating a dataset characterised by internal coherence need to be carefully worked out (Hollstein, 2021). In a QL study, the data generation strategy needs to mesh with research objectives that are focused on the exploration of change. It requires the application of tools and techniques that enable the process tracing of nonlinear development to be carried out in a structured and systematic manner. Paraphrasing Saldaña (2003), Neale (2017: 13)

has argued that there needs to be a *through-line* in the data: ‘a thread that provides a synchronic link *across* cases and themes at any one point in time, and a diachronic link *within* cases and themes through time’. To create a through-line, principled decisions need to be made in relation to the initial sampling, the time-period (which should reflect the transition in focus) and the methods used to produce the data. Rather than an eclectic range of multiple data types, QL studies seek consistency in the manner in which data is produced.

### Interviews: A means of engaging with time, over time

While QL research does not discriminate between data types, it is common that studies use a single method of data collection. As Nevedal *et al.* (2019) have pointed out, consistent use of a single data type facilitates the analysis of temporally generated data and more effectively enables systematic comparisons. Primarily, use is made of individual interviews (Nevedal *et al.*, 2019). In interviews, questions can be focused on topics of particular salience and can be consistently revisited within the flow of accumulating data. In this regard, continuity questions can play an important role. As Neale (2017: 13) has suggested, continuity questions can ‘provide the anchors for building an integrated dataset through the waves of data generation’ and can aid ‘the process of temporally-led, thematic and case-based analysis’. Most importantly, they can contribute to ensuring that an emerging dataset has a degree of integrity and an internal coherence needed for synthesis and analysis (Neale, 2020, 2021).

Thus, while it may be possible to create a through-line in any longitudinal dataset, it is often easiest to accomplish when the data constitutes a series of temporally spaced interviews carried out with individuals who make up a smaller sample. As part of a temporally ordered sequence, an interview can be constructed to zoom in on specific aspects of a complex and shifting experience. This makes it possible to trace focal *themes*, within and across *cases*, over *time*. To this end, the interview strategy should aim to generate data in a manner that enables the experiences recounted in a single interview to be *temporally* compared with those expressed in previous and subsequent interviews with the same participant (i.e. a within case approach), and *thematically* with those emerging in interviews with other participants (i.e. an across cases approach).

Because in QL studies interviews are carried out sequentially – often-times during a period that involves adjusting to changing circumstances of great personal significance – time not only provides a framework for data generation; it also shapes the nature of the data that is produced. As Neale (2017: 14) has observed, in a QL study ‘time comes into its own as a rich topic and theme of enquiry, feeding into particular lines of enquiry

and enriching the content of a dataset'. From this perspective, sequential interviewing provides a means of engaging *with* time, *over* time. Interviews can be used to explore longer-term trajectories and 'the flows of past, present and future', transitions, turning points and disjunctures, and 'the oscillations of daily living' (Neale, 2017: 14). To engage with time over time, QL advocates the use of *cartographic*, *recursive* and *participatory* interviewing techniques, and emphasises the importance of establishing an *ethnographic presence*.

### Cartographic techniques

To engage with experiences that arise in a temporal context – within, and as a function of the transition in focus – in a QL study interviewing will often involve the use of *cartographic* strategies (Neale, 2007, 2020, 2021). In a cartographically framed interview, participants map out and reflect on a process as it is experienced from certain perspectives. As Neale (2020) has explained, in a cartographic approach:

the interview moves from concrete life events and experiences to more reflective and abstract insights and interpretations. From the outset, this approach is grounded transparently in the themes of a study, which provide the focus for discussion. Yet this still gives participants space to construct their narratives in their own way. And it is likely to achieve the same depth of insight into what matters to them: how salient a particular process or experience is in shaping the course of their lives and its relative significance in relation to other influences and concerns. (Neale, 2020: 99)

Applying a cartographic approach, the aim is to conduct sequential interviews in a manner which goes beyond the thematic mapping of an extended or developing experience, and which additionally 'explores the movement of people through a landscape, giving attention to both surface details and the depths and drivers of the journey' (Neale, 2020: 99). In cartographic interviewing, the purpose is to construct a picture of the *dynamics* of a process of change. It involves a focus on the person's unfolding experiences, as well as the factors that shape the trajectory through the transition (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021). The aim of interviewing is thus to map the temporal process, and to shed light on 'where people are on their subjectively defined life map, and the nature, meaning and interior logic of the journey as it unfolds' (Neale, 2020: 100).

To map the route that a participant's journey might take, the interviewing strategy requires both structure and flexibility. While focus needs to remain trained on the process under investigation, it is important that there is an openness to experiences of a more tangential nature (and which, when they emerge, have a potential to illuminate the nonlinearity of process trajectories). As Neale (2020) has explained, interviewing

needs to be able to capture the path, the tempo, the synchronicities and the idiosyncrasies of the journey. It needs to discern whether the journey:

was straightforward (linear), circuitous, meandering or filled with zigzags or peaks and troughs; to what extent it was planned, was anticipated or is living up to expectations; the opportunities and constraints (across the micro–macro plane) that have shaped the journey so far; and any mechanisms (trigger or turning points) that have provided the impetus for new directions or for reverting back to earlier paths. (Neale, 2020: 100)

### **Recursive techniques: Moving backwards and forwards through the lens of the present**

In QL research, the timespan of a study also functions as the temporal horizon. If the temporal framing of the transition can be predefined – for example, the completion of an initial semester of university study – opportunities to traverse backwards and forwards in time within the interview are facilitated. From a current point in time, a participant can be invited to shift backwards and forwards, mapping the journey as it has unfolded so far, and how it might be expected to unfold in the future. In this way, the active employment of recursion in a QL interview provides an important strategy in illuminating how the unfolding lives of the participants ‘are not fixed at any one moment, but are constructed, reconstructed and updated through the recursive spiral of time’ (Neale, 2020: 100). As Neale has explained, a recursive approach to past, present and future can provide ‘a more nuanced and fluid way of exploring life course dynamics’, where ‘time as the medium for conducting a study begins to merge with time as a rich theme of enquiry’ (Neale, 2020: 101). In this way, recursive interviewing can cast light on the contingent nature of events and experiences, and how narratives are constantly adjusted and readjusted as time moves on (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021). As Neale (2017) has made clear, the primary value of a recursive approach is that it foregrounds the flux and contingency of human life:

Recursive interviewing involves looking both backwards and forwards in time, revisiting, re-visioning and updating a life journey at each successive interview. Participants are invited to overwrite the past (for the past is not fixed), update past understandings, and re-imagine the future through the lens of the ever-shifting present. In the process, it is possible to discern changes in subjective understandings of the journey, as well as concrete changes in circumstances and experiences, and to capture how the landscape itself is changing. (Neale, 2017: 18)

When a recursive approach is adopted, it is important that the interviewer carefully considers when it is appropriate to traverse backwards

and forwards in time. In-the-moment ethical sensitivity is needed when determining when it might be permissible to invite a participant to reflect on events and experiences described in previous interviews, and when it can be appropriate to invite mental journeying into the future. Indeed, a recursive strategy may only be appropriate in situations where trusting relationships have been established, and where there is ethical sensitivity to the manner in which a trajectory is unfolding. These are crucial considerations which we discuss further when reflecting on the ethical issues that become salient when sharing a participant's journey through a period of transition (Chapter 13). If these ethical dimensions are carefully handled, recursive interviewing can provide unique insights into a transitional experience as it unfolds, allowing the researcher to 'share with participants extracts from their earlier interview transcripts /.../ as a way of exploring just how and why they may have moved on or shifted perspective' (Neale, 2020: 102).

### Participatory techniques: the use of stories

To recap, in QL research, interviewing is conducted with the aim of achieving coherence and consistency in data generation that extends over time. While interviewing is not generally combined with other types of data generation, use can be made of participatory strategies and techniques (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021). Participatory techniques refer to data that is specifically solicited by the researcher. In QL research, participatory data is generally explored within an interview. While some forms of participatory data can be jointly constructed – for example, a descriptive and visually illustrated timeline, or graphic representations of family, friendship or other community networks – it can also be *self-generated* by a participant in a 'relatively unmediated way' (Neale, 2017: 7). Participatory data that is participant-led will often take the form of autobiographic writing. This can include diaries and forms of creative writing focused on anticipated or hoped for futures (e.g. future life essays). Creative writing has the advantage of encouraging participants 'to discuss time or change in terms of what has occurred (e.g. past experiences or interviews), what is currently occurring (e.g. present), or what may occur (e.g., future goals, expectations, or concerns)' (Nevedal *et al.*, 2019: 795).

In recognising the value that participatory data can have in exploring processes of change, QL research is closely aligned with narrative inquiry in applied linguistics (Barkhuizen, 2020; Barkhuizen *et al.*, 2014), and its aim of developing methods that can 'draw out participants' stories or histories of second language learning' (Benson, 2021b: 3). In migration contexts in particular, narrative data has been important in generating insights into processes of relocation and adaptation. As Baynham and De Fina (2016) have pointed out, many scholars:

have made narrative the central focus of their research, using it in open-ended sociolinguistic or ethnographic interviews for the purpose of generating rich and involved talk about fundamental experiences with work, language and personal relations lived by migrants and/or translocal individuals. In this sense, they can be regarded as belonging to a tradition initiated by Labov (1972) which exploits the potential of narrative as a *high-involvement* genre. (Baynham & De Fina, 2016: 35, emphasis added)

Because they offer possibilities for the contemporaneous production of data in between interviews, diaries and other narrative forms have particular value in QL research. As Neale (2020) makes clear, participant-generated data such as diaries and personal logs are temporal records that can capture the immediacy of life as it is lived:

They are constructed in the present moment and oriented to the future, documenting an unfolding life in an incremental and episodic way (Watson, 2013: 107). Given their inherent temporality, diaries constitute a powerful form of longitudinal data. They derive their value from their intimacy, their seriality and their close proximity to the events they describe (Watson, 2013). Since they are structured through time, they provide a lynchpin between past and future, following up on previous events, anticipating what is to follow, illuminating the intricacies of transitions and trajectories, changes and continuities. Capturing the processual nature of experience in this way can provide valuable continuity between waves of QL interviews, and give access to the minutiae of change that could not be gleaned in any other way. (Neale, 2020: 104)

However, while diaries and other forms of writing have undeniable value, care is needed in selecting a format suited to the study participants and their life situations. As Neale (2017, 2020) advises, when considering the use and types of self-generated data, careful thought needs to be given, first, to whether it is reasonable to expect participants to create process texts outside of the interview context and, second, to whether the challenges of the time expended, the confidence needed to engage in creative writing and the motivation to sustain such practices can mean that only certain participants can actively participate.

To address the risk that only participants with sufficient time, motivation, literacy skills and experiences of creative genres can actively engage in maintaining a diary or log, in QL studies use is made of *aural narratives*. Aural narratives are stories that participants recount about experiences they perceive as meaningful in the context of the focal phenomenon, and the unfolding period of life. As Neale (2020: 97) has suggested, ‘the idea of narration, that people will have a story to tell about their experiences through time that can be drawn out and shaped through

the research process, is central to QL interviewing'. Beyond participatory potential – i.e. enabling participants to become engaged in making sense of their own experiences – in a QL study, an aural narrative can provide a pivot around which an interview can be conducted, and can function as 'a springboard for discussion and reflection' (Neale, 2020: 108).

A particular strength of working with participant narratives in SLA research is that engagement with participants' stories 'takes the researcher into the world of the learner' (Benson, 2021: 1). When an interview is based around an aural narrative that a participant *brings with them* to an interview, interaction within the interview can be more dynamic. The telling of a story can facilitate a sharing of understandings in a manner different to when the structure and interaction patterns are more closely determined by the interviewer's objectives. Moreover, as Hollstein (2021: 11) has explained, when a participant is invited to tell a story during an interview, they can 'describe single events in an unrestricted way', with the result that the narrative can become 'less bound to the current situation and closer to past experiences of the interviewee'. When a participant comes to an interview armed with stories that they wish to tell, and when storytelling is actively encouraged by the interviewer, narrative equity is created. As the participant tells the story, and as an aural narrative unfolds, meanings are jointly constructed in an active process of telling, listening, questioning and understanding.

From a dynamic perspective, and as a means of studying processes in motion at a micro-level of analysis, methodologies that involve the examination of stories have flourished in recent years (for discussions and reviews in the context of identity development, see e.g. McLean *et al.*, 2020, and in relation to complexity and dynamic systems theories, see e.g. De Ruiter & Gmelin, 2021). As Klimstra and Schwab (2021: 284) have made clear, through 'the use of stories of specific concrete events that tend to be identity-oriented', narrative-based designs can provide a valuable methodological approach in the investigation of micro-level processes.

### An ethnographic presence: Spending time at the research site

Alongside the adoption of cartographic and recursive strategies, and the frequent use of participatory data, a fourth characteristic of interviewing in QL research involves the incorporation of aspects of ethnographic practice. Even though, in an interview-based design, ethnographic data may not have the status of a complementary data source, significant value can be gained when the researcher spends time in a research setting. With a commitment to establishing an *ethnographic presence* in sites relevant to the transition in focus, and by becoming a person who is frequently encountered in these contexts, the researcher can become part of the environment and its social practices. In this way, it is possible to develop

a more multi-faceted, enduring and trustful relationship with study participants. Neale (2017) has described these benefits in the following way:

Combining some elements of ethnography with interview-based methods is a common practice for it enhances insights and helps sustain long term relationships with participants. The longitudinal frame of a study gives ample scope for utilising both approaches. Alongside walking methodologies, for example, ‘day in the life’ tracking (Thomson, 2012), researchers may make informal visits to participants or field settings (e.g. the local pub or a support group); help out in community or service delivery settings; or attend outings or events arranged by participants or practitioners.

When the researcher becomes a familiar face in a context of practice, a framing for the interviews is created. This can facilitate the exploration of experiences, and can support the process of sense-making. (Neale, 2017: 6)

### **Interim Summary**

QL research is a methodology that enables the shifting experiences of a smaller number of participants to be investigated during a period of transition. It is a methodology that demands intensive engagement with processes, and it challenges researchers to think dynamically. In QL research, temporal perspectives inform all aspects of the undertaking: from the identification of the transition in focus, and the design of the study, to the presentation of the data and the handling of ethical issues.

Closely referencing the defining principles of QL research which we have now outlined, in the sections that follow we present the study’s design, the data generation process and the analytical procedures. We begin by providing the contextual background to the study and offer insights into the system of adult second language (L2) education in Sweden.

### **Background: Provision for Adult Language Learning in Sweden**

Swedish for Immigrants (*Svenska för invandrare*, or SFI as it is widely known), is a municipally organised programme of language education the aim of which is to provide adult migrants with the opportunity to develop ‘linguistic tools for communication and active participation in daily, societal and working life, and continuing studies’ (National Agency for Education, 2017). In Sweden, L2 education for adults dates back to the 1960s, and a time when the country first became a host nation for larger groups of migrants from beyond the Nordic region. Since then, programmes of language education have been offered under the SFI banner. In the mid-1980s, a period when Sweden first received larger numbers of non-European immigrants (for example

people fleeing from the Iran–Iraq conflict or seeking refuge from the persecution of the Chilean military dictatorship), SFI became a permanent programme placed under municipal control. Today, SFI is an integrated part of the Swedish national system of education. The syllabi for the different courses are constructed in a similar way to those of secondary and upper secondary education. As in other parts of the education system, there are national tests and materials for teachers produced by the National Agency for Education (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020; Lindberg & Sandwall, 2007).

Historically, Sweden has had a liberal immigration policy. SFI has played a key role in the integration process. As a means of addressing the educational needs of adult language learners with widely varying educational histories – and in response to criticisms of SFI as being pitched beyond the capabilities of adults lacking a formal education and protracting the learning of students with upper secondary and tertiary educations – reforms introduced in 2002 saw the creation of three separate study paths. Path One is for students with completed education at the primary level, or with no previous educational experience. Path One begins with a course providing basic literacy skills and a knowledge of the Swedish alphabet (Course A). The pace of Path One is slow. Path Two proceeds at a faster tempo, and is intended for students who have a completed education spanning between six and nine years of school. Path Two starts with a beginner-level course in Swedish (Course B).

Path Three is for students with 10 or more years of school experience. For adults with this background, but who have not developed basic-level skills in Swedish before starting SFI, it is normal to begin with Course C. This course is targeted at basic-level receptive, productive and interactive skills, the aim being that the student should be able to communicate in Swedish ‘using simple language in common situations in everyday, social, student and working life’. To gain a passing grade in the area ‘oral interaction’, the student needs to demonstrate the ability to ‘take part in simple conversation and discussion on familiar subjects by providing and seeking opinions, thoughts and information in a way that moves forward the conversation and discussion to a certain extent’ (National Agency for Education, 2017). For students who have already developed basic skills, it is possible to start directly with Course D.

While Course C can often be accomplished quickly (especially for students who are highly motivated), Course D can be more demanding, and can take longer to successfully complete. In the oral communication area of Course D, the student should be able to communicate ‘in both informal and more formal situations in everyday, social, student and working life’. To gain a passing grade in the area ‘oral interaction’, the student needs to be able to take part ‘in conversation and discussion on familiar subjects by expressing and responding to opinions using simple arguments, and providing and seeking thoughts and information in a way

that moves forward the conversation and discussion to a certain extent' (National Agency for Education, 2017).

On completion of Course D, students attain a level in Swedish equivalent to grade 6 in secondary school. For those seeking professional employment, or wanting to study in higher education, it is necessary to continue their study. Often, students will continue their education at the same institution, taking courses in Swedish as a Second Language (*Svenska som andraspråk*) at the basic level (equivalent to secondary school grade 9). Thereafter, three courses that build upon each other, and which correspond to competence at different stages of upper secondary education, are available.

Responsibility for providing courses in SFI and courses in Swedish as a Second Language lies with the local authority. Over the last 20 years, SFI has often been outsourced to private enterprise. Today, over a third of the total number of students enrolled on SFI programmes carry out their studies in institutions run on a commercial basis (Carlson & Jacobsson, 2019; Fejes & Holmquist, 2019; Martín Rojo & Del Pierco, 2019). In terms of numbers, there was a rapid growth in SFI enrolments between 2016 and 2019. In the peak year of 2016, some 150,000 students were registered on SFI-programmes. This rapid increase, and the subsequent decline in numbers after 2019, posed significant challenges for educational providers. While major teacher recruitment took place in 2016 and 2017, in 2019 this process of expansion was reversed. Government grants were cut back, and teachers were reassigned to other duties or, in some cases, made redundant (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020).

While SFI is regulated by national requirements in relation to content and goals, issues involving staffing, teacher contact time and teacher–student ratios are locally determined. For this reason, there can be significant differences in the conditions for learning and the quality of the instruction that students receive (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020; Lindberg & Sandwall, 2007). With this brief overview of the SFI system as a backdrop, we move on to describe the study's design.

## Design

With the objective of investigating changes in English and Swedish WTC during a period when communicative skills in Swedish might first be expected to develop, and with the QL metaphor of *walking alongside people as their lives unfold* (Neale, 2020, 2021; Neale & Flowerdew, 2003) as a guiding tenet, the research was designed so that WTC could be studied dynamically, and as a process in motion.

The aim was to recruit a group of participants at the beginning of a period when patterns of language use in social interactions might conceivably shift. To calibrate the design with the *developmental timescale* at which WTC growth and loss were expected to occur (Henry *et al.*,

2021a), and to capture the dynamics of stability and change (Henry *et al.*, 2021b), we developed a dual-pronged strategy: closely spaced interviews would revolve around participant-generated data in the form of stories told about communication events. Drawing on events and experiences recounted in these stories, WTC would be explored in proximity to the events in which choices involving the initiation of communication were actualised. Throughout the process, and with the aim of establishing an ethnographic presence, it was decided that one of us – Alastair – would spend extensive on-site time at the educational provider where participants would be recruited.

## The Research Process

### Recruitment

The first step in the research process involved finding a site where recruitment could take place. As mentioned previously, three criteria for participation in the study were determined. Participants should be individuals who (i) were on the brink of developing functional communication skills in Swedish, (ii) had functional communication skills in English but were not native speakers and (iii) would be willing to participate in a research project, and to interact with a researcher during a period stretching for more than six months.

To find participants meeting these criteria – and who would be at the ‘starting point’ of the transition period that we wanted to focus on – we identified SFI Path Three, Course C as the optimal site for recruitment. Unlike students who enrol on SFI Path Three but start directly with Course D, those who begin with Course C have not generally developed communication skills at a level that would enable simple social interaction. Thus, students beginning Course C at the start of the research period – and who would then progress onwards to Course D (where the aim was that students should become able to take part ‘in conversation and discussion on familiar subjects’ [National Agency for Education, 2017]) – would be suitable candidates.

Having identified Path Three, Course C as a suitable point at which to recruit participants, the next stage was to find an SFI provider willing to allow access to classes where such students might be enrolled. To this end, several institutions in the southern part of Sweden were contacted. Enquiries were made about the possibility of gaining access to a suitable group or groups of learners. When a positive response was received, discussions were held, often with a principal and the teacher(s) responsible for programme coordination. Site visits were made to two institutions. On both of these visits, meetings were held with senior teaching staff. In one case, a trial observation was also carried out. It was in this way that Pinewood College (a fictitious name) was selected as the recruitment site.

Pinewood College was located in a medium-sized provincial town. As normally the case for adult education in Sweden, Pinewood enrolled students from a catchment area that included not only the town itself, but other communities in the region. At Pinewood, teaching was provided in accordance with the nationally prescribed study paths for SFI (described earlier).

### The Path Three programme at Pinewood

At Pinewood, most students enrolling on Path Three began by taking Course C. This course was divided into a reception class (to which all new arrivals were initially assigned) and a continuation class (to which most students progressed). At the time of the project's start, the reception and continuation classes were taught by two teachers. These teachers divided their time between the two classes. Within each class, teaching was structured in a way where some lessons had a primary focus on grammar and written proficiency, while others focused on communication and developing oral skills. In both classes, the student group would change periodically. Generally, the arrival of new students to the reception class would be coordinated with the departure of students moving on to the continuation class. These departures were in turn linked to departures from the continuation class, where in most cases students progressed onwards to Course D.

While some students quickly completed Course C, for others completion took longer. Not all students who started Course C completed it. Some were disenrolled. This could be following a long period of absence, intermittent attendance, or if the student had failed to make progress after having been enrolled for more than six months. On occasion, a student might make an active decision to discontinue.

Numbers on Course C were generally in the 25–35 range, and teaching was provided in five three-hour sessions per week. In the reception class, students often spoke English when communicating with each other, and with the teacher. The teachers also made use of English when providing explanations of grammar and vocabulary. In the continuation class, English was also used as a language for communication, although to a lesser degree.

In Course D, the group was larger. At most, some 60 students were enrolled. While attendance at lessons could fluctuate, it would not be unusual for a class to contain upwards of 40 students. While in Course C the reception and continuation classes consisted of no more than 20 students, in Course D there was no subdivision into separately taught, progress-determined groups. To manage the situation, students were divided up into two groups, largely based on the time that they had first joined the Course D class. When one group had teacher-led instruction, the other group worked with an online learning package specially developed for the D course by a commercial enterprise.

In both courses, students were required to submit weekly assignments. Progression from the reception to the continuation classes (in Course C), and from Course C to Course D, was determined by a student's results on teacher-created tests. To successfully complete Course D, students took a national exam that provided eligibility for the next educational stage (Swedish as a Second Language, as previously described). For many of the students, this would involve at least one further year of full-time study at Pinewood.

### **The atmosphere and environment at Pinewood**

In addition to the SFI and Swedish as a Second Language offerings, Pinewood provided a wide range of adult education courses, many of which formed part of the matriculation requirements for tertiary education. In addition to the core subjects of Swedish, mathematics and English, courses were also offered in natural sciences. While these courses were studied by adults with varying backgrounds, a large majority had at one time been enrolled on the SFI and Swedish as a Second Language programmes. Like many similar institutions at this time, the college provided specially created programmes of upper secondary education for newly arrived young people, many of whom had come to Sweden during the refugee crisis of 2015.

With a large student population, the corridors and common spaces at Pinewood were constantly filled with students arriving at or leaving the campus, and who were coming and going between classes. Because space was in short supply, many students remained in the classrooms during break periods. Moreover, classes rarely remained intact, the revolving door policy mirroring the constant coming and going of students in the college buildings.

For many students at Pinewood, learning Swedish was a high-stakes endeavour that was carried out in sometimes less-than-optimal conditions. Even for the most committed of teachers, it was not always easy working in a crowded environment where students were grouped together in large classes, and where student groups were in constant flux. Moreover, as was common for all programmes of adult L2 education in Sweden at this time, the work of learning and teaching took place in a context where many students were living in precarious circumstances. Many possessed only a temporary residence permit and were uncertain as to whether they would be able to remain in Sweden.

### **Establishing an Ethnographic Presence: On Site at Pinewood**

As we have seen, in QL studies, the research process is often described as a journey. As a part of this journey, the selection of participants, requires that researchers 'decide how to draw a baseline sample, how to follow up the baseline and whether to recruit new sub-samples at a later date' (Neale,

2020: 59). In drawing a sample, an ethnographic presence is required. The researcher will need to establish an on-site presence over ‘several weeks to get to know and recruit the participants into the study’ (Neale, 2020: 53). To recruit students fitting the linguistic and developmental profile for our study – being on the brink of developing functional communication skills in Swedish, and having communication skills in English – the design required spending a prolonged period on site at Pinewood. From this point onwards, it is the voice of the researcher ‘on the ground’ (Alastair) which is heard in the text.

By spending time at Pinewood prior to and during the research period, our thinking was that this would facilitate the recruitment process and support the construction of positive researcher–participant relationships. Since insights would be generated in interviews that revolved around participatory data – stories of communication events ‘brought’ to the interview – an enduring relationship could generate confidence and trust. By spending extended time at Pinewood – in classrooms, as well as hanging out in common spaces on campus – opportunities for informal interaction and relationship-building would be plentiful.

In addition to providing a base upon which trusting and friendly relationships could be established, our thinking was that everyday contact on campus could have other important advantages. Not only would it afford opportunities for participants to exercise agency in initiating conversations relevant to the research – and in this way enhancing their investment in the research process – but because participants were provided with a naturally occurring communication channel (encountering the researcher on a day-by-day basis), this could create a greater alertness to changes that might be taking place in communication preferences. Equally – and from a purely practical perspective – a sustained on-site presence could also improve opportunities for arranging and carrying out interviews in close proximity to WTC experiences.

From mid-November 2019 up until the last day spent at Pinewood in the middle of March 2020 (when remote teaching was implemented following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic), I visited Pinewood on more than 50 separate days. The research log shows that I spent around 150 hours in the classrooms of the C and D courses. During this time, I became a familiar face at the college, not just for the students that I followed, but for the other students and teachers who I met in the corridors, the cafeteria and other common areas of the campus. I developed a practice of arriving on campus half an hour or so before classes were due to start, usually leaving an hour or so after classes had finished. When the students had morning classes (08:20–12:00), I would arrive at around 07:45 and leave around 12:30. When they had afternoon classes (13:00–16:40), I would arrive at around 12:00, and leave around 17:30.

In these ‘before and after’ times, and during mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks, I spent time talking with the students – those who had

been recruited to the study, as well as the many others who I got to know. We would chat on a whole range of topics. As a speaker of Swedish, a person knowledgeable about language learning and someone who had also gone through the SFI system, I found myself offering advice, insights and support.

I also spent a lot of ‘before and after’ time with the teachers. Opportunities to chat with them prior to a lesson meant that I was often able to gain insights into the teacher’s planning and lesson aims. This meant that I could better function as a resource in the classroom. In the periods following the end of a lesson, I was able to talk with the teacher about their experience of the lesson, and the students’ engagement and progress.

In the classroom, my participation would generally involve me being a resource to whom the students could turn when working with an assignment, or when they needed help in understanding something that the teacher had said or written. Group work was a common feature of the teaching, and most lessons included activities designed to promote interpersonal interaction. In these situations, I became a communication partner. On a few occasions, I also stepped in to teach the class. These situations arose when a teacher was absent due to illness, when teachers were involved in staff conferences and, on a couple of occasions, when teachers had national examinations to grade. On most of these occasions I would follow the teacher’s planning. On a couple of occasions, I designed activities and brought my own materials to class.

## **Recruitment**

### **Timing entry into the classroom**

In advance of my arrival on the college campus, I had agreed with the teachers that I would begin by spending time in a Course C reception class. This class consisted of students first enrolled at Pinewood in October 2019. We decided that I would enter the class and begin my participation two weeks after the commencement of teaching. This was to ensure that the students would have an initial settling-in period, and would have time to get used to the routines and to get to know one another. The group of students who began in the reception class at the end of October 2019 numbered some 20 individuals, the youngest being in their mid-twenties and the oldest in their late fifties. More than two thirds of the students were women.

On my arrival in the classroom, I introduced myself to the students, telling a little about my background, explaining that I too had studied on an SFI programme, and that I was now a university teacher. I then outlined the project and its purpose. I explained that I wanted to recruit people with a particular language profile, and that it was for this reason that I would be spending time in their classroom. I made clear that as a researcher, my interest was not on the events taking place in the

classroom, and that I would not be writing about or recording anything that took place while I was there. The students were curious about the research and often wanted to know more about the project. They particularly wanted to know why I had so much ‘spare time’ to spend at Pinewood, and why the Swedish government wanted to fund research of this sort.

Initially, I would mostly sit at the back of the classroom, participating only when invited to do so by the teacher. After the first couple of weeks, and having adopted this largely passive role, I gradually began to circulate more freely in the room, taking opportunities to spend time with individual students, sitting at the same row of tables during whole class teaching, and joining in when they worked with group activities.

Because the students spent a lot of time at the college – having some 20 contact hours per week at the beginning of the programme – I was quickly able to identify potential participants. In casual talk in the classroom, during breaks and in the ‘before and after’ periods, I mostly spoke English, with occasional switches to Swedish. From these conversations, and my observations of classroom interactions, I was able to assess a student’s communication skills in English and in Swedish, and their communication behaviours.

In addition to the inclusion criteria, an important consideration in the recruitment process was the need to limit participant recruitment to a number where it would be possible to forge individual relationships. As previously discussed, establishing a personal relationship was an important part of the research design. Participants needed to be motivated to share experiences of situations beyond college where opportunities to speak Swedish had arisen, and, in story form, to talk about these experiences in research interviews. While a particular number of participants had not been decided in advance, we had talked about having a participant group of around 10 to 12 individuals. However, for several reasons, it became clear that it would be difficult to recruit a group of this size. First, it turned out that the group that began in the Course C reception class in October 2019 was smaller than usual. While another C beginner group was formed a few weeks later, this group had an exactly similar schedule. This presented a dilemma, in that my time would need to be divided between the original C beginner group and the new group. We therefore decided to only recruit from the original C reception class.

### **Participants and Recruitment Procedures**

The participants were recruited from the student group who started in the Course C reception class in October 2019. Because we were interested in recruiting participants who were on the brink of developing functional communication skills in Swedish, and closely following them during a period when Swedish WTC might be expected to increase and

English WTC might decrease (Henry *et al.*, 2021a), recruitment took place at the point when students left the Course C reception class and progressed to the Course C continuation class.

As part of the revolving door strategy at Pinewood, the Course C teachers organised tests on a roughly fortnightly basis. This practice was nicely suited to the recruitment strategy, since it meant that recruitment to the project could be effectively staggered, and that data generation could begin at the same point for each participant (i.e. when their language skills were sufficient to enable them to join the continuation class). First, three participants were recruited in the third week of November. Thereafter, another three were recruited in the first week of December. Following the winter recess, two more participants were recruited at the end of the third week of January.

The practical effect of this recruitment strategy meant that, from December onwards, I divided my time between the Course C reception and the Course C continuation classes. Later, when participants left the Course C continuation class and moved to the Course D class, I began spending time in these classrooms too. However, by this point, all the recruited students had left the Course C reception class. This meant that I never needed to divide my time between more than two classrooms.

By the time that recruitment took place, the students had come to know me from the time I had spent in the classroom, and from chatting during recess periods. They knew why I was spending time at Pinewood, and why I was interested in finding out about experiences of communicating in English or in Swedish in contexts beyond the classroom. They also knew that I wanted to collect stories about communication events. Information about the participants is provided in Table 4.1. Short biographies are provided in Chapter 5.

**Table 4.1** The study participants

Participant	Time in Sweden	Region of origin	Migrant status
Jessie	<12 months	Southeast Asia	Spouse
Kesu	<12 months	Northeast Africa	Spouse
Maria	<12 months	Middle East	Spouse
Olivia	>12 months	Southern Europe	EU citizen
Pranisha	<12 months	South Asia	Spouse (internationally recruited husband)
Sabrina	>12 months	Eastern Europe	EU citizen
Titly	>12 months	South Asia	Spouse (internationally recruited husband)
Wafaa	>12 months	Middle East	Asylum-seeker

## Recruitment Procedures

The recruitment procedure involved a two-step process. Each time that a potential participant transitioned from the reception class to the continuation class, I met them (in a group room on campus), and explained again the purpose of the project and what was involved. After answering any questions, I then provided written information (in English) about the project, and about the ethical safeguards. I gave them my email address and personal phone number, along with information about the possibility to contact me if they had any questions about the project. After a week had passed, we met again. Here, I formally asked whether they wished to participate in the project. Of the eight students who met the inclusion criteria, and who were invited to take part in the project, all agreed to participate.

At this stage, I provided more detailed information about how data generation would take place. I explained that I wanted to closely follow their experiences of language use beyond the classroom, and, as a researcher, that I wanted to get as close as possible to their experiences and to understand how their willingness to communicate in English or in Swedish might change over time. I explained that I would want to interview them on a regular basis, and that I would ask them to share stories of communication events. I told them that while these stories could be told to me in interviews, they could also be recorded. I explained that this could be done orally, by using a specially designed voice messaging app, or in written form, via email or text messaging. If a participant expressed an interest in recording stories, I offered them the opportunity to use a phone with the app preinstalled, or to have the app installed on their own phone. Three of the participants chose to use the app and, initially, provided stories of communication events in this way. Two participants sent stories via email. However, after just a couple of weeks, these participants abandoned the digital options and chose to communicate with me face to face when they met me at the college. Often, when I spent time with students before or after a class, or during a break, a participant would come up to me and say, ‘Al, I’ve got something to tell you’.

## The Research Period and the Generation of Data

Once a participant had been recruited, I began the process of regularly interviewing them about their communication experiences. During the research period, I conducted a total of 61 interviews. The first interviews with the initially recruited participants were carried out one afternoon at the end of November (on a day which had brought the first snow of the winter). The final interview was carried out on a warm and sunny

day at the end of June. The interviews ranged from 40 to 70 minutes in length. At the time of recruitment, I told participants that the interviews could be carried out either at the college or online (using Zoom). Mostly, participants wanted to be interviewed in person. During the first three months, only a few of the interviews were carried out using Zoom. However, following the closure of the campus in the middle of March and the shift to remote learning (as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic), all the interviews were conducted using Zoom.

The biggest challenge in carrying out the interviewing involved finding suitable times. Since neither I nor the participants wanted to encroach on class time, we would generally start an interview in the break between classes (formally a 20-minute recess, but which could often extend to around half an hour) and continue during class time (mostly when individual or group work would take place). This meant that I was generally able to carry out only one interview during a morning or afternoon spent at Pinewood. Sometimes, however, there were extended periods of individual study, which made it possible to conduct two interviews during a session. At the college I was extremely fortunate in having almost exclusive access to a small conference room close to the participants' classrooms. This room was furnished with a comfortable sofa, armchairs and a low table. With just a couple of exceptions, interviews were carried out here.

In common with all institutions of adult education in Sweden, in the third week of March 2020 Pinewood switched to remote learning following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Just a couple of months prior to this time, Pinewood had purchased institutional licenses for an online learning platform specially designed for SFI. From the end of March onwards, teaching and communication were carried out using this platform. For my part, day-to-day communication with project participants took place via text messaging. For some participants, there were periods when we would communicate on an almost daily basis. For others, I would message them once a week or so, checking on how things were with them, and with their families. Maintaining contact in this way enabled me to keep abreast of their situations, and provided an opportunity to arrange interviews on Zoom whenever there were communication events which they wished to talk about.

The pandemic had a particular impact for the project participants. With families in different parts of the world – some in countries where the first wave of Covid had been particularly severe – they were concerned about their loved ones. For some participants, Swedish was no longer the priority that it had once been. For two participants, both mothers of young children, their family situations meant that they were unable to continue with their studies. Disenrolling from Pinewood, they also chose not to continue in the project.

## Interviewing

Whenever a participant approached me and told me that they had a story to tell, I arranged an interview. In some cases, a participant knew in advance that they would be involved in a communication situation where a choice between communicating in English or in Swedish might be likely to arise, for example a planned visit to a health centre. In such situations, we would prearrange an interview to take place soon after the event. On other occasions, I would suggest that it might be good to have an interview. For participants who regularly supplied me with stories, I sought to space interviews strategically, and interviews were not always held immediately after an event (or events) which formed the subject of a story.

The balancing of reactive and strategic approaches to the arranging of interviews was necessary not only due to the practicalities of finding suitable times to fit in an interview, but also because I wanted to ensure that interviews were spaced at reasonably regular intervals. In line with the project's *cartographic interviewing strategy* (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021), and with the aim of understanding how the process of developing communicative skills in Swedish was shaping the participants' experiences of social interaction, and how experiences rooted in one communication event could affect willingness to communicate in subsequent events, it was important that interviews were carefully spaced along a developmental timeline.

Irrespective of whether the interview was generated by receiving a story, whether it was prearranged following a planned communication event or whether it was strategically prompted, the aim was to structure the interview around an *aural narrative*. In each interview, stories told by the participant would form a fulcrum around which the conversation could revolve and develop. After the first couple of interviews, a pattern was established whereby interviews became 'story-led'. Often, the telling of a story had a generative effect, leading to the telling of other stories. Whether an aural narrative was 'brought to' an interview, or whether it emerged during the interview, the process of storytelling provided the participant with the opportunity to reflect on and to generate understandings of meaningful events in the context of an oftentimes fluctuating process of being willing (and unwilling) to communicate in Swedish.

Since interviews were structured around participatory data (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021), it meant that I became a fellow traveller. *Walking alongside* a participant during this period of change, I was able to follow their journey through the stories they told (Neale & Flowerdew, 2003). Importantly, the structuring of the interviews around the participants' stories supported personal agency. It had the effect of increasing a participant's investment in seeking to understand the psychological, social and sociolinguistic processes taking place. It meant that the exploration of WTC trajectories could become a joint enterprise, where understandings

could be co-constructed, discussed and reflected on through the storytelling process.

Beyond agency and investment, the strategy of structuring interviews around aural narratives had an additional advantage. Because interviews were based around stories of communication events, an experience connected to an event that had recently taken place could be compared with experiences of similar events further back in time. Equally, because the focus of the research was on an ongoing journey with a clearly defined goal (becoming a person who could communicate in Swedish), a communication event experienced in the present could be compared with events that a participant might imagine, or hoped would take place in the future. Facilitating such comparisons, the aural narratives promoted processes of *recursion*, the retrospective and prospective shuttling back and forth in time (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021). It enabled participants to engage in actively mapping their journeys as they unfolded. In an ongoing sequence of storytelling which is focused on mapping and understanding a process in motion, narratives are adjusted and readjusted as time moves on (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021). Since changes in willingness to communicate could be plotted within a sequence of temporally connected interviews, the contingent nature of a communication experience could be highlighted. In this way, time became both the medium *for* and the topic *of* investigation.

Working with a recursive strategy was demanding for the participants and for me. For my part, it meant that I needed to prepare in advance of each interview. While the tempo of data generation and the number of participants meant that it was not possible to carry out full-scale analyses of the data as it was accumulating (I also had university teaching duties), it was important that I kept in mind the stories that had been told in preceding interviews, and the insights that had emerged. In this regard, Nevedal *et al.* (2019) describe how some QL researchers can use ‘rapid’ analytical techniques. In a ‘rapid’ approach, particular parts of previous interviews are strategically reviewed in advance of subsequent interviews. The aim is that the researcher should become knowledgeable of individual processes as they are unfolding. In this way, the researcher becomes better equipped to explore patterns and trajectories with participants in each new interview.

On occasions when interviews had been prearranged, I was able to review notes that I had made in the research log following a previous interview (for example notes about an event described in a story). In situations where an interview took place without prior planning, or when I was unable to remember the exact details of a story told in a previous interview, I would invite the participant to start by giving a summary of events, and, in this context, identify ways of going back to the stories and topics that had been in focus in previous interviews. Equally, while it was often possible to make comparisons between a communication event described in a current story and an event that I retrieved from memory,

I also invited the participants to make comparisons between current and previous events. This was possible not only because situations where opportunities arose to communicate in Swedish were generally few in number, but also because situations would often form part of recurrent patterns of interaction with specific people and/or in specific social settings.

While a recursive approach that enables study participants to engage with their own journeys as they unfold can facilitate insight and can enhance agency, the use of recursive strategies needs to be carefully handled and with sensitivity to ethical issues (Neale, 2020, 2021). Recursion can arouse strong emotions. This is especially the case when the process involves a person's identity and security, and where disappointment, disillusionment and fears for the future can be triggered. As is described later in the discussion of the *ethics of walking alongside*, and the particular challenges that are involved when studying a process in motion (Chapter 13), I was careful about when to invite participants to reflect on aspects of a journey so far undertaken and, in the context of current challenges or setbacks, anticipated future trajectories.

All the participants experienced some degree of frustration at the pace of their learning, the constraints of the learning situation and the lack of opportunities to interact with speakers of Swedish in community contexts. Even for those participants whose language skills and willingness to communicate in Swedish developed throughout the research period (and for whom Swedish came to be a preferred communication choice in most social situations), doubt, worry and concerns about the future were frequently in mind. Moreover, and in addition to the types of acculturation stress generally associated with migration experiences (e.g. Dewaele & Stavans, 2014), the Covid-19 pandemic created additional stress and anxiety. Separated from family members living in countries where the pandemic had been difficult to contain, participants were concerned about the health and security of loved ones far away.

In this context, I was careful about when to invite a participant to shuttle backwards or forwards in time. If a dispiriting or emotionally straining experience were to arise – whether part of a story, or as an unprompted reflection on development or the participant's personal situation – I created space in the interview for talking about emotions. I provided support by being a compassionate and understanding listener. On a couple of occasions, I offered to provide the contact details of counselling services.

### **Analytical Strategies: Facilitating Comparisons Across Time and Between Participants**

In a QL research project, 'the methods and research designs must also allow comparisons across time and participants' (Hollstein, 2021:

12). Strategies for data generation need to be carefully developed. The same applies for analytical strategies. In our study, comparisons across time and between participants were facilitated by two data generation strategies. By matching the spacing of interviews with the developmental timescale, comparisons across time could be facilitated. By making systematic use of aural narratives as a means of exploring change, comparisons between participants could be better achieved. In the data analysis, comparisons across time and between participants were similarly facilitated by two strategies: the application of a diachronic approach and the use of case-led procedures.

In some QL studies, data analysis is carried out synchronically, that is, as the data accumulates. This can be appropriate where data is generated over longer timescales, and where particular waves of data collection take place. In other studies – particularly those with shorter timescales and a tighter-spaced data generation strategy – a diachronic or ‘trajectory’ approach can be preferable. Here, analyses take place at the end of the period. In addition to feasibility, this approach is appropriate when the focus is on the *process characteristics* of change, and where the aim is to provide ‘a deeper understanding of time’s passage’ (Nevedal *et al.*, 2019: 798). Beyond the ocular, ‘rapid analyses’ (Nevedal *et al.*, 2019) which took place alongside the unfolding processes of WTC development, and which supported the interviewing process (as previously described), data analysis was diachronic. The aim was to first identify patterns of WTC growth and loss across time, and then, in a second stage, to compare trajectories between participants.

While there is no prescribed set of analytical procedures for a QL study, there is an assumption that the process will begin with a *case-led analysis*. This will normally lead into a *thematic analysis*. Thereafter, the process will normally culminate in some form of overarching *integrative analysis*. As Neale (2020) has explained:

The *logic of QLA* involves working across *cases, themes and time* to discern their complex intersections. The process is iterative and multi-dimensional, involving multiple readings of the data that requires the researcher to switch the analytical gaze. Each reading involves an interrogation of cases, themes and time, but from a different starting point that offers a distinctive window onto a dataset. These different readings (case/thematic/temporal) can be seen as three ‘axes of comparison’ (Barley, 1995). Taken together, they enable the multiple facets of the dataset to be discerned, facilitating holistic insights into dynamic processes, and creating a balance between breadth and depth of vision, and between short and longer-term time horizons. (Neale, 2020: 111)

In QL studies, use is made of generic modes of analysis common to case study and thematically focused research. As with case studies and

content analyses, the aim is to move from descriptive to explanatory accounts of experiences, processes and journeys (Neale, 2020, 2021). In the same way that there are no procedural or analytical frameworks governing data analysis, the presentation of results can also differ in terms of the foregrounding of cases, themes or sometimes a combination of both. In a more extensive project – as here – the presentation of cases will often precede the presentation of themes.

In common with other forms of qualitative research – but with the specific aim of casting light on continuity and change – in a QL study the systematic interrogation of a dataset involves processes of iteration. As case summaries and process descriptions are created, and when higher-order insights and understandings are generated, the process will involve a ‘mix of creativity and systematic searching’, and will require ‘a blend of inspiration and diligent detection’ (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003: 199, cited in Neale, 2020: 110). In accordance with these phases, and as described in Table 4.2, the study’s analytical strategy took the form of initial

**Table 4.2** The analytical strategy

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**Case-led analyses** (within cases, sequential)

1. Creation of case summaries

Focus on migration and gender

Relationship migration; ‘co-moving’; asylum-seeking families  
(Boucher, 2021; Dodson, 2021; Kofman, 2019)

2. Plotting WTC trajectories

Focus on WTC dynamics

Continuous and discontinuous change; initial conditions  
(Henry *et al.*, 2021; Cameron, 2020)

3. Carrying out thematic analyses

Focus on the psychology of L2 communication

WTC Pyramid Levels III–V (boxes 3–10)  
(MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998; MacIntyre *et al.*, 2011)

Focus on language ideologies

‘deficit’ and ‘translanguaging’ ideologies  
(Subtirelu, 2014; Li & Zhu, 2013)

**Integrative analyses** (across cases, nonsequential)

1. Willingness to communicate...*at a specific time*

Focus on situational and temporal dynamics, emotions and self-confidence

2. Willingness to communicate...*with a specific person*

Focus on the evolution of WTC within interpersonal relationships

3. Willingness to communicate...*in a particular language*

Focus on multilingualism and choices involving the language in which communication is initiated and takes place

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within-case, sequential analyses, followed by an integrative, across-case, non-sequential analysis.

### **Case-Led Analyses**

Following the QL strategy of beginning with a case-led analysis, and thereafter carrying out thematic analyses, data analysis took place in two main stages. Once transcripts of the interviews had been prepared, they were separately read for each participant. Here, the aim was to reacquaint myself with the participants' experiences, and their personal and linguistic journeys. Next, I read each set of transcripts alongside the research log maintained during the period, and which provided a chronology of the data generation process. It included information about the days I had spent at Pinewood, the dates of interviews, and events that had taken place while I was on-site, or which had been communicated to me by participants in interviews and in other contacts (e.g. via mail/messaging, etc.). Having done this, I then constructed a written biography for each participant (Neale, 2020, 2021). In this biography, I began by describing the participant's background, experiences from the period before moving to Sweden, their early time in Sweden and their attempts to learn the language prior to enrolling at Pinewood. I wrote about key events in their lives which had occurred during the research period, and their plans after the completion of SFI (i.e. continued study or work). This helped me to further understand the participants as individuals, and provided a backdrop against which the development of WTC dynamics could be plotted.

In the next stage, I entered the interview transcripts into NVivo 12. For each participant, I read through the transcripts in chronological order. I then repeated the process, this time assigning sections of the text containing stories and the participants' reflections on these narratives to nodes representing each participant's journey. Having done this, I then read through these collected extracts, participant by participant. Thereafter, and based around the stories, I constructed a narrative of each journey in written form. Here, my aim was to turn the discursive accounts into 'chronologically ordered case profiles', and to 'build a diachronic understanding' of each participant's WTC trajectory (Neale, 2020: 111).

### **Thematic Analyses**

Having conducted the case-led analyses, I then carried out a series of thematic analyses. In a QL study, themes can be descriptive, conceptual or temporal. As Neale (2020: 113) explains, 'key themes, topics and substantive patterns of meaning are drawn out, and related data are brought together into thematic bundles'. To create these 'bundles', I worked with the transcripts in NVivo. Again, I started on a participant-by-participant basis, this time assigning sections of text to theme nodes. While some

of these theme nodes were created in NVivo prior to carrying out the analyses, new nodes were also created during the analysis as novel themes and aspects emerged. When this process was complete, I re-read the data extracts assigned to each theme node and reviewed the themes once more.

### (i) The WTC pyramid as a multifaceted analytical lens

With the aim of creating a diachronic understanding of each participant's WTC trajectory, I analysed the sequence of narratives. In accomplishing this, the constructs encompassed in layers III–V of the pyramid provided a multifaceted analytical lens. As MacIntyre *et al.* (2011: 82) have made clear, the notion of WTC subsumes and conjoins 'psychological, linguistic, educational, and communicative dimensions of language that typically have been studied independently of each other'. In empirical work, this means that the dimensions of the pyramid should be explored as 'integrated features of the student's experience' (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2011: 82). As MacIntyre and colleagues (2011: 82) have further pointed out, decisions about whether to communicate reside in a series of proximal and distal influences, and that 'it requires a broad sense of time and self to understand the fullness of the process'. With these ideas in mind, analyses were carried out with a focus on both *situated antecedents* (Layer III: desire to communicate with a particular person; communicative self-confidence) and the more *distal influences* of motivational propensities and the affective-cognitive context (respectively, Layer IV: interpersonal motivation; intergroup motivation; L2 self-confidence, and Layer V: intergroup attitudes; social situation; communicative competence) (see also Chapters 1 and 2, and 10 and 11).

While the WTC pyramid can be used to gain an *integrated* understanding of the psychological and sociopsychological processes underlying WTC (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2011), in a situated, longitudinal design there is need to pay attention to especially salient aspects of the contexts in which WTC evolves. In research that seeks to explore WTC beyond the classroom, this is centrally important. Analyses need to take a holistic approach where WTC is conceptualised 'as a contextually dependent social phenomenon' (Cameron, 2020: 20), and where communication behaviour is understood 'as an interaction between an individual and surrounding contextual characteristics' (Cameron, 2020: 13; see also Chapter 12).

### (ii) Language ideologies as an additional lens

In the migration context in which the study took place, there was particular need to take account of the situation of our participants as women who were experiencing linguistic changes during a liminal period in their lives. These experiences were indissociable from the women's relational experiences (as partners and mothers), their learning experiences (as

adults at the beginning of a process of acquiring a new language) and their experiences as migrants in a socially segregated and technologically advanced society (where opportunities for TL use in social interaction can be limited). In a context where ‘access to high-quality, relevant language is far from unproblematic or ensured’, and where the development of TL skills demands ‘a reconsideration of one’s place in the world and one’s desired and attainable futures’ (Ortega, 2018a: 19), the investigation of communication behaviours requires special consideration of ideologies, power and social transformation (Ortega, 2018a, 2018b, 2019).

Highlighting how, in contemporary societies, many adult language learners ‘negotiate their language learning from positions of marginalization’ (Ortega, 2018a: 22), Ortega explains how the conjoined operation of processes of linguistic and social duress function to shape the patterns and outcomes of TL learning. Thus the researcher is required to investigate not only inequalities ‘in accessing language for learning’ (linguistic duress), but also the ways in which ‘sociocultural and ideological forces in L2 users’ social worlds...interact with and modulate access to language’ (i.e. social duress and its effects) (Ortega, 2018a: 20).

To consider the influences of social and linguistic duress, analyses adopted a *language ideology* perspective. The value of incorporating a language ideology perspective in WTC research has been forcefully demonstrated by Subtirelu (2014). In longitudinal case study research examining the communication experiences of male Saudi and Chinese students enrolled on an intensive English programme in the United States, Subtirelu has argued that the relationship between communicative experiences conceptualised in the WTC pyramid and L2 users’ self-evaluations of L2 communication is mediated by *language ideology*. This he defines as ‘the networks of beliefs that language users hold, either tacitly or overtly, about language and its assumed relation to other aspects in their environments, especially other individuals and social groups, which stem either from explicit teaching or implicit socialization’ (Subtirelu, 2014: 121).

In his research, Subtirelu (2014: 121) showed how participants’ experiences with language were ‘necessarily interpreted through the lens of their language ideologies’. To describe how a language ideology perspective can complement analyses of communication behaviour which draw on the multiple lenses of the WTC pyramid, Subtirelu (2014) has offered the following explanation:

an aspect of language ideology that may offer promising insights for discussions of WTC concerns the way that the relationship between the L2 users’ experiences communicating in the L2 and the recontextualization of those experiences in more general self-assessments of the L2 is mediated by ideology. MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) model of WTC incorporates the individual’s prior experiences with the L2 and with other

communicative situations in a number of ways. For example, one aspect of state communicative self-confidence includes how the individual evaluates prior communicative experiences, whether they were unpleasant or successful. However, these evaluations entail language ideological assumptions about what constitutes successful communication and when ‘unsuccessful’ communication occurs, who or what is the cause thereof. (Subtirelu, 2014: 122)

Arguing that language ideologies mediated his participants’ perceptions of communication events and impacted on their WTC, Subtirelu (2014) identified a *deficit ideology*, where participants explained negative communication experiences in terms of inadequate L2 skills. They viewed and understood painful experiences in terms of not being sufficiently competent (in relation to a native-speaking interlocutor) and how this meant that over time they adopted avoidance strategies. For other participants, however, a similarly negative experience was not seen as solely due to their own (perceived) inadequacies. Rather, ‘blame’ for a frustrating or unsatisfactory communication event was apportioned between themselves and their interlocutors. Interpretations of this sort encompassed an understanding that the ‘responsibility’ for the success or failure of a communication event could be shared between participants. In communication events where accommodation was lacking, the TL-speaking interlocutor could sometimes be positioned as the problem, the effect being that the participant did not ‘view these situations as evidence of a deficit in their L2 abilities’ (Subtirelu, 2014: 129).

While Subtirelu’s (2014) research focused solely on problematic communicative events involving use of L2 English – his analyses highlighting a distinction between a deficit and a more flexible ‘lingua franca’ ideology – the study illustrates how differences in language ideologies can impact on the ways that communication events are interpreted. In this sense, the approach is transferrable to other research contexts where experiences of WTC are in focus. In previous research investigating the deployment of language resources among English-speaking adult learners of Swedish (Henry, 2016a, 2016b; Chapter 3), a view paralleling Subtirelu’s (2014) notion of a deficit ideology was found. In these studies, some participants held the belief that communicating in English (rather than Swedish) was appropriate, in that English provided a better means of achieving communicative efficiency. Among other participants, however, a counterpoint ideology was apparent. Analogous to Subtirelu’s (2014) notion of a lingua franca ideology, from this perspective communication in Swedish was seen as effective if interlocutors were accommodating and supported use of English as a resource in TL communication. This could be, for example, by demonstrating an openness to possibilities for code-switching. This is an approach which bears the hallmarks of a *translanguaging ideology*.

Translanguaging refers to the ‘ways in which bilinguals use their complex semiotic repertoire to act, to know, and to be’ (García & Li, 2014: 137). Thus, a *translanguaging ideology* emphasises the creative and flexible use of language resources (Li & Zhu, 2010). *Translanguaging ideologies* are communicated in language, and translate into *translanguaging practices* (Li & Zhu, 2010). In a translanguaging ideology, the use of varying languages is seen as a legitimate aspect of interaction. In translanguaging practices, shifts between languages are viewed as natural and as supporting the functionality of communication (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017; Hillman *et al.*, 2019; Palfreyman & Bataineh, 2018).

Adapting Subtirelu’s (2014) classification of counterposed ideologies to the current context – where English functions as a parallel communication code alongside Swedish, and where it can be used as a functional resource to support communication – in Table 4.3 we illustrate how *deficit* and *translanguaging* ideologies can be conceptualised in relation to WTC, and how they can function as analytical lenses in the interpretation of the data.

**Table 4.3** Language ideologies and communication behaviours

<i>Deficit ideology</i>	<i>Lingua franca ideology</i>	<i>Translanguaging ideology</i>
<b>Attributing</b> communication breakdown almost exclusively to L2 user’s linguistic failure	<b>Attributing</b> communication breakdown to a variety of causes including L1 user’s impatience and lack of familiarity with L2 English	<b>Attributing</b> communication breakdown to L1 user’s failure to support TL-communication by shifting exclusively to English
<b>Positioning</b> L1 user’s language as immutably intelligible	<b>Positioning</b> L1 users’ language as intelligible only when cooperative with needs of the L2 user	<b>Positioning</b> L1 user’s language as intelligible when supported by English as a complementary resource
<b>Constructing</b> an obligation for L2 users to conform to the ‘normal’ speech of the L1	<b>Constructing</b> an obligation for both L1 and L2 users to speak ‘clear’ English	<b>Constructing</b> an obligation for both parties to use English as a flexible resource in TL-interaction
<b>Interpreting</b> L1 users’ speech accommodations as indications of failed language learning by L2 user	<b>Interpreting</b> L1 users’ speech accommodations as fulfilment of communicative responsibility	<b>Interpreting</b> L1 users’ accommodations of shifts to English as fulfilment of communicative responsibility

Note: Adapted from Subtirelu (2014) to show how the notion of a *translanguaging ideology* can be used in the interpretation of study participants’ WTC experiences. Column two, ‘Lingua franca ideology’ serves to illustrate the original distinction in Subtirelu’s conceptualisation.

## Chapters presenting case-led analyses

In QL research, the strategy of working across cases, themes and time characterises each aspect of a project. Following Neale (2020: 117), who has suggested that ‘researchers working with very small samples, or using a psycho-social lens are more likely to structure their findings around individual cases, within which thematic and temporal insights are embedded’, four chapters – Chapters 6–9 – are structured around the experiences of particular participants.

In the first two chapters, we focus on the experiences of four participants who developed communication skills to the degree that, by the end of the research period, they were able to carry out a research interview in Swedish and, in our interactions, generally chose to communicate in Swedish. In Chapter 6, we focus on the experiences of the three participants – Kesu, Jessie and Maria – who had migrated to Sweden to join a partner. In Chapter 7 we focus on the experiences of Wafaa, the only participant in the group who was an asylum-seeker, and whose life situation differed substantially from the three women whose experiences are examined in Chapter 6.

In the two chapters that follow, we focus on the experiences of the other four participants. In Chapter 8, we explore the experiences of two ‘co-moving’ women, Olivia and Titly, both of whom had moved to Sweden to follow a partner/husband who had been internationally recruited to work in the technology sector. In Chapter 9, we focus on the experiences of the final two women, Pranisha (another co-mover) and Sabrina (an EU citizen). With young children, these women were forced to discontinue their studies following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. They also decided to withdraw from the project. In contrast to the women whose stories are told in Chapters 6 and 7, for these women a shift in probabilities – from being mostly willing to communicate in English to being mostly willing to communicate in Swedish – did not take place during the period in which the research was carried out.

### **Integrative Analysis**

In a QL project, the analytical process will not normally end with case and thematic analyses; rather, it will culminate in an overarching analysis (Neale, 2020, 2021). It is in this integrative analysis that comprehensive theoretical engagement takes place, and where theoretical propositions are developed:

It is here that the conceptual leap is made from a largely descriptive to an interpretive level of analysis. Summary and descriptive data files are compared and synthesized holistically to discern similarities and differences within and across cases, across themes, through the time frame of the study and further back and forwards in time as appropriate. The analytical gaze oscillates between single and multiple cases, between micro- and macro-historical processes, between short- and longer-term time horizons, between transitions, trajectories and the fleeting mechanisms, drivers and inhibitors of change. Plausible accounts of dynamic processes may have already begun to coalesce from a dataset that is rich in descriptive detail and explanatory insights. But here the process is sharpened through a systematic examination of the whole dataset in relation to pre-existing evidence, and the construction of typologies or theoretical

models of pathways and processes that fit the dataset as a whole (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 244–8). (Neale, 2020: 116)

In Chapters 10–12, we present a series of integrative analyses. Drawing on the classic definition of willingness to communicate (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) in Chapter 10, we present an overarching synthesis of the findings, which aims at understanding WTC in a community context. This involves being willing to communicate ‘at a particular time’ (a focus on situational and temporal dynamics, emotions and self-confidence), ‘with a specific person or persons’ (a focus on relational aspects, and communication within evolving relationships) and ‘using a L2’ or a *mix of languages* (a focus on multilingualism and language choice). Following on, in Chapter 11, we zoom in to examine how WTC is soft-assembled in communication events, and, in multilingual contexts, how it can encompass making choices about the language in which communication is initiated, and can involve shifts between languages during an interaction. Drawing on analyses of participants’ communication experiences presented in the second part of the book, and on the quantitative and mixed-methods studies carried out within the same research programme (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b), we offer a three-dimensional reconceptualisation of the pyramid model that reflects these dynamics.

Following on from this micro-level focus, in Chapter 12 we reverse the aperture to zoom out and focus on factors affecting WTC at a higher scale level. Here, we consider WTC development in relation to the *geographical locality* (provincial Sweden), *seasonal conditions* (the dark and cold of the Nordic winter), the time that the research was carried out (the *Covid-19* pandemic) and the *digitalisation of society* (the influence that technology use has on interpersonal communication).

## 5 The Participants

In this chapter, we provide brief descriptions of the project participants. We offer insights into their backgrounds and the reasons for relocating. We also briefly trace their language development. Introducing the participants in this way, the chapter provides a point of departure for those that follow.

Focused on a period when functional skills in Swedish might first begin to develop, the purpose of the project was to investigate the communication behaviours of adult language learners engaged in the process of learning Swedish. ‘Walking alongside’ a group of participants who had arrived in Sweden with skills in English, and who were accustomed to using English for communication in community contexts, we wanted to investigate willingness to communicate (WTC) as close as possible to the communication events where choices were made, and to study WTC as a process in motion. With the aim of following individuals from a point when communication skills and WTC in Swedish might be first expected to evolve, and over a period where changes in communication behaviour could be expected to occur, the research period was calibrated to the *developmental timescale* (see Chapter 3).

As described in the previous chapter, participants were recruited from a beginner-level Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) class. Recruitment took place at the point at which participants left the reception class (where they spent an initial number of weeks) and progressed to a continuation class. All the students who met the study’s inclusion criteria, and who progressed from the reception to the continuation class, were invited to take part in the study. All agreed to participate.

While a gender perspective was not a part of the project’s original design, it became clear that the participants’ stories reflected gendered experiences of second language (L2) communication. As partners in transnational relationships, co-moving spouses and mothers in migrating families, the participants’ experiences of communication in community contexts bore the imprint of the genderedness of international migration, and the particular challenges confronting women.

Norms that surround marriage, family, career paths and employment not only shape patterns of international migration; they also shape the lives of women migrants (Boucher, 2021; Dodson, 2021; Kofman, 2019). Migration is impacted by gender and gender stereotyping, configurations which can be reinforced by an ‘intersectional marginalization of age, class and ethnicity’ (Boucher, 2009: 21, as cited in Kofman, 2014). As Dodson (2021: 208) has made clear, ‘balancing family and work can present obstacles to skilled immigrant women’s employment and career, depending on intrafamily negotiations about household reproductive and care labour and which spouse’s career is given precedence’.

Transnational migration will often involve the maintenance or formation of families (Kofman, 2004). In migration that involves *family formation*, there is a transnational relationship. Residents of a destination country can enter a relationship with a partner living in another country, and who they may have met while abroad or through online channels. Equally, the daughters and sons of migrants already settled in a destination country can form relationships with a partner from their parents’ home country or diasporic space. In *family maintenance* migration, a family may move together as a unit, or may follow a pioneer once they have become established in a country of destination. Family maintenance migration can also include the ‘trailing spouses’ or ‘co-movers’ who follow partners who move abroad for work-related reasons (Kofman, 2004).

### Co-movers

As Boucher (2021: 2) has observed, ‘skilled immigration policies frequently perpetuate a stereotypical divide between an autonomous male breadwinner and an accompanying (implicitly female) spouse’. In the global employment market for skilled and highly skilled migrants, women form a minority of recruitments. In Europe, many countries deploy policies which support the logic of the knowledge society, and encourage overseas recruitment in fields such as technology, engineering and science (Kofman, 2019). When comparing the circumstances of men and women, research reveals that men are more likely to be recruited internationally. It would appear that the higher the level of the skill in demand, the more likely it is that males will be recruited. In high-tech industries and enterprises that recruit international STEM graduates, a large majority of principal applicant migrants (i.e. ‘primary’ movers) are males (Boucher, 2021).

For women who migrate together with an internationally employed partner – and who have also been referred to as ‘trailing spouses’ (Shinozaki, 2014) and ‘tied movers’ (Cangià, 2018) – gender roles and gender stereotyping affect employment and career opportunities. As Docquier and Rapoport (2012) have observed, women have a greater willingness to

relocate with an internationally employed spouse. For co-moving professional women, migration is rarely of immediate benefit to their careers. While they may be highly skilled, migration can lead to re-domestication, childcare and work for which they are over-qualified (Dodson, 2021). Because transnational and diasporic communities are often established when highly skilled males work in a particular industry or sector, gendered practices involving domestic and family responsibilities can often arise. In these social contexts, women can often take on the role of providing support for their husbands (Bhatt, 2018; Dodson, 2021; Walsh, 2018). For co-moving spouses with qualifications and professional experience from female-dominated sectors, such as education and medicine, gaining suitable employment can be a significant challenge. Skills transfer can be problematic. Frequently it is beset by linguistic and bureaucratic barriers created in the destination country (e.g. Larsen *et al.*, 2005).

### Relationship migration and cross-border marriages

Parallel to flows of labour from less affluent to more affluent countries, migration that takes place in the context of a marriage or a long-term relationship has increased in recent decades. As Kofman (2020) explains, terms such as ‘global hypergamy’ (Constable, 2005: 223) have been used to describe ‘the situation of women who are often migrating from poorer families in poorer countries to become partners of men who have a weak position on the marriage market in their own country but are in a higher socio-economic location compared to the migrant woman’ (Kofman, 2020: 223).

For cross-border marriage migrants, especially those who migrate from countries in the Global South to countries in the Global North, migration can mean a loss. This extends not only to the loss of social networks in home countries, but also to restrictions encountered in countries of settlement. It can mean being perceived as dependent, being defined as a ‘spouse’ and having rights and opportunities deriving solely from one’s social status as a wife or a partner (Williams, 2010). The dependent status of spouses or partners in cross-border marriages and relationships means that rights are conditional on the continuation of the relationship. Should a relationship break down before the migrant partner has established an independent right of residence, ‘the ending of his or her contract with the citizen ends her or his rights in the country of settlement’ (Williams, 2010: 6).

### Mothers in asylum-seeking families

For women in asylum-seeking families, the liminal context of the asylum process is a challenging time; they can be forced to reconstruct identities, both as a citizen and as a mother. As Montero-Sieburth and Mas Giralt (2021: 18) have observed, ‘contemporary families on the

move redefine and restructure themselves by forming and reforming relationships with close and distant family members across borders, and establish support systems with peers, community members and other family constellations'. In a meta-ethnographic review that examined refugee women's experiences of negotiating motherhood and maternity services in a new country, Pangas *et al.* (2019) found that asylum-seeking women experienced having to strive to maintain a cultural identity, while at the same having to adapt to the new cultural context and the family's changed circumstances. The experience of forced migration and subsequent resettlement was found to contribute to the experience of 'living between two cultures' (Pangas *et al.*, 2019: 34). As these authors observe, the women in the reviewed studies were 'required to negotiate significant life transitions and challenges whilst also adapting to the unfamiliar context of their host country', and to 'evaluate, balance, and assimilate their beliefs with new societal values' (Pangas *et al.*, 2019: 34). In addition to triggering a need to re-evaluate and redefine beliefs and identities, migration challenged the women's views of their relationships and gender roles.

### Emotional effects

In studies analysing the experiences of skilled migrants who had relocated to Norway, Aure (2013a, 2013b) has highlighted the emotional costs of employment-related mobility, and the effects it can have on women. Several of Aure's participants had experienced a loss of self, experiencing themselves as a 'nobody', rather than a 'somebody'. As Aure (2013a: 292) has argued, 'when skills and knowledge are not recognised and the holder is not given an appropriate position in the host society, the situation deprives the holder of a presumed, preferred, or desired role, along with the rights and duties that follow from employment'. Experiences of not being able to participate in the formal labour market, not having their skills and abilities recognised and not becoming an accepted member of society could diminish self-confidence and reduce experiences of agency. Although rarely articulated in direct terms, Aure (2013a: 290) has described how shame is implicit in participants' statements about 'not being anybody or not being worth anything'.

The gendered aspects of migration are also apparent in how the experience of relocation to another country can differently affect women and men (Dodson, 2021). In a study of immigrant mothers in Ireland, Gilmarin and Migge (2016) have shown how separation from home country social and family networks can make it difficult for women to develop a sense of belonging outside the family, and a sense of identity beyond parenthood. In Aure's (2013a) study, most female participants did not view mothering as an alternative to professional recognition. While being a

mother and wife could provide recognition as a woman, it detracted from a view of the self as a professionally competent and self-supporting adult.

### Deskilling

For skilled women who arrive in a new country – whether as a co-moving spouse or through non-labour routes, such as asylum-seeking or a transnational relationship – deskilling can have even greater consequences. Aure (2013b: 277), who studied the situation of migrant women in Norway, has emphasised how gendered perspectives on skilled migration highlight the intersection of skilled work, families and households, and the gendered roles of female migrants in such households. As she observes, ‘the discounting of highly skilled migrants’ qualifications is found most often among asylum seekers, refugees, and marriage- and dependent-migrants’ (Aure, 2013b: 275).

### Vulnerability, agency and resilience

Migrating families have often been characterised as vulnerable (Montero-Sieburth & Mas Giralt, 2021). They can be vulnerable due to a range of circumstances which place them at risk. Spousal migration can similarly involve vulnerability and reliance on others (the migrant spouse’s partner and the protection of the host country legal system). At the same time that recognition is given to the precarity of female migrants’ situations – with responsibilities for childcare and family welfare often disproportionately assigned – Montero-Sieburth and Mas Giralt (2021: 7) stress that vulnerability ‘should not be taken to be without agency’. As they make clear, migrants will often carefully ‘weigh the risks against staying and are resilient in their determination and decision to move’ (Montero-Sieburth & Mas Giralt, 2021: 7). Consequently, vulnerability should be assessed and understood on a case-by-case basis. For many women in migrating families, membership of a family unit has been found to foster resilience. For asylum-seekers, research shows that when women seek asylum together with their family, ‘the responsibilities they have towards them and the company that it provides often serve as distractions from the long wait and uncertainty’ (Robleda, 2020: 91; Weiss *et al.*, 2017).

### Portraits

As set out in the book’s introduction, we take the view that situated, participant-focused and participatory-oriented research can offer important insights into social-psychological phenomena traditionally framed as individual differences (IDs), and that designs which take a sustained, longitudinal approach can be ‘well suited to examine IDs that bear a social dimension’ (De Costa *et al.*, 2022: 429). In attempting to explore WTC in community contexts, and the ways in which it can develop over

time, patterns of development cannot be separated from the sociocultural and socioeconomic conditions that affect language learners. In addition to the phenomena discussed in the previous chapter – e.g. social and linguistic duress (Ortega, 2018a, 2018b) and language ideologies (Subtirelu, 2014) – it is crucial to understand how, as mothers, international spouses and co-moving partners, the intersections of migration and gender shape communication behaviours.

The participants were eight women ranging in age from their early twenties to their early thirties. Each with a different country of origin, the women had relocated to Sweden between 2016 and 2019. Two of the women came from countries in the European Union, two from countries in the Middle East, and two from countries in South Asia. One woman came from a country in Northeast Africa, and one from a country in Southeast Asia. The women are referred to by self-chosen pseudonyms.

Three of the women, Olivia, Pranisha and Titly, were co-movers. With internationally recruited husbands and partners who worked in the high-tech and engineering sectors, they had moved to Sweden as trailing spouses. Each of the women had a professional background. Olivia was a fashion designer, Pranisha was a software-development specialist and Titly was a doctor. For all three women, the move to Sweden interrupted career development. On arrival in Sweden, Olivia was only able to get freelance work. In order to work as a doctor in Sweden, Titly needed to gain a practice certificate. This meant that she was faced with the prospect of at least two years of additional study (on top of the seven years already invested in her medical degree). For Pranisha, moving to Sweden coincided with starting a family. It meant that she had spent her first years abroad in the home, looking after her baby.

Three women, Jessie, Kesu and Maria, were in international spousal relationships, and had relocated to Sweden to live with a husband or partner. While the co-moving women had all been in Sweden for more than a year before starting on the SFI programme, for these participants, the time in Sweden prior to enrolment amounted to just a few months. Kesu was married to a man from her home country who had migrated to Sweden several years previously. Maria had met her husband online, while Jessie and her partner had met while he had been on holiday in her home country. All three women were university graduates. While in the long term, relocation to Sweden offered favourable prospects for professional development, in the shorter term the move was damaging to their careers.

One of the participants, Wafaa, was an asylum-seeker. She and her family had arrived in Sweden from a country in the Middle East. Wafaa and her husband had three children, one of whom was born in

Sweden shortly after the family's arrival. Wafaa and her husband both had professional backgrounds, in healthcare technology and business administration. They hoped to gain permanent residence in Sweden, and to develop their careers.

Sabrina and her husband were EU citizens and had relocated to Sweden for economic reasons. Among the participants, Sabrina had been in Sweden for the longest time, approximately three years before the start of the research period. On arrival in the country, she and her husband were quickly able to gain employment. While the jobs they had in Sweden were less skilled than those they had previously held, they provided better economic security. Sabrina and her husband became first-time parents while living in Sweden.

In Chapters 6–9, and case by case, the women's experiences of communication events and WTC development are told. However, before moving on to these chapters, each participant is presented in a short biographical sketch.

## **Kesu**

Born and brought up in a small provincial town in a country in Northeast Africa, Kesu, who was in her mid-twenties, arrived in Sweden in the summer of 2019. On completing her upper secondary education, Kesu gained a place on a university degree programme where she majored in economics and agricultural management. After graduation, Kesu married a man whom she had known since childhood. During the period when Kesu was at university, she and her husband had not been able to maintain a close relationship. Like many young men in her country, Kesu's husband was required to carry out a lengthy period of military service. To avoid the dangers facing military conscripts, he sought asylum in Sweden. Arriving in Sweden in 2015, Kesu's husband quickly developed skills in Swedish, and was able to secure permanent employment as a craftsman with a company that manufactured timber-based products for the construction industry.

Kesu's journey to Sweden had not been an easy one. Like many people seeking to leave her country, she was unable to get an exit visa. First, she had to spend time in a neighbouring country. From there, she was able to apply for a visa to join her husband in Sweden. Having to wait more than 12 months for her immigration application to be processed in the transit country, Kesu tried to find work. Here, Kesu's language skills stood her in good stead. In addition to her mother tongue – an important regional language in her home country – Kesu also spoke the national language of the transit country, English (which she had learnt in school from the second grade), and Arabic. With skills in English, she was able to find employment as a teaching assistant at an international school. It

was at this time, while working at the school and waiting for her visa, that Kesu made her first attempts to learn Swedish using resources she had accessed online.

After her residence application was granted, Kesu joined her husband in Sweden. He had found a house in a small rural community that the couple could rent. In these interviews, Kesu spoke about how she enjoyed the quiet life in these rural surroundings and how she valued being close to an outdoor environment of fields, trees and lakes. Kesu described herself as a social person. She and her husband had friends from their home country who had settled in different parts of Sweden. Like Kesu and her husband, many of these friends were members of an Oriental Orthodox church. On most weekends, Kesu and her husband travelled to one of Sweden's larger cities to attend services at this church. During the research period, Kesu became pregnant, she and her husband becoming parents to their first child in the late summer of 2020.

By the end of the research period, Kesu had successfully completed the SFI programme at Pinewood, and was confident communicating in Swedish. In texts and email exchanges after the winter break, Kesu had begun to communicate in Swedish. From February onwards, she would mostly speak in Swedish in the interviews, switching to English when she wanted to elaborate on the details of a story, or to explain something. By the end of the research period, Kesu described feeling generally confident when communicating in Swedish in most social situations. Looking back on her first year in Sweden, Kesu was content with the progress she had made. Not daring to say a word in Swedish on arrival, it was only after the first three months that she made her first tentative attempts to use the language which she had been learning. It was also at this point that the stress which she had experienced since her arrival first began to subside.

In class, Kesu was quiet. Although she would confidently take part in conversations and respond to questions asked by a teacher, she rarely initiated interaction. During breaks she would often remain in the classroom, working quietly, often together with Jessie, with whom she had become friendly.

### **Jessie**

Like Kesu, Jessie was a diligent language learner. While she was also quiet in the classroom, Jessie developed good communication skills. By the end of the research period, she had successfully completed the SFI programme. In her early twenties, Jessie was born and brought up in a major provincial city in a country in Southeast Asia. After leaving school she moved to the capital city, where she enrolled at one of the country's larger universities. Here she completed a three-year degree in environmental science. It was during her time as a student that she met her partner, a similarly aged man from Sweden who was in the country

on vacation. When his holiday was over, the couple kept in touch. After a while, they decided to live together, and Jessie applied for a residence permit so that she could join him in Sweden. The application process was smooth. Following a wait of about three months, Jessie's residence permit was granted, and she arrived in Sweden in the summer of 2019. Jessie's partner lived in a provincial town and was in professional employment. During the research period, the couple lived in a flat in an attractive part of the town.

While Jessie and her partner had always communicated in English, she had not understood quite how useful English would be living in Sweden. Like several of the women, she found that in the early period of her life in Sweden, her skills in English seemed to be developing at a greater pace than those in Swedish.

Like Kesu, Jessie had a positive outlook on life. Her ambition was to gain matching professional employment, and she hoped to work in business administration. In addition to members of her partner's family, Jessie's social contacts included a cousin who had moved to Sweden several years previously, and who had started a family. Jessie enjoyed spending time with her cousin and her cousin's children, greatly appreciating the opportunity to speak in her mother tongue. Even though Jessie developed communication skills that enabled her to interact in Swedish in everyday situations, it was only towards the end of the research period that she and her partner switched from speaking English with one another to speaking Swedish. Similarly, most of the interviews took place in English, and it was only at the end of the period that interviews were conducted in Swedish.

Like Kesu, Jessie valued opportunities to enjoy outdoor life. She enjoyed visiting the local gym and a large multisport centre. Jessie was an avid watcher of American and Korean TV dramas. In the cold and dark days of winter, and during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic (between April and June), Jessie would spend her free time watching streamed TV series. While this was great fun, she was also aware that it could help her develop language skills. She would often select and focus on the Swedish subtitles when watching her favourite series. Sometimes she would also watch Swedish and Norwegian TV series, in these cases focusing on the English subtitles.

## **Maria**

Like Jessie, Maria moved to Sweden to join her partner. In her late twenties, Maria had spent her childhood and early adult life in a country in the Middle East. After graduating from high school, she attended university in a major city. Here, she gained a bachelor's degree in management, and a master's degree in management psychology. During her university education, Maria had supported herself by working part-time

in a pharmacy, and later for an insurance company. It was towards the end of her education that she met her husband, a Swedish national whose family had emigrated from the same region some 30 years previously. Deciding that she and her husband would be better placed if they lived together in Sweden, Maria applied for a residence permit and joined him in Sweden in the early summer of 2019.

The couple lived together in a modest home owned by Maria's husband, a university graduate who had professional employment with a public agency. Mostly, Maria and her husband would socialise with his family. They also enjoyed meals out at local restaurants, and visits to a local gym. At home, Maria and her husband mostly spoke Arabic, occasionally switching to English. While members of her husband's extended family spoke both Swedish and Arabic, initially Maria only spoke Arabic in family social contexts. In other situations, Maria communicated in English. However, Maria's Swedish developed quickly. By the end of the research period, she mostly communicated in Swedish in family and social occasions, when visiting shops and restaurants and when using public services.

Like Kesu and Jessie, Maria was a conscientious language learner. While waiting for her residence application to be granted, she too had begun learning Swedish, making use of YouTube and the *Rosetta Stone* online language programme. Maria was always attentive in class, sitting at the front of the classroom whenever possible. She came across as being confident in speaking Swedish and was always willing to engage in discussions in small groups and in whole class interaction. Of all the project participants, Maria's progress was the most rapid. From an early point, email and text correspondence took place in Swedish. By the end of the period, interviews took place almost entirely in Swedish. Maria's long-term goal was to gain employment that matched her educational qualifications, and that could offer her the opportunity for a professional career in Sweden.

## **Olivia**

Olivia, who was in her mid-twenties, had been in Sweden for over a year before she enrolled on the SFI course. From a small town in a country in southern Europe, Olivia had spent periods of her life in different parts of the country. Leaving school, she moved to a provincial city to study for an undergraduate degree (in fashion design), and later to a larger city to do her master's degree (in fashion management). With her education complete, she moved once again, this time to live with her partner in one of the country's biggest cities. Fond of foreign travel, and with a cosmopolitan outlook, Olivia had spent numerous summers as a teenager in the UK and Ireland enrolled at various language schools. During her undergraduate studies Olivia had taken a year out to spend time in London, enjoying life, and working in shops and restaurants.

Olivia came to Sweden after her partner had gained a place on an international master's programme and, thereafter, a job as an engineer with a prominent high-tech company. As a co-moving partner, Olivia was not perturbed by the move to Sweden; she felt that there would be excellent opportunities to develop her own career. Shortly after arrival, Olivia gained a fixed-term trainee contract with an up-and-coming Swedish fashion brand. For Olivia and her partner, the language of their respective workplaces was English. With English widely used in Sweden, Olivia had not experienced relocation to northern Europe as particularly challenging.

After this initial year, Olivia began to contemplate the possibility of a longer-term future in Sweden. Rather than seeking full-time employment, she shifted focus and began to work as a freelance designer, her aim being to study Swedish on a parallel basis. In the medium term, her plan was to seek permanent employment, or a place on an international master's programme in fashion design.

However, as time moved on, Olivia began to become disillusioned with her situation. While she loved Swedish design, and enjoyed many aspects of the Scandinavian lifestyle, she found that the medium-sized town in which she and her partner were living was limiting, and that it did not provide the opportunities for creative expression which she sought. While the couple had many friends, they were nearly all from other countries, meaning that Olivia found herself living in an international community, with little contact with speakers of Swedish. This meant that she could sometimes experience frustration with a situation where both her career and her language skills were not progressing in the way that she had hoped. When the Covid-19 crisis triggered a downturn in the international economy, her partner's company was badly affected. By the late spring of 2020 he had been informed that his contract would not be extended. When he was offered a job by a company in their home country, the couple decided to return home, and Olivia left Sweden in the summer of 2020.

Although an easy-going and sociable person, Olivia tended to be quiet in the classroom. Living in a social circle mostly comprised of people with international backgrounds, she had few opportunities to develop her Swedish, and found herself using English in nearly all communication situations. While Olivia continued her studies up until the summer recess, she did not manage to successfully complete the SFI programme. Throughout the period – both at Pinewood and in the interviews – communication took place almost entirely in English.

### **Pranisha**

With a husband working as an engineer in the high-tech sector, Pranisha too was a co-mover. When her husband was recruited by a multinational company to join a software design team based in Sweden,

the couple relocated from their home country in South Asia. With a post-graduate degree in chemistry, and employment experience from the high-tech industry, where she had worked in software development, Pranisha recognised that the move to Sweden also presented opportunities for her own career development. Like her husband, who was able to move from one high-tech project to another, Pranisha saw a bright future in Sweden, with many opportunities to work within her field of specialisation.

Initially, Pranisha's husband had moved to Sweden alone. Then, once he had settled in and found an apartment for the family, Pranisha and the couple's new-born daughter followed. Intending to make Sweden a permanent home, the couple decided that Pranisha would continue her career in Sweden once family commitments made this possible. As a first stage of this plan, and once their child had begun preschool, Pranisha enrolled on the SFI programme at Pinewood.

Pranisha was a conscientious student and made good progress in her learning. Although quiet in class, she was confident communicating in Swedish. She interacted with the teacher and with other students without apprehension. Brought up in a multilingual environment, and having attended English medium schools, Pranisha explained that she liked languages, and that she enjoyed the process of learning a new language. In addition to English and her mother tongue, Pranisha spoke three other languages, with varying degrees of fluency. At home, Pranisha and her husband spoke a regional language, occasionally mixing this with English. One of the reasons she liked Swedish, Pranisha explained, was because she could recognise similarities with English. From an early stage she understood that English could be a resource when learning Swedish.

However, like many other parents in a similar situation, Pranisha's studies were interrupted with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Electing to keep her daughter at home in this period of uncertainty, Pranisha found it difficult to find time for study. Wanting to devote her full energies to her studies, but realising that this would not be possible, she decided to take a break from the programme, and deregistered in April 2020.

## **Sabrina**

Born and brought up in a country in the eastern part of the European Union, when she relocated to Sweden Sabrina was in her late twenties. Having progressed through her home country's school system, Sabrina started a university programme. However, having no financial support, she had to combine full-time study with a job. This proved to be very difficult. Seeing few prospects in her home country, even with a university degree, Sabrina decided to discontinue her studies. She moved to another EU country where members of her family had also settled. Spending most of her twenties in this country, Sabrina became a fluent speaker of the language.

She established a career in the hospitality industry, working in customer services. It was here that she met her husband. This was a happy time for Sabrina, and she described herself as being content and enjoying life in a country that she loved. However, with the progressive worsening of the European economy, it became increasingly difficult for Sabrina and her husband to make ends meet. Because Sabrina had relatives in Sweden, and with her family promising to help the couple to get started, they decided to relocate, making the move in late 2016. On arrival in Sweden, Sabrina and her husband quickly found employment. While her husband got a job working for a municipality, Sabrina worked for a privately operated domestic services company. The couple bought an apartment and, having established themselves, started a family.

Following maternity leave, Sabrina decided not to go straight back to work. Rather, she wanted to spend time learning Swedish. While a lack of Swedish had not previously been a problem – her work did not demand much interpersonal interaction, and she was able to get by in everyday interactions using English – Sabrina wanted to learn the language. Deeply committed to creating a good life for her children, Sabrina wanted to make sure that she could be actively involved in all aspects of their education and upbringing. While her dream was to one day gain a professional qualification that would enable her to work as a preschool teacher, she was not sure whether this would be possible. The family would need her income, at least while the children were growing up.

Throughout the period when she was enrolled at Pinewood, Sabrina remained in two minds about whether formal learning was the right direction to take. She felt frustrated by what she experienced to be a lack of progress in her learning. Her husband joked with her that he was learning more Swedish driving a truck than she was on the SFI programme. While Sabrina was confident speaking Swedish, and had good communication skills, her grammar and writing were less advanced. She felt this was probably due to her previous success in learning languages in everyday contexts, becoming fluent in the other European language she had acquired as an adult without having been enrolled in formal education.

When the Covid-19 situation worsened in Sweden, Sabrina was faced with a similar situation as Pranisha. She too felt that she could no longer keep her children in day-care, and she decided to put her studies on hold. Her plan was to stay home with her children and, whenever possible, to pick up work doing contract cleaning in the evenings and at night.

## **Titly**

Titly, who was in her late twenties, was a qualified physician. Born and brought up in a country in South Asia, she had studied medicine for seven years, qualifying in 2017 with a specialty in general surgery. Like many professional women in her home country, once she had gained

her qualification Titly got married. At the time of their marriage, Titly's husband was a graduate student at a university in Sweden. Following the wedding celebrations, and without having had an opportunity to begin medical practice, Titly left to join her husband. Titly found relocation to Sweden to be challenging. Not only was she separated from her family, but she also found it difficult being away from medicine, which had been part of her life for the previous seven years. She longed for the time when she could work in the profession that she loved, and to which she had devoted so many years of intensive study.

The time when Titly arrived in Sweden coincided with great pressure on the SFI system. Finding it difficult to secure a place on a programme, Titly enrolled instead on an English medium international master's programme in medical science. During the first months of their marriage, the couple lived in one of Sweden's bigger cities. They enjoyed the opportunities that this offered. In their free time the couple often travelled in Europe, sometimes meeting friends from their home country. Upon completion of his degree, her husband was recruited by a multinational company, and he began work in a research department developing 5G technologies. This involved a move to another city, meaning that Titly was not able to continue with her degree.

While the future looked bright for her husband, Titly's own career opportunities hinged on passing the requisite language exams that would enable her to practice as a surgeon. As a consequence of relocating to another part of Sweden after her husband had been headhunted, and because of the pressure on the SFI system, Titly continued to find it hard to enrol on a language programme. Frustrated in having to wait for a place, and with her husband often returning home from work late in the evening, Titly decided to apply for unskilled work. Finding it easy to get a job, she worked at a pizza delivery company, becoming the supervisor for a team of workers mostly comprised of young people from Sweden and English-speaking migrants. Later, she complemented this job with another part-time job working in a boutique owned by a woman from her home country.

Eventually, Titly was able to embark on the process of learning Swedish. This involved parallel study on two programmes, the SFI programme at Pinewood and a nationally provided programme specially designed for medical professionals. This parallel learning solution was far from ideal. Schedules often collided, and Titly found it difficult to juggle the two courses. This was additionally complicated by the teachers on the specialist programme being unable (or unwilling) to make accommodations. Titly also found the differences in the level and the focus of the two courses to be frustrating. While the tempo of the SFI programme could sometimes feel unduly slow, she experienced the specialist programme to be at a high level. Moreover, being the only female student, the youngest person on the programme and the only person not to have

any experience of post-qualification practice, Titly often felt that she was unfairly treated, discriminated against on all these counts.

The challenges of balancing the two study paths, and the discriminatory practices that she experienced on the medical programme, meant that Titly was often disillusioned. She felt that she was being held back, and that she was not making the progress with Swedish which she had hoped for. She found it frustrating not only to see how other students had succeeded, but also how friends in her home country had begun their careers in medical practice. Towards the end of the research period, Titly and her husband moved again, and she transferred from Pinewood to another SFI programme. Even though Titly had developed communication skills that easily enabled her to engage in everyday conversations, her writing skills had not developed to a similar degree, and at the end of the research period, she had not been able to successfully complete the SFI programme.

### **Wafaa**

Wafaa, her husband and their young children arrived in Sweden in 2018. In her early thirties, Wafaa was born and brought up in a country in the Middle East. Following upper secondary education, Wafaa enrolled at university, successfully completing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in biomedical science. Because of the precarious situation in their home country, Wafaa and her husband first moved to another Arabic-speaking country. Here, they were able to establish themselves in professional employment that matched their qualifications. Wafaa worked in a hospital as a laboratory scientist. In addition to her clinical work, Wafaa was also involved in the collegial and academic supervision of junior members of staff. However, being migrants, and lacking employment security, the couple's situation was precarious, and they experienced varying forms of discrimination. Following events that had put the family's life at risk, Wafaa and her husband decided to seek asylum in Sweden. Arriving in Sweden, Wafaa's husband became actively involved in working for support networks for asylum-seekers in similar situations to their own. Both he and Wafaa became engaged in advocating for the rights of asylum-seekers. Shortly after arriving in Sweden, Wafaa and her husband became parents for the third time.

Wafaa was an exceptional language learner. Conscientious in her study – spending hours doing additional work – she organised her learning in a systematic manner. In accordance with a self-designed model, she first embarked on mastering the basics of Swedish grammar. Thereafter, with a knowledge of grammar and syntax as a base, she began the work of building a vocabulary. While Wafaa fully recognised that this approach could mean that she was not initially as fluent as other students – with the consequence that she was generally quiet in class – she was confident that a solid base would be of greater value in the long term.

With three young children, Wafaa had little time for self-study. This meant that she would begin work learning Swedish after the children's bedtime. Often, she would study from 8pm until around midnight. However, she did not see this as a duty or an obligation. Rather, she described being happy to be engaged in something that gave her pleasure. She enjoyed the process of learning a new language, and she gained satisfaction from the progress that she made.

Like the other women, Wafaa's long-term goal was to gain professional employment in Sweden. By the end of the research period, she had successfully completed the SFI programme, and was hoping not only to continue on to study higher-level courses in Swedish, but also to enrol on a postgraduate (English-mediated) programme in advanced biomedicine. Wafaa's greatest wish was that the family would be able to remain permanently in Sweden. She explained that the biggest source of motivation was the desire to be able to support her children in their upbringing by being able to communicate with their friends and teachers. By the end of the research period, all the interviews were conducted in Swedish. Wafaa described how she would generally communicate in Swedish when opportunities arose, with English functioning as a back-up when needed.

## **Part 3**

# **Stories of Interactions in Community Contexts**



## 6 Developmental Dynamics: Kesu, Maria and Jessie

In qualitative longitudinal (QL) studies, researchers need ‘to work across cases, themes and time and, thereafter, to shape the presentation of findings’ (Neale, 2020: 117). Because ‘researchers working with very small samples, or using a psycho-social lens are more likely to structure their findings around individual cases, within which thematic and temporal insights are embedded’ (Neale, 2020: 117), in this and the next three chapters cases are grouped in relation to the challenges connected to participants’ migration circumstances. In this chapter, we focus on the experiences of the three participants – Jessie, Kesu and Maria – who had migrated to Sweden to join a partner. The partners, who were all speakers of Swedish, were strongly supportive of the women’s efforts to develop TL skills. Nevertheless, Swedish was not frequently spoken in their homes. Even though Kesu’s husband encouraged her in her learning, and would tell her the names of things in Swedish, they communicated in a shared first language (L1), a regional language in their home country. When Maria and her husband spoke at home, they did so in Arabic, occasionally with English mixed in. Jessie and her partner only spoke English, at least in the beginning. In wider social and family-based circles, Maria and Jessie could often find themselves in Swedish-speaking environments. However, in the beginning at least, people spoke with them in English (Jessie), and in English and Arabic (Maria). For example, when Jessie went out with her husband and his friends, they would speak with her in English. Members of Maria’s husband’s family communicated in both Swedish and Arabic. Depending on their interaction partners, they would often code-switch between the two languages. When speaking with Maria, family members used Arabic. Jessie’s partner’s parents only spoke Swedish, and he would translate for her.

While each of the women had been able to enrol at Pinewood within a few months after arriving in Sweden, none of them was a complete beginner. In addition to encountering Swedish at home, and in family and social contexts, all three had begun the process of learning Swedish while waiting for their residence permits. They had continued to work with self-study methods up to – and beyond – the start of the Swedish for

Immigrants (SFI) programme. At the same time, all three were relieved when, on arriving in the Course C reception class, they discovered that English was used for classroom meta-communication.

All three women were ambitious. They saw the SFI programme as a first step on a journey that would lead to opportunities to develop their careers and to become established in Sweden. They were committed to completing the C and D courses as quickly as possible, and they looked forward to progressing onwards through the educational system, and to become eligible candidates for matching employment. Wanting this initial stage to pass as quickly as possible, they would spend large parts of the day not taken up with lessons working with Swedish, either at home or at the college.

At the beginning of the research period, all three women were able to communicate in Swedish in a basic way. They could respond to a teacher's questions about, for example, the weather, or the seasons of the year. They interacted with other students in small groups, and could ask and answer simple questions about the time of the day, and likes and dislikes. As they progressed from the C Course reception class to the C Course continuation class, their confidence grew. At this point, all three women became increasingly willing to communicate in interactions in the classroom. However, on arrival to the D class, they met with a shock. In the D class, many students were close to the point where they would finish the SFI programme. They were able to communicate confidently in Swedish on a wide range of topics. While Maria rapidly regained her confidence – quickly coming to realise that she was at least as good as many of the students who had been in the D class for a longer period – Jessie and Kesu were both quiet on arrival. While both made good progress with their studies, the larger sized class, and the presence of many linguistically confident students, meant that they mostly spoke when responding to a teacher's question, or during group work.

After just a couple of weeks in the new class, Maria had become recognised as one of the best students. She frequently contributed to class discussions, and even though there were many Arabic speakers in the class, she would often speak in Swedish in informal interactions between activities and during breaks. In the D class, national tests were periodically offered to students who the teachers felt had reached a level where the skills stipulated in the SFI curriculum had been obtained. In these tests, there were two speaking tasks, one focused on production and one on interaction. Both tests assessed the student's ability to communicate on issues related to everyday circumstances, societal issues and working life, and in formal and informal situations. Maria took and passed the national test in April. Kesu and Jessie took the test on a later occasion, both passing in June.

## Patterns of Development

While for all three women the research period saw a shift from mostly speaking English in community interactions to mostly speaking Swedish, the development of Swedish willingness to communicate (WTC) patterned differently. For Kesu, the process of becoming increasingly willing to communicate in Swedish was gradual. For Maria, however, the development of Swedish WTC was marked by a series of thresholds. At differing times, sudden shifts from being unwilling to willing to communicate in Swedish took place in the varying discourse contexts in which Maria was a participant. For both women, Swedish WTC had developed to a degree where, at the end of the research period, English had become a fallback in most discourse contexts, mostly used in complex transactions when there was a need for clarification or elaboration.

For Jessie, willingness to communicate in Swedish was to a large degree conditioned by the response of an interlocutor. Depending on the interlocutor's behaviour within a communication event, she could shift from being generally willing to communicate in Swedish to being generally unwilling and vice versa. While Jessie would often initiate and continue a conversation in Swedish, if an interaction developed in a way that made her feel uncomfortable or insecure, she would, if possible, switch to English. Even in situations where she felt confident, and had herself initiated and continued communication in Swedish, she recognised how she would have preferred to communicate in English, and that she would have done so but for her determination to become proficient in Swedish.

The differing patterns of change in WTC were reflected in our interviews. From an early stage, Kesu wanted to speak Swedish. From the second interview onwards, she began to initiate interactions in Swedish. Over time, shifts back to English became less frequent. By the time of the fifth interview (05 02 2020), shifts had become highly infrequent. For Maria, the pattern was different. From the outset, Maria was adamant that she wanted to speak in English and that she would inform me when she was 'ready' to conduct the interview in Swedish. This did not happen until the sixth interview (12 02 2020) when, at the beginning of the interview, Maria announced that she wanted to do it in Swedish:

### Interview 6 (12 02 2020)

A: So, if you could just walk me through, kind of like tell me about, you know, things in your life that have involved language really, from sort of like the beginning of the weekend through to yesterday, when you did your eye test at the opticians, and you were talking with the study counsellor here.

- M: Yes. *But I will start by saying that I am going to try only speaking in Swedish, because you said to me that next time you decide if you want to speak in Swedish or English. And if there is a possibility to talk to you, then I must take it, that possibility.*
- A: *Yes, you should do that.*
- M: *Yes.*
- A: *I think that's great. But if it feels that, 'No, I can talk about that better in English', it is fine to switch over.*
- M: *Yes. Of course.*
- A: *Yes.*
- M: *OK. So, a lot of things have happened to me. So many things have happened to me since the last time.*

This interview, and all subsequent interviews, took place in Swedish. What is noteworthy is that, up until this point, all the interviews had taken place in English. Yet, from observing Maria's language use in the classroom, and considering the ease with which she was able to conduct the interviews from this time onwards, it was clear that she would have been able to communicate in Swedish in our conversations at a much earlier point. However, as we shall see, for Maria the shift from being mostly willing to speak in English to being mostly willing to speak in Swedish was quite abrupt. Like Clara, the participant in our study on person–context dynamics (Henry *et al.*, 2021b; see also Chapter 3), the pattern of change was notably discontinuous. In each discourse domain, a watershed point was reached where Maria's propensity to initiate communication shifted from nearly always beginning an interaction in English, to nearly always beginning an interaction in Swedish.<sup>1</sup>

For Jessie, the pattern of development for English WTC and Swedish WTC was different again. The first interview when she spoke Swedish was the seventh in the series (conducted in April). Here, and in subsequent interviews, Jessie would often shift back to English, for example when we talked about things in which she was interested, such as TV series, life in her home country and her ambitions. However, when she told stories of events that had taken place, or talked about course assignments and exams, she tended to use Swedish. While Jessie's WTC fluctuated more than the other two women, by the end of the research period, she had shifted to preferring to mostly communicate in Swedish, carrying out the two final interviews in May and June almost entirely in Swedish.

### **Kesu: Gradual Change**

Even though Kesu had been learning Swedish while she waited for her residence permit, she was taken aback by the experience of hearing Swedish spoken around her when she finally arrived in the country. With her husband as a positive role model – his own determination to become

proficient in Swedish meaning that he had been able to establish himself within a relatively short period, having acquired a job and a house by the time that Kesu arrived – Kesu was apprehensive about the task awaiting her. She was also keen to get started:

[When] I came here, I don't, I didn't, I can't hear the Swedish people when they speak. I can't even take one word. Wow. Whoo. I was so confused then. It was so stressful for me at that first time, and then I was asking, 'How long will it take to start this language?'. (Interview 1: 29 11 2019)

Like the other women, Kesu was surprised at how English could be used as means of communication. With her husband at work, and being curious to explore her new surroundings, Kesu was delighted to find that English provided a resource in her forays beyond the home, and that it enabled her to function in almost any situation in which she found herself. Having grown up in a multilingual environment where, in addition to her mother tongue (a regional language) and the national language, Arabic could often be encountered, Kesu had an awareness of how languages could be used in different contexts, and for varying communication purposes.

At the same time, developing skills in Swedish had been Kesu's main priority from the outset. Consequently, one of the biggest challenges she faced in this early period involved forcing herself to leave the comfort zone that English provided. As Kesu explained, her ambition was to experience the same sense of security when speaking Swedish as she did when speaking English:

#### Interview 1 (29 11 2019)

- A: You know, with people outside, or with me now, or whenever you speak English, how do you feel? Do you feel confident, do you feel competent, do you feel secure? Or do you feel a little bit nervous or anxious? How do you feel when you are using English?
- K: When I use English, I feel more confident. Because English is the language that helped me most in every aspect of my life. And I hope that Swedish should, could be like that. I hope so. But with English, I feel confident. Because I know the words, I know that I can understand everything. So I feel confident.
- A: OK. How do you feel about Swedish then?
- K: OK [laughs]. About Swedish? I can't feel 100% confident. But I think, well, it's developing, the confidence is developing. Not at a higher stage, but it's developing. [laughs]

- A: Mmm. If we think about any kind of development, sometimes development can go slow, and sometimes it can go very quick. Where do you think your sort of sense of confidence in Swedish is now? Is it kind of developing slowly, or is it developing quickly at the moment?
- K: Ah, this moment it is developing quickly. [laughs]
- A: Right, right.
- K: Because, I don't know, mmm, if it is from me, or from the situation, I don't know. But it is developing quickly. I hope to be like with English. To be confident.

With her experiences as a multilingual language learner (Kesu learnt English and Arabic in school) and as a teacher of other languages (she had taught English as a means of supporting herself while waiting for her residence permit), Kesu was aware that developing communication skills would be a process that would proceed situation by situation, and that it would be fuelled by own efforts and initiatives. This she illustrated in a story of an incident that had taken place a week previously, when she had been on her way to college:

#### Story One 'At the bus station' (Interview 1: 29 11 2019)

- K: Last week I was in the bus station. Then one man, a Swedish man, came to me and said, he asked me, '*Can you help me? You have a mobile?*' I said, '*I can help you*'. '*Em, do you speak Swedish?*', he said. Because I think he understood my words. '*I can*', I said. So, he, '*Eh can you, can you see when the [city]-bus will come? When will come the [city] bus?*' And I, 'OK', I said. So, I searched for the time and the bus number, then I told him. Wow! He said he was so happy because I helped him. I started to help. [laughs] So, wow!
- A: How did that feel for you?
- K: Wow! I was so happy just at that moment. I called to my husband [laughs]. I told him that, 'Oh wow, I'm so happy today because I've started to help Swedish people!'. 'Wow!' he said. And he was so happy also.
- A: I am sure.
- K: So, I was so happy that, wow, I've started to, here, yes.

While this story shows how Kesu was willing to capitalise on opportunities that might arise spontaneously in everyday situations, it also points to an awareness of how she could craft situations that would enable her to practise Swedish. However, as she describes in the following story, sometimes the seeking out of opportunities for TL communication could put her in potentially uncomfortable situations:

## Story Two ‘Charging the travel pass’ (Interview 1: 29 11 2019)

- K: I want to talk. My ability? I can hear *well*. I can understand good. But the main problem is, I have to get the words out. How? Then I said, ‘Keeping quiet is not developing me’. So, I have to, I have to say anything. I have to say it wrong. So, then I can develop. So, I can upgrade my *speech*.
- A: Right. So, do you think, do you kind of like, decide to yourself? You make the decision?
- K: Yes.
- A: ‘OK, I’m going to take a risk, I’m going to take a chance’?
- K: Yes.
- A: ‘Because if I don’t, if I remain quiet’?
- K: Yes. Well today is one example, so when,
- A: Yes, give me some examples.
- K: The first time when I travel with the bus. Well, I know, I can talk with English. I don’t think that my Swedish can... I was thinking then, the Swedish words. The language. So, then I called to my husband. I said, ‘I want to pay for the bus. Can you communicate with him?’. I gave him the phone. And he was communicating. But I was feeling so shy. Because I was able to talk. I have a mouth, I have the [words]. So why? No, I shouldn’t use this all the time [points to the phone]. I have to do my best. I said then, afterwards, I go to the bus driver, and I asked him ‘*can you help me?*’. ‘OK’, he said. ‘OK. *I want to charge the card for a month*’, I said. And he understood. ‘Wow!’, I said. I was so happy because I gave him the information and he understood. Wow!
- A: Right.
- K: ‘OK’, he said.
- A: And had you, had you practised this before you said it to him? Had you practised?
- K: Yes.
- A: OK, ‘this is what I need to say, this is what I’m going to say’?
- K: Yes. I have practised that. I have, eh, see, I have checked it all. So, I have to say like this, *yes*. Then I go. I said it. He asked me for how long, ‘*How long for?*’. ‘*For a month*’, I said. ‘OK, that’s good’, he said, ‘OK’. Then I was so happy because I had started to communicate with Swedish people.

Throughout the research period, Kesu told stories of everyday events where – planned, or on the spur of the moment – she had made the decision to communicate in Swedish. As well as situations on buses, Kesu also told stories about how she had asked for things in shops (for example, flowers of a particular colour), how she had collected prescriptions

from the pharmacy (and where she had needed to ask questions), and how she had made telephone calls in connection with enquiries about study benefits.

As is apparent from Stories 1 and 2, Kesu's state of communicative self-confidence, and her desire to communicate with a specific person, meant that she could respond in Swedish to a question that she understood (Story One), and could mentally rehearse a communication situation prior to enacting it (Story Two). While these transactions might seem trivial, and are rapidly concluded, the impact on Kesu's second language (L2) self-confidence and her interpersonal motivation are readily apparent.

In addition to these and many other everyday stories that Kesu recounted, she also told a series of stories that involved experiences when attending an antenatal clinic (Kesu became a first-time mother shortly after the end of the research period). The first of these visits took place in December. Thereafter, and throughout our interviews in the following months, Kesu told stories about consultations that took place at the clinic. In these stories, she described the choices she had made about the language in which communication should be enacted. Through the telling of these stories, the interview became a place where it became possible for Kesu to reflect on her developing L2 self-confidence, her communicative competence, and the changing role that English played in fulfilling communication needs. Not only could a visit described in a current story be contrasted with a visit told in a previous story, but since these consultations continued regularly throughout a period when WTC development was taking place, it was also possible to speculate about how a subsequent visit to the clinic might play out.

In the first of these stories – told following her first visit to the antenatal clinic – Kesu described how, in advance of the visit, she had been thinking about which language to use:

**Story Three 'A first visit to the antenatal clinic' (Interview 2: 06 12 2019)**

K: First, when I was thinking to go there, I was thinking that, 'Which language do I have to use? Is it better to use English or *Swedish*?'. Then, *Yes*, I don't have any problem to communicate in English, so I put English here. I have also a second choice, *a little Swedish, but I can* communicate a little bit. So, when I go there, well, there was a cleaner, a woman. When I saw her, I asked her, in Swedish, I asked her, '*Excuse me, will I meet the doctor today?*'. *I*, just to get some help. Then she said, '*Yes, yes, exactly, they are at breakfast now, so you, you have to go out and wait, then the doctor will check you*'. OK, I understood well, and I was so happy then because it was my first, well,

not my first time, but the conversation was all *in Swedish*. So I was confident that when, that whatever the doctor asked me, or wanted any information, I will give it to her *in Swedish*. If it gets hard for me, I will use English. Then the doctor came. She called me, and we go. Then she *spoke*. Oh, she speaks fast! So I get confused then. Then she says quickly, 'I can speak English, can I use English, *or?*' she said. 'Yes, we can use English', I said. Because I don't want to waste time. Because this is an efficient place. And I have to understand all the information, and I have to say the right thing, what I want, and that I have. So, she said, 'That's OK, we will take it in English'. So, we have a good communication in English. Then her assistant, she has an assistant, then she said I have to wait for five minutes, then the specialist will meet me. Then the doctor came, *and* I think she told her, she got the information that I need to speak English. Then she also asked me, 'Do you want to speak English or *Swedish*'. I said 'English, but I have a little *Swedish*, I can do it', I said. 'OK, we can go with English'. I was so surprised. When *Swedish people* speak *Swedish*, they speak fast. When they speak English, they, I don't know why, they speak slowly. Is it difficult for them? Or they need the other person to understand? I don't know. But it was very good for me, I get good conversation. When we have finished it at last, she has asked me to, if I want, she can make, we can have an appointment in *January*, and if I want, she can fix an interpreter. 'No', I say, 'I don't want an interpreter. I am communicating with you well'. Also, I tell her that, 'well, I am studying the Swedish language, so I will have a little Swedish, *hopefully* in *January*. I will come to you with my developed language', I say. '*That's great*', she says. 'So can I try a little *Swedish*', I said. She says yes. She was motivating me with *Swedish*.  
Yes.

A: Was she nice and gave you lots of time?

K: Yes. She was good. Also, we were understanding each other very well. Then, if there, she gave me the medicine to take from the pharmacy. Then I go to the pharmacy, the pharmacist was, I didn't push her to speak English, when she asked. She started with *Swedish*. I reply with *Swedish*. Then she gave me the tablets and I needed to ask her how. She told me to take once a day.

A: And this conversation is in Swedish?

K: In Swedish.

A: Yes.

K: But I had got one question, that, in which time, is it in the morning *or* at *evening*, *or* in the night? I asked her.

A: And you asked her that question in Swedish?

- K: In Swedish. I said, ‘*What time?*’ She said, ‘I don’t know’. She didn’t understand, I think. So then I gave her a choice. I changed the question, ‘Is it, *is it in the morning or evening or at night?*’ She said, ‘It will be better if you take it in the morning after your breakfast’.
- A: *She said it in Swedish?* She said in Swedish, yes?
- K: Yes. ‘But it should be after food’, she said. I get more confident then. There’s no English, *it is in Swedish*. I tried to ask, she understands, and replies to me. So, I was so happy. Then, that’s all. I paid, went home.
- A: I can understand you felt happy and successful.
- K: Yeah. *So happy*. Because the first time when I came here, I was not confident. If I was going to an office or anywhere, I was not going alone. I had to take my husband. My husband get permission from his work, and he was going. But he was motivating me to be alone, ‘Because you have English’. But I was hearing that *Swedish* people, there are some people who cannot, don’t need to speak English, so this was not motivating me. So, ‘I have to learn their language’, I said.
- A: Yes.
- K: You see the first time this is, when I am communicating alone.
- A: Was this today? Was that the first time that you went on your own?
- K: *Yes*.

In a story which spans over four separate communication events – the interaction with the cleaner, the two interaction sequences with the medical staff and, finally, the transaction with the pharmacist – we see how Kesu’s self-confidence to communicate in Swedish develops during her time at the clinic. Having successfully accomplished the interaction with the cleaner, the satisfaction that this generates seems to boost Kesu’s self-confidence and her desire to continue in a similar manner when communicating with the medical staff (‘I was confident that when, that whatever the doctor asked me, or wanted any information, I will give it to her *in Swedish*’). We see also that Kesu’s optimism about being able to communicate with the doctor in Swedish is grounded in the belief that, should it prove necessary, she will be able to shift to English (‘If it gets hard for me, I will use English’). However, when she meets the doctor, and the doctor begins to talk to her, Kesu has to immediately recalibrate her expectations. When the doctor recognises that Kesu doesn’t understand, and suggests that they switch to English, Kesu immediately agrees, the justification being that the transaction needs to be efficiently accomplished (‘Because I don’t want to waste time. Because this is an efficient place’). This sets the tone for the second consultation, which also takes place in English.

Even though both consultations had taken place in English, Kesu understands that with time, and her developing linguistic competence, subsequent consultations will provide opportunities to communicate in Swedish. Refusing the offer of an interpreter, Kesu sets herself the challenge of using Swedish at the next appointment by saying that her language will have developed further by this stage. As Kesu describes it, the prospect of being able to communicate with a person who encourages her to speak Swedish – but who is also happy to shift between English and Swedish – has a strong motivational effect. It means that when the consultation is over, and she goes to the pharmacy, she has the self-confidence to initiate communication in Swedish. As she explains, she carried out the transaction entirely in Swedish.

A clue to understanding the story that Kesu tells of her first attempts at independently carrying out a series of important transactions is buried at the end. Almost as an afterthought, Kesu describes how her husband had encouraged her to visit the clinic on her own: ‘he was motivating me to be alone, “Because you have English”’. While the knowledge that English provides a means of conducting the transactions with the medical staff can generate the self-confidence to be independent, confidence is enhanced *in situ* when the medical staff validate the strategy of combining English and Swedish. If, as MacIntyre (2020) has argued, WTC is soft-assembled at particular moments in time – a specific behavioural intention emerging from the interactions of multiple influences that lead a person to having something to say to somebody, and having the self-confidence to do so *at that moment* – the situations recounted in this story reveal the influence of having other potential communication options at the point of intention. In simple transactions (i.e. with the cleaner and the pharmacist), English functions as a fallback resource (to be used in the event of communication breakdown). The effect is that Kesu’s willingness to communicate in Swedish is enhanced. In complex transactions (i.e. with the medical staff), a similar function is evident. However, in high-stakes interactions, the availability of the resource is dependent on the parties sharing a ‘translanguaging ideology’ (Li & Zhu, 2013). This is further revealed in the following two stories:

#### Story Four ‘A consultation with the midwife’ (Interview 4: 10 01 2020)

K: *I met with my midwife. I had a time at eight o’clock. So, the first thing that she asked me, she asked me if I wanted an interpreter. So, I said ‘No, I do not want an interpreter, I am going to do it myself. And if I don’t understand, then I’m going to use English’. ‘OK’, she said, ‘That’s good, I’ll do that too’. So that was good. We agreed. That was today, this morning. And we spoke about everything in Swedish.*

A: Wow!

- K: *So, she asked me, 'How long have you been in Sweden?'. And I answered, 'Almost seven months'. Wow! So, in such a short time you are speaking Swedish? It is, you are very good'. She motivates me more. So, I, I say, 'I have been in Sweden for seven months, but I began SFI in October. So it is almost four months'. So, she was really surprised.*
- A: *Yes, I understand, I can understand.*
- K: *Yes, she said. She said, 'Some people come from [other North African countries]. They have been here for over two years, but they can't speak Swedish'. 'But you have only been here seven months and you can, you can understand, and you can communicate with your doctor yourself, so that's very good', she said.*
- A: *Yes. But it's true. It is fantastic that you can speak so much after only a short time. You are very good.*
- K: *Wow. Thanks!*
- A: *Yes.*
- K: *Now if they, if anybody says these things, I feel like I must do better.*
- A: *I understand.*
- K: *Now, we have a time in April. I, we have a time with my midwife in April. So, I promised her not to use English, only Swedish.*

While at the end of this meeting Kesu sets herself the target of communicating with the midwife in Swedish at the next appointment (in April), it turned out that the development of competence and self-confidence was more rapid than she had anticipated. At the next visit (in February) Kesu confidently initiates communication in Swedish:

#### Story Five 'Another visit to the midwife' (Interview 5: 05 02 2020)

- A: *So, when you were at the antenatal centre, you spoke Swedish? The whole time?*
- K: *Yes. First, we went to the reception. And there we, we gave them the papers, and she said that we had to go to the third floor, room three, and then we met the midwife.*
- A: *She would do the ultrasound?*
- K: *Yes. It was really nice.*
- A: *And everything in Swedish?*
- K: *Yes. Everything in Swedish. But now it's become easy for me to understand, and I can ask if I have anything. It's good for me. Now, it is not like the first time. Now, I only want to speak Swedish.*
- A: *This is interesting, that you say this. Because, er, if we go back to December, which language did you use then?*

- K: *Ehm, the first time, she started with Swedish. But she spoke too quickly for me at that time. So I said, 'We can use English'. Because I want to understand well as it is an important case. So, she said 'OK'. When a Swedish person speaks English, they speak a little more slowly, not quickly like with Swedish. So, I understand her well. And in January, the second time, we used both Swedish and English. But it was good. Now, here, we just use Swedish.*
- A: *Yes, exactly, exactly.*
- K: *But when I meet my midwife again in April, after March, another meeting after a month, it is only going to be in Swedish. I promised. Only Swedish.*
- A: *Ah yes, a promise. You promised.*
- K: *I promised my midwife that in April I will only speak Swedish.*
- A: *OK. And that's the same midwife you had met in December?*
- K: *Yes. December and January.*
- A: *And you gave her a promise?*
- K: *Yes. Swedish. And it will, develop, eh, Swedish.*
- A: *Yes, exactly, exactly.*
- K: *I hope.*
- A: *I'm sure.*

In these stories, Kesu describes interpersonal situations in which she feels secure, and which mean that she is prepared to communicate in Swedish. Similar to the participant in Wang and Mercer's (2021) study on willingness to engage in language use, Kesu is involved in strategic behaviours designed to monitor her progress, to gauge achievement and to set future goals. As the stories reveal, responses received from an interlocutor not only provide an impetus to continue an interaction in Swedish, but additionally function as a means of gaining an external assessment of language development. For people with migrant backgrounds who are learning the language of a host country, progress checks such as these can function as important sources of motivation (Henry *et al.*, 2015; Henry & Davydenko, 2020). Not only do positive interlocutor responses provide recognition of the effort put into language learning, and validation of the progress made, but in the context of continuing relationships they can function to set new targets in the sense of wanting to demonstrate continued progress in subsequent interactions.

In both stories, we see how Kesu's confidence in communicating in Swedish is bolstered by the knowledge that English is a potentially useable resource. Indeed, in Story Four, this possibility is explicitly negotiated with the midwife. Importantly, the midwife is aware of Kesu's goals, and her motivation. She is aware that their meetings provide an important opportunity for Kesu to test her progress, and to develop interactional skills. The importance of the affordances for translanguaging

provided by the midwife's accommodations is sharply evident at the next consultation. When April arrives, and Kesu again visits the antenatal centre, it is not 'her' midwife who she sees, but a new midwife who Kesu had not previously met. As her story reveals, the interaction during this consultation was very different:

**Story Six 'A new midwife' (Interview 9: 29 04 2020)**

K: *The midwife was new. It wasn't my midwife. So, she was not confident to speak with me in Swedish. Because she asked me, 'Is it OK with English or Swedish?' I said that it didn't matter. 'I can understand both. I can use English and I can do it in Swedish'. But she spoke really fast! /.../ She spoke quickly and I was confused. So, when I asked her, she then started to speak English. So I understood. Then we like, we heard the child's heartbeat.*

Of course, this is a very special and joyous occasion for Kesu, hearing the heartbeat of her child for the very first time. However, from a language perspective, we can also understand how the consultation was disappointing. Not only was it not 'her' midwife who Kesu met – meaning that she lost opportunities for further validation in the context of a continuing relationship – but it also became clear that she was not going to have the possibility to speak Swedish.

As we have suggested, in a translanguaging ideology (Li & Zhu, 2013), a breakdown in a TL-mediated interaction can be attributed to an interlocutor's failure to support TL communication (here, the midwife's choice to make exclusive use of English). For Kesu, whose previous consultations at the antenatal centre had largely taken place in Swedish, the impossibility of doing so on this occasion is a result of the new midwife's failure to make accommodations by speaking slowly, and (presumably) her aim of getting the transaction conducted as efficiently as possible.

The translanguaging practices characterising these interactions are negotiated in the context of practice contingencies. In interactions with the first midwife, the midwife's Swedish is intelligible because it is spoken slowly, and with care. With English functioning as a complementary resource, the transaction could be conducted in a way that is maximally beneficial. Because Kesu felt at ease, she could confidently describe her health, and understand the information and advice given by the midwife. With the second midwife, contingencies of efficiency and comprehensibility characterise the interaction. Shortly after the beginning of the consultation, Kesu loses confidence in communicating in Swedish. Even though the interaction continues in English – meaning that she might be better placed to understand what the midwife is saying – Kesu is disappointed in being denied the opportunity to interact in Swedish.

At the next antenatal consultation (in June), Kesu met ‘her’ midwife again:

**Story Seven ‘Meeting the first midwife again’ (Interview 11: 11 06 2020)**

- A: *When you met your midwife, the first midwife, now this Tuesday, did you speak with her directly in Swedish?*
- K: *Yes. She only spoke Swedish, and she spoke a little slowly. And it was perfect. Because I could understand everything. And if I didn’t understand, I must ask. And she only answered in Swedish, and I could understand her well.*
- A: *But how does it feel now, she is going on holiday, she’s on holiday now, that you can’t [meet her]? Because you will meet the other midwife?*
- K: *It is not a problem. Because the other midwife, she, I can communicate with her in a good way. It’s not a problem.*
- A: *Do you think that you are going to speak English with her, or Swedish?*
- K: *I think she will continue. She will continue speaking English. But I will do it with English, Swedish [self-corrects]. But she is not like confident. She. I don’t know. She will just talk. I think that she thinks that I don’t understand very well.*

As Kesu explains, the language she chooses for communication – English or Swedish – depends on the confidence and accommodations of the interlocutor. Because the first midwife speaks slowly, and because she makes clear that if there is anything that Kesu does not understand, she only needs to ask, Kesu is confident in speaking Swedish throughout the consultation.

However, Kesu is also given the information that the midwife would soon be going on summer leave, and that on her next visit, it would be the other midwife who Kesu would meet. Even though the current meeting had been ‘perfect’, and Kesu had been able to ‘understand everything’, she says that she can’t imagine herself communicating in Swedish at the next consultation. Rather, she thinks that she will communicate in English, and that this will be because the other midwife lacks the confidence to allow the interaction to take place in Swedish, as she is concerned that Kesu will not understand.

As Kubanyiova and Yue (2019: 60) have suggested, ‘WTC essentially arises inside a particular human *relationship* rather than in an individual’ (original emphasis). In these circumstances, where WTC also involves making choices about the language in which to communicate, it is not only the nature and qualities of the relationship that influence willingness to enter an interaction; it also involves the ways in which translanguaging *ideologies* are transformed into translanguaging *practices* (Li & Zhu,

2013; Subtirelu, 2014; see also Chapter 4). While in the relationship with the first midwife, an obligation to use English as a flexible resource is jointly constructed, and accommodations of shifts to English function as a fulfilment of a jointly held communicative responsibility, in the second relationship there is no accommodation for flexibility in language use. Rather, the exclusive use of English functions as an indication of a ‘deficiency’ in Kesu’s TL ability (‘she thinks that I don’t understand very well’).

### **Maria: Nongradual Change**

For Kesu, English provided the security that gave her the confidence to communicate in Swedish. When the interactional demands of communication became complex, or where the affordances of a communication event did not support the use of Swedish (a sceptical interlocutor, or an interlocutor who was reluctant to engage in translanguaging practices), Kesu would communicate in English. For Maria, however, English had a different role. In her case, English functioned as a ‘yardstick’ by which she could assess communicative abilities in Swedish. In Wang and Mercer’s (2021) case study of willingness to engage in language learning opportunities beyond the classroom, the participant (Wang) compared the experiences of learning German (the current TL) with English (a previous TL). Similar comparisons where communicative competence in one L2 functions as a referent for another, are illustrated in Henry’s (2010, 2011) work on foreign language learning in secondary and upper secondary contexts. In these studies, English functioned as a benchmark for assessments of communication skills in French, German and Spanish. In a similar way, and through metalinguistic reflections triggered by situational assessments of communication possibilities, Maria compared the functionality of Swedish with the functionality of English.

Of all the participants, Maria was the most confident when interacting in Swedish in the classroom. She was active in class from the start, and consistently volunteered to answer her teachers’ questions. Transferring to the D course, where many students had been learning Swedish for a far longer period, Maria was confident communicating in Swedish. Yet, it was a long time before any of the stories that she told involved communication in Swedish in community contexts. Her sense of being confidently willing to communicate in Swedish in the classroom, but reluctant to do so in other settings – to the point that she would remain silent in situations when she felt it was inappropriate to communicate in English or in Arabic – emerged clearly in the first interview:

#### **Interview 1 (05 12 2019)**

A: Are there any examples of situations where you found English useful? When you first...

M: Maybe in the airport, first. Then every time I go, and every place I visit. Maybe in the *food store*. Today, for example, I posted a letter. So I use English for sure. But usually I go with my husband, and he always speaks with people.

A: Right.

M: But I don't want to rely on him. I want to be independent.

A: Yes, yes. Do you see Swedish as a possibility for being independent? But could you be independent with English, here in Sweden?

M: I can. But it is important also to learn Swedish. I want to be like other people. I'm such. It's strange. But I don't feel shy. But I have to study the language.

/.../

A: You told me before, when we were talking, you said, I think you said the same thing. Something like 'I don't feel shy, but I don't like to speak either'.

M: It's not about not speaking. But I use English in order not to make wrong statements.

A: Right. So, I mean, if you think about the times when you are not with your husband, so you are out doing things while your husband is at work.

M: Yes.

A: OK. And you find yourself in situations where you interact with people, can you tell me about how that is?

M: Actually, no. I don't interact with anyone. I just visit his mother and his sisters.

A: OK, so when you,

M: I don't have friends.

A: Ah, OK. But when you interact with his mother, and his sisters?

M: Yes.

A: How?

M: We speak Arabic.

A: OK.

M: *But his sister, his sisters speak Swedish* with each other.

A: But how about when you talk with his sisters?

M: I listen to them.

A: You listen?

M: Oh. When I talk with them? Oh, we talk in Arabic.

A: OK. How does that feel for you?

M: [sighs] It's OK. But sometimes when I want to write *a message* for them, I write in Swedish.

A: Yes?

M: I've started writing in Swedish.

A: And they respond, they reply to you?

M: Yes.

- A: In Swedish?
- M: Yes.
- A: So, do you feel it is kind of different, communicating in Swedish in writing?
- M: It is better than speaking.
- A: Tell me. Can you tell me? How?
- M: Because before sending the message I can search on Google. If it's right *or* not. But if it is not OK, if I write something wrong. Because then they won't say to me, *or* they won't say something shameful for me. I can say 'OK', to them, 'OK. I want you to correct for me'.
- A: Yes.
- M: But people don't just listen.
- A: Right, right.
- M: So, I can't talk with people in Swedish now.
- A: OK. But earlier on, in our interview, you said 'Hey, shall we speak Swedish? *Shall we speak Swedish?*' *And you spoke Swedish with me.*
- M: Yes. *In school I can speak because I'm learning Swedish now, so they understand. They understand that I am learning.* It is not hard. You, and [teachers], know that we are learning.
- A: Yes.
- M: But other people don't know.
- A: OK. *So, let's say this. If you were to meet me, on the weekend, Saturday or Sunday, at [shopping mall] or in [town] which language, which language do we use? If I say, Hi, Hi!*
- M: Outside the school or at home, I just say *Hello*, and *Thank you*. And other speech is in English.

As Maria emphasised in this and subsequent interviews, her reluctance to communicate in Swedish was not due to timidity in social situations. Nor was it because, as a person, she was shy. Rather, her unwillingness to communicate in Swedish in contexts beyond the classroom is rooted in her desire to protect her personal integrity. Even though, after three months of learning at Pinewood, and untold additional hours of self-study, Maria had become competent in communicating in Swedish, she would choose to speak English with speakers of Swedish. When in the company of her husband's sisters, who generally spoke Swedish with each other, Maria communicated in Arabic, or not at all. In these situations, her reluctance to communicate in Swedish – wholly absent in the learning and social situations at Pinewood – can be understood as rooted in a desire to preserve personal integrity, and a form of impression management (Wen & Clément, 2003). In situations where social roles are not defined in terms of learning, Maria sought to avoid the risk of discomfort and embarrassment that could arise from what she

perceived as deficient language use and the risk of someone saying ‘something shameful for me’.

Maria’s willingness to communicate in Swedish in the classroom – and consistent reluctance to do so in social situations – remained little changed over the first three months of the research period. The first indication of a shift in Maria’s willingness to communicate in Swedish beyond the classroom comes in the third interview, which took place after the winter break. Here, Maria described how she communicated in Swedish over the internet, speaking with a sister-in-law who was abroad on holiday. In other social interactions, Maria continued to be unwilling to communicate in Swedish. However, she was aware that she might soon be reaching a point where this could change:

### Interview 3 (09 01 2020)

M: I use Swedish more. When I had a video call with my *husband’s sister*, I just talked with her in Swedish.

A: OK.

M: So, she got surprised. And she told me... ‘You are learning very fast’, and she told me ‘I will help you when I get back’.

/.../

A: Have you had other situations, in the last three weeks or so, when you have not been with your family? Maybe your husband has been working, or something? And you have been, you know, on your own? Situations where you have communicated with people? I am interested in any communication that you have had.

M: Outside?

A: Outside, yes. Outside of the home.

M: Actually, when I go to the supermarket, I will speak in English.

A: OK.

M: I don’t use Swedish.

A: OK.

M: Yet.

/.../

M: I have an aunt here in Sweden. She doesn’t speak in Swedish. Because one time, she had a case when someone laughed, because she spoke wrong. And so, she doesn’t speak any more in Swedish.

A: OK.

M: Mmm. So, I know some people feel shy when they talk in Swedish, outside, with people. But I don’t feel shy. I know that I am studying this language. So maybe I’m going to have wrong words, or the accent is not right. I know that. But in school, I feel brave, I feel that, yes, I can in school. But I want to speak outside school. Maybe soon.

As we see from this interview, Maria is highly reflexive; she is aware of her progress, and how her willingness to communicate in Swedish differs between contexts. She recognises that she is most willing to communicate in Swedish when at Pinewood, and least willing to do so in situations where she finds herself alone in the company of Swedish speakers. Although she had not previously been willing to communicate in Swedish in family situations, in a video-call with her sister-in-law she found herself willing to do so. Maria stresses again that she is not a shy person. This is confirmed by observations at the college where, by this time, Maria had become one of the most active students in the class, and was constantly engaged in social interactions in Swedish, Arabic and English before the start of class and during breaks.

The anecdote about her aunt's experience of being ridiculed, and Maria's decision to start communicating in Swedish beyond the classroom only at a point when she felt sufficiently confident to do so, reveal how her behaviour is influenced by cognitive-affective processes that favour the 'safe' option of communicating in English over the 'risky' option of communicating in Swedish. Ortega (2020) has drawn attention to the impact of *microaggressions* (Sue, 2010): 'daily putdowns' that are related to 'language in intersection with other minoritized markers of identity, such as their ethnicity, race, or immigrant or otherwise minoritized status' (Ortega, 2020: 38). Microaggressions are systematically linked to a range of stress factors, such as lower self-esteem, negative affect, depression and anxiety symptoms (Lui & Quezada, 2019). Over time, microaggressions can lead to communication apprehension, and to heightened levels of language-based rejection sensitivity (language-RS) (Lou & Noels, 2019). The notion of language-RS is based on proposals by Mendoza-Denton *et al.* (2002) who argue that both direct and vicarious experiences of rejection due to personal and social characteristics such as race, gender, age, social status or sexual orientation, can lead to *rejection sensitivity*: the development of anxious expectations of rejection. In extending the concept to L2 learning, Lou and Noels (2019) have suggested that a person with a migration background can be sensitive to the ways they are or might be treated in interactions with members of the TL community.

Daily putdowns linked to TL use can lead to a tendency to anxiously anticipate rejection from TL speakers (Lou & Noels, 2019; Ortega, 2020). In a context where interactions can take place in either a TL, or a contact language such as English, use of the contact language can reduce the experience of lacking self-confidence and self-efficacy and, in this way, can lessen the risk of experiencing rejection. At the same time, for migrants who are motivated to acquire a TL, and who strive to develop TL competence as a means of establishing themselves in a new society, reliance on the contact language (as a means of buffering against language-RS) can involve a loss of opportunities to develop TL skills. This can be detrimental for TL development and, in the long term,

successful adaptation to the social contexts of the host country (Henry, 2016a, 2016b).

In circumstances where language-RS can be avoided by using a contact language, much will depend on a person's beliefs about languages, and language use. Previously in this chapter, we saw how Kesu held beliefs about how English could be flexibly used to support communication in Swedish. As Subtirelu (2014) has demonstrated, language ideologies – the beliefs that a person holds about appropriate language use – affect WTC. In contexts where a contact language provides a communication option, a translanguaging ideology (Li & Zhu, 2013) can support WTC, while a deficit ideology can function as a constraint.

In a deficit ideology, the individual is positioned as an imperfect L2 user. A deficit ideology embodies an assumption that 'it is the L2 user's task to conform to the norms of L1 communication as closely as possible in order to be viewed as a competent (though still imperfect) L2 user and to improve communication between L1 and L2 users' (Subtirelu, 2014: 124). For individuals who hold deficit ideologies, communication events that are experienced as unsuccessful can be interpreted as evidence of linguistic deficiency and can have negative effects on WTC.

Distancing herself from people, like her aunt, who do not attempt to speak Swedish (due to experiences of rejection or ridicule) and people for whom a lack of social confidence is a trait-level characteristic ('I know some people feel shy when they talk in Swedish, outside, with people. But I don't feel shy'), Maria emphasises that her reluctance to communicate is because she is currently a *learner*, rather than a *speaker* of Swedish ('I know that I am studying this language'). Even though Maria's situation is different to that of her aunt, the story she tells about the aunt's experience functions to highlight the risks associated with competent, but imperfect L2 use for a person who holds a deficit ideology. It is from this 'deficit ideology' perspective that Maria's evaluation that she is not yet ready for L2 communication beyond school can be understood. It explains why her WTC trajectory shapes very differently from the generally gradual increase characteristic of Kesu's development. For Maria, the shift from being unwilling to being willing to communicate in Swedish was sudden.

The first time that Maria told a story about a situation where she had spoken Swedish was at the beginning of February. In the story, which involved a visit to her local health centre, Maria explained that because it was a follow-up appointment, she had decided to go on her own, rather than waiting for a time when her husband could accompany her. She described how her decision to communicate in Swedish was based on a series of interconnected assessments. First, she felt that she had reached a level of competence in Swedish where social communication could be effective. Second, she recognised that not communicating in Swedish (by communicating in English, or relying on her husband) was not a sustainable option. Finally, based on experiences from the previous

appointment, she knew that the transactions would not be too complex. Having made these assessments, and having rehearsed the situation in advance, she decided to communicate in Swedish:

**Story One and Story Two ‘Visiting the health centre and the pharmacy’ (Interview 5: 03 02 2020)**

- M: So, I went there after I decided to go alone without my husband.
- A: I mean, was this kind of like a regular appointment, or a special appointment or?
- M: No. The first time I was supposed just to go because I want to take a kind of medicine. So, the first time, I went with my husband, because I don’t know the place. We went together and I took the medicine. But the nurse told me that you have to come and have a check-up after three months. So, after three months, I decided to go alone. First of all, I told my husband, ‘Now it’s time to go to the check-up’. So, we were going to the check-up when he has time off from his job to go together. But then I told him, ‘I guess I have to go alone’. He said to me, ‘yes, you can do it’.
- A: So, you were, was it your choice? You preferred to go alone?
- M: Yes. Because it was simple. Not so much, but not too complicated. So, I went there without, just drop-in. Without booking. First, you have to check-in with the, check-in with a nurse. You wait. Then your pressure. So, when I go in, I told her, after small talking, I told her, ‘*I speak a little Swedish, but if I don’t understand I can speak English*’. So, she continued in Swedish. I understood everything. But maybe she told me about my weight. I ehm didn’t understand. So I asked her. So, she told me in English. But then she continued in Swedish. Then I went out and I waited a little. And then there is the second one, maybe she was a doctor, the first one is a nurse. The second one decided more about the medicine. So, the second one, I told her the same statement. But she told me, if it’s better for me to speak in English. So I told her, ‘No, I must speak in Swedish instead’. We continued. But sometimes we speak in English and in Swedish also.
- A: Mmm. So there are switches in between? Who initiated them? Was it kind of like the doctor that switched first, and you followed? Or you switched and the doctor followed? Or did, do you remember?
- M: No. When she spoke in Swedish, or in English, I replied in Swedish.
- A: OK. So she started off. She says to you, the doctor says to you, ‘Maybe better if we do this in English?’
- M: Yes, she said so. But we started in Swedish. But maybe she said something I didn’t understand. When I didn’t understand, she continued in English.

- A: How did she know you didn't understand? Did you say?
- M: I asked her.
- A: Yes, you said 'I'm sorry?'
- M: Mmm, *yes*
- A: In Swedish?
- M: Mmm.
- A: *'Excuse me, I don't understand'*
- M: Mmm.
- A: Yes.
- M: Or *'What did you say?'*
- A: Yes, OK. And then she just switched into? And her English was good. Or?
- M: [pause]
- A: Not so good?
- M: Not so good.
- A: Her English isn't? It wasn't so good?
- M: But it's OK. I can understand.
- A: OK.
- M: When she said something in English, so I replied in Swedish.
- A: She said something to you in English? And you replied?
- M: Yes.
- A: Tell me about that, why?
- M: I wasn't shy, actually. I was not brave, but I felt like comfortable.
- A: OK.
- M: Mmm.
- A: Because what is incredibly interesting for me, is that two weeks previously you told me a story about when you were with your nephew, your three-year-old nephew, in [town]. And on two occasions you went with him to McDonald's. And you are going to order a Happy Meal, and with a Happy Meal you have to kind of make choices about burgers or nuggets, and carrots or apples. So, it's kind of a simple transaction. And on both occasions, you did it in English. You didn't do it in Swedish. And you're in a place, McDonald's, nobody knows you, OK? He's a little kid. And that's two weeks ago. And now, in a kind of situation that is much more important, much more challenging, you say to the doctor, when she speaks English, 'No', and you continue in Swedish?
- M: Now I feel like, um, better in Swedish. I can speak more in Swedish. I know more words. After, when I was home, my husband told me, 'They were nice with you. Because sometimes if you, if you're strange, or you speak another language', he says like. I don't know what he feels. But it was OK.
- A: Is that something that you have experienced yourself? Or something that you've heard from other people?

- M: No. He told me.  
 A: Yes.  
 M: But after, I went from the *health centre*.  
 A: Yes, yes, *health centre*, health centre, I mean clinic. Yes, I don't know what you call it.  
 M: So, I went to their pharmacy, to get the medicine. But I spoke with her in English, because it was, so little words to say to her. So I just decided to answer her, to ask for the medicine in English.  
 [Discussion about the pharmacy]  
 A: So it's a short period of time between the two, but there you decided to do it in English?  
 M: Because I don't want to let others just like feel that it's difficult to understand me, from what I'm saying in Swedish, and like I'm saying words like '*Der da der*'. So I just keep it easy. It was a quick visit, so I said to her, and just took the medicine and left.  
 A: It was, right, was the visit to the clinic, had you kind of planned that in advance?  
 M: Yes.  
 A: Can you tell me about that? How you were kind of thinking?  
 M: Because I saw I can do it. I'm better now in Swedish, So it's time to start. If I don't start now, I will not speak anymore later.  
 A: So you kind of forced yourself?  
 M: As I told you before, it's like a challenge. I have to start, to begin.  
 A: Mmm, mmm.  
 M: So, it's time. I have been here for five months. So, it's a long time.

As we demonstrated in our previous work (Henry *et al.*, 2021b; see also Chapter 3), changes in WTC can be either continuous or discontinuous. In some cases, a change in WTC can be manifested in nondramatic accelerations or decelerations. This pattern of continuous change is characteristic of Kesu's gradually increasing willingness to communicate in Swedish. In other cases, such as with Maria, a distinctive pattern of behaviour can rapidly transform into a very different pattern. For Maria, change was nongradual and discontinuous.

As Maria makes clear, this 'first time' decision to communicate in Swedish was chosen with care. The previous visit to the health centre had provided her with a script for the current situation. She knew, additionally, that the consultation involved getting some test results and listening to the doctor's diagnosis, and that it would not involve her having to talk about a condition or to describe symptoms. Together, the recognition that her language skills had developed to a degree where she could communicate, and the mental rehearsing of the situation, function to instil confidence in advance of the consultation. Maria's confidence further

grows as the situation unfolds. She experiences being communicatively competent, not only in initiating communication in Swedish, but also – and here too in accordance with a deficit ideology – not needing to respond in English when the doctor made a switch.

At a point in her development when she was on the cusp of transitioning from being generally unwilling to being generally willing to communicate in Swedish in community contexts, situational assessments of contextual affordances have particular importance. This is illustrated in the context of the two trivial transactions referred to in the interview. The first involved revisiting a story told in the previous interview about visits to a McDonald's restaurant with her young nephew, and, on these occasions, how she had ordered the food in English. The second involved how, when visiting the pharmacy, Maria communicated in English. When asked to reflect on these simple transactions in the context of the far more complex interactions of the medical consultation, Maria's responses reveal how she differentiates between situations that she perceives as safe, and those that are potentially threatening. Comparing the consultation at the health centre (when she communicated in Swedish) to the visit to the McDonald's restaurant (when she communicated in English), Maria refers to something that her husband had said: 'They were nice with you. Because sometimes if you, if you're strange, or you speak another language'. Similarly, when reflecting on how she had chosen to communicate in English when collecting her prescription at the pharmacy, Maria explained that she had wanted to avoid a situation where other people might find it 'difficult to understand me, from what I'm saying in Swedish, and like I'm saying words like "*Der da der*". So I just keep it easy'.

As Sevinç and Backus (2019) have demonstrated, in contexts of migration the anxiety experienced in a communication event can often result from negative opinions of others, rather than evaluations of the individual's own linguistic competence and communicative abilities. Studying the language anxiety of Turkish immigrants in Holland, these researchers commented on how participants would often mention incidents in which an interlocutor's behaviour could generate experiences of guilt. Many of the study participants felt that their Dutch could be 'better', and that it was not appropriate to codeswitch. Consequently, as Sevinç and Backus (2019: 719) have observed, adult migrants can 'feel confronted by a prevailing ideology that treats natural contact effects (mixing languages and making "errors", in Dutch as well as Turkish) as undesirable, and that judges a speaker exhibiting such tendencies as ignorant'.

For Maria, we can understand how, at this stage of her TL development, willingness to communicate in Swedish is not primarily conditioned by linguistic competence. Transactions at McDonald's or in the pharmacy are low-demand situations. Nor is it conditioned by socioemotional pressures, as in these situations there is no demand for Swedish to

be spoken. Rather, decisions about whether to communicate in Swedish or in English appear to be determined by risk assessments centred on evaluations of the social context (secure or insecure), and on the anticipated response of an interlocutor (accommodating or judgmental).

As we found in our previous research (Henry *et al.*, 2021a), WTC can develop in a nonlinear manner, where watershed events or ‘change points’ can signal abrupt differences in communication behaviour. A positive experience in a communication event, or in a series of events closely linked in time, can trigger shifts in propensities for communication initiation. A positive experience that reduces language-RS and communication anxiety (Lou & Noels, 2019; Sevinç & Backus, 2019) can lead to adaptive behaviours where, with a diminishing fear of social rejection, the individual can be more willing to engage in TL communication in circumstances previously perceived as risky.

While in a pattern of nongradual, discontinuous change it is never possible to identify any single event as being *the* event that triggers a sudden change in WTC propensities (Henry *et al.*, 2021b), for Maria the unaccompanied visit to the health centre appears to be pivotal in the development of Swedish WTC. In the next interview, Maria told stories of two similar communication events where the initiation of communication in Swedish had been natural and unreflected:

**Stories Three and Four ‘Playing chess, and meeting the study adviser’  
(Interview 6: 12 02 2020)**

M: *So many things have happened to me. I don’t know, so many things have happened to me since last time. So, first, I met with my husband’s family. On Saturday. When we were there, I met a new guy. My husband’s sister, her daughter, she has a new boyfriend. He is Swedish.*

A: *Mmm. How old is he?*

M: *He’s around 18, or 19. So I met him for the first time. For the first time. And I said to him, ‘I speak a little Swedish, but if you want to speak with me, you can speak English’. He said to me, ‘You are very good, because I have a friend, he has been in Sweden for three years, and he doesn’t speak at all. But you, you know many words’.*

A: *Mmm, But you said to him ‘You can speak with me in English?’*

M: *Yes. In order to communicate with each other.*

A: *So you thought that, did you maybe think that, ‘Maybe Swedish, but maybe English is also needed’? That you would need a bit of English as well?*

M: *Yes.*

[Small talk about family]

M: *I also played chess with my husband’s sister. Chess.*

- A: *Who won?*
- M: *She did!* [laughs]
- A: [laughs] OK.
- M: *But first the boyfriend and my husband's sister's children were playing, and we played after them. So I was helping the boyfriend. And so the boyfriend, he said to me, 'You should win'. I said to him, 'I want to win, but we will have to see'. So we were communicating with each other, but in Swedish, that night.*
- A: *How did that feel? Did it feel like natural, that you would speak in Swedish? Or did it feel like you had to put in a lot of effort? You had to work really hard? You know, sometimes it can feel like, it can feel like completely natural that we use one language or use another language. So you and I, we switch around, and it feels, for me anyway, kind of natural. But sometimes you can be in a situation where you feel, 'I really have to try hard to use it'.*
- M: Yes.
- A: And what I'm wondering is, when you were speaking with the boyfriend, did it feel kind of natural to do it in Swedish? Or did you feel you had to kind of work hard?
- M: *I wanted to work harder!* [laughs]
- A: Yes.
- M: *But I wanted* [sighs]. I wanted to communicate with him *better*.
- A: Mmm.
- M: And so that's why this motivates me to learn more, and to know more words in order to communicate more and to understand what they are talking specifically about, but I tried only to speak in Swedish.
- A: Mmm. So if we think about it, if you think back on it, do you see it as like, 'Here I was. I could see this was a good opportunity to kind of use Swedish and to kind of practise', or was it more like, 'I'm just hanging out with the family and it feels natural'?
- M: It's somehow natural, but sometimes I feel like I'm controlling my words in order not to say something wrong in front of him because he's Swedish. Maybe he doesn't understand that I'm learning, and that I'm studying the language. So I am really controlling my words.
- A: Right. Interesting. We talked about that before, a few weeks back. On several occasions you told me, 'I don't want to make a mistake because he's Swedish. I don't want to say that because they're Swedish'. And like, if you go, if we go back way back, to before Christmas, you said to me something like, 'I'm a person surrounded by people who speak Swedish, but I don't speak'.
- M: Mmm.

- A: And we talked about that. Is this the same kind of thing here? That you that you are kind of, really careful about what you say, and the words that you choose?
- M: *I am not quite as careful, but I am, I'm trying my best.*
- A: Yes. Yes. But are you kind of, even though you are kind of speaking lots of Swedish, we speak a lot, and in the classroom earlier on when we were just having a chat, we spoke a lot of Swedish.
- M: Mmm.
- A: But, so when we, kind of like in that type of situation, or when you're just like hanging out, sitting on the sofa, are you sitting thinking 'OK, how, what am I going say? How can I say it? Which word shall I use?'
- M: I told you before, it is not the same in school. It's somehow different there. But that's why I told him, 'I'm just living here for a couple of months'. So I want him to understand that's why I'm speaking in a bad way.
- A: Mmm, I understand. I understand. Is it about...
- M: But I didn't speak with him in English. I tried in Swedish.
- A: Yes, which you wouldn't have done last, a month previously?
- M: Mmm. But now I feel like that I'm getting better and better, the language, so that's why also I'm speaking with people outside, even my family, all people, in Swedish.
- A: Mmm. So, tell me more about
- M: More?
- A: the weekend. And things that happened... tell me about yesterday.
- M: Yesterday? *Many things happened yesterday.*
- A: Yes. You said to me, *you said to me earlier that yesterday had been a long day.*
- M: *Yes, because we went to the meeting, and afterwards*
- A: *What time? What was the time?*
- M: *One o'clock.*
- A: *One o'clock, yes. And you had a meeting with the study adviser? Here? At the college?*
- M: *The college. So, when we went here, she said to me, 'Tell me what do you want?'. I said to her, my husband will tell you. Not me.*
- A: *Aha, he was there too. And did he do that? What did he tell her?*
- M: *We told her, together, together. But I continued. I continued talking with her. I said that we wanted to know what would happen after SFI. What the plans might be. Then he continued.*
- A: Mmm. *He continued.*
- M: *Continued. When they were speaking, I spoke too. Then, afterwards, she said, 'You speak well and clearly'. So that*

conversation was good. And we talked about *Basic* [the next programme] and many other things. But after that we go out, we went outside, and she helped me to *apply for a place on Basic. In March. So she helped me. She only spoke with me in Swedish. My husband*, he had left.

A: Mmm. *Did he leave because he had something else to do? Or did you say to him, 'you don't have to be here because I can fix this myself'?*

M: I was a little afraid that, if I am not going to understand something. But it was good. I understood everything.

A: Mmm. Did you say to him, look you can go now because I...

M: He was waiting. He was sitting away. I don't know if he was listening to me. But I didn't need his help, so

A: Did you say to him, you can go away?

M: No. He decided to sit away. So I just did it alone. *She*, she was speaking with me in Swedish, so I was replying also in Swedish.

A: Mmm. *How did that feel?*

M: *Really good. Because she said she was happy about me. And my husband told me*, when we went out, that she was happy because they like such people, who are educated, and after a small, not long period, that they speak very well.

A: Mmm, it's true.

M: And he saw her expressions on her face, she was all the time laughing.

A: Is that something that you, kind of, are aware of, when you are speaking Swedish with people? If their expression, on their face?

M: *Yes.*

A: How they react, how they respond?

M: *Do you remember when I told you, about when my car?*

A: Yes. Exactly. And the man came and helped.

M: *He did not help me! He was angry.*

A: Yes, yes that's right. *I remember. And at that time, you could, you were able to read?*

M: I was

A: *You could read,*

M: *Yes*

A: You could read his expressions? *Yes, exactly. He didn't want to. He was not friendly. And would not help.*

M: *Yes. But I.* I didn't ask him to help me. But I just said to him, 'My car is not working', and he wanted to enter. He was very angry.

A: Mmm.

M: I told her also. Maybe sometimes people feel like shy or ashamed when they want to speak here in Sweden. And so that's why I want to, to show her that I am not shy. I can speak with people.

In the story about the games of chess, Maria tells how she and her niece's boyfriend were 'communicating with each other, but in Swedish, that night'. While her story is about a relaxed and friendly family gathering, Maria explains how this communication had involved some degree of effort on her part, and how she became motivated by the boyfriend's encouragement. Not being a member of the immediate family, and being young (19), also meant that Maria was more confident and willing to communicate with him in Swedish. Importantly, Maria also explains how she had informed the boyfriend that she was 'just living here for a couple of months', and that she did this because she wanted him 'to understand that's why I'm speaking in a bad way'. With these caveats in place, and with the accelerating excitement of the game, Maria communicated with him in Swedish throughout the evening.

In the second story, Maria describes an appointment with a study counsellor. In contrast to previous occasions – where her husband had assumed the role of a language broker – Maria explained how this time they jointly carried out the interaction, and how she had subsequently taken over and spoken with the study counsellor on her own. Here too, Maria received praise from her interlocutor. However, unlike the chess game, which took place in an informal family environment, here the interlocutor was a public official. This meant that Maria's perceptions of being under scrutiny took a different form. Interviews with public officials provide important sites where identities are enacted, and where progress and aspirations are evaluated. In these contexts, a positive reception can enhance motivation and support continued efforts at developing TL skills (Henry, 2016a, 2016b).

Pleased with how the interview had proceeded, and with her ability to communicate in Swedish, Maria recounts how, afterwards, her husband commented that the study counsellor had been 'happy because they like such people, who are educated, and after a small, not long period, that they speak very well'. When Maria was asked if she too was aware of an interlocutor's non-verbal behaviour, she responded by referring to a story that she had told in a previous interview. When Maria's car had broken down and blocked the entrance to a driveway, she had become aware of hostility in the interlocutor's expression. Recalling this, and how she had not been able to respond and explain the situation to the hostile interlocutor, Maria is reminded of how she told the study counsellor that 'sometimes people feel like shy or ashamed when they want to speak here in Sweden'. This too appears to be a reason for communicating in Swedish. As Maria explained, she wanted to show the study counsellor 'that I am not shy. I can speak with people'.

In both these stories, we can see how there is a change in Maria's WTC. When circumstances can be controlled, and she is able to position herself as a learner of Swedish and someone who has not been long in the country, Maria is inclined to communicate in Swedish. This shift in WTC

is further evidenced in stories that she tells in the next interview. Again, these involved both a formal and a trivial interaction. Here, however, there is no sense in Maria's narrative of her needing to control the situation. Rather, the decisions that she makes to communicate in Swedish appear to be spontaneous; decision-making takes place as the events unfold. Further, these stories do not give any indication of apprehension concerning communication difficulties, or the negative assessments of others:

**Stories Five and Six 'The test centre' and 'A visit to McDonald's' (Interview 7: 18 03 2020)**

M: Last week I did the *Risk assessment*. I went with my, *my mother-in-law*. She was translating for me when we were there. Everything. But I was understanding everything. I told her, 'I'm understanding', but she insisted to translate. We were there with two guys, three. Two were *Swedish*. And one was er, I forgot, from Pakistan. But he is young, not so much, because he's doing *the driving test*. He's applying for it, so maybe he was here for a long time. He speaks well. And I spoke all the time in Swedish. Even *my mother-in-law* was translating for me. But I was also replying to all the questions in Swedish.

A: Mmm.

M: You know. No, you don't know, because you didn't do it. *On the Risk assessment test* we sit together, and they ask about *speed* and we have to guess. *We have to guess* in order to know which speed we have to *drive*. So that was also OK for me. And I wasn't shy because you know, those two guys sitting in front of me, they were Swedish, they were young.

A: Yes. You didn't feel?

M: They knew also that my *mother-in-law* was with me. Because she is *the interpreter*. Translator.

A: Mmm. Did that help, having her there with you? Or would you just, would you have been confident even without her?

M: She helped me, yes, but she was OK. She was waiting with me.

A: Mmm. OK. And how did the test go?

M: All good. *I passed*.

A: *You passed?*

M: Yes. *But the Risk assessment* it's OK.

A: *Well, congratulations!*  
/.../

M: *So I did the Risk assessment and after that me and my mother-in-law went to [town]. And there we went to McDonalds. Me and her. So I spoke with some people who were there. I ordered the food. I ordered the food.*

A: Well done, yes.

- M: Mmm. But you know, *do you remember when I spoke with you, and I told you I spoke English?*
- A: *Exactly. Yes, I remember. You were there with the little boy who is your sister-in-law's son, who is a three-year-old, I remember, you were there, and you spoke in English.*
- M: Yes, well this time I spoke in Swedish. My mother-in-law was with me. But I didn't let her speak. I spoke.
- A: Mmm.
- M: Mmm.
- A: *So, did it feel more secure? Did it feel normal and completely natural?*
- M: *Yes.*
- A: *And the order went well? It went well?*
- M: *Yes. And specially, that I was at the Risk assessment and the whole day I had been speaking in Swedish.*
- A: *Yes, exactly so. And so after the Risk assessment when you had spoken Swedish all day, you were at McDonald's, and it felt*
- M: *Normal.*

If Swedish WTC suddenly emerges in the preceding pair of stories (Three and Four), it is in these stories (Five and Six) that communicating in Swedish comes across as unproblematic. Maria recognises how her willingness to communicate in Swedish when ordering food at McDonald's is probably influenced by the successful experience of communicating in Swedish at the Test Centre, and in successfully passing this part of her driving test. While she dutifully acknowledges the presence and support provided by her mother-in-law, she describes how she was able to conduct the interactions without great difficulty.

By the middle of April, a month later, Maria passed the National Test for Course D, and completed the SFI programme. By this time, the interviews took place entirely in Swedish, with only occasional code-switches to English. Maria had been applying for work and had been to job interviews. At the end of the research period, she gained a part-time job, and was looking forward to starting work as a secondary school teaching assistant in the autumn.

### **Jessie: Fluctuations Within a Gradual Pattern of Change**

By the end of the research period, Jessie had also successfully completed the SFI programme. While Kesu had begun to communicate in Swedish early on in the interviews, and Maria at a later point, it was only in the final interviews that Jessie mostly spoke Swedish. Kesu and Maria clearly enjoyed communicating in Swedish. As well as telling about their communication experiences, they also enjoyed talking about Swedish prosody, idioms and grammar. For Jessie however, the pleasure

she found in speaking Swedish derived not from curiosity, or an interest in the language, but in the accomplishment of communicating in the TL.

For Kesu and Maria, we saw how communication behaviour and WTC trajectories were shaped by language ideologies. While Kesu's approach to communication bore the hallmarks of a translanguaging ideology, and her Swedish WTC trajectory had a pattern of gradual growth, for Maria a deficit ideology resulted in a nongradual trajectory. In contrast, Jessie did not hold strong beliefs about the affordances of English (characteristic of a translanguaging ideology) or about needing to communicate accurately and appropriately in Swedish in social interactions (characteristic of a deficit ideology). Lacking beliefs about language which might 'guide' communication behaviour, and result in distinct WTC trajectories (as was the case for Kesu and Maria), for Jessie WTC fluctuated to a far greater degree. In her case, willingness to communicate in Swedish was shaped by situational assessments of an interlocutor's perceptions of intelligibility, and their ability and willingness to make accommodations. For Jessie, the biggest challenge she faced was pronunciation. As this gradually improved, she found herself more often in situations when she judged that an interaction could be initiated and carried out in Swedish, with support (when necessary) from code-switches to English. Possessing a gritty temperament, Jessie would force herself to communicate in Swedish, even though in most cases she would have preferred to carry out an interaction in English.

Of the three women, Jessie was most aware of discrimination, and most sensitive to the prejudice of others. During the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly the early period, people from Central and Southeast Asia were vulnerable to racial stigmatisation and racially based discrimination (Cho *et al.*, 2021). As a Southeast Asian woman living in Sweden, Jessie experienced this at close hand. While for Maria, sensitivity to language-based rejection (Lou & Noels, 2019) was primarily grounded in vicarious experiences – stories told by others about the preferences and prejudices of Swedish speakers – for Jessie rejection sensitivity was based on first-hand experiences of prejudicial treatment. As illustrated in stories that Jessie told, these could range from situations when people were dismissive, and did not make any attempts to understand her, to those where she was subjected to undisguised racial prejudice:

#### Story One 'At the Café' (Interview 4: 17 02 2019)

J: I went to the café with my cousin. And everyone, you know, when you order, order some *coffee*, they smile at everyone. But when we come it's like they are not welcoming. And, I don't know, it's the first time that I pay for the *coffee*. So I don't know how to use it [the machine]. So my cousin teaches me, 'OK, you have to this here'. And they like to her, 'OK, you took too long

time to pay for that'. They told me that. So, OK. I need to, I need time to, OK, learn some things here. But don't talk to me like that. I feel [sighs]. It is a bad feeling. People here, not everyone is you know happy or friendly.

A: Mmm

J: My eh, my boyfriend told me something like that.

A: Mmm

J: A little, it feels hard.

A: Does that happen often? That you can feel that people are not friendly? Does that happen often? Or is it occasional, sometimes, or?

J: Sometimes. If I go alone. Or if I go with my cousin. If I go with my boyfriend, it does not happen.

### Story Two 'At a furniture store' (Interview 4: 17 02 2019)

J: Sometimes, it is strange when you are talking with someone. Sometimes they help you. But now it is maybe better, because I am more confident, and speak Swedish better.

A: Mmm. Do you think that being confident to speak Swedish, to use Swedish, can help in those situations?

J: Yes. It's more helpful. And I can, you know, I can understand what they say. But one time, I go with my cousin, and we speak [L1], and someone is like, I don't know what they say, but she said 'sing-song' or something. And my cousin was angry! And she, she talked with her. I don't know what they say. I just see this. And later she explained for me, so.

A: Mmm.

J: OK. Why did they say that to me? Are they? I don't do anything wrong [sighs]. Or? Why? Why do they say that? So, I am a little angry.

A: Mmm. Angry. I mean, I can understand. You know. Humiliated as well?

J: Yes [sighs].

When a migrant person's linguistic diversity is viewed by others with suspicion or prejudice, linguistic confidence and sense of self-worth are affected (Ortega, 2018a). In situations where migrants are subjected to the prejudice of TL-speaking others, the experience of prejudicial treatment can lead to cyclical effects (Sevinç & Backus, 2019). Patterns of avoidance can arise. Confidence can be eroded, and TL use can become less frequent (or, as for Maria's aunt, hardly used at all). In a context where a high prestige contact language such as English can provide a viable communication option, microaggressions of the sort that Jessie describes can lead to systematic preferences for communication in the

contact language. When this happens, there is a risk that TL communication skills never fully develop.

Jessie was a person with strong self-belief, and a determination to succeed with her goals. As a teenager, she had left her hometown (a provincial city) to take a place on a programme at one of the bigger universities in the country's capital. Coping in a high-pressure environment and moving to a city where she did not know a single person, Jessie explained how this had given her inner strength. As she explained in the interviews, coping on her own in the capital city meant that she had developed personal resilience. It was this inner strength, she believed, that enabled her to continue her efforts to communicate in Swedish when opportunities arose, even though a communication event could be very challenging. Knowing that communicating in social contexts beyond the classroom would be crucial for the development of pronunciation (and recognising that there was always a risk of encountering a negative response that could range from unhelpful, to an articulation of racial prejudice), Jessie's determination never seemed to waver. She continued to seek out and take advantage of communication opportunities when they arose.

Because she and her boyfriend mostly spoke English – something which they felt was important in their developing relationship – Jessie found that communicating with his friends was a good way to practice speaking Swedish in a safe environment:

#### Interview 5 (09 03 2020)

A: OK, so last time we spoke would have been round about two weeks ago, something like that?

J: Yes.

A: Yes. So, like always, I am kind of interested to know, what kind of things have happened in your life in the last two weeks that involved language?

J: Yes. When I am in class, yes, everything is perfect. I talk and I hear so clearly. But outside from school, outside everything is more difficult. Like, I try to talk in Swedish, with everyone, but no one understands me. So I have to speak in English again. I try. I try for, I try so many times. But, no, it's not working. I think it is because of my *pronunciation*.

A: *Pronunciation*, pronunciation, yes.

J: Yes. So, I have to try more to communicate with everyone.

A: Mmm

J: But it's nice, nice to try that.

A: So you, do you feel upset, or sad, or a little bit low, a little bit depressed, about this?

J: Yes. I'm a little bit disappointed about me.

- A: Yes, disappointed, ah, not disappointed about you, but disappointed about the situation?
- J: Ah, yes. Sometimes, yes. Like everybody is very nice, and some listen to me. But many times, they don't understand.
- A: OK. Can you give me some specific examples of, the types of situation where you've used Swedish, and people haven't really understood?
- J: Yes. It's like yesterday. I talked with my boyfriend's friends. They want me to tell them some story from school, in SFI. Yes. I try, but they, 'OK, *what did you say?*'
- A: Mmm
- J: Yes. And I repeat for three times. Now! Now they understand. And they said, 'OK, you will need more *pronunciation*',
- A: Mmm
- J: Yes. My *pronunciation* is not good, so they had to listen. And they fixed, fixed my *pronunciation*. I tried. Again. A bit more. 'Good!'
- A: Is that, I mean, that must be very frustrating, for you?
- J: Yes [sighs]
- A: Because, like you say, you understand everything, you know exactly what to say.
- J: Yes.
- A: And what you say is perfectly correct. But they find it hard to understand what you are saying?
- J: Yes. Exactly. Or like sometimes I talk in eh, not a full sentence, right? English, Swedish, English, Swedish. It's mixed. Mixed together. So it's hard for them.

Over time, Jessie came to discover that in certain environments, people she met were less likely to react in negative ways when she tried to communicate in Swedish, and seemed more relaxed, friendly and accommodating. When classes at Pinewood stopped for the winter break, Jessie returned to her home country to visit her mother and her friends and family. Shortly after returning, she began to visit a multi-facility sports and leisure centre in the town where she and her partner lived. Jessie quickly found that this was a place where she felt confident communicating in Swedish. Many of the communication events that Jessie described in her stories took place at this complex. In three stories about events that had taken place in February, when Jessie had first started to visit the centre, she talked about how she felt secure in this environment, and how this enabled her to feel confident about communicating in Swedish.

In the first of these stories, Jessie described a casual encounter in the swimming pool, where a man had given her advice on swimming backstroke:

### Story Three 'Learning backstroke' (Interview 3: 05 02 2020)

- J: Last Sunday I went swimming, to the swimming pool. And I meet some trainer, maybe, and he taught me how to do *backstroke*.
- A: Aah, OK.
- J: In Swedish.
- A: Yes. OK, OK.
- J: I can't understand every word he says, but the body language.
- A: Yes, yes. Because he's teaching you how to swim,
- J: Yes.
- A: You can understand.
- J: Yes. It's good. And I can understand, and I learn.
- A: Yes.
- J: It's good.
- A: So this, was this, did you have a class with him? A special appointment, or a special class? Or?
- J: No, I was just swimming and he, he sees me and just, 'You need to improve your *backstroke*'. 'Oh, OK'. [laughs] So he taught me.
- A: And does it, did it feel confident for you? Like interacting with him in Swedish? In the beginning, did he speak English with you, in the beginning, or Swedish?
- J: Yeah, in the beginning he spoke Swedish, and I say 'Ah, can you speak English?', and he say, 'Of course, but you can understand Swedish too?' I say 'Yes'. So, he's tough! [laughs]
- A: Ah, OK. So he said, 'Do you understand Swedish too?', and you said 'Yes'?
- J: Yes. [laughs]
- A: That's a risk too, isn't it?
- J: OK. [laughs]
- A: So, you try to speak in English, and he says, 'But can you understand Swedish too?', and you say 'Yes',
- J: Yes
- A: OK.
- J: Confident. Not like before.
- A: Right, that's right.
- J: Before, when someone talk with me, I always talk anyway, I just speak English, but now it's better.
- A: Right. Right.
- J: Yeah.
- A: That's really, and you recognise that? Can you see that yourself?
- J: Yes.
- A: So he taught, he was giving you instructions how to do backstroke?

- J: Yes. He, I can understand that, *breathe, lie* some words he says, yes.
- A: *Breathe, lie.*
- J: Many words. But now I've forgotten them. But I understood at that time.
- A: That's right. And as you say, the body language is fantastic, because he's, he is showing you with his body, yes?
- J: Yes. And he talks and I can understand. Yes. It's good.
- A: And was he a good instructor? Were you able to swim better, backstroke?
- J: Yes! I learned Swedish and I'm swimming too. So, it's good!

In this story Jessie tells how, in the ambient environment and relaxed atmosphere of a Sunday morning at the swimming pool, she had felt sufficiently confident to speak Swedish. Here, a number of affordances accommodate interaction in Swedish: the man is friendly, they are communicating about a physical activity, the interactions can be supported by non-verbal communication and English is acknowledged as a fallback option. In addition to the relaxed environment, engagement in the physical task of learning backstroke can also have influenced Jessie's willingness to communicate in Swedish. As Myhre and Fiskum (2021) found in their study of Norwegian teenagers' experiences of developing L2 (English) fluency in an outdoor context, engaging in activities that involve physical activity can increase a person's WTC.

On another visit to the swimming pool, recounted in a story in the next interview, Jessie again communicates in Swedish with another user of the pool, this time a teenage girl. Having bumped into each other, Jessie and the girl engage in conversation, an interaction which continues when they meet on subsequent occasions:

**Story Four 'A collision in the swimming pool' (Interview 4: 17 02 2020)**

- J: Now I think I'm more confident to talk in Swedish. I go out and go to the swimming pool, and I talk with someone. We meet together and have. Someone I was talking with. It's much fun, because sometimes we mix English with Swedish.
- A: Right.
- J: But it is really good, because now I feel more confident.
- A: Mmm. Was this someone that you met at the swimming pool?
- J: Yes.
- A: Did you know them before?
- J: No.
- A: You just met them? Yes?

- J: I talked with her. A girl, a teenager, 15 or. She is very good, and she helps me, and she was teaching me, talking Swedish and swimming, and it's good.
- A: So how did you first meet her? Did you kind of meet in the swimming pool, or?
- J: Yes.
- A: She just said 'Hi', or did you kind of crash when you?
- J: Yeah! We crashed, we said 'Hi' and
- A: *Sorry!* [laughs]
- J: She said, 'Are you good? OK?' And I asked her later to teach me swimming. And we talk a little. Yeah, she's in *upper secondary school*. I forgot the name of the school. But she's very good, friendly, and, you know, we are the same, in education, so.
- A: Yes, you, I mean you're kind of in the same age?
- H: Yes. It's more easy when you talk. Like when I come to my boyfriend's family, it's 'Good weather', you know? It's the age.

In the same interview, Jessie tells the story of other communication events that took place at the sports and leisure centre. On these occasions she had gone to a newly formed karate class. As with the conversations with the girl in the pool, Jessie described the enjoyment of being involved in friendly social interaction, the confidence that this could generate, and how involvement in physical activity seemed to have a different effect on her willingness to communicate in Swedish:

#### Story Five 'Going to the dojo' (Interview 4: 17 02 2020)

- A: Whose idea was it? Was it your own idea to go?
- J: I wanted to go there. I wanted to. I like sport, so I wanted to join in some sport. So, I like, so I asked my boyfriend. And he knew, in the swimming pool *building*, or something like that, they have karate, judo. 'You can join'. 'OK'. And I'll try.  
/.../
- A: But tell me, because to go, for anybody, to go to a club, for the first time, is kind of, maybe not an easy thing. You are completely new, you don't know anybody, they don't know you.
- J: Yes.
- A: That is, I would say, for anybody, kind of a brave thing to do.
- J: Yes.
- A: How did you feel about that? Did you feel brave, when you went there? You know, knock on the door, go through the door?
- J: Yes.
- A: Yes?
- J: Yes, I feel. If I was in [home country] I would never go alone.

- A: Oh, really?
- J: Yes. There my friend was there. But now I don't have friends here. So I will go alone and meet someone, and make friends.
- A: Yes.
- H: It's good. A little hard for me. Because they speak in Swedish, so I just see and, ehm, repeat what they do, and I study some words like before.
- A: So, did you study some words before you went there? Because you thought 'I might need these words'?
- J: Yes. I see on the website, the Karate club. When you go you must understand some Japanese. So, I learnt it.
- A: So, you learnt the Japanese? From a website?
- J: Yes.
- A: So that you could, when you went to the dojo, that you could behave correctly?
- J: Yes.  
/.../
- A: What happens, what happens when you get there?
- J: They talk, I make, they make. OK. It's really fun. *Fun*. Because the, I know some words, new words. And the teacher, the trainer, he, when he talks, *it's a little hard*, so I forget what he said.
- A: Mmm, right
- J: It made it more like, I don't know how to say it. It made it more interesting, with the Swedish.
- A: It made you more interested in working with Swedish?
- J: Yes.
- A: It gave you a kind of motivation? To kind of continue?
- J: Yes.
- A: Yes. Right. So how many people were there, in the in the dojo?
- J: In the beginning? I think 13. Yes, 13.
- A: OK. And what did they say? Because you are new.
- J: All, all is new.
- A: Oh, everybody is new?
- J: Yes, so.
- A: Oh, OK. It's for beginners, ah, OK.
- J: Yes.
- A: And were they all Swedish? Or did they come from different countries?
- J: Yeah. Someone was from Romania.
- A: And were they all women, or were there men as well?
- J: Yes, both.
- A: Yes. And age?

- J: From *adult* to 15.  
 A: And did you get a chance to kind of speak with them, or?  
 J: Yes.  
 A: Because it's kind of like, you go in, and everybody is new, and you, you smile and yes.  
 J: Yes. I just smile and when we are training, as a couple, yeah, I say 'Hi' and we are talking a little. When they talk fast, I ask them, 'Can you talk slowly'. And it was really fun. Because I made a friend, and meet someone new, and you know, learning by, by the hobby. It's more fun than in class [laughs]  
 A: Yes, yes. So, you were there for an hour?  
 J: Yes.  
 A: Did the hour go quick?  
 J: Yes! [laughs]

When communication could take place in situations free from the risk of prejudice, where interlocutors were accommodating, and when interaction centred around a social activity – karate or learning to swim – Jessie was able to relax. As she recognised, doing something meaningful and participating in an activity with others had a positive effect on her willingness to communicate in Swedish, and her motivation to seek out further opportunities for social interaction.

However, the point at which Jessie began to develop confidence in initiating communication in Swedish coincided with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The onset of the pandemic created widespread anxiety and triggered health-protective behavioural responses, particularly among women (Buyukkececi, 2021). In Sweden, as in many other countries, the pandemic changed people's lifestyle habits, including patterns of social interaction (Blom *et al.*, 2021). When Pinewood went over to remote learning in the middle of March, opportunities for social contact during and between classes disappeared. So did opportunities to engage in informal interaction. While in Sweden facilities such as gyms and sports centres generally remained open during the first pandemic wave, visits declined sharply, and visitors were encouraged to practice social distancing.

With the changes in lifestyle triggered by the pandemic, Jessie found herself lacking opportunities for the types of independent social contact which she valued so highly. Having previously not wanted to communicate in Swedish in her close personal relationships – she and her boyfriend had always spoken English, and with her cousin she communicated in their mother tongue – the societal changes brought about by Covid meant that Jessie began to reassess these preferences. From this time onwards, Jessie made greater strategic use of opportunities to communicate in Swedish in her close social relationships:

## Interview 9 (09 06 2020)

- J: *With Corona you can't go out so much. Because it is not possible to like, go to college, or to swim. So, it is hard to find opportunities to speak. But otherwise, sometimes I talk with my cousin, or with my boyfriend and his friends.*  
/.../  
*I speak a lot. And I like to practice with my cousin. Yes, and I watch films with her. She knows how to pronounce things. So I practice with her.*
- A: *You practice pronunciation by watching films? And practicing together with your cousin?*
- J: *Yes.*
- A: *And you don't speak [mother tongue]?*
- J: *We practice. And she has children, who are born here, so I speak with them.*
- A: *Yes.*
- J: *It's nice.*
- A: *Yes. It is really good talking with children. Because children tell you, 'No, that's wrong. That's wrong. You said it wrong'.*
- J: *Yes.*
- A: *Adults maybe don't do that. But children do. Children say things like 'No, no, no, that's wrong!'*
- J: *Yes.*

Deprived of the types of interaction that could arise spontaneously during enjoyable activities, Jessie tuned into the affordances present in family relationships. This seems to have had a beneficial effect. Over the preceding months, Jessie had become fearful that interlocutors would not understand her when she spoke Swedish. However, now that she had begun to access resources in family networks, her pronunciation improved. As she explained, 'I like to practice with my cousin. Yes, and I watch films with her. She knows how to pronounce things'.

As Derwing (2017) reminds us, an interlocutor's perception of an L2 speaker's fluency is highly important in shaping communication events. If interlocutors find it tiring or frustrating to attend to dysfluent speech, negative impressions can have deleterious consequences; lack of confidence can lead to communication avoidance. As Derwing (2017: 247) makes clear, for L2 learners who struggle with pronunciation, the improvement of fluency 'can contribute to other speakers' willingness to engage an L2 learner in conversation'.

For migrants from central and Southeast Asia, developing fluency skills in the languages of destination countries can be particularly difficult (Derwing *et al.*, 2008; Derwing & Munro, 2013). In a study in which the TL fluency development of migrant speakers of Slavic languages and

Mandarin were compared, Derwing *et al.* (2008) found that differing fluency levels were related to socioaffective and motivational factors. Specifically, the lower fluency levels of the Mandarin speakers could be explained by a greater fear of making mistakes and reduced willingness to initiate communication in social interaction (with the consequence that opportunities for practice and development were fewer).

In the few stories involving communication events that Jessie told during this period, it was again the interlocutor's response that seemed central to the success of an interaction. In a story about a brief encounter on the street – where a passer-by had stopped Jessie to ask her a question – she described how she had begun to speak in Swedish, but had switched to English when the interlocutor had not understood:

### Story Six 'Stopped on the street' (Interview 8: 13 05 2020)

J: *I was on the way to the supermarket and a man goes up to me and asks about the street. I didn't know. So I wanted to speak with him in Swedish. But I had to think a lot. I mixed English with Swedish together, together. So, yes, he is confused.*

A: OK.

J: He don't know what I'm saying [laughs].

A: OK.

J: So, finally, I have to say, talk in English [sighs].

A: Mmm,

J: So, my problem [laughs] you know.

A: Did he, was he kind? Kind of nice?

J: Yes.

A: *Was he like understanding? Was he like, nice? Was he OK?*

J: *Yes, he was OK. He was relaxed and he waited for me to think in Swedish. And he said that, he wondered if I had moved to Sweden. 'Yes. I have moved to Sweden. I have been here for eight months'. So, yes, we talked just a little.*

Even though the conversation proceeds in English, it is clear how this was a positive experience for Jessie. She had begun the communication in Swedish. The man had been accommodating and had given her space to think, and to formulate her responses. It is also interesting that, with the benefit of further reflection, Jessie decides to tell the story in Swedish.

The changes in Jessie's confidence in initiating communication in Swedish (a consequence, it would seem, of her changed approach to making use of social resources) were also reflected in the interviews. The first time that Jessie interacted in Swedish in an interview was in April (a month after the onset of the pandemic). In the interviews in April and May, Jessie would often begin to talk about an experience in Swedish. After a time, however, she would switch to English. Thereafter, the

conversation could shift back and forth between Swedish and English. It was only in the final interview, in June, that the conversation mostly took place in Swedish, with infrequent switches of code. As Jessie explained in this interview, she had begun to feel more confident. Previously, she said, she had been reluctant to speak with other people. Her fear was that they would not be able to understand her. Now, however, she felt confident to speak Swedish with English as a support:

**Interview 9 (09 06 2020)**

- A: *Have you had opportunities to speak with other people? Not your boyfriend or your cousin. But have you had other opportunities? Or nothing?*
- J: *I like, go to the supermarket, and I can maybe like talk a little bit there. But not much. Just short moments.*
- A: *Does it feel good, now, when you are at the supermarket and talk? Or if you are buying a cup of coffee? Or? Does it feel OK?*
- J: *Yes, it's OK. I am more confident.*
- A: *Yes, exactly, exactly.*
- J: *Like before, I like, I didn't want to talk with other people, because I, if I talk, they maybe can't understand me. But now it's better. I can speak Swedish with English more.*
- A: *So you speak Swedish now, not English?*
- H: *Aah [laughs] Yes.*
- A: *Or do you speak English also? Or is it mostly Swedish, or only Swedish? Or? How is it?*
- J: *I speak mostly Swedish. But some words, if I don't know, I speak a little English. To explain. So that they understand.*
- A: *So when you start a conversation, you start in Swedish?*
- J: *Yes exactly.*

The shift to a more instrumental approach to interaction in close social contacts – triggered by the loss of community opportunities – appeared to have been beneficial. With the increasing perception that her speech *was* comprehensible to others, came the confidence and willingness to initiate communication in Swedish. Neither gradual (as with Kesu's WTC trajectory) nor a sudden nongradual shift, from being generally unwilling, to being generally willing to communicate in Swedish (as Maria had experienced), for Jessie the development of Swedish WTC involved distinct periods of growth. Both periods can be understood as resulting from intentional action, first by spending time in the secure environment of the sports complex, and thereafter, following the pandemic, by enlisting the support of family members.

While Kesu and Maria's Swedish WTC development revealed the influence, respectively, of translanguaging and deficit ideologies, for

Jessie the situation was different. As Subtirelu (2014) has suggested, the relationship between language ideology and WTC is indirect; ideologies affect language users' evaluations of their L2 communicative abilities, which in turn impact on WTC. While Jessie systematically positioned herself as 'deficient' – a result of the difficulties she experienced with pronunciation – she was equally aware that the success of a communication event could depend on an interlocutor's efforts and willingness to respond strategically, by providing space to think, and encouraging the use of other language resources. If Jessie lacked Kesu's early confidence in communicating in Swedish (with English as a backup), she also lacked the sense that her Swedish had to be of a certain standard before she could feel confident to communicate outside of a learning context (as was the case for Maria). Not all L2 learners will possess strong language ideologies. For Jessie, communication events were approached and reflected on in pragmatic terms. While confidence was key to successful communication, it was not a precondition for initiating communication. Rather, confidence was a feeling that could develop *within* a communication event, determining whether she would continue in Swedish, or would switch to English. With a pragmatic attitude and an instrumental approach, Jessie was able to respond adaptively to each communication situation, and in relation to the affordances which it contained.

## Note

- (1) In the interview excerpts presented here and in subsequent chapters, the text in regular typeface relates to utterances in English, while the text in italics relates to utterances in Swedish.

## 7 Linguistic Self-Efficacy and Communication Willingness: Wafaa

In the preceding chapter we traced the development of Swedish willingness to communicate (WTC) for the three women who had migrated to Sweden to join a partner. In different ways, and at varying stages during the research period, these women were supported in developing confidence to communicate in Swedish by their partners, and by members of the partner's family and social networks. From the start, Kesu's husband had encouraged her to be independent. To a degree, this was pragmatically motivated; it was difficult for him to take time off work. He convinced Kesu that because she had English, she would be able to handle interactions in service contexts. In Maria's case, her husband had flexible working conditions. This meant that he could function as a language broker when important transactions needed to be carried out. However, when the change in Maria's Swedish WTC took place – and she shifted from mostly choosing to communicate in English to mostly choosing to communicate in Swedish – his support was no longer needed. When Maria told her husband that she wanted them to speak Swedish together, he was happy to do so. Initially preferring to communicate in English in her close personal relationships, Jessie had made independent attempts to put herself into Swedish-speaking social contexts, visiting a sports complex and taking karate classes. However, when restrictions following the Covid-19 pandemic made these social activities impossible, she drew on the language resources in family and social networks. She began speaking Swedish with members of her partner's family, with her partner's friends, and with her cousin and her cousin's children.

For all three women, a relationship with a husband or partner resident in Sweden brought with it opportunities for career advancement. With hopes for a professional future in Sweden, the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme was seen as the first stage of a longer process that would lead to employment that would fit with their career aspirations. Holders of university degrees, the three women were highly motivated to establish career paths in Sweden, and were often frustrated at the slow pace at which the SFI programme proceeded.

With supportive partners, opportunities to communicate in Swedish in family-based social networks, clearly mapped out goals and time available for study, Jessie, Kesu and Maria progressed quickly in their learning. With learning behaviour shaped by approach-oriented motivation (Henry & Davydenko, 2020), they developed basic communication skills and successfully completed the SFI programme within the research period. For Wafaa, the fourth of the women who completed the SFI programme in this period, the situation was very different. Wafaa, her husband and their young children had arrived in Sweden as asylum-seekers. Wafaa and her husband were highly resourceful. They had quickly developed social contacts among other asylum-seekers from their home country. Her husband had also developed connections among people and organisations in Sweden who were engaged in providing support to refugees. For Wafaa, however, opportunities to practise Swedish in social contexts were few. Because she shouldered much of the responsibility for childcare, and with much of her husband's time taken up with providing advocacy and support to fellow asylum-seekers, Wafaa lacked time during the day when she could study.

As previously found in studies of second language (L2) perseverance in migration contexts, certain individuals can approach the task of developing target language (TL) skills with uncommon determination (Henry & Davydenko, 2020; Henry *et al.*, 2015). Having the signature characteristics of a 'high locomotor' – a person who experiences heightened enjoyment of goal attainment, who is preoccupied with salient tasks and who possesses a single-mindedness in goal persistence (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2016, 2018; see also Dörnyei & Henry, 2022) – and with an enhanced metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness, Wafaa was also successful in her SFI studies. Not speaking any Swedish at the beginning of the programme, by the early spring, Wafaa was able to conduct most social transactions in Swedish.

### **Language Ideologies and WTC Development**

As we saw in the previous chapter, WTC trajectories differed for the three women. For Kesu, change was continuous. Swedish WTC developed steadily over the period. For Maria, change was discontinuous. In her case, a dramatic shift in communication behaviour took place at a point when she became linguistically self-confident. We have suggested that these differing developmental patterns can be traced to differences in language ideologies (Subtirelu, 2014). For Kesu, a translanguaging ideology meant that she viewed English and Swedish as complementary resources in communication. With the development of communicative competence in Swedish, Kesu's willingness to use the language in social communication also developed. This had the effect that English gradually faded into the background. For Maria, a deficit ideology meant that

Swedish WTC emerged only once a threshold degree of communicative competence was achieved. Even though Maria was highly willing to communicate in the classroom – doing so with accuracy and fluency – in contexts beyond the classroom Swedish WTC emerged only at a time when she felt that she could communicate without making errors. For Jessie, the pattern was different again. Not having strong beliefs about the possibilities of flexibly shifting between languages (characteristic for a translanguaging ideology), or the importance of achieving native-like accuracy in TL communication (characteristic for a deficit ideology), in Jessie’s case communication events were approached – and understood – in a pragmatic manner. Primarily, Swedish WTC was conditioned by the particularities of events, and assessments of an interlocutor’s willingness to make accommodations. For Jessie, WTC development had a fluctuating pattern.

Assessments of self-efficacy in TL communication shape WTC (Henry *et al.*, 2021b). As Subtirelu (2014) has suggested, the relationship between an L2 user’s experiences of TL communication, and the recontextualisation of those experiences in self-evaluations of communicative ability can be mediated by language ideologies. Implicit in self-assessments, and in the construction of language ideologies, self–other comparisons have important influences on communication behaviour. The others with whom a language learner can compare themselves – and who can function as role models (Muir *et al.*, 2021) – can be TL speakers, as well as fellow learners.

Wafaa had quickly come to understand how people with Arabic-speaking backgrounds often seemed to struggle in achieving accuracy in spoken Swedish. Like Maria (who had arrived at a similar conclusion about the challenges facing L1 Arabic speakers), Wafaa’s approach to L2 learning bore the influences of a deficit ideology. Her communication behaviour was coloured by the perception of an obligation to conform to normal (i.e. native speaker) patterns of TL use. At the same time, Wafaa’s previous migration experiences, her resourcefulness and her engagement in migration issues beyond the day-to-day challenges facing her own family, meant that she had developed a high degree of resilience and self-belief. A self-confident person, Wafaa did not approach communication situations with trepidation. Nor was she reluctant to communicate in Swedish. Rather, willingness to communicate in Swedish was conditioned by situated assessments of contextual affordances and her current communicative competence.

### **Grammar First**

As Wafaa made clear in the initial interview, she liked language learning. At university, she had studied on an English-mediated programme. She enjoyed studying her major subject of biomedical science in English.

Aware of the value of English as an international language, she took additional ESL and EAP courses. During her university years, English also became a free-time interest. Wanting to communicate in English, but lacking opportunities, Wafaa joined conversation clubs where she could practise speaking. Reflecting on how her enthusiasm and commitment to English could differ from that of her peers, Wafaa hoped that a relationship with Swedish would develop in a similar way. From the beginning, she had imagined herself putting energy into her studies, and seeking opportunities for language development beyond formal learning:

**Interview 1 (21 01 2020)**

W: Oh, I learnt English from school, at the beginning, and then when I attended university, I studied my bachelor's in English, which was a medical specialist. But then, I like to learn new languages. And so I developed it by myself, by reading more, attending clubs which are for learning English. And I took one to two courses about English, the language, and English like if I want to use it to write reports.

/.../

I should work hard in the language, and I know it. Also, I like to learn something, especially languages. It's like a hobby.

/.../

When I study, there are many friends who study in English at the university. But they didn't compete to improve themselves in English, they just took it. Also, we didn't talk, in my country, in English. But I liked it. So, I continued to learn more and more. And now I think I will do the same with *Swedish*.

At the same time, Wafaa's situation as a mother of three children meant that she lacked the freedom she had enjoyed as a university student. Instead, time for learning Swedish had to be fitted around her family commitments. It meant that the only periods available for sustained study were in the evenings, when she would spend between two and three hours working with Swedish:

**Interview 1 (21 01 2020)**

A: You have a lot of work? At home?

W: Yes. There is a lot. But it's OK. I can arrange my time between them [her children] and between what I want, because I can do that.

/.../

A: When I see you in the classroom you are always working, always focused.

W: Yes.

A: And you have developed a lot in your Swedish, in a quite a short period of time.

W: Yes. Actually, I hope that I can arrive to a high level in Swedish in a short time. Because I have aims or goals that I should reach in a short time.

/.../

W: It's very important, because my kids talk, start to talk in *Swedish*. And I cannot hear them talking while I, if I don't understand. This is very difficult for me. I want to share everything with them and teach them. And also, they will be in schools. And I have experience, and I have information, so I should talk in *Swedish* to give this information to them. While if I don't, I cannot give them anything.

A: Mmm. Would you say that's your main motivation? Or one of your main motivations?

W: Yes. Of course. And this is, this may be the most.

A: Mmm. So, you have the kind of, the professional, your professional goal,

W: Yes.

A: And you have your goal as a mother. So that you would be completely fluent in Swedish, so that you can understand everything with the children.

W: Yes.

A: But you also enjoy languages.

W: Yes, of course. I enjoy it. And I feel that, it is not like a duty, that I should learn. No. I feel it's. I want to learn, because I like it.

/.../

W: I can spend two hours, or three hours without feeling bored. That I'm bored? No. I feel that I do something which has, which is, I like it.

A: Mmm, mmm.

W: So sometimes I don't find the time, or I cannot arrange the time as I want so, mmm [sighs] I, it didn't go well. Like I wanted.

/.../

A: When do you find the time to do your studying?

W: Actually, I use time after they are sleeping. Until they sleep, I cannot do anything. And they go to sleep at seven to eight o'clock. So, after these times, I study *Swedish* for two to three hours.

A: Mmm. That's quite hard. You must be tired.

W: Ehm, no. It's OK for me. I. As I told you, I don't feel it is a duty. I like it. I feel that it's like a hobby. I'm interested to learn languages.

As emerges in this conversation, Wafaa not only enjoyed learning Swedish – valuing the opportunities to study in the evenings when her children were asleep – but she also had clearly defined long-term goals. As well as wanting to be a supportive and engaged mother, Wafaa had the goal of gaining matching employment. With previous experiences of successful and enjoyable L2 learning, and with these personal goals steering her behaviour, Wafaa described how she structured her learning around grammar. She believed that grammar could provide her with a base upon which she would be able to construct communication skills. Aware of how other migrants could have a good vocabulary, but were unable to communicate with accuracy, Wafaa was determined not to take any shortcuts. Instead, her strategy was to begin the learning process by first mastering the morphological and syntactic structures of Swedish. For Wafaa, confidence to communicate in Swedish emerged once she felt able to handle the questions and responses of interpersonal interactions with assuredness and accuracy:

#### Interview 2 (30 01 2020)

- W: Actually, I've created a plan, for me and the language. First, I read the *grammar*. Most of the *grammar*. So that I can construct the sentence easily. And then, after this time, I learn new vocabulary. And I try to know the most, but I feel that I need more and more. /.../ A second step on the plan, I should know – I don't know how to say – but I should know a large amount of vocabulary in Swedish, to connect them, or to bind them to the *grammar*, so that I can talk without being afraid. Confidence. I see people here, they talk, they have vocabulary, but maybe they don't talk in a *grammatical* way. But that's how I should begin.
- A: That is important for you? To have the grammar? So you can speak?
- W: Yes.
- A: And you think that will give you confidence, when you know the grammar? How to form sentences?
- W: Yes. You cannot talk without knowing how they form their sentences. It is different from English. So, I began with *grammar*. To know how they form the sentence and how they say these. It is more basic than vocabulary. After, I will begin with vocabulary.

The goal of communicating with accuracy meant that in the early months of the SFI programme, Wafaa was reluctant to communicate in Swedish. In and beyond the classroom, she relied on English. However, once she had achieved a mastery of the basics of Swedish grammar, and felt that she could communicate with accuracy, willingness to communicate in Swedish began to emerge. The perception of being successful in

communication – and the confidence this could generate – was a subject to which Wafaa would frequently return during the interviews:

#### Interview 5 (09 03 2020)

A: We talked a lot about how you want to speak *proper Swedish*.

W: Yes. Yes. There are many people here, they talk *Swedish*. Before I learn *Swedish*, I listen to them, and I said, ‘Wow, they talk *Swedish* very well’. But after I learn the language, and the *grammar*, and I hear them, so I, ‘They talk bad *Swedish*’. They talk without *grammar*. Just they put verbs with nouns. I didn’t like this way of talking or speaking. Of course, we cannot reach the level of, to be like a mother language, or a second, but we can improve ourself to be at a high level. Or we can improve ourself to speak real *Swedish*, not just that we say words so others can understand us. But for me, it’s not the goal just that people understand me. It’s very important that I should learn it correctly, like anything else, the language, like any other things. Like if I want to learn computer skills, I should learn them correctly, not just to take something from here or there. So, I should reach a level which is a good level. The goal for me is not just to let others understand me.

Wafaa’s perception that adult migrants could often lack grammatical skills, and her desire to avoid speech consisting of poorly constructed and grammatically incorrect utterances, bears the hallmarks of a deficit ideology (Subtirelu, 2014). Yet at the same time, Wafaa was equally aware that an expectation of native speaker-like competence was unrealistic: ‘we cannot reach the level of, to be like a mother language, or a second, but we can improve ourself to be at a high level’. Rather, the combination of a belief that language skills should be acquired in a systematic manner, coupled with the notion that the goal of learning should be the ability to communicate appropriately, points to what might be termed a *communicative competence ideology*. That is, a belief that language becomes functional at a point when messages can be conveyed with a suitable degree of accuracy and precision.

#### An S-Shaped Curve

Mediated by a *communicative competence ideology*, for Wafaa, the development of Swedish WTC took the form of an S-shaped curve. Following an initial period of reluctance to communicate in Swedish and reliance on English (November–January), a period of growth took place (February–March). The start of this period coincided with a time when Wafaa had begun to become linguistically self-confident. However, when

the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, and when opportunities for communication in social situations rapidly diminished, this period was followed by a subsequent levelling off (April–June).

### November–January: Reliance on English

In their early period in Sweden, English meant that Wafaa and her husband were able to maintain their independence. They rarely made use of the services of interpreters, quickly recognising that, in most situations, English would be sufficient for their communicative needs:

#### Interview 1 (21 01 2020)

- A: Were you surprised at the way that you could perhaps use English? Or did you know that you would be able to use English here in Sweden?
- W: Actually, I heard so. At the beginning, I'd ask them if they speak English or not. But now I don't ask anyone, 'Do you speak English?'. Of course they do. I start talking with him in English. Because no one, almost all talk in English. So, in the beginning, yes. I asked them, 'Do you speak English?', yes. And then I didn't need to. I feel sometimes when there is someone I meet, or I meet someone who has come at the same time, but they didn't speak English, and no *Swedish*, it's very hard for them to deal with the people here. They want a translator, and they want to, someone to go with them and talk. But I can go to, to anywhere, and do what I want by myself.
- A: Mmm. Do you ever, have you ever been in situations where you've used an interpreter? Or have you always managed to do things yourself?
- W: No, I didn't use. Only, we used the translator when we are in a government *part*, an appointment, like at Migration.
- A: Yes.
- W: Or, also at the beginning, when we went to the *health centre*. They didn't know us. So they booked a translator.
- A: Yes.
- W: But later, they, we told them that, 'No. I can speak English'
- A: Mmm. Mmm.
- W: So, we deal with them in English.

While English provided an invaluable communicative resource, Wafaa was aware that over-reliance on English would not be beneficial in the long term. At the same time, she recognised that opportunities to practise Swedish in interactions that stretched beyond the mundane transactions of everyday life were limited.

### February–March: A steeper gradient

Up until the end of January, Wafaa had been reluctant to communicate in Swedish. Even though she had been enrolled on the SFI course since November, and had been studying at home, she described how she mostly communicated in English. In the following story, about a visit to a health centre, Wafaa reflected on how, up until this point, she had felt that it was still ‘early to begin to talk’. However, she also explained that she had slowly begun to feel better equipped to communicate in Swedish. This had become clear when the services of an interpreter had seemed largely superfluous:

#### Story One ‘Talking with a nurse’ (Interview 1: 21 01 2020)

A: So, in sort of small, day-to-day situations, when you shop, or maybe you are on a bus or, which kind of language do you mostly use? If you talk with people?

W: In general, like the bus or *the shop* I cannot. I feel that *some people* don’t have time to. I cannot stand and think what I want to say in Swedish.

A: Mmm. Mmm.

W: So, I, quickly I talk in English. And ask him or her what I want. Like anything, anything. I cannot have time to think. I think it is early to begin to talk, maybe. If I have, or I want to interact, and I am in a good mood, I can do that *in the shop*, or, but usually, not always. Because it depends on if we are busy, and I have something I want to finish. They are sometimes. It returns to confidence. Yes. Ehm, if I’m not sure about my language. ‘What’s this in Swedish?’ So, I didn’t talk. But I think confidence is very important, because I tried to talk with a nurse, *nurse*, in Swedish, before, two days. She told me that I will not understand her because she talks, ehm, medical words. But when she told me that ‘I booked a translator’, I said to her, ‘No I want to talk in *Swedish*’.

A: Mmm.

W: So she said, ‘No’. Then when she called her, the translator, she asked me, *in Swedish*, and I answered her. Before the translator begins, so she told me, ‘I didn’t think that you will know these words. I think these words will be hard’. I told her, ‘No. Sometimes I don’t understand the, or every word, but I can understand the general. So I can answer’. So maybe it needs more confidence and practice.

A: Mmm. So after that situation, presumably your self-confidence improved?

W: No.

- A: No?
- W: Because I feel that it is not the same. Sometimes I feel, ‘Yes I’m good’. But sometimes I’m not feeling, not in the mood that I want to talk. And if my plan works, I just want to talk when I know. What’s easily... And if I want to talk in *Swedish*, I must concentrate and focus on the words. And so it is difficult. And I don’t have *the courage*.
- A: So it really depends on how you’re feeling at that particular time?
- W: Yes.
- A: In that particular context?
- W: Yes, yes. Yes of course.
- A: That’s really interesting
- W: I feel if I want, when I talk to her, I feel it was like a challenge to me. I talked to [husband] and I said, ‘I want to talk to her in *Swedish*’, because I, because there was a personal aim. I don’t know. Maybe there is like a risk to be afraid and, no I don’t want that. And maybe the others will feel bored while I am thinking. Sometimes I feel that I should forget these things and speak and take my time. So I try to do that.

In this and other stories that she told, Wafaa’s identification of confidence as an influencing factor does not appear to involve communication apprehension or language anxiety. Rather, its roots seem to lie in *linguistic self-efficacy*. WTC is a culmination of processes resulting in psychological preparedness for speaking (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). In part, this is underpinned by linguistic self-confidence. This involves self-appraisals of communicative skills. In turn, these are influenced by linguistic self-efficacy, the ability to control language outcomes (Sampasivam & Clément, 2014; see also Chapter 11).

As Wafaa explained, if she wanted to speak in Swedish, she must ‘concentrate and focus on the words’. This was not easy and meant that sometimes she lacked ‘courage’. When Wafaa talks about confidence – a recurring theme in her reflections – it is not so much that apprehension or timidity are a block on her Swedish WTC. Rather, choices about whether to communicate in Swedish or in English seem to be influenced more by linguistic self-efficacy, and evaluations of her current capacity to communicate with the degree of accuracy to which she aspires. In the situation at the health centre, Wafaa’s recognition that she understood what the nurse was telling her functioned to enhance evaluations of her linguistic self-efficacy. The interpreter is not only an intrusive presence in a private event, but also an indication to Wafaa that she is quite capable of conducting the interaction without the support of an intermediary.

Reflecting on these events, Wafaa recognised that her desire to be in full control of linguistic output – the need to experience being linguistically efficacious – could sometimes have negative consequences.

She realises that there could be ‘a risk to be afraid’ of communicating in Swedish. Reflecting further, Wafaa recognises that it is important not to be perturbed by an interlocutor’s response (impatience), and that she should allow herself space to communicate in a manner that would enable her to feel competent: ‘Maybe there is like a risk to be afraid and, no I don’t want that. And maybe the others will feel bored while I am thinking. Sometimes I feel that I should forget these things and speak and take my time. So I try to do that’.

In a segregated society, opportunities to engage in social interaction in the TL can be few. Recognising the need to seek out opportunities, and to not shy away from challenges, Wafaa described how she had begun to seize on opportunities that could arise. In these stories, Wafaa reflected at length on language use in social interactions. When she knew beforehand that a communication event might take place, she described how she would mentally rehearse the situation. In advance of the event, she would practise what she would say. Afterwards, she would evaluate how the communication had been. Even chance encounters, and the most mundane of interactions, were seen as potentially valuable opportunities for communication. In such situations, Wafaa would reflect on the way that the interaction had played out, her own linguistic self-efficacy, and the role and responses of an interlocutor. Scrutinising an interaction, she would seek evidence of improvement. Projecting into the future, she would position the interaction as a small, incremental stage in a longer trajectory of becoming willing to communicate and, through language use, becoming proficient in Swedish to a degree where she could become established in society. Wafaa’s perception of how everyday communication events could pave the route towards integration is revealed in a story told in our next interview, which involved listening to someone else’s conversation:

### Story Two ‘A stranger on a train’ (Interview 2: 30 01 2020)

W: The other day, when I was on the *train*, there was another one beside me. A *woman*. She talked. It was very clear. I can feel it. Sitting there I can understand everything. The first time. When, before, I learn *Swedish*, I feel that I’m blind. I see everything in the streets. I cannot understand anything. When I study, and when I began to know the words and everything, I feel that I see the place for the first time.

A: Mmm.

W: Yes. It’s here. It works like this.

A: Mmm.

W: So, mmm.

A: Is that the same when you talk with people? When you decide to interact with them in Swedish? And you interact, you talk, it

works? Is it the same feeling of being able to see, and not being blind? That you are kind of, involved? You are there?

W: Talking to the people, that's another test where you feel that. You interact with someone on the society, and you are a part of the society. And which I want. I want to understand their language. Not other language. So I feel happiness to talk in *Swedish*. And I, the others understand me more if I talk in English, I know. English is very important. And it is international. But I will be closer to them if I talk their language.

A: Is that one of the things that sort of enables you to work as hard as you do?

W: Yes, yes, yes.

A: You know, eight o'clock in the evening, the kids are asleep, and you start working?

W: Yes, it's very important. This is one of the things. And as I told you, also I want to have a job here. If I didn't do hard in the beginning, with the study. I cannot have any job without language. So I should prepare for, with it. Not for university only, but for, to be a part of the society. To deal with them. To have a job. For everything.

Telling this story of how she listened to a woman's conversation, Wafaa explores the *feeling* of being able to communicate. Telling, and making sense of the story simultaneously, Wafaa describes experiencing how things come together when she realised that she understood what the woman was saying. Because language is embodied in interpersonal communication, she recognises how a successful interaction can trigger a sense of belonging: 'You interact with someone on the society, and you are a part of the society'.

For L2 learners, positive interactions with TL speakers can function as progress checks. Beyond providing validation for the efforts that the person has made, successful communication can trigger continued striving directed to L2 attainment (Henry *et al.*, 2015; Dörnyei *et al.*, 2016). At this stage of Wafaa's development, simple interactions – even an overheard conversation – can support L2 perseverance. As well as generating motivation to continue to develop communication skills in Swedish, positive communication experiences have the function of highlighting the consequences of relying on English as a contact language.

It is around this point that Wafaa's desire to communicate in Swedish began to gather pace. With a developing sense of linguistic self-efficacy, and recognising how successful communication in Swedish could generate positive emotions (which in turn could support motivation and help to generate the sense of approaching the long-term goal of becoming a part of Swedish society), Wafaa's reliance on English began to diminish. Even in situations where communication in English might have made a

transaction more efficient, Wafaa described how she chose to communicate in Swedish. This change in her communication behaviour is revealed in two stories told during an early interview. Both involved interactions in shops. In the first of these stories, Wafaa described how she had returned a defective product. In the second, she described an interaction with a shop assistant where she had asked questions about children's clothes:

### Story Three 'Returning a broken toy' (Interview 2: 30 01 2020)

W: *On Monday* I talked to, what is it in *Swedish*? A *cashier*, or which, the one which is at *the shop*.

A: Yes, Yes.

W: The cashier.

A: Cashier, yes, *cashier, cashier*.

W: *Cashier*, yes. So it, *I decide to myself that I am going to speak in Swedish*. Then I start thinking about the words, which words will I use with her?

A: Mmm. Did you think before?

W: Yes. *Only just, only suddenly, seconds before*.

A: *Yes? Just seconds, just seconds before?*

W: *Yes, but I make my plan*. I want to talk *in Swedish*.

A: Mmm.

W: I talk to her then. I, at the first, I told her that I want to return the toy.

[Discussion about the shop]

W: I talk to her. I want to return back this one.

A: You wanted to return it? OK.

W: So then she answered me in a long sentence.

A: Yes.

W: I didn't hear any word. Then I told her, I said in myself, I should continue in *Swedish*, and so I talked to her and, '*What did you say?*'. Then she repeated the sentence. I feel it's very easy. I can understand every word she said. That, it gives me like, more confidence.

/.../

W: When I returned the toy, just I think of one word, which is, what is the meaning of 'I want to return back this one', *I want to return this*.

A: *Exactly, yes*.

W: Then I told her, '*Can I return this?*'. She told me that, *Next time I have to come here first*. To the cashier. It's meaning that I should come here first. To return back the toy. And then because I went and bought something else. So, I don't know that I should come first to the cashier and return it, and then buy other things. She said that. Sometimes I feel it, every word was easy and, but at the same time, I cannot. I said to her 'OK'.

- A: So you smile?  
 W: Yes  
 A: Nod and,  
 W: 'OK'  
 A: And so she knows that you understand?  
 W: Yes. I understand. What I don't know, maybe, I don't know if there is another sentence I should have told her, or something. But I said to her 'Yes OK'.  
 A: Mmm. And it was successful, so she took the toy back?  
 W: Yes, yes.  
 A: And you got the money back?  
 W: Yes.  
 A: And you were able to buy the new things?  
 W: Yes.  
 A: So how, I mean, that's quite a difficult transaction, actually. To go. If you go to a shop and buy something, that's kind of easy, but if you want to go and take something back. Sometimes people can, 'Oh, why do you want to take it back?'. It can be quite a stressful transaction, compared to when you are buying.  
 W: Yes, maybe the situation needs more sentences [laughs]. I don't know. But I, there is no one at the cashier. I said, 'I should try'. I cannot try while there's too many people waiting on the cashier. So there is no one on the cashier, so I said, 'I want to try *in Swedish*'. But also, there is another thing with the cashier. I think she doesn't talk English.

#### Story Four 'Buying clothes' (Interview 2: 30 01 2020)

- W: Also yesterday, I talk to another one *in a shop*. She was old and I talk to her *in Swedish*. I feel she doesn't understand. I think that there are some people, I mean, I don't know maybe if it's related to the person himself, he is, how much he is intelligent to hear someone who speaks his language in another accent, or in another different way. So some people, I feel they understand what you say. Like when we talk English. I'm not perfect in English, but you understand me. And the same thing yesterday. I feel she doesn't understand *Swedish*. So I stopped and talked in English. And she didn't understand English. So I return back to talk to her in *Swedish*. But I use words which is clear to her like, 'I need *clothes*, I want to know a special thing about clothes on the shop'. So I asked her that, if they are new clothes, because I feel it's not like new or something. So I ask her in English. She didn't understand. Then she, I told her, '*I need clothes*'. She's thinking a while and then she told me, 'Yes, all here are new',

and in *Swedish*. But I don't know. She talks, but it's not clear, her language.

In both these stories, the interactions take place in Swedish. However, the transactions are more complex than those that might normally occur in such shops. In the first transaction, when Wafaa returns the toy, she plans beforehand what to say. That she proceeds to the enactment of her plan – carrying out the transaction in Swedish – is made possible because there is no queue of other shoppers at the checkout desk. The fact that Wafaa forms the impression that the cashier doesn't speak English also contributes to her Swedish WTC. While the transaction was successful – the toy was returned, and Wafaa was able to understand that the correct procedure would have been to first return the item and then to make new purchases – she recognises how the interaction was scaffolded by non-verbal communication. As she reflected, 'maybe the situation need[ed] more sentences'.

In the second story, Wafaa did not mention any beforehand planning. Rather, it seems that the notion of asking questions arose while she was inspecting the clothes. Here too, Wafaa's evaluation of the situation plays into her communication decisions. Because the sales assistant was older, Wafaa decided to initiate the communication in Swedish. Perceiving that communication was not effective, she switched to English. When this did not help, she switched back to Swedish again.

While the first situation was challenging because of its complex nature, the second was challenging because the interlocutor was unable to support the communication. As Wafaa recognises, it depends on how much a person 'is intelligent to hear someone who speaks his language in another accent, or in another different way'. Yet she is able to successfully accomplish both transactions in Swedish. When reflecting on the events in these stories, Wafaa chooses not to highlight linguistic self-efficacy (as previously). Rather, she reflects on how a communication event is a bidirectional accomplishment, with success determined as much by the attitude and accommodations of the interlocutor, as by her own communication skills. Reflecting on her progress in developing L2 skills, Wafaa explained that syntax and morphology were no longer a hinderance to her self-confidence, and that it was now vocabulary that presented the major barrier to experiencing communicative competence:

#### Interview 2 (30 01 2020)

A: For me, who is like externally observing, I mean, your progress is rapid.

W: Yes.

A: Do you feel that your progress is...?

W: Yes. I feel that, when I look to my notebook, and the first sentence which I write, and I didn't know any words, and this is

November. Yes. November. And there's too much holiday. I didn't know, really. I didn't know any words in Swedish. Maybe just numbers and, yeah. But a language, like a language? No. I didn't know any words.

A: Mmm. So that's November. And now we're still in January. It's the end of January and you went to a shop, and you completed a transaction where you had to return a product, and you did that entirely in Swedish.

W: Yes.

A: I mean that's like two and a half months, three months.

W: Yes. Sometimes I feel when I, my, I don't know, it's confidence. *Confidence*. But I feel that, like, I talk in English, so I feel the words come directly. I don't know how the mind works. But maybe because I didn't have enough words in Swedish. I cannot talk. But I do feel that I can say the sentence correctly. But I don't know new words. But it's become familiar to me. That I can [understand] any question, but the words itself, I cannot find it. /.../ Also, I think it is a short time, and I learn many words and the *grammar*. At the beginning, the *grammar* was everything. Opening the other. Now, after two months, I feel that the *grammar* becomes tidy in my brain.

A: More, what can we say, more systematised in your brain?

W: Yes. Then, when I began with vocabulary, I did the word today, then I forget it, then I [sighs]. I feel that the words need a time for like, fermentation.

A: Yes, a good word, yes, to ferment, to grow, yes.

W: Yes, after fermentation for these words, so I can use it directly. And it is also very important to me that when I learn any word, I cannot learn it by itself. I put it on a sentence, to know the meaning, the exact meaning for it in Swedish. It is not easy.

A: Do you make those sentences in your mind? So you see a new word you kind of like, play around with it in your mind? Putting it into sentences?

W: It's, I feel that. I told you, on the night, my brain works as a computer [laughs]. I translate the word. Then there is a sentence for it, or there is another word which I don't know. So I take it and translate it and put the sense, not put a sentence for it, but from the programme I take another sentence. It is, so it's complicated. And each sentence I find these words. I cannot talk with *Swedish* without knowing the meaning of it. So, I think I need more vocabulary to reach the level which I can talk to anyone.

As we see in this excerpt, Wafaa's evaluation of her capacity to communicate in Swedish has changed. Rather than a focus on grammatical accuracy, perceptions of linguistic self-efficacy involve appraisals of the

degree of sophistication in her speech. Seeking the same sense of linguistic self-confidence that she experiences when constructing sentences, Wafaa says that she has begun to focus on vocabulary. Reflecting on how building a vocabulary will enable her to communicate in any situation – not just those she identifies as conducive – she recognises how this can be a lengthy process. As she puts it, each new word needs time to ‘ferment’ – to be understood and coded into her long-term memory.

Because she was aware of the importance of capitalising on situations where Swedish could be practised, Wafaa found that she evaluated opportunities, situation by situation. Often, she would make beforehand assessments of the potential for successful communication in Swedish. When the communication was over, she would evaluate how effective it had been. At the same time, she recognised that opportunities for development *through* communication were few and far between. In most situations, interactions were simply routine:

#### Interview 5 (09 03 2020)

W: Sometimes I feel that I am not in the mood that I want to focus, to speak *in Swedish*. So *English* is easier. But I can talk with them in Swedish. But sometimes I don't, or I don't in *all situations, like when I am at* [name of store] *or when I buy something, I speak in Swedish. I understand. I understand them. I answer in Swedish. But they are just short situations. 'Yes', 'No thanks'. And 'Yes, OK'.*

A: *Everyday situations?*

W: *Yes. They are not important or make any difference.*

A: *No, precisely. They are not situations where you can develop. They are very short. Routine.*

W: *Routine. Yes. They are not so important. Or not for development.*

However, as a parent of three young children, Wafaa was able to find opportunities for communication beyond the mundane interactions of travel and shopping. These possibilities arose when leaving and collecting her two youngest children from preschool:

#### Interview 5 (09 03 2020)

A: Do you feel that you have opportunities to kind of, speak and practise Swedish outside of school?

W: I think it is not easy. The only place which I can ask them, when I started [SFI], I told the *preschool* teachers, ‘No one talk with me in English. I want to speak *in Swedish*’. Starting for just one or two weeks ago, there are some teachers who talk to me in Swedish.

Even though from the start, Wafaa's ambition had been to communicate with the preschool teachers in Swedish, it was only recently, she says, that this had begun to take place. However, once she began talking with the teachers in Swedish, a pattern was quickly established. Interactions in Swedish took place on a daily basis, when leaving and picking up her children:

**Interview 5 (09 03 2020)**

W: *I speak with the preschool teachers. You could say that around 80 per cent of me talking with the preschool teachers is in Swedish. I stopped them speaking English with me.*

A: *They have stopped? They have stopped speaking with you in English?*

W: *Now. Now they have started speaking with me in Swedish. Maybe a month ago. I don't understand everything. But recently they have started talking with me. If something had happened, things that happened at preschool. And I can understand. All the thoughts and words. And I can talk with them. Ask them about things that have happened. If they have had a party. I can understand them and speak with them in Swedish.*

A: *So, when you speak with them, do you need to plan?*

W: *No.*

A: *You just talk?*

W: *Maybe now that I have acquired so many words in Swedish, and practised them, I don't need to think about, or practise, or plan what I am going to say. I talk with them without missing anything out. Spontaneously.*

As Wafaa explains, while this was a pattern of interaction she had sought from the start (the children were first enrolled at the preschool when Wafaa began SFI), it was only in recent weeks that she and the teachers had begun communicating in Swedish. Prompted to reflect on how this has come about, Wafaa's response again highlights the role played by linguistic self-efficacy in developing Swedish WTC. Because she experienced that her vocabulary had developed to an extent where pre-planning and self-monitoring were no longer required, Wafaa had become confident about communicating in Swedish. Speaking in Swedish with regularly encountered individuals (the preschool teachers) about relevant topics (her children's participation in preschool activities and their everyday routines), a normalised pattern of communication had been established. Conscious decision-making no longer played a role in the assembly of a communication event (see Chapters 10 and 11 for extended discussions).

## April–June: The Covid-19 pandemic and fewer communication opportunities

Linguistic self-efficacy involves the L2 learner's perceptions about specific aspects of linguistic capability. For Wafaa, perceptions of self-efficacy differed in the two periods so far focused on. While in the period from November to January, linguistic self-efficacy involved perceptions of being competent in handling the morphology and syntax of Swedish, in the period from February to March, the perception of being linguistically efficacious involved competence in using vocabulary appropriate for communication needs. In the right circumstances – a non-stressful environment where an interlocutor had time to interact, or a repeated interaction on a familiar topic with a familiar person – Wafaa was able to experience being efficacious in constructing talk and interacting in Swedish.

However, this positive set of circumstances lasted for only a short period. Although Sweden did not experience the type of lockdown imposed by many other governments at this time, the Covid-19 pandemic had wide-ranging effects on social and working life. Like many parents, Wafaa and her husband decided to take their children out of preschool. No longer dropping off and picking up the children, or leaving home to shop for non-essential items, Wafaa found that she could spend days on end without speaking Swedish:

### Interview 8 (16 06 2020)

W: *It is hard to find anybody to talk to in Swedish. I had just a short conversation with the teacher in today's [online lesson]. But when I speak, I don't feel any more, I didn't feel confidence. So, I used English. It is better for me that time. But I can, with you I can speak Swedish. But with others, I can understand what they say, and answer them, but it is not what I want.*

A: *What would you like?*

W: *I think that I need more fluency when I speak with someone. And that I can, I want to use words to describe everything.*

A: *I understand. It is frustrating. You are really good at understanding. And you are really good at writing, and really good at grammar. But to speak you need to practise. You need to practise quite a lot. And that's hard. It was hard before Corona. There were not many chances.*

W: *Yes.*

A: *And now with Corona there are even fewer chances.*

W: *Yes. It's hard.*

A: *Is it frustrating?*

W: *Well, no. It is not frustrating for me. Because I think that it will come. Will come with time.*

While the situation was frustrating in these early days of the pandemic, Wafaa remained optimistic. At this time, moving towards the end of the research period, there was uncertainty as to how long the pandemic would last and how long restrictions on social gatherings would be in place. Like many others, Wafaa hoped for a return to normality later in the year. Despite the changes that had taken place, and the lack of opportunities to communicate, Wafaa was aware that she was still making progress. Even if the movement towards proficiency might have slowed down, the journey was still ongoing, and Wafaa continued to develop TL skills, primarily in reading and writing. While opportunities for interpersonal communication were few, Wafaa explained that she was able to maintain her ‘relationship’ with the language; Swedish had become an increasing presence in her self-talk:

I think it depends on imagination, or just, I think in *Swedish*. When I want to study, I think in *Swedish* only. Only in *Swedish*. Like how to make. Not to make a sentence, but I just, I can imagine a situation. I don’t know, but I feel that my mind is working automatically, thinking in Swedish. It’s not in English. When I start to study in Swedish, I’m just thinking in Swedish. So I feel that may maybe this thing helps me, in speaking. But it is not too much. (Interview 6: 15 04 2020)

If before Covid, social interactions could often be experienced as mundane, this increased with the onset of pandemic. As Wafaa explained, life had moved indoors. When she went to the shops, she wanted to get things done as quickly as possible. One arena where she did find opportunities for longer interactions in Swedish was when visiting the local pharmacy:

#### Story Five ‘At the pharmacy’ (Interview 6: 15 04 2020)

W: I was at the pharmacy. I think one or two times. When I went to buy medicine from the pharmacy, I talked to them in Swedish.

A: How did it go?

W: Yes, it was good. And I feel that I can talk without thinking about ‘should I use English or Swedish’, because they, they talk with me in Swedish, so I start to reply in Swedish. It’s not that good, but I can deal with them in Swedish.

A: Mmm. Does it help, in the pharmacy, because you have a medical background? So you are in the pharmacy, does that make a difference, does that help you or?

W: Mmm. No. It’s like, we talk about, regular talk. It is not related to information about science or something like that. It’s just, I

want this thing, or where is it, if I don't, for example. So, it's very simple things.

### Story Six 'At the pharmacy again' (Interview 7: 18 05 2020)

W: *Two days ago, I was talking with... a pharmacist. I wanted to buy some vitamins. So I, she spoke with me in Swedish. And I answered her in Swedish. I can say that I can talk with her when she speaks with me in Swedish. Automatically I answer her in Swedish. That is not hard for me. And I can ask her about the vitamins also, not just 'Yes' or 'No'. I asked her whether there was a difference between vitamins. I didn't understand 100% of what she said, but the language was clear for me. Some other people, when they speak Swedish with me, I can feel that it is hard. It is not clear. I don't know what it depends on. They have a local dialect, or what it is. But when people speak clearly, I can understand every word. But with others, if they have a dialect, I don't understand every word.*

A: *But at the pharmacy? You knew what the conversation was about?*

W: *Yes.*

A: *You know that it is about different types of vitamins?*

W: *Yes. And she told me that there was a component, I don't know the name, a component of the vitamin, but I understood what I needed. I knew.*

With the onset of summer, and the improvement of the Covid-19 situation in Sweden, Wafaa and her husband decided to re-enrol their children at preschool. However, due to organisational changes brought about by the pandemic (a decrease in demand for places, and increase in staff absences), the children were placed in a different preschool. While leaving and collecting the children once again provided Wafaa with an opportunity to practise communicating in Swedish, she found that she lacked self-confidence:

### Interview 8 (16 06 2020)

A: *Have you spoken with other people since last time we spoke? Have there been situations when you have spoken Swedish?*

W: *No. No, I haven't used Swedish. Not spoken with anyone in Swedish. Just with the teachers at preschool.*

A: *You speak with them?*

W: *Yes. I speak. It is a new preschool. I speak with them in English. But, they try to translate for me. From Swedish. But I told them,*

*they don't need to translate from Swedish. I understand Swedish. But I am not good at speaking it. And I told them this in Swedish. And that's good, they say. 'We can understand you when you speak Swedish'. But I feel that I need more self-confidence.*

A: Yes, confidence, *self-confidence*.

W: Yes. *Self-confidence when I speak Swedish.*

Previously, when Wafaa had experienced a lack of self-confidence, this had stemmed from appraisals of linguistic self-efficacy. Back in the pre-Covid period, she had not seemed over-troubled by self-confidence when communicating in demanding situations (for example, when she returned the defective toy). Here, though, it seems that self-confidence – rather than linguistic self-efficacy – is the source of Wafaa's apprehension about communicating in Swedish. The combination of being isolated at home, studying Swedish online and lacking interpersonal encounters appears to have created a new type of uncertainty, different to that she had previously experienced.

For the women who had access to social networks that included speakers of Swedish, the changes brought about by the pandemic did not have a great impact on their Swedish WTC. By the time of the pandemic, Kesu and Maria had already switched to Swedish as the primary choice for communication. For Jessie, the loss of opportunities for interaction in community contexts meant that she drew on resources in family-based networks. For Wafaa the impact of the pandemic was more dramatic. With few opportunities for communication, and finding herself reverting to English when communicating with staff at the new preschool, Wafaa was worried that her willingness to communicate in Swedish was beginning to ebb.

Unlike the other women – who were able to map out trajectories for their future lives in Sweden – for Wafaa and her family, the future was uncertain. Lacking a permanent residence permit (the norm for asylum-seekers after 2016), and with the situation in their home country highly precarious, it was difficult to plan beyond the present. The experience of social isolation in Sweden, and separation from members of an extended family in their home country, further highlighted the precarity of the family's situation. While Wafaa was generally optimistic, and possessed an uncommon inner strength, following the pandemic there were times when she could be despondent, expressing doubts about the point of learning Swedish:

#### Interview 4 (27 02 2020)

A: Right before we started the interview, you were telling me that your frustration, how it influences, impacts on your language learning.

W: Yes. Sometimes I like to learn. And I have a future, for me and for my kids. But sometimes when I look to the permit, to the residence permit. /.../ So I, when I am thinking about, ‘What I will do if they don’t renew it for me? Should I live like the others? In black? Or what do they want?’. I don’t want this life. So I feel, ‘no, oh why I did I come to SFI and learn?’. They don’t give us any chance to integrate. Just a residence permit for one year. And I tried. And I will do my best to learn and look for a job. But I don’t know.

While Wafaa successfully completed SFI and continued her education in Swedish, the faltering pattern of Swedish WTC evident during the final part of the research period may not only be a reflection of changes in the conditions for communication brought about by the pandemic. The shifting pattern of Swedish WTC, and fluctuations between periods of confidence and apprehension, also need to be understood in relation to the challenges facing Wafaa as an asylum-seeker and a mother of young children. Alongside coping with the struggles of managing daily life, and adjusting to new social circumstances, for Wafaa (and for the thousands of other migrants faced with an uncertain future, and the stress of not knowing whether a residence permit would be renewed), uncertainty about the future meant that investment in everyday interactions was not always easy. As has emerged in research on the experiences of Arabic-speaking parents in asylum-seeking families in Sweden, acculturation processes are often characterised by ‘living with feelings of stress and fighting for survival’ (Mangrio *et al.*, 2020: 702). In circumstances such as these, WTC can be conditioned as much by the negative effects of acculturation stress, and the fears associated with deportation or becoming undocumented, as by the positive effects of resilience and aspirations for the future. If, as Mangrio *et al.* (2020: 702) have suggested, the experience of living in liminal circumstances involves ‘a transitional journey between uncertainty and hope’, then WTC is likely to fluctuate in a similar way. While it might flow in periods when hope is generated, in phases that involve uncertainty, it can just as quickly ebb away.

## 8 Willingness to Communicate and the Challenges of Tied Migration: Olivia and Titly

In the two previous chapters we charted the development of Swedish willingness to communicate (WTC) for the four women who completed the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme during the research period. In this, and the following chapter, we examine the communication experiences of the other four participants. Here, we focus on two women who had relocated to Sweden as co-moving partners: Olivia, who was from a country in southern Europe, and Titly, who was from a country in South Asia. Although both women had professional backgrounds, neither was able to transition into matching employment following the move to Sweden. Initially, relocating to Sweden had appeared an attractive opportunity. Olivia, who had studied fashion design and management, and had worked as a freelance designer for various international companies, believed that there would be opportunities to find similar assignments in Sweden. Titly, who had trained as a doctor in her home country, aimed to begin her clinical career in Sweden.

Both women had partners working in the high-tech sector. Olivia's partner was an engineer specialising in robotics. When an opportunity arose to study for an international master's degree at a university in Sweden – and which would provide a lead-in to employment with a Swedish-based company – Olivia was happy to follow him. Interested in Scandinavian design, Olivia felt that she too could profit from the opportunity to pursue her career, working in the Swedish fashion industry. Shortly after arriving in Sweden, Olivia gained a trainee position with an up-and-coming company in one of the country's bigger cities.

Titly had met her husband through family intermediaries. Shortly after her graduation from medical school, the couple got married. At this time, her husband had already spent four years in Sweden. Having first done an international master's, he was thereafter recruited by a multinational company to work with the development of 5G technologies. The long-term plan was that Titly and her husband would become established in their respective professions in Sweden, and would then build a family. Titly's hope was that after several years of practice in Sweden, she would

be able to return to her home country and continue her career serving the people of the community in which she had grown up.

Both women liked living in Sweden and valued the Swedish lifestyle. Titly enjoyed travelling, and she and her husband regularly visited friends in other northern European countries. Olivia and her partner appreciated the Swedish landscape and enjoyed outdoor pursuits. Both women were quickly able to integrate into social communities linked to their partner's employment. For Titly, additional social opportunities were provided by diasporic communities. Olivia socialised within the city's international student community, where she made many friends.

The initial period after the move to Sweden was a happy time for both women. They enjoyed the experience of getting to know and settling into a new cultural environment. However, after a time, it became apparent that as co-movers their situations differed from those of their partners. For their partners, career paths were clearly mapped out. They had been able to pursue professional goals without needing to learn Swedish. For the women, however, routes to professional success were dependent on developing language skills. For Titly, professional practice in Sweden would only be possible once she had gained the requisite language qualifications (which beyond general intermediate level skills, also involved passing a special exam in medical Swedish). In her case, Olivia quickly recognised that while it might be possible to gain short-term, fixed-period contracts as a freelance designer, in order to establish herself in a Swedish company, or an international company based in Sweden, it would be necessary to become fluent in Swedish.

As Kofman and Raghuram (2005) have argued, there is a difference between *skilled migration* and *skilled migrants*. In the case of skilled migration, professional people can become established in a host country through international recruitment routes, or via high-prestige postgraduate programmes. However, for skilled migrants, entry takes place through non-work channels, and in forms of tied migration. For co-movers, no matter how skilled they might be, becoming established in the new society is far more difficult than for an internationally recruited spouse (Aure, 2013a).

Among professional couples, the career trajectories and employment experiences of the internationally recruited partner and the co-moving partner can be very different. While for the internationally recruited partner, the move will frequently be part of a strategically planned path of career development, for the co-moving partner, relocation will often involve the interruption of a career trajectory, and a period of longer-term uncertainty. For the co-moving partner, migration can be a time of upheaval where demands are placed on personal resilience. As Aure (2013a: 283) has explained, the tied migration channel 'places migrants in a "random" labour market, and the resources that migrating with a partner could provide need to be actively used and utilized to be of any help'.

While tied migration can be a major disadvantage for any co-moving partner, for women co-movers the disadvantage can interact with other constraining factors (Aure, 2013a, 2013b). As Liversage (2009) has shown in a study of the labour market exclusion of highly skilled women who had migrated to Denmark for non-work reasons, gender role expectations and gendered work discrimination practices can further contribute to the difficulties of becoming established in matching employment.

For both Titly and Olivia, the developmental trajectories of Swedish WTC reflected the challenges they faced in entering Sweden through the tied migration channel. While the women whose stories were told in the previous chapters had enrolled on the SFI programme shortly after arrival in Sweden, for differing reasons Titly and Olivia had waited before beginning their studies. Being co-movers, they had quickly acculturated into international communities linked to their partner's employment. Socialising in these international circles, they found themselves surrounded by English. Despite having lived in Sweden for a longer period, they arrived at SFI with no language advantage, and were placed in the reception class.

The extended period of living in Sweden prior to beginning formal learning, and their successful reliance on English for communication in social and community contexts, meant that their learning experience differed from the three women who had partners living in Sweden, and who started SFI soon after their arrival in the country. While Jessie, Kesu and Maria had all experienced periods of positive momentum, for Titly and Olivia learning Swedish was a frustrating experience. As co-movers, they encountered obstacles that prevented a smooth career continuation. This meant that learning on the SFI programme was carried out alongside other strategic undertakings designed to enhance career opportunities. For Olivia, this involved doing freelance work, which in addition to generating income, could enhance her professional portfolio. Olivia was also engaged in studying English. Her aim was to increase her score on the IELTS exam as a means of accessing a place on an international master's in Sweden which, she hoped, would increase opportunities for direct recruitment. Titly was studying another language course on a parallel basis to SFI. She had enrolled on a specialist programme of Swedish for medical professionals, a programme which had a very different focus, pace and teaching methodology. Titly's situation was further complicated in that, during the research period, she and her husband moved to another city closer to his workplace. Disenrolling from Pinewood after five months of study, Titly found that she was unable to gain a place on a similar programme in the new city, a situation which involved a further interruption and added to her frustration.

In multiple and intersecting ways, the circumstances connected to the women's situations of tied migration meant that neither experienced a period of prolonged self-confidence, or a period when they

felt generally willing to communicate in Swedish. While Olivia felt frustrated by the lack of opportunities to ‘talk in order to learn’ (a method which had enabled her to successfully develop skills in English) and was fearful of the negative evaluations of Swedish-speaking interlocutors, Tity’s perception was that she was not good at languages. This was reinforced by the feedback she received from her teachers, both at SFI and on the medical programme. Because she felt that her grammatical competence was poor, she was often hesitant about communicating in Swedish in community situations. Moreover, both women were conscious about their immigrant status – something that seemed to hardly bother their partners – and experienced a fear of social rejection.

**Olivia: ‘Motivated, to try to speak Swedish, but not with the situation that’s around speaking’**

As a co-mover, Olivia was part of a younger generation of mobile Europeans. Compared to previous generations, members of ‘Generation Y’ have been identified as more mobile and more positive about the benefits of mobility (Dries *et al.*, 2008). Characteristic for this ‘boundary crossing’ generation – people born in the 1980s and 1990s – is a higher degree of openness to global influences, and greater receptivity to international movement (Dries *et al.*, 2008). As Doherty *et al.* (2010: 378) describe it, for young people of this generation, ‘cultural exposure, travel and a desire for adventure are key motivators’. Members of Generation Y have been described as ‘boundary-crossers’ (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011); decisions to become mobile are ‘underpinned by perceptions of personal agency’, and are ‘determined by a combination of self-efficacy (judgments of capabilities) and outcome expectations’ (Doherty *et al.*, 2010: 381).

As a teenager and young adult, Olivia had become accustomed to mobility. Having studied for her undergraduate and master’s degrees at universities in different parts of her home country, she relocated once again after meeting her partner, this time to a semi-autonomous region where a regional dialect was mostly spoken. Olivia thrived on the experience, happy to communicate in this dialect. As a teenager, Olivia had spent many summers abroad, often in the UK, where she had attended various language schools. During her undergraduate degree, she took a year off, spending the time in London working as a sales assistant and in various hospitality jobs. With positive experiences of mobility, and an openness to new experiences, Olivia saw the move to Sweden as a further opportunity to enjoy a cosmopolitan lifestyle.

In Doherty *et al.*’s study (2010), location was found to be an important influence on the mobility of young Europeans, the ‘host country culture’ being the pull-factor with the greatest attraction. For Olivia, the

decision to relocate to Sweden was an exciting opportunity to experience life in a country that she admired. She arrived with positive views, not just about Swedish design and the Swedish fashion industry, but also about the country's social, cultural and environmental values. Throughout the period in which the interviews took place, Olivia remained appreciative of the Swedish lifestyle. Even after she and her partner made the decision to return to their home country – a consequence of a further career move on his part – she spoke warmly of her experiences, and of her two years in Sweden.

As Doherty *et al.* (2010: 390) have noted, for boundary crossers, 'confidence in ability to benefit from the experience' tends to increase with age. At the same time, 'incentives such as willingness to move away and adventure seeking appear to diminish'. Having grown up with a cosmopolitan outlook, and with experiences of various types of 'boundary crossing', Olivia was aware of the benefits and the challenges that relocation to Sweden could bring. While she valued the opportunity to make new acquaintances, and to learn a new language, she was also aware of her social status as an immigrant, and the difficulties that this could entail. In the first interview, Olivia described how she had experienced a similar sense of unease connected to being an immigrant as when she had been an 18-year-old living in London. At the same time, she felt empowered by her university education, and her ability to communicate in English:

**'Feeling like an immigrant – but confident' (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)**

A: You said that when you were in England, you felt like an immigrant. Yes? Now you are in Sweden. It's many years later. You've got your bachelor's degree. You've now got a master's degree as well. Do you feel the same way, or do you feel differently?

O: I feel the same as an immigrant. But I feel more stronger than in 2012. Because in 2012 I was just with a girl who is 18 years old. Trying to know another country, trying to know friends, and trying to speak in another language. Now I speak another. I don't speak Swedish, but I speak English. So I can talk with Swedish people in English. I feel more confident because I have my bachelor and master. I have a background. So, I'm 26 years old. I feel like, more a woman than in 2012. I feel like an immigrant also, but more confident. I think I can find my way. I can find my job here. But it's not going too easy. It's not. It is not easy now. But, I don't know. I think if I try it, and I work for it, I can get it.

While maturity meant that Olivia experienced being better placed to appreciate the value of new cultural experiences and, with English as

a support, to manage the challenges attaching to an immigrant status, she was also aware of a need to develop her career. With things not going entirely as she had hoped – she was at this point without employment – Olivia was aware of the risks associated with being a co-moving partner. Reflecting on previous experiences of living in a new country, and learning the host country language, Olivia explained that now the stakes were very different. Learning English as a teenager was fun, she said. Developing skills in English had been primarily fuelled by a desire to communicate with friends. Now, later in life, learning Swedish was an endeavour to which consequences attached:

**Learning Swedish to get a job (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)**

O: But when I went every year to England. I think it was because I enjoyed it a lot. So for me, speaking English, I did not feel that fear. It was not something that I wanted to do. I wanted to enjoy being with my friends, trying to speak, to do something. I just wanted to be there.

A: Right.

O: So it was like the balance, it was...

A: OK. How about here? What's the difference?

O: Because here [sighs]. I think it's not the same. At that time, I was studying. I was so, ah, 'Now I am young'. But I was super young. And I knew that, when I was studying there, in England. 'But oh, in September I have to start my Bachelor or my, going to school'. And it was just something fun. Just speaking English, trying to learn English. That's all. Now I'm trying to learn Swedish, to get a job, to survive. It's not the same. It's too much pressure.

Having spent over a year in Sweden prior to starting the SFI programme, Olivia had a wide social network, and many friends. However, the groups in which she socialised were largely comprised of international postgraduate students, employees at the multinational company where her partner worked and the partners and families of these various people. Spending her free time with this fluid group of internationals, socialising in the bars and restaurants of the town where she lived, Olivia found herself living in what she described as a 'super-international' environment. Here, English was the lingua franca, and interaction in Swedish was a rare event:

**'Super-international' (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)**

O: Actually, I have a lot of friends here.

A: Yes?

- O: Yes.  
 A: Yes. I'm sure. Mmm. So how do you, in which language mostly do you communicate?  
 O: English.  
 A: Completely?  
 O: English [laughs]. English all the time. /.../ They are from India, Brazil, yes. Super-international.

**'Always in English' (Interview 2: 17 12 2019)**

- O: I only socialise with people who know English [laughs] /.../  
 A: So, like during the break, so you and your friends, you are going to go and get a coffee or something, or whatever you do during the break, and you are talking. Is that going to be in English? Nearly all the time?  
 O: Yes, always. Always in English.

Throughout the interviews, Olivia would return to the challenge of needing to develop proficiency in Swedish as a means of developing her career, yet at the same time enjoying life in a dynamic international community. While she wanted to be able to interact with speakers of Swedish, when opportunities for communication did arise, awareness of an immigrant identity created apprehension:

**'Motivated trying to learn Swedish, but not with the situation' (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)**

- A: How would you describe your motivation?  
 O: Mmm. [pause] [sighs]. Like 70% or,  
 A: OK. Mmm.  
 O: Umm, I don't know. Yeah, I feel motivated, to try to speak Swedish, but not with the situation that's around speaking. Trying to speak Swedish. Like I'm 26 years old, not having a job, being in another country, bla bla bla bla bla. Being an immigrant. So, yeah, I feel motivated trying to learn Swedish, but not with the situation. Maybe if I can learn Swedish and work at the same time, or something like that, it could be like better. Like I have a job. I need to speak Swedish to be better in my job. So, it's more like pushing on myself.

In the initial interviews, Olivia reflected on how the situation was not suited to target language (TL) communication, and how it held back the development of oral skills. While she felt 'motivated, to try to speak Swedish', her WTC was dampened by 'the situation that's around speaking'. Although she enjoyed being part of a 'super-international'

environment, she recognised how it restricted access to contexts where she could practise speaking Swedish. In a later interview when Olivia reflected on living in London, and how there too she had also been part of an international community, she could see how the current situation created very different conditions for TL development:

**‘International communities’ (Interview 8: 07 05 2020)**

O: I don’t know if that’s strange to say, but as an immigrant, I don’t know. Like for me at least, when you go to another country, you always have immigrant friends. I don’t know why, or what, but it’s like when you’re [nationality], yes, or from another country, you always had, your friends are always from outside that country. Always. I don’t know what happened when I was living in London. It was the same. Like I was with [nationality] people, or maybe from other countries. But from the UK, no one. And here it is almost the same. Well, I have, we have friends here from Sweden. But they are a lot, they are involved in these international groups. So I don’t know. For me it was not strange. Because when I came here, I started living in a house with 9 people or 10 people, I don’t remember. All internationals. So I knew from there that I was going to create relationships, have friend relationships. So I think it was not strange for me. I think the strange thing is to come here and just having Swedish friends! Like be super inside the society, the Swedish society.

Aware that living in an international environment constrained opportunities to communicate in Swedish, Olivia spoke about how she needed to make active efforts to create opportunities for communication: ‘so it’s more like pushing on myself’. Having spent over a year in Sweden without making substantial progress, Olivia was aware of the pressure she was under. Her desire to communicate in Swedish (but her favouring of English), her hesitancy when communication situations did arise and the disappointment generated when she made a half-hearted attempt, combined to generate a disillusionment that characterised communication experiences. Whether participating in oral activities in the SFI classroom, carrying out mundane transactions at the local store or engaging in casual interaction with a Swedish friend, Olivia described how she experienced apprehension when trying to communicate in Swedish:

**The first days in class (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)**

O: Like, I’m going to speak a lot? No. To try to say something? No. I don’t feel confident. So that’s why it’s like, how do you say in English? Fear. Fear. I feel fear.

- A: Right, yes, that's, I understand that.
- O: And not just trying to speak. Even if I think about it, I feel like 'Oh my God'. The first day that I came to this class [the continuation class], I know that we have to do a presentation. And it was not the presentation that we did in [the reception class]. It was '*My name is Olivia and I am from....*' /.../ And when I listen to [Teacher] saying that, I was like, 'Oh my God'. I feel fear. Like 'I don't want to do this. Why am I here?' /.../ And I feel superbad because of that. Because I know that I have to try to speak, and when I see people that don't know English, to try to speak.
- A: Mmm.
- O: Daria [a classmate] told me, 'Try. Just try'. But I don't want to try. Because I don't know anything. I feel like I don't know anything.

#### Group work (Interview 2: 17 12 2019)

- O: I tried to say something, and then she asked me something, and I said like 'Yes, yes'. I didn't understand anything. And then she asked me again, and I said like, 'I don't understand' and [Teacher] and the others that were on my table, they tried to help me. But at that time, it was not helpful for me. So I felt like, they are all together. All but me. They understand like.
- A: Yes, yes, I understand.
- O: Yeah. And I felt super-stressed, and I was like, I wanted to cry.
- A: Right.
- O: I feel superbad, and I say like, 'Yes, next, next, I don't want to talk'. Because it was so much questions. I didn't understand anything. I don't know what I was thinking at the first. Right at that moment [Teacher] came to my desk. It was a very bad situation.

As becomes clear in these classroom examples, it is not only the feeling of not wanting, or not being able to communicate in Swedish that is troubling for Olivia. It is also the sense of being expected to be able to carry out basic interactions. Regardless of the interlocutor – the teacher, a classmate, an acquaintance, a shop assistant or a person in a position of authority – Olivia described how she would experience embarrassment in not being able to match up to the expectation that she would respond to a simple question in Swedish:

#### Story One 'The tomato' (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)

- A: You told me about a situation where you, like the weekend before, you were in the shop and,

- O: Yeah, the tomato.
- A: Choosing tomatoes, yeah, the tomato thing. Can you tell me, how did that feel, when the woman who was sitting behind the, the cashier, said, 'Oh, is that your tomato?' And you understood exactly what she said, but you didn't know what to say?
- O: Yeah, I felt like good, because I understood. I understand the sentences. But not if it was a tomato, or all of the tomatoes, or what type of tomato. So, I was like 'Oh, fuck. What can I say now?' And I say 'Maybe'. Like I'm a professional in Swedish, 'Maybe, maybe'.
- A: Yes. So, you were kind of hedging, *maybe*.
- O: And then I think she, this girl, realises that I didn't know Swedish, and she said, 'Can you take the tomato bla bla bla'. And this guy came with the tomato. So that's for you, and she spoke in English. 'This is' she said, something like that, 'This is for you', or 'This was a tomato', or something like that. So, she realised that I was not Swedish. But I tried.

### Story Two 'At the employment office' (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)

- A: I mean like just in regular stuff, in the shops, do people start speaking in Swedish?
- O: Yes. They always speak to me in Swedish.
- A: And you say?
- O: And I say 'Sorry'. Or, 'Can you speak in English'. Or something like that. If I don't understand. I always try to understand. But if I don't understand, I say 'Sorry, can you speak English?', something like that.  
/.../
- A: Have you had like, um, situations where you've been like in some kind of meeting maybe? To discuss education, or maybe have you been to *the employment office* or *the population registry*, or any of those places?
- O: Yes, but always in English.
- A: Always in English.
- O: Yeah, it was some, one time when I went to the *employment office*. It is super-difficult. When I went to register there, the papers that you have to do, and on the computer, it was in Swedish. Everything. So, I asked them like, 'Is everything in Swedish? You don't have it in English?' And he said, 'No, in Swedish. We are in Sweden'. And I say 'Yes, I understand that, but there is a lot of immigrants here'.
- A: So what happened?
- O: He was trying to help me. He said to me, 'If you need help, I can help you, OK?'. I was trying, trying,

- A: You said that in English or in Swedish?  
 O: No, no, in English, in English. And I was trying to understand. But so difficult.

**Story Three ‘Talking with Swedish friends’ (Interview 1: 04 12 2019)**

- O: With my Swedish friends, we try, they try, to speak to me in Swedish. And I try to answer. But I cannot answer.  
 A: So, do you, I mean, have there been situations since you started the course where you have kind of thought, ‘OK, well I can try a little bit in Swedish?’  
 O: Yes.  
 A: Or you kind of, they have kind of said, ‘*Hi, How’s it going?*’, or ‘*How are you?*’  
 O: Yeah, yeah.  
 A: ‘*How are things today?*’ And you have continued in Swedish? You’ve continued in Swedish?  
 O: Yeah, yeah.  
 A: Has that kind of stuff happened?  
 O: Yeah, yeah. Always. All the time.  
 A: How does it go? What normally happens?  
 O: I feel like, ‘*Oh no*’. That’s my, the situation is like. ‘*Oh no, no*’. I feel like ah, so much stress, so much stress, so much pressure. Because it’s not only one. Maybe they are always three, four or so, when you go to a place, ‘Hi Olivia’, ‘Hi Olivia’. It’s everyone there. So, all of them, they are looking at you, like, ‘Is she going to speak in Swedish?’  
 A: Aha, you feel that they, that they are kind of waiting?  
 O: Yeah, yeah.  
 A: And now they know that you are studying as well?  
 O: Yeah, yeah. And it’s so difficult. I have a friend, Oscar, he’s from Sweden also. And he doesn’t care about that. He says, ‘Do you want to speak in Swedish?’, and I say ‘No’. ‘OK’. But the other ones, they are like, ‘*Ah speak Swedish, speak Swedish*’. And they also, that’s good for me because they speak with me in Swedish, and I answer in English, sometimes. So, but I [sighs], they speak sooo slowly, so I can understand. That’s good. But when they want you to answer, I feel so much pressure. Because they are Swedish. From Sweden. So [pause] I don’t know. I think I am going to do something wrong, or they are not going to understand me. /.../ So sometimes I say, ‘I don’t want to talk in Swedish’, because I know I’m going to do it wrong. And people say, ‘But you have to try’. I have to try, but I don’t feel confident to try. Even to try.

As these stories reveal, as soon as Olivia experienced apprehension about communicating in Swedish – a lack of confidence in her ability to express herself, and a sense of failing to meet the expectations of interlocutors – she would shift to the security of English. The apprehension with which Olivia approached a communication situation was apparent in all of the stories she told during the research period. Indeed, her Swedish WTC varied little over the period. On some occasions, however, Olivia recognised that she was a little less anxious about failing to complete an interaction in Swedish, and a little less fearful of a possibly negative response. In situations where she felt comfortable, and where she did not experience the scrutiny of others, she could sometimes relax and communicate in Swedish:

**Story Four ‘A beer at the pub’ (Interview 3: 21 01 2020)**

O: I was with friends when we came back from [home country]. Or it was this weekend? No, this weekend, because I was studying last week. We were at [pub] in [city]. Taking some beers. And one of my best friends, Jamal, he is from Syria. He went here, to SFI, like one or two years ago. He finished SFI, but he didn't start [subsequent programme]. And he asked me in Swedish, and I answered in Swedish also. And we have another friend. He is from Italy, and he's studying Swedish now, on his own, at home. And he was like, 'Yeah, yeah, I'm learning a lot of Swedish, yeah we're going to talk in Swedish'. And he didn't understand anything of what we were talking about. We didn't talk about things like, super-difficult, just basic things. But Jamal speaks super good. Like he pronounces really good. Because he is not Swedish, so he pronounces everything, and I understood everything that he said. And he told me like, 'Ah you're good in Swedish', and I said...

A: So you replied? You spoke in Swedish as well?

O: Yeah. A little bit. Like, mm, I don't know, five, ten minutes.

A: So, look, let me ask you a question. So you are sitting in [pub]. You're having a couple of beers,

O: Uhum

A: Did that kind of make it easier?

O: I think it was easy because, ehm, I hadn't seen my friends for three weeks, since I went to [home country]. And I was like, really happy to speak with them, and everything, and with Jamal. He is a really nice guy, and he is always helping you. So he asked me in Swedish, just to practise, him and me. So, yeah, I think I was like, 'OK, I'm going to try'. And also, he is not from Sweden. So I don't feel like this pressure of doing it well, trying so that people understand you, and everything.

- A: Is that something you feel sometimes?
- O: Yes. With Swedish people. That's why I don't want to speak with Swedish people. I feel like the pressure of, I don't know, they speak really good Swedish. So, I don't know if they are going to understand me, or if they are going to think like 'Ah, she looks stupid talking in Swedish'. That's why I prefer to speak with people who are not from Sweden.

In the story about the conversation in the pub – when Olivia tells how she and her friend spoke in Swedish for some five to ten minutes – several facilitative factors seem to coincide. They are enjoying a beer. She and her friend have not seen each other for a while. There is also another friend, from Italy, who seems to lack even basic skills. These circumstances appear to encourage Olivia to communicate in Swedish. She seems particularly at ease talking with Jamal. As she puts it, 'he is a really nice guy, and he is always helping you'. Moreover, Jamal is 'not from Sweden'. As Olivia explains, this means that she does not experience the 'pressure of doing it well'. It is the same in Story Three. Here, among all her Swedish friends, Olivia identifies one person – Oscar – who does not seem to expect, or pressurise her to speak in Swedish.

In the previous chapter we saw how one of the women, Maria, had a deficit language ideology. A deficit ideology is a set of beliefs that positions the individual as an imperfect second language (L2) user, and carries the assumption that 'it is the L2 user's task to conform to the norms of L1 communication as closely as possible in order to be viewed as a competent (though still imperfect) L2 user' (Subtirelu, 2014: 124). For Maria, a deficit ideology functioned to delay the point in time where, in social contacts beyond the classroom, she felt sufficiently confident to communicate in Swedish.

For people who hold deficit ideologies, an unsuccessful communication event can be interpreted as evidence of linguistic deficiency and can have a negative influence on WTC. Even though the developmental trajectories of Swedish WTC were different for Olivia and Maria, the perception of being critically scrutinised by native-speaking interlocutors is similar. As Lou and Noels (2019) have suggested, a person with a migration background can be particularly sensitive to the ways in which they are treated in interactions with TL speakers. This can lead to a tendency to anxiously anticipate rejection. When communicating with Jamal, however, fear of rejection is less apparent. Olivia may indeed make errors. When communicating in Swedish for five to ten minutes this is bound to happen. However, she does not seem overly perturbed. As her narrative indicates, her communicative shortcomings are not going to be subject to the gaze (as she perceives it) of a more critically inclined, native-speaking other.

The two-month period following her return to Sweden in January up until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March, was the time when Olivia experienced being most willing to communicate in Swedish. Even though she was frustrated by the changes that took place at Pinewood after the winter break – bigger classes and fewer contact hours – she was optimistic about the future. Albeit slowly, she felt that she was making progress with her learning. As she explained in an interview in mid-January, she experienced greater confidence in choosing communication codes; ‘Now I feel like more confident. And I know when I want to speak in English or in Swedish. And when I want to, I try to do it at that time’:

#### Story Five ‘At the supermarket’ (Interview 3: 21 01 2020)

O: When I go to supermarket, because now I go to a new supermarket, and when I go there, I know that they only speak Swedish. And sometimes I thought that about, mm, I can try to tell something. Actually, one time, it was, it’s a really small supermarket, so there is a boss. So, the son of the boss, he was on the machine, the cashier, and I think he was, I don’t know, seven years old, something like that, or 10 years old, and my boyfriend told me try to ask the child how old he is. And I thought like, mmm, yeah, I know how to ask, but eh maybe another time. So, I always think like, when I go there, like try to say something like, ‘Hi, how are you?’, or ‘How do you feel today?’ Things like that. Because it’s always super quiet, and it’s only ‘*Hi, hello, thanks very much*’. /.../ But on the other hand, I don’t want to. Because if he asks me something, and I don’t understand what it is. Like, ‘*How old are you?*’ ‘*Bla bla bla*’ ‘Sorry, English’. It’s like, ‘OK, do you speak Swedish, or do you speak English?’ So this. I don’t know, I think it’s like confusing.

Even though during this period Olivia did not describe a particular event in a community context when she spoke Swedish (other than when socialising with friends at parties, and in pubs and restaurants), she was aware that in the right circumstances, she *could* take the plunge and communicate. Because she was making progress with Swedish – development which had also been highlighted by her teachers – confidence in her communicative abilities was also boosted. She talked about visits to the healthcare centre but how, because of the importance of the situation, she had decided to stick to English. She identified how visits to the pharmacy could also provide opportunities. However, here she was always served by a person who spoke her mother tongue. Enjoying first language (L1) conversations with this woman, she never wanted to speak Swedish.

At this stage, Olivia seemed slowly to be moving towards a point where, given the right circumstances, she might experience a willingness

to communicate in Swedish in simple everyday interactions. However, a shift in Olivia's general state of communicative readiness did not materialise. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, major changes took place in Swedish society. While shops, restaurants and secondary schools remained open, and public transport continued to operate, social practices and patterns of social interaction changed almost overnight. Home working was encouraged, and in tertiary and adult education, remote learning was introduced. People spent far more time in their homes and socialised in restricted circles. At Pinewood, the online learning package introduced in January became the primary means of learning and communication.

As a result of these changes, opportunities to communicate in Swedish in community contexts rapidly diminished. In an interview in March, right at the beginning of the pandemic, Olivia described how she could not recall any situations where she felt there had been opportunities to use Swedish in social interactions:

**'Nothing happened' (Interview 6: 10 03 2020)**

O: So, yeah, nothing happened. And now I go just to the supermarket one time per week. So I don't have the opportunity to talk a lot.

A: So you go once a week because of...

O: Because I prefer to go just once and take everything... I have the food like ready. I know so,

A: You kind of planned it out?

O: Yes. So it's easy. But no, nothing happened to me. So sad. And also, I don't, I feel like, I think I am losing the language.

A: Really?

O: Yes. I was talking with a friend the other week, and I was sad. And like, I think I am losing or, everything that I learned before, I'm losing it. /.../ I feel sad because I learnt, I think, a lot in a quite small time. I was so confident with Swedish like, 'Oh wow, I'm learning a lot. I know how to talk'. Like little sentences. But I know. But now I don't feel that confidence. I feel sad because I'm losing. Like, I didn't learn too much language. And now I'm losing it like. It's weird. I don't know. It's a weird situation.

From the pandemic's onset in late February–early March until the end of the research period in June, Olivia's situation changed little. She studied online, cut down her visits to shops and met her friends outdoors. Instead of going to the gym, she and her partner went for walks and cycle rides in the countryside. While Olivia had always experienced life in Sweden as somewhat mundane, the pandemic enhanced this feeling. She described a life of routines; how she always went to the same shops, and had the same recurring interactions:

**The pandemic creates routines ‘They know me’ (Interview 8: 07 05 2020)**

- O: Doing sports outside means that I meet some friends, but opportunities to speak Swedish? No.
- A: So these friends, are they friends who sort of like, live in the same apartment building? Or they are friends from, through [her partner’s employer]? Or who? Which friends?
- O: Yes. From everywhere. Like people from [employer]. Sometimes I meet Daria [friend from SFI] also. So yeah. But we mostly speak in English.
- A: OK.
- O: The only opportunities that I have is when I go to [department store], or the supermarket. But they know me. So they know that I don’t speak in Swedish. Because I go always to the same places, I think. But then there are other people who know that I don’t speak Swedish, and they still speak in Swedish to me. Like yesterday, I went to [department store]. And this one girl that I always, always meet [there], and she knows that I don’t speak Swedish. And she speaks Swedish.
- A: OK. So how do you respond in that situation?
- O: I always say, ‘No, no’. I don’t say ‘No’. I say ‘*No, no, no*’. It’s three ‘*no*’s. And then ‘*Thanks*’.
- A: Yes. So, you have a kind of little routine?
- O: Yes. Because she always says the same. Like, ‘Do you want a bag?’, ‘Are you a member?’, ‘Do you want to become a member?’, And I say ‘No, no, no’. Then she gives me the ticket. ‘Thank you’.

In the interviews towards the end of the period, Olivia would often reflect on the irony of her situation. Living in a country whose language she had been learning for nearly two years, she had hardly any opportunities to practise speaking in everyday situations. Living through the pandemic also caused her to reflect on the relationship between formal and informal learning, and how she had developed her skills in English:

**Formal and informal learning (Interview 8: 07 05 2020)**

- O: I remember sometimes, when I was studying English, that I knew how to speak. And my listening was good. But then they said to me, ‘OK, now you should write, what you are saying’. And I was like, ‘Oh fuck’. What are words like? You don’t know how to write some words. But you know how to say them. So now it’s different. I know how to write them, but I don’t know...
- A: That’s really interesting. Isn’t it? It is exactly the opposite?
- O: Yes.

- A: When you think about those skills profiles, is that surprising to you?
- O: Yes. Well, it's not. No, for me, it is not surprising. Because I think when you learn a language, the best way to learn it is to speak the language, speak and listen to people. That's why I went to London. And I always try to speak in English. I think that's the best way. /.../ Now I don't have like the... Because at that time in England, if I didn't speak English, no one was going to understand me, or understand what I said. But here I have English. So people can understand what I say. So I don't have like. No one is pushing me. Or I'm not pushing myself to... 'you have to, or need to speak Swedish'.

In previous interviews, Olivia had described the stress that she experienced in recognising the need to speak Swedish in order to develop her language skills, but lacking the courage to initiate communication. Reflecting on the Covid-19 restrictions, and the minimal opportunities for communication, Olivia arrived at the conclusion that acquisition probably played a more important role than learning. Living in a community context where English functioned as a contact language, and socialising in an international enclave where English was the lingua franca, situations requiring communication in Swedish were few. Moreover, she lacked even extrinsically derived motivation. As she put it, 'no one is pushing me' to speak Swedish, and 'I'm not pushing myself'.

During the interviews at this time, Olivia had begun to rethink her long-term plans. Because the pandemic meant that a future in Sweden for her and her partner had become uncertain, she found herself reflecting on the value of Swedish:

**'Is it worth learning Swedish?' (Interview 8: 07 05 2020)**

- O: Well, sometimes I think like I should continue with Swedish, because, ehm, if I continue living in Sweden, then it's going to be good for me. But if not, well, not a lot of people know how to speak Swedish outside Sweden. So maybe that opens me a door. I don't know where, or when, but maybe. And then on the other, I have other days that I think like, 'Why am I sitting studying Swedish? Who knows Swedish in this world like? Just people in Sweden. Why? I'm losing my time learning Swedish when I can learn, I don't know, Chinese or another language that is more useful for my life'. But then I think, 'Well because we are living in Sweden, so'.
- A: Yes, right.
- O: Yes. But sometimes the, I don't know. It's hard. I have a mix of feelings. So. And now with this situation, that we don't know

what we are going to do. We wanted to change. Now it's the Corona virus. It's not the best situation to change your life.

Like thousands of EU citizens living and working in other countries within the Union, the Covid-19 pandemic caused Olivia and her partner to reassess their situation. When her partner understood that his employment contract would not be renewed, they began making plans to return to their home country. Very quickly, both secured jobs. Olivia obtained a contract as a design consultant with a domestic fashion brand, and her partner secured a job with a privately owned engineering company. Having arranged to terminate the lease on their apartment, and after spending the traditional Midsummer celebrations with friends, Olivia and her partner returned home in July.

### **Titly**

Recently married, and having completed her seven-year medical training, Titly arrived in Sweden filled with confidence, excited about the new life awaiting her. Titly and her husband had an active social life. Like Olivia, Titly spent time in international English-speaking environments, socialising with her husband's postgraduate colleagues and his friends from work. She also socialised with members of diasporic groups in Sweden. She and her husband would also visit friends from their home country who had settled in different parts of Europe. The couple liked foreign travel and enjoyed weekend breaks in different European cities. Titly was firmly set on establishing a career in Sweden, as a surgeon or in general practice. Before arriving, she had ascertained what she would need to do in order to gain a practice certificate issued by the Swedish medical authorities. As she explained in the first interview, from the day she arrived in Sweden, she had a clear vision of what she wanted to accomplish:

#### **My dream for the future (Interview 1: 06 12 2019)**

T: I dream that, OK it's a matter of time. Give me, ah, I give myself two years' time to pass the Swedish SAS3, and also to pass the medical test. So I hope in 2021 I will be a doctor in Sweden.

Titly made all the necessary applications to gain a place on a general language programme (SFI), and on a specialist programme for medical professionals. However, during this period, adult language education was substantially under-resourced. A large demand for places meant that for both SFI and the medical programme, Titly had to wait for longer than she had anticipated before gaining a place. Frustrated at the thought of sitting at home, Titly decided to find employment. Determined to be

independent – and having convinced her husband of the importance of a life beyond the home for her self-esteem and well-being – Titly quickly found work. Her first job was as a team leader at a newly established pizza delivery company. Here, she worked for several months. Later, she got a job as an assistant in a clothes shop owned and operated by an acquaintance from her home country. For these jobs, knowledge of Swedish was not necessary. At the pizza delivery company, the employees were either fellow migrants or students. All the work took place in English. At the shop, transactions took place in Titly’s mother tongue, or in English. Titly enjoyed both jobs. She described these early months as a happy period. Often her husband would visit her during his lunch hour, and would buy pizza to take back to his office.

The ease with which Titly had gained these jobs had not surprised her. Having listened to her husband’s accounts of how easy it was to get by in Sweden using English, Titly had been confident when applying for work. At the same time, she never lost sight of her goal of entering medical practice, and was fully aware of the need to develop high-level skills in Swedish. From an early stage she began to learn Swedish on her own, using materials that she bought, or which were available online. Thriving in her early married life in this new country, and with her long-term goal firmly in mind, Titly found that she enjoyed learning. As she explained in our first interview, ‘you know, this is very fun, and to learn a new language is like you are discovering a new world’.

Buoyed by an enthusiasm for learning and a desire to progress quickly, Titly found that she was able to develop basic communication skills. She described how she felt positive about her future, confident about learning Swedish, and that she wanted to communicate in Swedish in social situations:

**Story One ‘Learning the word for “share”’ (Interview 1: 06 12 2019)**

T: My husband’s best friend, they are sharing a room. Joel. I talk with him, all the conversation in Swedish. And I made so many mistakes. And Joel teaches me. ‘OK, OK, don’t say it like this. Say these things now’. So, that time, my husband feels so proud. Yes, my husband said, ‘I’ve been living here for four years, and I don’t know anything, and you, you just start after only three months, and I feel proud of you’.

A: Yes. So, were you proud of yourself?

T: Sometimes.

A: Yes, yes. It’s OK, you don’t need to be modest. But, basically, um

T: No, actually, I am proud of my muscle. That I don’t give up. Only for this.

/.../

- A: But when you are with, you know, when you are using Swedish, when you are going to *the Migration office*, when you are going to the health centre, you know,
- T: Yes, I just try. I just try a lot. Because sometimes, my husband also doesn't have that much patience. He said 'OK, just end up with the English'. But I try there. And you know, no one can say that 'OK, you are taking so much time, now go'. They are not so rude. They are so soft in Sweden, everyone. So that, they give me that time, and I try to complete my whole conversation. And sometimes I just say in English, 'OK, *what does that mean in Swedish?*', and they say 'OK, this was this'. Yesterday, I wanted to say to someone, that I want to share it. But I don't know the word 'share' in Swedish. So, some bus driver told me that *share* is share. So, these things.

Reflecting on this period, Titly described how she had engaged in informal learning with the same tenacious attitude as she had approached other challenges in life. She explained how her entrance exams to medical school had been very demanding, and how she had devoted her life to intensive study. Similarly, once she had gained admission to medical school, she found that she had to put in untold hours of study for each set of credits. In the early interviews, Titly would often identify tenacity as a defining personal strength, proud of her capacity for hard work and her inner resilience.

A year or so after arrival in Sweden, Titly started on the programme at Pinewood. She began her studies with the same enthusiasm that had characterised her earlier independent attempts at language learning. While she remained enthusiastic and confident about communicating in Swedish, she had come to realise that the success of a communication event, and the effects that it had on her self-confidence, depended on the conditions in which the interaction took place. In situations where an interlocutor was accommodating, when there was time available to plan in advance and when she did not experience stress, Titly found herself willing to communicate in Swedish. She tried hard to avoid 'ending up with English', as her husband had advised:

### Story Two 'Moving home' (Interview 3: 06 02 2020)

- A: So, tell me then, in the last couple of weeks, last week or so, have you been having interactions? Have you spoken with people? You told me about the bus. Have you had any other experiences when you could have used English, or could have used Swedish?
- T: Yes. Because my neighbour is Swedish.
- A: Yes.

- T: So, now I'm leaving home. /.../ But we have so many furnitures in our house. And also, we can't carry it to the [new apartment]. You know, the transport fare is so much. So, I talked to my neighbour. I said that 'If you want something, you can take it, because I'm just, I just try to throw the things from my house'. So, she said, 'OK, leave this, this, this, this. These things'.
- A: And so you went? Your neighbour is Swedish?
- T: Yes. Umm. Not Swedish, but Albanian. But she's lived in Sweden for a long time. And she only speaks Swedish, and
- A: And you don't speak Albanian?
- T: Eh, yes [laughs]
- A: So how did that go?
- T: Yes, I go and said, 'OK, I'm moving out, and I have some *furniture*. If you, *if you need it, you can take it*'. So, she understands me, and she said, 'OK, then I will come in your house and I will say which things I need'
- A: Yes. And that worked?
- T: Yeah, it works. Even I was throwing some carpet and so many things. So she is saying to my husband, 'If you throw it out, then just give it to me and I'm going to use it'. So my husband is not understanding. He said, 'OK, you think it is dust here? OK I'm going to throw it out'. And she said, 'No, don't throw it out. If you are throwing out, then give it to me'.
- A: Right, right. So what are you doing? You are translating in between?
- T: No, I was in the house, and I was hearing that my husband was having some conversation with someone. So I thought they have some problem. So I just opened the door and my neighbour said, 'OK, tell your husband I want to take that'. And so I said 'No, she is saying that she needs to take that'. And my husband is thinking, he said, 'Why you put this here? Throw it out'.
- A: OK. So, he doesn't. He's not understanding...
- T: No [laughs]
- A: I understand. OK.
- T: And he is just saying, 'Look you can go, and I will throw it now'.
- A: Mmm. So how did that feel? Did that feel like completely natural? To be doing that? Or does it feel like, 'Oh this is a challenge. I am going to need to be kind of resourceful'?
- T: You know, now I am taking it very easily. How much time I will take. Give it my time. And I take it very slowly.

As is evident in this story, Titly could confidently explain to her neighbour that they were moving, and that the neighbour could have any furniture they were not taking with them. This accomplished, she seemed to enjoy her role as an intermediary, sorting things out when her husband and the

neighbour were unable to make sense of the other's intentions. While mediation might appear challenging – explaining her husband's misunderstanding requires some thought – Titly felt confident about communicating. Of course, in this situation, English does not function as a backup. Nevertheless, the sense of being willing to communicate in Swedish (given the right circumstances) recurred in many of the stories that Titly told. The most important factor influencing the success of a communication event, it would seem, was having time to mentally prepare:

### Story Three 'At the immigration office' (Interview 3: 06 02 2020)

- A: But let me, can I ask you then, yesterday, you were at *the immigration office*, the immigration department?
- T: Exactly.
- A: How did, can you tell me about that? What happened in terms of language? How did you do that?
- T: No, yesterday, actually, we go for the drop-in. Actually, we have some problem with, I told you that we are trying to clear my bank account details.
- A: Yes.
- T: Because I want to know, is everything OK. Or, 'if you want any tax or something, but I am ready here to give it to you'. Because they declare the tax in April, so I am just having that thing with them. So, I just go for the drop-in. And they say, 'OK, we don't have this type of case, I will let you know by mail'.
- A: OK.
- T: So, it's too long. They don't.
- A: So, it was a very small meeting, yes?
- T: Yes. But I wait a very long time for the. Because you know the drop-in.
- A: I understand. So you are waiting in the waiting room, you take a number.
- T: Yes, yes [laughs].
- A: You sit there, you wait for an hour and a half or something.
- T: Yes, and then they say...
- A: So, tell me about the actual interaction? Tell me about the meeting. How did it go? Which language did you start with?
- T: Oh no, I just go, and I asked them, that I need some information.
- A: How did you ask? Was it Swedish?
- T: No, in Swedish.
- A: In Swedish.
- T: Then they said, 'What type of information?'. Then I show my bank account details to them. 'But I don't know that is, I mean this money, you take the tax or not?'. Then she said, 'I don't know anything about it'.

- A: And this, all of this is taking place in Swedish?
- T: Yes. And some things, I just ask her in, because I saw everything in the translator [laughs].
- A: Right, so you, did you prepare?
- T: I prepare.
- A: So you are prepared, mentally prepared? And when you are sitting there, for an hour and a half, waiting, you are kind of preparing in your mind?
- T: Yes, yes.
- A: How you are going to say things?
- T: Yes. Because if I know that I will be talking to you in this subject, I know what, which other questions come from you. So, then I said 'OK, so who is going to tell me that?', and she said, 'OK, give your personal number, ID-card, and we will send you a mail'. But still no, they are not in contact with us.
- A: OK. So, the whole thing was, in that sense, was very smooth and effective?
- T: Yes.
- A: Yes.
- T: Because that's a very sharp conversation. Two, two minutes, I think.
- A: Mmm. So how did you feel, yesterday? How did you feel about it? You know, you prepared. It's like, you know, it's like a test, isn't it? You prepare in advance. You do it. You are successful.
- T: Yes. Because I don't have any work to there, because I was just waiting. Because my husband go to the office. And it's all about my bank account [laughs]. So.
- A: But, you know, you were successful. It was, you know, you managed to interact.
- T: Yes [laughs]. Yes. But I don't have anything to do. So I was just writing the English in the Google Translate and was watching what came in the Swedish word.
- A: OK. And then just, like, memorised?
- T: Yes. Some sentence I know. And some things I don't know. So I just, 'are these things OK?'. Then put in this, this, this, and I just go in. I told her. Even I ask at the last, I asked her 'Do you understand?' [laughs].
- A: In English or Swedish? In Swedish, in Swedish?
- T: In Swedish.
- A: In Swedish, yes.
- T: 'If you don't understand, then I can explain in English'.
- A: OK, and what did she say?
- T: And then she just smiled, and said, 'OK I understand, I'll send you a mail'.

Here we see how, even though English would seem to be a more promising communication option, Titly is willing to communicate in Swedish. She initiates the interaction in Swedish and is able to successfully achieve what she set out to do (receiving information about the tax status of her earnings). As she explains, in this situation she had a lot of time to prepare. Using the Google Translate app, she was able to stitch together a conversation that she envisaged taking place. In this act of prospection – playing out the conversation in her mind – the responses that Titly believes that she might receive from the interlocutor are also included: ‘because if I know that I will be talking to you in this subject, I know what, which other questions come from you’.

Strategic in her choices about when and how to communicate, Titly was able to feel confident about speaking in Swedish (even in a ‘sharp’ conversation, as here in the immigration office). However, while the strategy of stitching together sentences in advance of a communication event was effective when there was time to prepare, Titly was aware that not all situations afforded such luxuries. In the interviews Titly often talked about her experiences from medical school. She stressed how her medical education had always been a challenge, and that she had constantly needed to put in extra effort. She admitted disliking theoretical modules, preferring the parts of the programme that took place in clinical settings. A preference for situated learning, and a ‘solution-focused’ approach to communication, were similarly characteristic of Titly’s efforts to acquire Swedish. While she developed good receptive skills, she struggled with grammar and syntax. This is illustrated in a story about a weekend break in another Swedish city. Due to rail problems, she and her husband arrived late at night, hungry and tired. With most restaurants closed, they managed to order food in a pub close to their hotel:

#### Story Four ‘Ordering food’ (Interview 2: 10 01 2020)

T: In [city] we go in a pub at the night. So there, we are so hungry because we reach [city] at twelve o’clock. Our train was the night train, so when we reach [area where hotel is located], everything is closed. So, we go for, in a pub, to find some food. So that time we talked to them, ‘OK we are hungry, and do, can you give me us food and something?’. And they said, ‘OK but you know this is the time the bar only is open’. So we say no, but we are ‘if you have any option then just tell us because we need food’. Then they said, ‘OK, if you want fish and chips then we can do that’. And so that time we talk in, I mean, I try to talk with them in Swedish. It’s the only thing.

A: Tell me, that story, how did it go? How did that interaction go?

T: Yes. Because in the night they, there are so many people, and they are checking the ID-card, on entering to the pub. So, so

many things. And I, we, said that, ‘No, we are not come here for the bar, we come here for the food’. So the guy don’t understand, because the pub is, ehm. There is only one woman. She is the only one who is working in the pub, and another guy is outside. He is checking the ID-card. So the woman is Chinese and so she doesn’t understand. You know, the Chinese, they don’t understand too much English. So we tried to explain to her in Swedish. ‘OK we want food, because if you have any options then please give us food, because everything is closed’.

- A: And you were doing that? Not your husband? Because of your Swedish?
- T: Yes, yes, yes. So I just tried and she agreed and she gave us food.
- A: OK. So, you were successful?
- T: [laughs] Yes.
- A: So how did that feel?
- T: Yes, it’s good. But I think, still now I can’t say, you know, what is in the past and what is in the present. I can’t express these things, actually.

In many ways, this must have been a demanding situation. Titly and her husband arrive late in the evening. They are hungry and the restaurants are all closed. The only place they can find is packed with people enjoying a Friday night out. The pub seems to be short staffed, and the only person serving does not appear to speak English. Taking command of the situation, Titly is once again able to effectuate the transaction using Swedish. They get the food. What is interesting is that when asked about how it felt to be successful communicating in Swedish, Titly reflected on how she had a problem with grammar: ‘it’s good. But I think, still now I can’t say, you know, what is in the past and what is in the present. I can’t express these things, actually’.

As time moved on, Titly became increasingly concerned about how her speech might lack grammatical precision. She had begun to receive feedback from her teachers on the medical programme and at SFI, to the effect that problems with grammar were holding her back and preventing progress:

**Story Five ‘Humiliation in the medical classroom’ (Interview 2: 10 01 2020)**

- T: But sometimes it feels, so low in the classrooms. /.../ I tried my level best. Because, you know, in the SFI class, I am only doing the little words. I am learning to make the sentence, OK? Subject, verb, object, like this. But in that class [medical programme] they are teaching us particle verb, or preposition, or verb, not preposition actually, particle verb, *main clause*, *subclause*, how

to transform the sentence like this. This is so much tough for me. Because I don't know the preposition, and I'm doing the particle verb, but the teacher is like, she [pause]. I don't know why I am doing this course. I think I'm doing this course only for the medical certificate. But she insulted me every time. And things like that make you less confident, I suppose. You come home and you think that, 'OK, I will, today I will study hard'. But these things make you demotivated, 'OK, no, I'm not going to study there' /.../ We have a medical presentation. And I give the presentation, and after that she told me she don't appreciate me. And she said, 'OK, I understand you have good knowledge about medicine, but when I will be your patient, I will want to listen to everything in Swedish'. Then I said, 'OK, I tried, I forgot some little bit words', because I memorised my presentation actually. 'I don't understand everything, but I memorised my presentation and some words I forgot'.

A: Did you use English to help, as a backup, when you forgot the Swedish words?

T: Yes. And she became angry about that. Because I don't know the several types, in Swedish. I forgot. So that's the thing. So these things, sometimes, make me low. Because I am living in the other land. I don't, I mean, no one is close to me here. So this, these things, make it hard, make me demotivated. I just cried. And I come out, and called my husband, 'OK I'm going back to [home country]. I'm not going to do these stupid things, and I am not doing anything'.

A: Yes. I feel very sorry that you had that experience. Because a language teacher should know better. A language teacher should understand that, for motivation, it is important to feel confident.

T: Yes. Then my husband said, 'OK, you want to quit this course, then just quit it and do only the SFI and complete your course and then you'll get the exam'.

A: Yes. So these things sometimes demotivated you?

T: These things, and when you try to, OK, when you try to use Swedish sometimes, and it feels that, 'OK, no, I am not going to use Swedish, someone will humiliate me again'.

Having spent over a year in Sweden before starting a language programme, Titly had acquired quite a lot of Swedish in everyday interactions. As we have seen, she was confidently able to carry out more than just basic interactions. However, her experiences in the medical class had a negative effect on her self-confidence. In this classroom, a grammar-translation approach seemed to dominate. From the descriptions Titly gave, there appeared to be few opportunities to develop language skills

through interaction. At Pinewood, Titly would often sit alone at a desk, or in a quiet corner, absorbed with long lists of words and phrases. In typical cramming style, she would be trying to memorise vocabulary for a forthcoming test on the medical programme. Alongside struggling with coursework, which was heavily focused on grammar and vocabulary, Titly also found herself in an environment with monolingual norms, and where the strategic use of English was strongly discouraged: ‘she became angry about that’.

As Darwin and Norton (2015) have suggested, when considering a language learner’s motivation, it is necessary to ask whether they are invested in the language practices of classrooms and communities. Teachers have the power to shape language practices in varying ways; they ‘bring to the classroom not only their personal histories and knowledge, but also their own worldviews and assumptions, which may or may not align with those of learners’ (Darwin & Norton, 2023: 1). Thus, while a learner might be highly motivated, if their conception of ‘good language teaching’ is not consistent with that of the teacher, investment in the language practices of the classroom is likely to be affected. For Titly, the grammar–translation approach and the ‘Swedish only’ classroom environment stood in stark contrast to her experiences of interaction in community contexts, where communication was strategically accomplished, and where English was a valuable resource.

Recalling how she felt at the time, and reflecting on how this and similarly hurtful experiences affected her self-confidence, Titly described how such situations could have strongly negative effects. She found that the practice and responses of the medical programme teacher not only affected her Swedish WTC – ‘it feels that, “OK, no, I am not going to use Swedish, someone will humiliate me again”’ – but also caused her to reassess her life situation: ‘these things, sometimes, make me low, because I am living in the other land. I don’t, I mean no one is close to me here. So this, these things, make it hard, make me demotivated. I just cried. And I come out, and called my husband, “OK I’m going back to [home country]”’.

The disillusionment that Titly felt about learning Swedish on the medical programme was a trigger for other negative emotions. Having spent seven years of her life qualifying as a doctor, she now faced the daunting task of achieving high-level competence in a language she found difficult. It also caused her to dwell on her position as a tied migrant. Even though she and her husband were both highly educated professionals, he had been able to pursue a career without ever having to learn the host country language; for her, language proficiency was a major obstacle to career development. In an interview a few weeks later, Titly again reflected on the negative treatment she experienced when attending the medical programme:

## Interview 3 (06 02 2020)

- A: You told me when we met in class about two or three weeks ago, back in January, about how, in the other course that you are studying, the teacher had been really unkind, and aggressive.
- T: And I was so sad. I was so sad. I was so sad. Umm, I can't tell you it was worth the time I passed that one test. I was so sad.
- A: And that meant that you kind of, you lost enthusiasm for using Swedish? Did that mean that you lost your enthusiasm for using Swedish?
- T: Yes.
- A: You lost your motivation to use Swedish in everyday situations?
- T: Yes, yes. And I was saying to my husband, 'OK, I'm determined. Please search your job in UK. We're moving on'. /.../ If you go into the UK in a *health centre*, you can see so many Indian doctors, Pakistani doctors, Bangladeshi doctors. Because PLAB<sup>1</sup> is very common in our country.
- A: Yes, yes. So, in January, when you were feeling kind of low in Sweden, you were saying to your husband, 'this isn't working. Let's'. Would he be able to get a job in the UK?
- T: Yes. /.../ Because for the engineers it is very easy to get a job. Because I told you that my husband doesn't know any Swedish or anything. And he got a job before completing his master's and everything. So it's very easy to get a job.
- A: Whereas for you, it's impossible to get a job without having Swedish language skills.
- T: It's very difficult. It's impossible.

Titly's experiences resonate with those of other co-moving spouses who have confronted the inequities of tied migration. While the internationally recruited partner (often male) is able to take advantage of a move, the co-moving partner (often female) is forced to put a career on hold (Aure, 2013a, 2013b). Like many other women migrants from South Asia (Kou & Bailey, 2017), Titly experienced being thwarted in her professional aspirations, the gender-based inequality weighing heavily on her mind.

In addition to the negative experiences from the medical programme (where ideologies that favoured monolingualism and grammar-focused teaching were at odds with Titly's community experiences of strategically constructed communication and flexible translanguaging practices), and the frustration she experienced as a tied migrant, Titly was acutely aware of more widespread racial discrimination. As Ortega (2019) has observed, even if a migrant L2 learner's language practices change sufficiently to be deemed appropriate by a native-speaking interlocutor, there are other sources of discrimination that intersect with language, and which 'are not easily undone' (Ortega, 2019: 30). Adding to the

accumulating experiences of inequitable treatment, and the challenges of life as a tied migrant, exposure to everyday racism in Swedish society accentuated the vulnerability that Titly experienced:

**Story Six ‘Everyday racism’ (Interview 3: 06 02 2020)**

T: When I went to [city], there sometimes, in the bus, Swedish people get in the bus. And it appears that she will be preferring to stand in the bus in spite of that she could sit beside me. So, these things are really, very bad.

/.../

A: The example you have just given me, about how, and I recognise exactly what you are saying, how you can get on a bus and there’s a place next to you, but someone who, you know, looks Swedish, they prefer to stand rather than sitting next to...

T: Yeah.

A: How, I mean, is that something you have noticed in terms of like opportunities to interact with people? That it is actually quite difficult? It is quite difficult to kind of make contact?

T: Yes. Even my neighbour, she is living in Sweden 30 years, 40 years, she said, she is a very old lady, so she said, all of the time she has never had a Swedish friend. Like, I can have a Swedish colleague, but I can never have a Swedish friend. You know, like the friend I can talk to a lot. They are not like that.

A: Mmm. And is that something that you have kind of like, recognised, noticed? Because I mean, you have been here now 18 months.

T: Yes.

A: You have a wide set of experiences. I mean you worked in [pizza delivery company], for example. So you’ve had a lot of contact with people. You have had all sorts of travel experiences. You are studying two different courses. So it is not as if you are sitting at home.

T: Yes. But I noticed everywhere. Some people are very weird. I told you last time that me, my husband and one of his friends, we get in the train, and there is a person sleeping. And just so for that, we don’t talk. So that we will not disturb her sleeping. And suddenly she just wake up, and see that three of them are in the same, I mean, in the train. We have some four-seater seats. The three of us are there. And she just wake up, and just stand and walk. So, these things are, you know. It is like, even if you try to ignore these things, you can’t.

A: Mmm. Mmm. Does that influence you? In terms of your own kind of sense of wanting to contact, wanting to interact with Swedish people? Does that kind of make you less willing to?

- T: Yes, really, you know. Because I thought, OK, if I want to talk, suppose if I go and try to contact or interact with him or her, what will she say? If she will say something good, or something bad.
- A: Mmm
- T: So.
- A: So, it's a risk?
- T: Yes. It's a risk. And, or something that she will be thinking, 'OK why she come here or something'.  
/.../
- A: Do you feel that you pick up on it, the signals that you see?
- T: Yes. I see in the bus, and the train. Like that. Even in the SFI somewhere [sighs].
- A: Yes, you've noticed that?
- T: That, yes, they don't like, eh, the people too much.
- A: OK. Do you, how do you see that?
- T: [sighs]. In so many ways. Examples? If I don't like you, you will understand that, OK.
- A: Is it like, is it body language?
- T: It's like body language. It's like your sixth sense. It's like your social sense. That you know. That you are mixing with so many people, so you can understand, 'OK, this guy is not liking me'.

As Ortega (2019: 34) has noted, in traditionally liberal and democratic societies, 'racism, anti-immigration prejudice, Islamophobia, perceived threats to national identities, and anti-welfare arguments have risen to the political mainstream'. These ideological shifts find expression in the forms of everyday racism that Titly describes. Whether picking up on a teacher's indifference, or being openly shunned on public transport, perceptions of other people's prejudice accumulate in ways that lead to what Titly describes as a 'sixth' or a 'social' sense. In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that willingness to communicate in a host country language is negatively affected.

In a society where the indignities and pain of everyday racism can be experienced in any social context – including education – certain places can offer safer environments. As we saw in a previous chapter, as a young Southeast Asian woman, Jessie could experience the prejudice of others in social situations. This meant that she was careful about where she spent time, favouring 'safe' places such as the multi-facility leisure centre. The leisure centre was a place where she felt comfortable, and where positive interactions with speakers of Swedish could take place. For Titly too, the leisure centre was a safe place. She enjoyed spending time there and, like Jessie, found that opportunities to communicate in Swedish could arise:

### Story Seven ‘At the leisure centre’ (Interview 3: 06 02 2020)

T: When I go for the swimming, in [leisure centre], there is a swimming. I mean, there are so many gymnasiums, so many things, and the swimming bath. There are so many people. So there, people actually talk in Swedish. And, I am learning swimming, so my husband always holds me. Or I need to hold something. So, when someone just come, it is very difficult for me to keep their space. Because without holding something, I can’t move. So, I, every time I need to tell them ‘OK, go from there’, or ‘I can’t swim’. So every time we talk, in the pool, we talk in Swedish. So that feels also good. And even there is one lady she was teaching her little daughter. So she always gives me some instruction. Because my husband’s doing some things, and she said, ‘OK, don’t do these things, just spread your hand or leg like this’. So she always, also said in Swedish. So sometimes I don’t understand. And I again say, ‘Please, can you say another word, or in any, I mean, any easy word’. Because she is also not so good in English. Sometimes she said in English, that ‘I don’t understand’. And sometimes she said ‘OK’. I suppose that day I learn from her ‘*exercise*’ exercise.

A: *Exercise*, yes, yes.

T: And she is saying that ‘*It is good to exercise*’.

In his classic work of urban sociology, *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg (1999) identified the existence of places in towns and cities where people are able to spend time hanging out. In these ‘core settings of informal public life’, public places can become the hosts for ‘regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home [first place] and work [second place]’ (Oldenburg, 1999: 16). Coining the term ‘third places’, Oldenburg emphasised the ordinariness of these social arenas – libraries, hair salons, cafés, pubs, parks, playgrounds and squares – and the activities that take place there. As Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) have made clear, no matter how mundane activities in a third place might be, interactions can generate enjoyment for participants:

The dominant activity is not ‘special’ in the eyes of its inhabitants, it is a taken-for-granted part of their social existence. It is not a place outsiders find necessarily interesting or notable. It is a forum of association which is beneficial only to the degree that it is well-integrated into daily life. (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982: 271)

Oldenburg (1999) identified third places as being particularly important for people who are newly arrived in a locality. For these people, third

places can function as ‘ports of entry’ or ‘sorting areas’ where they are able to identify others with whom they can affiliate. He suggested that third places could have particular importance for socially isolated residents (for example, elderly people), and that the beneficial impacts of social interaction would be most fruitful when people engaged in verbalised conversation (see Hickman, 2013, for an informed discussion).

For Titly, the leisure centre functioned as a classic third place. Doing something that was meaningful and enjoyable, she was able to benefit from social interactions while in the pool, and when getting changed before and after swimming. Just like Jessie (see Chapter 6), Titly found that people were most willing to talk with her when in the water, advising her on how best to learn to swim. These experiences were unusually pleasant: ‘so every time we talk, in the pool, we talk in Swedish, so that feels also good’. In third places, and in socialisation spaces connected to leisure activities, interest clubs and sports, apprehension about communication across cultural and ethnic divides has been shown to decrease. Even though they may lack duration, ‘meaningful encounters’ in these semipublic spaces can have positive effects on affiliation and well-being (Knipprath *et al.*, 2021; Piekut & Valentine, 2017) (see also Chapter 12 for an extended discussion).

For people who lack established social networks, and for different reasons can feel isolated or socially excluded, research has shown how third places are locations where they are able to establish and maintain ‘weak tie’ relationships (e.g. Ringsby Jansson, 2002). Coined by Granovetter (1973), the notion of ‘weak ties’ refers to recurring surface-level interactions with people who are acquaintances, rather than friends. As Granovetter (1973) has explained, compared to the stronger ties of friendship, ‘weak ties’ do not require the same investments of time and emotional resources. For this reason, ‘weak ties’ can be formed between people who may share different backgrounds (Granovetter, 1973; McPherson *et al.*, 2001). Even though in ‘weak tie’ dyads people are not closely connected at an emotional level – and interactions may be no deeper than a superficial exchange of information – weak ties can play an important role in reducing social isolation (Granovetter, 1973).

In migration contexts, weak ties can have positive influences on well-being (van der Horst & Coffé, 2012). As Décieux and Mörchen (2021: 247) make clear, weak ties are ‘important for migrants’ social interaction’. For people who are newly arrived in a locality, they can be ‘indispensable to individuals’ opportunities and to their integration into communities’ (Granovetter, 1973: 1378). In SLA, Coleman (2015: 42) has suggested that in the context of study abroad, weak tie relationships can ‘enable sojourners to develop as individuals’, and that interactions within weak tie relationships ‘can nurture new activities and new attitudes’.

Perhaps because of her medical training, Titly was good at interpreting an interlocutor’s non-verbal communication. As we have seen, she

was alert to indications of mistrust and prejudice. She was also good at picking up on positive attitudes. As a person, Titly was empathetic and open to new experiences. As Rose and colleagues (Rose & Ray, 1997; Rose *et al.*, 1998) have suggested, even simple everyday gestures indicating recognition from others can be important when people seek to integrate into a new environment. For marginalised groups – and immigrant women especially – the experience of a small neighbourly gesture can enable them to feel more at ease in their surroundings (Rose *et al.*, 1998). Spending a lot of time at the city library – a classic example of a ‘third place’ (Oldenburg, 1999) – Titly developed a ‘weak tie’ relationship with another library user, an older man who would go there each day to read the newspapers:

**Story Eight ‘The man in the library’ (Interview 4: 20 02 2020)**

- A: And if we think about your life outside of school, and the kind of things that you’ve been doing since we last spoke, do you have any kind of like situations that you remember? That you can tell me about? That you think I might be interested in?
- T: Ah, I told you that I don’t study in my home. So, sometimes from here, I directly go to the City *Library*. /.../ There is a, you see, there is a glass-room, for the self-study. So there sometimes is an old man. If you go, I think every time he is there. Because whenever I go, I saw him there. So, if we make some noise or something by, ring my phone, he just feels so angry.
- A: You can see that, can you?
- T: Yes. He just looks at me like this. And sometimes when I try to memorise some words, uhm, because in my country we are so loud. I think that we study so loudly. And we try to memorise that, so.
- A: Yes, I know. I have seen you doing that. Before we had a test here a few weeks ago, I saw you speaking over to yourself, quietly, but yes.
- T: /.../ So I talked to him. That I’m sorry, that I made this disturbance to you. So then he was so nice, and we talked, and he said, ‘OK, you are trying to learn Swedish’. And I said yes. /.../
- A: So let me, when you went up to him, when you approached him, to apologise, did you do that in Swedish or in English?
- T: Yes, I said *sorry*, I have, or *I have an exam coming soon*. /.../ When I understand he knew English, then I was saying something to him in English. He said, ‘No. You tell me in Swedish, and I will try to understand you’. And in so many times I am using Google Translate. And he said ‘OK, don’t use that. Just try to say in simple way. Then I will tell you the word’ /.../

- A: OK. So, you haven't seen him again? But you might? You might see him again? And you might be able to have the same kind of conversation?
- T: Yes, because we talked. And I saw him four or five times in the *City Library*. I think in the morning, I mean at this time, everyone goes there, and the old people. And they read the newspapers, and so many things.
- A: So you saw him on several occasions. /.../ So how, we are looking back on it now, how do you feel about that?
- T: It's good. You know, sometimes when people encourage you, it is like a good thing. I mean, because now I am away from my country. I am away from my parents. I am away from my profession, the most important thing. So I think this is the most, I mean, depressive period for me. And this weather. Everything.

When Titly had this conversation with the man in the library, she was generally despondent about the situation she found herself in. She missed her family and the opportunity to work in a profession for which she had trained for so long. Amidst this gloom – mirrored by the grey February weather – the conversation with the old man appeared to temporarily lift her spirits, and to enable her to feel encouraged.

While Titly had regularly exchanged greetings with the old man in the library, and the woman in the swimming pool, the social restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the library and the leisure centre became places that she could no longer visit, and these relationships did not develop. However, another 'weak tie' relationship that Titly established – and which endured throughout the pandemic and strengthened over time – was with a hospital specialist.

In a study of the settlement experiences of immigrant women in Montréal, Rose and colleagues (1998) explored participants' weak tie networks. Prominent in these networks were health and community care professionals. Beyond the material support that these people could provide, health and community professionals were also valued for their emotional support and companionship. As interactions increased over time, a weak tie relationship that started with a shallow interchange could develop into a stronger tie.

Titly consulted this medical specialist on several occasions during the research period. As we can see from stories told in two consecutive interviews, Titly was not only able to gain important medical advice. She also had an opportunity to interact with a person who she trusted, who understood her social situation, and who seemed happy to offer advice about language learning:

### Story Nine 'Consulting a specialist' (Interview 3: 06 02 2020)

T: I always visit a doctor. In, after one or two months. With him, I am so comfortable. We used everything! We used English, we used Swedish.

A: Is he a Swedish guy?

T: Yes. He is a Swedish guy. A very big guy. A very tall guy.

A: And you visited him on a couple of occasions? Two or three occasions?

T: Yes, yes.

A: So, you kind of know each other now?

T: Yes.

A: He knows that you are a doctor?

T: Yes. And also, sometimes he used to, sometimes he is saying, 'OK, you know that complication?'. I said no. Then he said, 'OK', and we have a very long conversation. One hour almost.

A: Is it like, two professionals speaking?

T: Yes.

A: I mean, doctor patient. But also two professionals?

T: Sometimes that. Two professionals. He is a senior. He is teaching me something. 'OK, why you don't you study these things?'. I like him also. And sometimes he is saying, your Swedish is getting well.

A: Right. So, take me, walk me through those types of conversation, that you have. Are you, is it always in Swedish, and English is the back-up? Or is it in English with a little bit of Swedish sometimes? How does it work?

T: Before, it is English. Sometimes in Swedish.

A: So, English mostly, and a little bit of Swedish?

T: Yes. But now, I try to say in Swedish. If I am stuck somewhere, and if I don't understand, then I used to, 'OK, can you please say me that in English'.

A: Mmm. And how does he say, how does he do?

T: Ah, sometimes he tries. If he knows... just to check on the translator, and we just, or I'll say, 'OK, just tell me again, I'll be watching the translator'. And those things.

A: He knows that you are learning Swedish? He knows that you are motivated to kind of, develop your skills?

T: Eh, my doctor?

A: Your doctor, yes.

T: Yes, he knows. Even he always, last time I have a test, and we have an appointment. So, he is just saying, 'OK, you have a test today. OK we will, we are going to finish it early and then you can go'.

- A: Right. Is he kind of, do you feel that he is kind of helping you learn?
- T: Ehm, yes. He is helping me a lot. And he also helps me to how, because I don't know, so many books, because in Sweden they don't have the proper guidelines. What you need to study to pass that test. So, he also suggests me some books, and I can just borrow these books from the library. And then, even I got one library fine because I forgot to give back!
- A: OK. So he is kind of an interesting guy in the sense that, you know... We have talked a lot about how it is difficult to meet Swedish people. Like your neighbour says to you, 'I have lived here 30 years and I don't have a Swedish friend'. So he is kind of...
- T: He is a guy that I can talk to a lot.

#### Story Ten 'Another consultation' (Interview 4: 20 02 2020)

- A: You told me last time we spoke that you have been on a previous visit, and you, he had been really nice to you. And he had given you space to talk Swedish if you wanted to, a little bit. And he was understanding, and he gave you time.
- T: Yes. So he was saying that time. He showed me the blood report, and he said that C, Ds, these things are so high. So, I was so astonished by, just he, 'Do you have any fever that time?'. And I said no, 'But I have [medical condition] so that point I think it can be raised'. Then he was so happy, and he said, 'OK, now you are learning so much Swedish, you know'.
- A: And you, but you were doing this in, the conversation in Swedish?
- T: Yes. And he is saying to my husband, 'OK, if you have any questions you can ask'. *But* my husband said, 'I don't know Swedish'.
- A: OK.
- T: So he said, 'OK, pardon me. I will explain it all by English again'.
- A: OK. So this guy, he knows you well now? It is like the fourth visit or something like that? Third visit? So, he knows you well, he gave you a lot of space, a lot of time last time, and he does, he is speaking to you in Swedish? He knows that you are studying a medical course? And it is a technical, medical type-conversation that he is having with you? Because he knows you understand, so he says, 'Here I've got the blood report, *Here I have the blood report.*'
- T: Yes.

- A: *And I can see that these values are quite high, these values. And you say, 'Yes, I understand'. And he says, 'Is there something that can cause this?', and you say, 'Yes, I have [medical condition]'. So, what I am trying to say is, you are having a technical conversation, as one medical person to another?*
- T: Yes, and eh, one more thing that, in here, people say it in another name, but in our country, we told it in another name. So, I told, eh, I was just trying to tell him that. I don't know what the [medical term] is in Swedish. So, I was just trying to tell him that. Then he understand. And he said 'OK, I understand, you are trying to say this thing'. I said, 'Yes, because we told this in my country'. Then he said, 'OK, this is the same thing, but I think they have two different names'. So, I was thinking that, OK, because these things, I know that in my blood report that things is always high. So I told him that, 'OK, this is very normal for me because previous reports is also like that'. And he say, 'OK, but even you do it again'. So, these things, this guy is nice. And that time I also feel, OK, now I can know so many words, medical words, I suppose, I can't say. Even he told me that, 'You have some problem with the future tense', he told me.
- A: He is also giving you feedback on language?
- T: Yes. He told me, 'OK, you have so many problems with the future tense, you can't manage the. Your *sentence structure* is not correct in the future. You can't manage it.
- A: You are doing this in Swedish, or in English?
- T: No. Eh, he said it in Swedish, that you have problem with the future, and it was. Then he said in English, that was, is this. So I said, 'Yes, I know that', and he said 'OK'. I only, 'not my fault, I under-study, you know, verb present and verb past form. I don't study the past perfect'. So he said, 'OK just now also study that'.
- A: OK. So he's giving you a little bit of advice as well?
- T: Yes. Because he said, 'You are so bad in that' [laughs].
- A: [laughs]. Well, at least he is honest, and direct, maybe, yes.
- T: Yes, no. But I, because so many times we visit to each other. Now I don't feel so bad with his words.

While Titly was concerned about her medical condition, she also enjoyed the conversations with the doctor. Seeming to possess a high degree of social and emotional intelligence, he enabled Titly to contribute in diagnosing her medical condition. The consultations provided Titly with an opportunity to interact not only as a patient, but also as a medical professional. In the identity work taking place in their communication, their roles function as enactments of shifting interactional identities, as doctor and patient, and as medical professionals (junior and senior, as Titly puts it).

Interactional identities shape how people talk (Tracy & Robles, 2013). Because the doctor validates Titly's own expertise – for example, by discussing blood reports in a technical way – she experiences confidence when talking with him. To some degree, their conversations take place in Swedish. This is facilitated by the doctor not rushing the consultation, and allowing Titly time to construct her questions and responses (often, it would seem, with the help of a translation app). The doctor expresses interest in Titly's ambition to become a medical professional in Sweden, and appears also to monitor her language development. He provides advice about how best to study for the medical test and offers feedback on her problems with verb tenses and syntax.

During this period, Titly had begun to harbour doubts about how quickly she would be able to reach her goal of becoming established as a medical professional in Sweden. Concerns about the slow pace of progress, and the many obstacles that appeared to block her path, weighed heavily on her mind. Aware that she was entering a low period, Titly no longer experienced the optimism, resourcefulness and tenacity that had been characteristic of her early months in Sweden, and when she had been learning Swedish under her own steam. In the same interview in which she told the story of how the doctor had coached her on study techniques and Swedish syntax, Titly had begun by explaining how she was finding it difficult to focus on learning, and that she was slowly losing confidence in her ability to communicate in Swedish. Whereas previously she had been positive about communicating in Swedish, now, she said, she had become more apprehensive:

**'Nowadays I am losing confidence' (Interview 4: 20 02 2020)**

A: So, let's start off by me asking, have you got any stories to tell me since last time we spoke? I think last time we spoke was about a couple of weeks ago, or something like that.

T: Yes. But in these two weeks, I only come, because I told you that from last week, that I start again by that class. But nowadays I'm feeling that whatever, if [pause]. Before the worst happened, I don't think what I'm saying, that I just collect a word and I say it. But nowadays, I don't know why, but I am losing my confidence or something. Nowadays I don't try to say so many things if I am not sure.

The 'worst' that Titly refers to are the negative experiences from the medical class (and which had caused her to stop attending for a period), and the situation at Pinewood, where an online learning tool had been introduced and contact time in the classroom had diminished. As Titly went on to explain, she now experienced stress, which she attributed to concerns about progress and insecurity when communicating:

**‘What will I do? I don’t know’ (Interview 4: 20 02 2020)**

- T: From Christmas vacation, I was so depressed. I was so depressed. So every time I was saying, ‘No, no I want to go back, I don’t want to live here’. Everything. And I am nearly 30. Now, I am 28. So, the people have two problems in their two ages. If you study in the medical journal or everywhere. In the teenage, they don’t understand what they need to do. What will be the future? And also in the thirties, because they can’t decide what will they be. Will they start a family? They will be planning for the family. Or they will go for the profession? What will they do? The same situation I have. So, I have that age. That I can’t decide anything. And in teenage, everyone forgive me. ‘OK, she’s just a teenage girl’. But these, this is the not the same now.
- A: So, if I understand you correctly, what you are saying to me is that this is a very pressured time of your life. There are many different things that are creating stress and pressure?
- T: Yes, so many different things. /.../ So, now, I am feeling, ‘OK, what do I want to do? And what will I do?’. I don’t know. At first, when I start Swedish, I feel interest. Too much of it. OK, these new things I suppose. I just learn a simple single word, and I just try to use it everywhere. I remember when I first learnt ‘sharing’. *Sharing*. Everything I was saying was that. ‘OK, guy, can you share this with me’, kind of. Everywhere I just used that *share*-word. But now I don’t feel these things. Now I am feeling low. OK. I am in the same way. It is almost from October, that I start. October, November, December, January, February. It is almost five months. And I am in the same place.
- A: Mmm, mmm. You can’t see that you are progressing? And you kind of feel the pressure? We talked about the pressure in your medical course.
- T: I am feeling pressured. And progressing? I don’t know if I progressed or not. Because the last test I got, I failed. So, I think the progress is zero. So I think [SFI teacher] understands that I was so nervous.

Of all the study participants, Titly’s long-term goal was most clearly defined. As she had explained in the initial interview, when she arrived in Sweden she had dreamed about a future professional life. She had set herself the goal of passing the necessary exams, and by 2021 entering medical practice. However, the tied migration channel places great demands on an individual’s resources (Aure, 2013a, 2013b). Struggling to keep on top of two full-time courses, having responsibilities in the home and with her husband working long hours, Titly found that her energy was depleted. At the outset of her studies, and with the vision of a professional life

that was not too far away on the horizon, learning was fun, and she experienced energy and determination. However, with the likelihood of receiving a practice certificate within her self-set two-year time period rapidly fading, Titly found that she lacked the energy for study. While studying for her medical degree had been highly demanding, Titly had been able to maintain momentum by focusing on her long-term goal. She described how she struggled with theoretical modules, and that it was only in the clinical elements that she had thrived. Much, she recognised, was the same in Sweden. While using the language could be enjoyable, she struggled with grammar, syntax and writing:

**‘I am not that person, that study person’ (Interview 4: 20 02 2020)**

A: So, from 2012 to 2018, you are constantly working in a medical environment, with other professionals, with patients, and now it’s...

T: Yes, and now it’s nothing.

A: Nothing.

T: And I just love that work only. Because from first year to second year, in medical the pass mark is 60 out of 100. You need 60% mark. So, that is the borderline. Every time I just passed with the 60 marks. Never 61. Never happened with me. But suddenly, when I come to the third year, suddenly there is a medicine ward. And I got a first. So, my teacher was so surprised. My teacher asked me, how you get a first? Tell me? Then I said, I don’t know, because at that time I was just interested about that. It is like to me a storybook. Because I read lots of storybooks. It’s like, look, OK, this thing is interesting, this thing is interesting. But I am not that person, that study person. So I am not feeling so good in the Swedish language.

A: Mmm, mmm. Is the kind of, I mean. Here’s my interpretation. It is like a vacuum, you know? You are kind of, you are in a situation where you don’t have this, kind of routines. You don’t have the structure in your life. You don’t have the, the kind of the recognition for your abilities, your skills?

T: Yes.

A: And also the future is kind of uncertain?

T: Even, you know, now I interact with people so less. I don’t go to the [home country] community. I don’t talk to [people from home country]. I don’t go in the [home country] gathering. Because in Sweden, in [cities] there are so many [home country] communities. They have so many things they do all the time. I don’t want to go. Sometimes my husband said, ‘OK, let’s go there’. I said, ‘Oh no. Now you are a successful person, you can say your story. OK, I have this, do this, these things. Now I’m

working there. What will I say?'. But I know, I study. He studies only four years and he come here. But I study seven years. So, I spend my seven years, and then I come here and now I'm doing nothing. Now what is my recognition? That? What will people tell me? That I am your wife? This is my identity? So, I, now I have my identity problem here. So these are the things that are dragging me so low. /.../ So here, I am feeling so lonely. And I don't talk to anyone so much. Because my people ask, 'What are you doing? It is one and half years, what are you doing now?' So people will think that I'm, now I have become a housewife, or something. For that also, I need to give the test! Before I go back to [home country]. Because I know, if I go to [home country] in May, everyone will ask me the same question, 'What are you doing in Sweden?' So, I don't want that identity, that my husband is working and I'm the housewife. Someone just calls me 'OK, she is the girl whose husband is working there'. I just want my own identity. So these things. So, I think sometimes that these things also feels so low.

In this part of the interview, it is revealing how Titly's assessments of how she was as a medical student and how she is as a language learner seem to coincide. She is someone who enjoys and is good at practically oriented activities, but who finds abstract, theoretical learning to be challenging. In the interview, Titly ponders on her situation. Reflecting how 'now I interact with people so less', and that 'I don't talk to anyone so much', she is aware of her depressed state.

As is well documented in the literature, acculturative stress can derive from different aspects of a migrant's life, including social, cultural and functional aspects (Berry, 1997; Church, 1982; Ying, 2005). In empirical work, two categories of acculturative stress that often emerge are stress connected to prejudice and experiences of alienation, and stress related to the development of L2 proficiency (Sodowsky & Plake, 1991). While Titly's depressed state can be understood in relation to both these factors, in her own framing, low self-esteem is connected to identity: 'my identity problem here'.

In a study casting light on the gendered nature of the emotional costs connected with tied migration, Aure (2013a) examined the identity and emotional experiences of a group of highly skilled dependent migrants in Norway (see also Aure, 2013b; Fosslund & Aure, 2011). When analysing the data from her study, Aure (2013a) drew on Honneth's (1995) theory of recognition, and in particular the concepts of 'integrity' and 'respect' (Honneth, 1992). In Honneth's theorising, individual development is understood in the context of social and historical change. Human identities are conditioned by responses received from others, which can be affirming or disaffirming. As Honneth (1992: 188) has explained, 'the

constitution of human integrity is dependent on the experience of inter-subjective recognition’.

Disaffirming behaviours involve physical disrespect, the deprivation of rights and duties, and the nonrecognition of one’s social value (as an individual or member of a group). In Aure’s (2013a) study, participants experienced distress in being denied opportunities to practise as professionals and, through such practice, the chance to gain recognition and respect. Natalia, a post-doctoral researcher who had left a leading position at a university in her home country, described how in Norway she felt invisible, and that she had lost her self-confidence: ‘I soon came to see myself as a person without a future, one that didn’t know anything. I became a nobody who couldn’t talk or express herself’ (Aure, 2013a: 288).

As Aure (2013a: 288) has observed, migration is not simply a subjective experience. For a tied-migration professional, ‘the post-migration experience of not being valued, not having /.../ skills recognised, and not being able to secure a skilled job’, can function as a disaffirmation of themselves as an individual, and as a productive member of society. For Natalia, and others like her, the position as a highly skilled but non-employed professional meant that she was denied access ‘to the respect and social value from which she usually derived her core sense of worth, meaning, and self’ (Aure, 2013a: 288). As Aure (2013a: 289) makes clear, the denial of recognition ‘constrains subjects in their freedom of action’ and ‘impairs these persons in their positive understanding of self’ to a degree where they can experience threats to their core identities. For a tied migrant, it is not agentic capacity per se that can determine social and emotional outcomes, but confidence in being able to act:

Lack of recognition may involve migrants not being accepted as fully-fledged members of society, with the accompanying emotions that may bring. For those lacking language skills, this may lead to infantilisation, as they can no longer express themselves in a manner befitting their sense of self and professional status. Even if such migrants made rational choices to relocate and follow their spouse, and even if they attend language classes – assuming that they find adequate courses (which are often lacking), and have sufficient money and time – they may still feel infantilised. They will not lack agency but rather the confidence that is part of being able to utilise their agency. (Aure, 2013a: 290)

As revealed in Titly’s narrative, the move to Sweden, and the challenges faced in pursuit of a difficult-to-reach professional goal, can be understood as a denial of recognition (Honneth, 1992). Impacting negatively on her social and professional identities, denial of recognition drains Titly’s confidence. As she explains in her impassioned monologue, ‘I spend my seven years [studying] and then I come here and now I’m doing nothing.

Now what is my recognition? That? What will people tell me? That I am your wife? This is my identity?’.

The hurt caused by her situation, the loss of self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence meant that Titly began to shun social contact. She described a listlessness, and a preference for solitude. On particularly low days, she would use her regional transport pass to travel without direction from one place to another, sitting by herself on buses and trains staring out of the window. As well as shying away from contexts where Swedish might be used, she avoided the social circles in which she formerly spent time. Fearful of the ways in which she might be positioned by others – ‘the girl whose husband is working there’ – Titly’s sense of losing a core identity meant that she was unable to feel enthusiasm for social contact: ‘I just want my own identity. So these things. So, I think sometimes that these things also feels so low’.

At the end of March, and having moved to a bigger city, Titly found herself in new and, she hoped, better circumstances. She had found a new fast-track programme for medical professionals. Although this would not start immediately, she was glad to leave the intimidating environment and inequitable practices of the previous medical programme. She also disenrolled from the SFI programme at Pinewood and hoped to be admitted to a similar programme closer to her new home. Around this time, Titly was noticeably happier. She began to renew her social contacts. When she and her husband received visitors – a couple from their home country – she told stories of how she had shown them around the city, and, communicating in Swedish, had ordered food in cafés and had arranged their transport.

However, the social restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic meant that Titly’s life changed again. Shortly after moving to the new apartment, she and her husband began working and studying from home. While she enjoyed having more time to spend with her husband, Titly found remote learning demanding.

In the early days of the pandemic, the extent to which the spread of the virus would generate a need for hospital care was entirely unknown. With a risk that hospitals would be overwhelmed with Covid cases, the Swedish authorities reorganised the provision of health care, constructing large-scale units to cope with the tens of thousands of admissions that a worst-case scenario might generate. National campaigns to recruit health workers were initiated. Retired medical and nursing staff, people from other sectors who had been furloughed (for example airlines) and students from medical and nursing programmes were all encouraged to register to work in the health sector as a means of coping with an anticipated need for greatly increased staffing. As well as websites specially set up by health authorities, private actors and organisations were also involved in the recruitment of staff.

In an interview on 23 March, three days after the largest health authority in Sweden had made a national appeal for medical staff, Titly explained that she had registered to work as a hospital volunteer, and that she hoped she would be able to offer her services in this time of crisis. Titly was glad to have this opportunity. Despite the risks to her own health, she longed to be able to spend time in a hospital environment. However, even though the pressure on the Swedish health services was acute, and thousands of people were treated in intensive care units during the spring of 2020, Titly never received a response from any of the health providers or private organisations with whom she had registered:

#### Interview 7 (08 04 2020)

A: How are you?

T: I'm good. Little bit depressed for, I think for three weeks, or more than three weeks, even, I don't count, I forgot to count how many days, I am in the home.

A: OK. Last time we spoke, we talked about how you had volunteered because of your...

T: No. I don't get any answer. Even today I talk to someone, a [home country] doctor. He works in Sweden. So I talk to him, if there is any opportunity for me to work.

A: What did he say?

T: He said he will search, because he lives in [other city]. So he give me another number, someone who works in [city]. He told me to contact with him. So I will do. Contact with him. I will send him a message. /.../ I have tried a lot to contact with everyone, OK. Because I want to work. Because I think, I don't know why they are not responding. And you know, they are taking at least five years' experience doctors. But I just passed and I come, so even, I passed two years ago, so how can I be the five years' experience?

A: Yes, but you nevertheless have skills that are important.

T: Ah, but they need five years' experience they told me. I don't know. It seems impossible for me.

A: Yes, well, things can, things may change. We just don't know at the moment. Life is,

T: Yes. Things may change, they might. I am just, I am always hopeful.

#### Interview 8 (06 05 2020)

T: And everyone is saying, you know the Facebook is so popular with our generations, everyone is giving their thoughts or views.

OK, they are serving the people. The thing for Corona. And I also want to serve people. But I just sit in my home.

- A: Mmm. No, I understand, it is. When you told me last time, you spoke, or the time before that, that you thought that you might have an opportunity to start working in the hospital, because of the Corona situation.
- T: No. They say they want. But today I called to the *employment service* and say ‘OK, I apply so many times’, and they say, ‘OK we took the application, but still we don’t know if we need people’. If it was an emergency, they will search for that.  
[Discussion about first application to work as a hospital volunteer]
- T: That time I was so happy.
- A: I remember. I remember you were. It was kind of ironic, to me, because it was a dangerous thing. It was a scary time. But you were so happy because you thought that, now this is my opportunity. I think you said something like, ‘I can be in a hospital, I can be surrounded by, in an environment where I can feel....’
- T: Yes, that was my, that was what I meant. I actually miss that environment, that smell of the hospital.
- A: Yes, you said that many times.

For all the study participants, the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the period March to June was a turbulent time. Not only were opportunities for social interaction lost when Pinewood closed, but as migrants separated from friends and relatives, they had additional worries. While they were anxious about family members in their home countries, their families were worried about them. In international media, Sweden was frequently portrayed as a high-risk country, with high rates of infection and deaths.<sup>2</sup>

For Titly, the situation was additionally dispiriting in being deprived of an opportunity to serve the community, a further denial of recognition and social worth (Honneth, 1992). With her hopes of working in a hospital receding, Titly again found herself in a low emotional state. With almost no social interaction, she had no stories of communication events to share. In these circumstances she felt that she was further losing confidence to communicate, not only in Swedish, but also in English:

**‘Social distancing’ (Interview 8: 06 05 2020)**

- T: I am not talking too much to people in Swedish. And the home working, and so many things, it is so, so much affective. Actually, sometimes I feel that whatever I learned in these months, I will forget all of these things.

- A: Mmm. I think that is, that's kind of completely normal, to think that way, ehm because I mean,
- T: And people, and now people don't talk to you actually, in the bus. Also, in the bus there is a rule in [City] that you need to sit at least a distance, two or three seat distance.

**'Losing confidence to speak' (Interview 9: 05 06 2021)**

- T: It is very difficult. And it is very depressing. And nowadays I didn't communicate with the people, and now I am losing the confidence to talk with the people in Swedish. Even in English. Because all the time me and my husband is at the home, so we, all the time we have spoken [mother tongue].

For all the study participants, the effects of Covid-19 radically changed the social and psychological conditions of TL communication. For those who envisaged a longer-term future in the country, and had committed themselves to a life in Sweden either through a relationship (Jessie, Kesu and Maria) or by building a family (Wafaa), motivation, resourcefulness and agentic capacity enabled them to access other contexts in which to communicate. For Olivia and Titly, however, the pandemic had all but curtailed opportunities to communicate in Swedish. With remote working partners, and friends in home countries experiencing similar social isolation, they gravitated to L1 environments online and L1 social media. By the end of the research period, both women found that they were less willing to communicate in Swedish than they had been at the beginning.

## Notes

- (1) PLAB. Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test. PLAB is provided in the UK by the GMC (General Medical Council). The purpose of the PLAB test is to ensure that doctors who are qualified abroad have the right knowledge and skills to practise medicine in the UK.
- (2) It subsequently emerged that during the pandemic, Sweden had one of the lowest excess mortality rates in Europe.

## 9 Willingness to Communicate and Translanguaging Ideologies: Pranisha and Sabrina

In this chapter we focus on the experiences of the final two participants, Pranisha and Sabrina. Both were the mothers of young children. While Pranisha's child was already a toddler when she and her husband relocated to Sweden, Sabrina's children were born in Sweden. The women's husbands both had permanent employment. Pranisha's husband, who was a software engineer, had been recruited internationally. He worked in a high-tech company in the automotive industry. In her home country, Pranisha had also established herself in the software industry. However, her career had been put on hold, first when she became a mother, and then again when moving to Sweden as a 'trailing spouse' (Kofman, 2004; Shinozaki, 2014). Her career break was further prolonged by the choice to enrol on the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme. The couple had reasoned that if Pranisha studied full-time, not only would their daughter have a smooth beginning to the school system (by not having long days at preschool), but that it would be an investment in the family's future, as at least one parent would be able to speak Swedish.

The same was the case for Sabrina. In a form of family maintenance migration (Kofman, 2004), Sabrina and her husband had moved to Sweden with the aim of starting a family. Although neither had employment at the time of the move, Sabrina's husband quickly got a job working for a company sub-contracted to provide refuse and waste disposal services to a major municipality. Rather than seeking full-time work, Sabrina and her husband decided that it would be better if she studied Swedish. Like Pranisha and her husband, the couple's reasoning was that enrolment on an SFI programme would mean that Sabrina would have more time available to care for their children (in the periods when she was free from study), and that a Swedish-speaking parent would greatly benefit the children's upbringing and education.

In both families, the division of responsibilities meant that the men's employment was prioritised; Pranisha's husband had been internationally recruited, and Sabrina's husband had better earning capacity. Along with childcare, the responsibility for language learning also fell to the women. As both Pranisha and Sabrina emphasised, their motivation to learn Swedish derived from a desire to provide the best for their children, and to support their children when growing up by being able to communicate with schoolfriends and teachers. As Sabrina put it, when you have children 'you have to learn':

**Interview 1 (09 01 2020)**

A: What is it that motivates you to learn Swedish?

S: My kids.

A: Yes.

S: Kids. Yes. So I want a good quality for life for them. So I try to do, and the, I don't know exactly how to explain, but I try to do my best, all that is good for them, to have a good life. Do whatever I can.

/.../

This is the reason that I try to learn more Swedish. Because they will grow up. They will come home with friends, or they go out, and I have to understand what they say. Because here with English, you can do whatever you like, you can go, whatever you want. They, everyone talks English here. So it's not a problem to live with English. But when you have kids it's, you have to learn. If I don't know. I want to know what they talk, or they do. It's import for me. I am a possessive mum [laughs].

As Pranisha explained, relocation as a family created a range of responsibilities. It meant that at least one of the parents needed to develop second language (L2) skills:

**Interview 2 (20 02 2020)**

A: Do you see it as kind of like important for your family, that you speak Swedish? Is that a kind of, like an important part of your role in the family? That because he is not, he doesn't have the opportunity, because he is working in an English only environment and doesn't have the sort of interactions and opportunities that you have? And you say he is not studying. Is that sort of, within the family, is that an important role, that you have taken on? To be the one in, the one of the parents that actually speaks Swedish, or?

- P: Yes. It is better even to have one speak in Swedish. Because of my daughter even.
- A: Mmm. Yes, you mentioned that last time, you said to me, and even to communicate outside,
- P: Usually we both go outside at a time, not leaving one. So, yes, one can communicate with others, at least one could understand what others are saying. That would be better. I think so.

While both women viewed the development of skills in Swedish as integral to responsible parenting, neither saw Swedish as necessary for employment. However, as Pranisha explained, it would be a social advantage if she could communicate in the host country language:

**‘An advantage learning the local language’ (Interview 1, 04 02 2020)**

- P: I have taken a long gap, after my maternity, because of my daughter. I have to see her, ah, and in the meanwhile we were travelling to my mum’s home. And here, for a few months here. So, like, I was, there is a gap in my career. So even now, I want to start here. I was just preparing now. Like, it was a bit difficult for me, actually. But now I think I could do it, because my daughter has settled. She is very good at going to school. I have no problem in that. So I could start. This is the time I think. /.../
- A: What sort of job would you like to do?
- P: I have to continue my career, like software testing. I want to continue that.
- A: So you would work in a similar sort of company to your husband? Working in a project, developing a piece of software?
- P: Yes, testing the software.
- A: What do you think the job opportunities are in Sweden?
- P: I think there are good opportunities, because even if, I’ll try the job at interviews, and simultaneously I would apply for the software testing course, which is available here.
- A: So would that be, a university course?
- P: Yes, it’s a university course. So I wanted to apply for that, but the application date has closed recently.
- A: OK.
- P: I did not check that. So I have to, I am planning for that even. So, in simultaneously.
- A: So that is something you would like to do, in the next year or?
- P: Yes, next year.
- A: Do you need to have Swedish to get a place on that course? Or is it a master’s level course, and you don’t need Swedish?
- P: I think I don’t need Swedish. But it would be an advantage, knowing the local language.

## WTC and Language Ideologies

As mothers of young children, and with husbands away from home for most of the day (Pranisha's husband worked long hours, and Sabrina's husband had a lengthy commute to and from work), the women's communication experiences were centred around their children. Like Wafaa (Chapter 7), these involved interactions with teachers at their children's preschools, and with staff at health centres. However, unlike Wafaa – whose strategy for skills development meant that Swedish willingness to communicate (WTC) emerged only at the point when she felt linguistically secure (safe in the knowledge that she had mastered the basics of morphology and syntax) – Pranisha and Sabrina took a more relaxed approach to communication. For both women, Swedish and English could be used flexibly, and could have complementary functions in social interactions. Like Kesu (Chapter 6), this meant that Pranisha and Sabrina were both willing to communicate in Swedish from an early point. Unconcerned about switching between languages (cf. Maria, Chapter 6), and with English always a potential source of support, both were confident that they could interact independently with people who they met in the course of caring for their children.

Like Kesu – who in addition to a regional language and her country's national language, also spoke Arabic and English – Pranisha and Sabrina were both multilinguals. While for Sabrina, Swedish was a fourth language, for Pranisha it was a fifth. In the region where Pranisha had been brought up, it was common that people would speak the regional languages, the national language and English. Varying combinations of these languages were used to effectuate communication across social domains. While Sabrina had been brought up in a largely monolingual country, in her early teens she moved to another EU country. Here she lived for eight years, quickly becoming fluent in the country's language.

At home, Pranisha and her husband communicated in their first language (L1), often mixed with English. In a similar way, Sabrina and her husband also mixed languages. Sabrina and her husband had a common L1. However, because they had met while living abroad, their communication would vary between the L1 and the language of the former host country.

Like Olivia (Chapter 8), Pranisha and Sabrina shared an openness to new experiences. Both had a cosmopolitan outlook on life. Moving to another EU country as a young woman, Sabrina had thrived on the experience. She loved the language, the lifestyle and the open and welcoming attitude of the people. While she had been reluctant to uproot from a country which had become her home, she recognised the advantages that relocation to Sweden could bring. Sabrina had an older sister who had successfully settled in Sweden. Visiting Sweden, she could see how her sister's children had received a good start in life. With positive

experiences from her first relocation – and having been able to easily acquire the host country language while working in various jobs in the hospitality industry – Sabrina was convinced that she would be able to adjust to life in Sweden, and that she would be able to acquire language skills in a similar way. She was further encouraged in that her sister had told her that English would be a valuable resource. Even if at the beginning of her time in Sweden English was a little rusty, Sabrina found that it was sufficient for her needs, and that it had begun to develop anew:

**Interview 1 (09 01 2020)**

When I come here, I have to take off all my English. Because it is the only way to communicate with the people, so that it is not necessary to have someone all the time with me. So I learn! [laughs]. Every day something new. (Interview 1: 09 01 2020)

Even though Pranisha had not previously lived abroad, and relocation to Sweden had not been her idea, over time she had become aware of the benefits of living in another country. Not only could she and her husband advance their careers (Pranisha hoped to gain employment in the software industry when family circumstances permitted), but she felt that a move to Europe would enable her and her husband to expand their horizons, and to develop as individuals:

Actually, he really wanted a new career, and in a new place. And he wanted to grow as well. So, ah, we are starting off this conversation, like joining any other country. Like, I was not that interested, because of ehm, we are adjusted to one country, one customs and all, and which relate us at the most. And even the lifestyle is different. So I was a bit confused. Not only this country. In any country we were discussing. So, like, he was saying that we could grow more. And he convinced me as well. I was convinced. Yes, we have to be, ehm like, develop. Not constraining ourselves to one particular locality, or something like that. So, I was convinced. And we came here. First he came here. (Interview 1: 04 02 2020)

The benefits of the move to Sweden would be enhanced, Pranisha reasoned, if she learnt Swedish. Swedish could help her adjust to a new life, and to connect with people in social contexts:

**Interview 1 (04 02 2020)**

A: Earlier on you talked about adjusting. Adjusting, is that part of like learning Swedish, learning the new language?

- P: I just think in here, for myself, so I think it [Swedish] is not probably that needed. But if it is, so I will go on with it. I have no problem in learning any language, because acquiring a new language is a good thing. I hope so.
- A: Mmm, you enjoy learning languages, or?
- P: Yes. I enjoy learning languages. Because you get connected with. See, there is a language difference. We couldn't connect properly with people. Up to some extent we could if we learnt the language. We could connect more, I think so, I am feeling that way.

As discussed in previous chapters (Chapter 4, Chapter 6), a language learner's perception of a communication event – and of being willing or unwilling to communicate – can be mediated by a language ideology. Stemming 'from explicit teaching or implicit socialization', language ideologies are the implicit and explicit beliefs that learners have about language, the relationship of a language to aspects of the social environment and the ways in which the language can or should be used (Subtirelu, 2014: 121). Language ideologies influence a person's willingness to communicate. Judgements about whether to initiate communication – to 'cross the Rubicon' (MacIntyre, 2007) – incorporate assessments of previous communication experiences, and the degree to which they were pleasant and successful. As Subtirelu (2014: 122) has suggested, 'these evaluations entail language ideological assumptions about what constitutes successful communication and when "unsuccessful" communication occurs, who or what is the cause thereof'. In periods when target language (TL) skills are undergoing development, language ideologies can strongly impact a person's willingness to communicate.

In Chapter 6, we saw how Kesu (one of the participants who successfully completed the SFI programme) possessed a translanguaging ideology. Translanguaging describes the manner in which a bilingual or multilingual person makes use of their linguistic repertoire, in communication, in learning and in the development of identities. In contexts where a choice of codes is available, a translanguaging ideology emphasises how languages function as flexible resources that can be used to support communication. In a translanguaging ideology, the use of varying languages in communication is a legitimate dimension of an interaction. For a person who holds a translanguaging ideology, languages are used flexibly and creatively in supporting communication. Shifts between languages are seen as natural and functional. A translanguaging *ideology* can translate into a series of translanguaging *practices* characterised by code-switching, and the strategic use of language resources (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017; Garcia & Li, 2014; Hillman *et al.*, 2019; Li & Zhu, 2010, 2013; Palfreyman & Bataineh, 2018).

With previous experiences of learning and using different languages, and in the context of communication events centred around the practical

day-to-day challenges of parenting (taking and collecting children from preschool, and visiting child healthcare services), the willingness to communicate of the two women was sharply characterised by a translanguaging ideology.

As we saw when mapping Kesu's WTC trajectory (Chapter 6), translanguaging practices receded as her confidence and skills in communicating in Swedish increased. Towards the end of the period, English was only used in situations when the interlocutor felt more confident when communicating with her in English. For Pranisha and Sabrina, however, it is not known how WTC might have developed. It is not clear whether English would have remained a flexible resource, used to support communication in community contexts, or whether Swedish would have become dominant to a degree that a desire to communicate in English would only be manifested on rare occasions (see Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b; also Chapter 3). When the spread of the Covid-19 virus reached pandemic status, Pranisha and Sabrina both took the precaution of keeping their children at home. Having to disenrol from Pinewood, they also chose not to continue as project participants.

Prior to the pandemic, the stories of communication events that the women told revealed how Swedish WTC was underpinned by a recognition that shifting between languages could support communication. Like Kesu (Chapter 6), initiating communication in Swedish was possible because in nearly all situations, English provided a highly functional fallback.

## Pranisha

Pranisha's approach to communication and her beliefs about the flexible use of languages stemmed from a multilingual upbringing. Having grown up in an environment where, in addition to the regional languages, the national language and English could also be used in everyday social contexts, Pranisha was aware of the ways in which languages provided flexible resources within and across communication events. Arriving in Sweden, she adopted a similar approach to communication:

### Multilingualism (Interview 2: 20 02 2020)

- A: Those experiences, of being in a multilingual environment, when some languages kind of work well, or better than others, do you think that has kind of influenced you? In terms of wanting to learn Swedish, and using Swedish in different situations, and knowing when to switch to English? I was just kind of curious.
- P: Yes, ehm, that experience actually worked here, because it's a multilanguage, many of them use. In [home city] even many of them use [Ly, regional language]. Because, mmm, like half

of the people use [Ly], and half of the people use [Lx, regional language]. Because most people living in [home city] know [Ly]. If we go to the local market, most of them speak in [Ly]. We have to communicate with them. I know I could eh start in [Ly]. If I speak [Lx, Pranisha's L1], they don't understand. Yeah, ultimately you have to learn that language. You have to speak some, a few words. They could understand. So that is more important for me in that country, if you go outside.

Comparing the two multilingual environments, Pranisha made the point that in her home city, it was necessary to learn the languages of other social groups in order to carry out everyday transactions. While in Sweden, English functioned as a contact language in most situations, Pranisha recognised the advantages of communicating in Swedish. Holding a firm belief that L2 development is facilitated through communication, Pranisha viewed English as a functional resource. By supporting communication when difficulties arose, English could facilitate the development of Swedish.

Highly pragmatic, and having grown up surrounded by languages, Pranisha would approach a communication event with the assuredness of being able to handle the transaction. Although we only managed to arrange two interviews prior to the pandemic, Pranisha told several stories about communication events where Swedish WTC was underpinned by values associated with a translanguaging ideology:

#### Story One 'At the hospital' (Interview 1: 04 02 2020)

P: I have been to hospital only, related to all situations, and in there I started in Swedish. But the concept is, I have to, that it is more important that others have to understand what my daughter's problem is. So, I started to some extent. And it is not working as well, because the language is different. And I switched to English and explained better. Because that is, most important, because it is related to health. So, I think that it would be not the situation, dealing with differences in the language, and I have to convey them properly. So, in daily activities, it is not, if we do one or two wrong words when we speak, there is no problem. Actually, we could communicate. That's just a communication. This is more important. So, I just don't want to skip those words which I don't know. Because then I'm switching to English and then explaining properly /.../. Because there are many things, not only related to language. Because if that person is interested in what I'm saying, I will support. And if not, then I will switch to another language. Like, I don't hesitate talking because the other person is not feeling good about what I am speaking. I don't stop. Because I have to learn. So that is my concept, actually. Everywhere.

As this story reveals, while Pranisha approached communication situations with the view that her language resources could be flexibly used to support communication, an inner logic governed how communication initiation decisions are made. Pranisha described how choices about communication were determined in accordance with a self-developed strategy. Unless the situation was important, she would not be perturbed by isolated errors that were unlikely to disrupt the flow of communication: ‘So in daily activities, it is not, if we do one or two wrong words when we speak, there is no problem. Actually, we could communicate’. However, if a point were to arise where she judged that her Swedish was insufficient, she would seek opportunities to continue in English.

Pranisha’s story shows how, even in important situations – here, a hospital visit that involves her daughter’s health – adherence to her ‘concept’ meant that she would initiate communication in Swedish. A further aspect of this ‘concept’ involved the framing of a communication event as a site of TL acquisition. As Pranisha explained, ‘I don’t hesitate talking because the other person is not feeling good about what I am speaking. I don’t stop. Because I have to learn. So that is my concept, actually. Everywhere’. As a means of maintaining a balance between the desire to learn *from* the situation, and the need to communicate *within* the situation, Pranisha described how she would be constantly vigilant, evaluating each interaction as it unfolded. Alert to indications that the communication might not be working, she would closely monitor the response of an interlocutor.

Pranisha’s ‘concept’ would appear thus to comprise three elements: (i) viewing communication events as contexts of acquisition, (ii) seeking to communicate in Swedish up until a threshold is reached where communication in Swedish was no longer effective, and thereafter switching to English or summoning other help, and (iii) monitoring the response of the interlocutor and evaluating her own and the interlocutor’s ability to support the interaction. With this ‘concept’ underpinning Pranisha’s communication behaviours, combinations of these three elements emerged in many of the stories that she told:

#### Story Two ‘At the store’ (Interview 1: 04 02 2020)

P: I went to grocery store near my apartment. There, in there, one guy doesn’t know English, totally. But even I started in Swedish. And I was asking that, about some meat. I think. So, would it be available in weekdays or weekend? Something like that. But he understand up to that extent, but he not say properly, like he, he is hesitating to say me again, because [pause]. Everyone knows that by my way of speaking that I do not come from, what I can

say in fluent Swedish. So, yes, he's like hesitating. And he called the guy and he, I explained to him again.

A: In Swedish?

P: Yes, Swedish. And he understand, and give me the answer, the other guy.

A: Right.

P: So, yes, it would be in, only weekends, some meat.

A: So you were saying [pause] *When can I buy that meat?*

P: *Yes.*

A: Something like that?

P: Yes, yes.

A: OK. And he says, *Only on the weekends.*

P: *Yes. On the weekends. Yes.*

A: OK. So, in that type of situation, you know you want to ask a question, do you kind of plan it out in your mind, 'how am I going to ask that question?'

P: Yes.

A: Do you kind of think, 'OK, how am I going to do this? Am I going to do this in Swedish or English?'. Or is it something that's just spontaneous?

P: Ehm, no, I have a question. Actually. And it depends upon the person even. If, more of, I will start in Swedish, if the other guy could understand some word in Swedish, or he could, I feel that he could understand in English. If I don't know that word, I can switch to English. I'll switch to English. At that particular word. And if I feel that that guy doesn't know, I keep on communicating like. If again he doesn't understand, if there are any others who could speak with me, I'll ask him. So, OK, help on the way, then we will communicate. I will start with Swedish again. And if I don't know. I'll switch to English.

A: OK.

P: Yes.

A: How do you make that decision? You think if that guy is going to, if it is going to work with that guy? If it is not going to work with that guy? How do you?

P: Yes, if we are saying something, the others keep on like. Yes. I could understand, I could understand that you are understanding or not what I am speaking.

A: OK.

P: I don't know about others. But I especially observe for people. What I am seeing. Is he understanding or not?

A: Right.

P: He or she is understanding or not? I keep on observing people. So if they are, if they understand, I will stick to Swedish and

speaking like. If I don't know I'm, if I know that other guy doesn't know what I am speaking, I switch to English.

A: Right.

P: And because I need to communicate there, I have to finish my work, eh I have work to be done there.

A: Yes.

P: Yes. So, yes, probably I'll switch to some words in English, yes.

A: Mmm. So, you are saying that you are kind of, like, you can see? You are observing the whole time?

P: Yes. Observing.

A: Are you looking at facial expressions?

P: Of course.

A: Body language? And you can, 'Yes, OK'.

P: Yes.

A: So, when you kind of like, start out, and do you kind of, in most of those kind of like everyday situations, do you mostly start out thinking 'OK, I am going try in Swedish and then switch to English', or do you kind of mostly start out thinking, 'No, I better start in English'?

P: No. Before I have this, I'll start with English. And I'll converse. But after knowing some language, some, not fully, to some extent. Daily I have started, I keep on thinking that I'll start in Swedish. If not possible, if I don't know what to say there in particular, or if the other people do not understand what I am speaking, then I'll switch to English.

A: Right.

P: Yes.

A: And roughly how long ago did you kind of sort of switch into thinking 'Well I'll start, I'll try with Swedish. I'll start with Swedish and see what happens'?

P: Yes, probably when I started in October, like, October, November, or maybe probably in December, I started speaking in, started fully in Swedish, and I think that is the right time, because I could gain something. I know something about language. I could speak. I have the confidence. In there. I started at that time.  
/.../

In my model, if you want to learn a language, you have to watch movies. First movies, or anything in Swedish. News. Like grab some words and start speaking. In any language I do that.

A: Mmm. Because we spoke earlier on about your different languages.

P: Yes.

A: And you have been telling me that you kind of observe the person that you are speaking to.

- P: Yes.
- A: And you can tell whether or not they understand. Is that something that you have kind of like, grown up with? With your different languages. Being able to kind of like, you know see, 'OK, this guy understands, this guy doesn't'?
- P: Yes. Yes, I relate to that, because many languages. I have dealt with people knowing other languages, so I keep on observing. If other person do that or not. But I do that especially. Keep on observing, and I'll continue with that language. If not, I'll see. I will observe. And I'll switch to another language. What others, what. And I, first I have to be comfortable with that, and then others have to, because they are communicating with me. So, both have to feel confident with that particular language.

As Pranisha explains at the end of this story, having made the initial decision to communicate in Swedish, WTC would endure all the time she felt that the interlocutor was comfortable. As she made clear, 'both have to feel confident with that particular language'. Describing these events, Pranisha says that she is constantly engaged in monitoring the communication: 'I have dealt with people knowing other languages, so I keep on observing. If other person do that or not. But I do that especially. Keep on observing, and I'll continue with that language. If not, I'll see. I will observe'.

At the beginning of the story, Pranisha tells how she attempted to ask a question perhaps more complex than a supermarket assistant might normally expect; she wanted to know when a particular type of meat would be available. She explained how the communication did not work, how the assistant called for help, and how she had to ask her question again (still in Swedish) when another assistant arrived. Reflecting on this situation as she tells the story, Pranisha explained how she felt that the first assistant had only partially understood, and that she knew this because 'like he, is hesitating to say me again... so, yes, he's like hesitating'. While in this story 'hesitation' involves an interlocutor's inability to make sense of communication in Swedish, Pranisha also describes how an interlocutor can be hesitant when communication becomes challenging and, in such circumstances, how she might switch to English as a means of supporting the interaction. This is illustrated in a story told about a visit to a health centre:

### Story Three 'At the health centre' (Interview 2: 20 02 2020)

- A: Has that always worked well? That the people you have been speaking with, have been happy speaking English with you?
- P: Yes. That, *no*, ah, not. Like, some others could be happy speaking in English, but some others, like I feel some sort of

hesitation, because of the language, I think. So that is not their, I mean, situation, reason for that. Because of the language they hesitate to me.

A: When you say hesitate, what, can you describe what,

P: What I feel?

A: Yes. How you feel, and in what sense they are sort of hesitant.

P: Mmm, Like you are asking me that, how I know they are hesitating?

A: Mmm.

P: Ehm because [pause] how could I say that? Hesitation in the sense they start speaking in Swedish, and I did not understand. I'll say this in Swedish, '*I don't understand. Can you speak English?*'. They, like, they will start a few words, what I wanted to know like. But they will stop in the middle. Like they will send for someone who are more of speaking in English. I, like, I feel that they kind of hesitated because of the language. They call someone, and they discuss with others. And the other person over here, she speaks to me, and I could understand, I'll see her. And this long process. I feel sometimes it could be better. Why this long process? I could, 'let me at least speak, I must learn'. That like encourages me, those situations. Why all this long process?

Again, we see the elements of Pranisha's 'concept' in action. She frames the communication event as a context of acquisition, she seeks to communicate in Swedish until it is no longer effective, and she monitors the response of the interlocutor. It is also clear that she finds it frustrating when a switch to English triggers an interlocutor's insecurity. We understand that it is not only the disruption of the conversation that is frustrating; it is also that she is missing out on a learning opportunity. Coming from a societal context where code-switching effectuates successful interaction, Pranisha is frustrated by the lack of 'linguistic efficiency' that she can sometimes encounter. However, it is a frustration that she is able to use productively, as it spurs her to renew her efforts to develop TL skills: 'that like encourages me, those situations'.

In another story from the same interview, Pranisha described how shifting to English could also be effective. When interacting with an accommodating interlocutor, a successful switch could boost her willingness to continue the communication in Swedish:

#### Story Four 'Scanning and switching' (Interview 2: 20 02 2020)

P: Actually, I started speaking a lot more. But some words, like which I don't know the exact meaning, I switch to English even. Then, after again, I switch to Swedish.

A: OK. So switching.

- P: Yes. And in grocery stores, and if I don't know how to like... like one device we have to scan the goods. So, we don't know, for the first time, how to pay for it. So, we keep on asking. Like my husband is asking. She has started speaking in Swedish.
- A: Your husband as well?
- P: Eh, no. No, he doesn't understand it.
- A: Yes. He doesn't speak any Swedish.
- P: Yes. And he was asking me, 'What is she was saying?' like. So we, I told her that we cannot do it. 'It's not doing it. Can you try and tell us?'. So she started doing it. And again, 'You have to do like this', she was explaining. And again, 'Once you try again, I'm deleting this once you try again'. She is saying that and,
- A: And she's saying this in Swedish?
- P: Eh, yes, Swedish. And I could understand. One word, one or two words, I did not understand. I started asking, 'What is that? You can say in English?'. 'OK'. She said it in English. Then again we did it. And that was like different. Not in every day. So, I could manage talking with people. Some words are a bit difficult for me, but it's OK. That works. I'm switching again, and I'm again back to Swedish.

Another story Pranisha told in this interview offers further insight into how she was willing to communicate in Swedish even in difficult and stressful situations. In this story, Pranisha tells of how, when going to collect her daughter from preschool, she found that the children were not there. At this stage of her development, Pranisha was confident to communicate in Swedish on subjects related to her daughter's well-being and social interactions. She said that she did not generally need to switch to English when talking with staff. However, the missing children presents a different situation. When Pranisha was eventually able to find a member of staff, it turned out to be a new teacher. Because this teacher did not appear to speak English, Pranisha found herself communicating in Swedish. Had it been possible, she would probably have preferred to speak in English:

#### Story Five 'Missing children' (Interview 2: 20 02 2020)

- P: Now like, with more of Swedish, like I can understand what they are saying. And even I could explain what I want. Like my daughter isn't there in the school for a while, in the classroom. Is she? Is she? I was searching. Where is she? Where are the other kids? Where are these kids? I'm searching back in the playground. I couldn't find anywhere actually. I was searching. There are two schools, like combined together in there. So I was

searching for another classroom, there. I did not find anyone, actually. I was searching, roaming the grounds.

A: Were you scared?

P: Eh, no. Yes, I was eh scared.

A: Worried? A little bit worried, yes?

P: Yes. I know that they take care, but where are these? And the time, it was being like 4:30. After this SFI. I am a little bit worried. What are they going to do? Actually, they have to mention like, 'We'll come in two different ways', or 'There are two gates. We will come in two different ways'. But, the other side of the school, they've been playing with, the children are playing. And I said to her that's a relief. We are worried. We are tensed, actually. I am tensed. Other parents also got tensed. 'Where are the kids?'. There are other parents coming. Like I'm, when I'm leaving, taking my child, 'Where are the kids? Where are the kids? Where have they been?'. So I told her that if you are taking the kids on the back side, please give a note on the door or something, because

A: And you said this, you were saying this in Swedish, yes?

P: Yes, in Swedish. And even the door is locked in there. I got my child and I asked her to take the lock, but she said there is another way inside from the school and you can go in there, to change my daughter's clothes, like it's rain clothes. So, that conversation I completed in Swedish actually, somehow or other. And I feel good actually.

A: Mmm. But let me ask you a question, because that's quite a stressful situation, or at least the stress must kind of like increase during this situation, for you and for the other parents, because where, where are the kids? Now, you might think that in a stressful situation you might kind of fall back on English, kind of like use more English. But you didn't. You used Swedish. How, I wonder, how are you thinking about that?

P: In that case, when I was worried, maybe I use English. But the other lady doesn't know English, first of all, so

A: OK. So she was one of the teachers that didn't speak English?

P: She doesn't speak English.

A: OK.

P: Maybe in that condition, if she speak English, I may switch to English, I don't know in that sense or not, but she doesn't know English.

A: So you have no choice.

P: I have no choice.

A: Mmm.

P: I have explained her not to do this like that, and she said OK. And it is fine for me, and maybe that was a new teacher, she

doesn't know how to, being there, so I was like, again. The main teacher who was, I daily speak with, I said to her, not to do like this. You tell her, because we got tension, and, 'OK', she said, 'I manage, I'll see, take care of that'. Yes, it's OK, it's all OK.

A: It's sorted now.

P: Clear.

A: Clear, yes. So, when picking up, school is like a, sort of important in that sense for language? You leave your daughter there in the morning, you pick your daughter up in the afternoon, you are meeting teachers, you are meeting other parents, so how often do you have conversations there?

P: Ehm, teachers, with teachers, there is a daily conversation. And with parents, like we are, I take different times, others take a different time, we rarely meet. Um, if we talk even, it's good. A little talk about the kids generally, but it's maybe good for. Initially, as I said, I don't know. When they start speaking in Swedish. I was like, 'I don't know, what are you saying', like 'you can say it in English?' But I was, what we can say? I am not getting like a bit shy or something. I'm like better afterwards. Like it would be more like I could go and talk to them, like if they come to me and speak in Swedish, I could understand and I could reply some other. And it feels good for me, because conversating with the others, like in relation to my daughter's conversation, what she did, and what other children she play with, how they were being, how they played together. We talk a lot. Because the teacher go on saying that these two are playing good. So, if we, if I find I meet her, *my daughter's*, that kid's parent, we could talk to each other. 'They were very good at playing'. 'They were together all the time'. Some talk, yes.

As Pranisha explains in this story, confidence and positive feelings are generated when communication is successful. In the 'weak tie' relationships (Granovetter, 1973) that she had established with the regular preschool teachers, and sometimes with other parents, Pranisha experienced positive emotions when communication took place in Swedish: 'it feels good for me, because conversating with the others, like in relation to my daughter's conversation, what she did, and what other children she play with, how they were being, how they played together. We talk a lot'. As we have seen previously (Chapter 8), in migration contexts weak tie relationships can have positive influences on well-being (van der Horst & Coffé, 2012). Equally, because communication is constantly evaluated from a language development perspective, Pranisha experiences positive emotion when, in a stressful situation with an unknown interlocutor, she successfully communicates in Swedish: 'so, that conversation I completed in Swedish actually, somehow or other. And I feel good actually'.

## Sabrina

Sabrina's willingness to communicate in Swedish in community contexts was similarly influenced by previous multilingual experiences. As a young adult, and without formal education, Sabrina had become fluent in a third language while living abroad. Like Pranisha, Sabrina held beliefs about the primacy of learning in natural contexts, and how languages constitute flexible resources. In her late teens, Sabrina left her home country (in the eastern part of the European Union). For the next eight years, she lived in a country in the southern part of the EU. Arriving in this country, Sabrina did not know the language. Nor did English function as a contact language. However, within a short period after her arrival, Sabrina had been able to develop communication skills, through workplace interactions and in social contexts connected to her employment.

Arriving in Sweden, Sabrina found that English had a much greater value. Like many of the project participants, Sabrina quickly realised that English would enable her to be independent, even if her skills needed brushing up. As Sabrina explained, she had not needed to use English much while living in the other EU country. Nor had she been particularly good at English in school. Relying on English to communicate in community contexts, she found that her skills rapidly developed:

### Interview 1 (09 01 2020)

A: Let me start with the English you know. How did you become skilled in speaking English? Where did you learn the English that you know?

S: Ehm, I learn in school.

A: Yes.

S: But I was not so good.

A: Mmm /.../ So when you came to Sweden, your English developed?

S: Yes. it grew, yes.

/.../

A: Yes, and you learned [language of EU country] in school?

S: No. But I lived in [EU country] and I speak also [the language]

/.../

A: OK. So how have you learned Swedish? Is it through school, or have you learned Swedish through other ways?

S: I have my sister.

A: Yes.

S: And I work with her. And she speaks Swedish with the client.

A: OK.

S: So I listened. I take some things.

- A: Right, right.
- S: And I'm looking at the TV and it's in English and it's written in Swedish. Like on Netflix or something else, so I take some words. But the real problem is, for me, because I don't have someone to speak to, is to make a conversation, and be every-day. And I don't know how to develop my Swedish.
- A: Yes, I understand.
- S: Because I go to the kids' *preschool* and I start with Swedish and when the conversation is difficult, I change in English. This is the problem.
- A: Right. And is that, did you, have you always tried to kind of start in Swedish? Or in the beginning did you mostly use English?
- S: It depends where I am. But I, for example, I go to the doctor, I start in Swedish. And after this conversation is very long, I need more words, so I change, in English.
- A: Mmm. How does it feel when you are speaking with someone in Swedish, and when you are speaking with someone in English?
- S: Swedish is. English for me is like, eh, I don't know, the second language. It is something normal to speak in English. It's coming like speaking in [L1]. But Swedish is something difficult. It's, I have to think first to say the words. English is coming like normal.  
/.../
- S: But here, I don't know, I see like this, the people is not so open like in [other EU country]. There you can speak. Maybe you didn't speak good, but they speak. I go to a bar to drink a coffee, and all speak with you. You make a lot of friends. So you go to the store to buy something, they speak with you in the, when you pay. They are more open. Like this, the people are closer. Here they are alone. They don't like the contact with another people. It's my opinion, I don't know. But I don't live so.
- A: No. I think a lot of people say the same thing, yes.
- S: Yes, they are not so. You for example, if you go in [other EU country] to drink a coffee, or to the restaurant, everyone is talking with you. Starting with the *waiter*. He talks a lot because it's his work to sell everything and he talks a lot. Here it is not like this. They don't like the, for example, here all the restaurants, not all, most, they are self-service.
- A: Yes, that's right, yes.
- S: So you don't have contact with the people. That is missing. A lot. So this is a problem, that for me, that I don't start to talk so good. Because I see my husband, he works with the Swedish people, not really Swedish, but the people who know only Swedish, so he speaks more than me.
- A: Really?

- S: Yes [laughs] /.../ So this is the problem for me. I don't have so much contact with the Swedish people.
- A: Mmm. I think it's something many people experience. I think that you are not alone at all. I think many, many people experience the same thing.
- S: Because I go to the school, to my kids' *preschool*. But I don't stay all the day to talk with them. I change few words, and I go home. So I go to the store. There's nothing that happens.

As we can see in these excerpts, in both the countries where Sabrina had lived as an immigrant, she had acquired language skills through communication in community contexts. While in the first country, Sabrina was quickly able to develop skills in the host country language, in Sweden she found development in English to be more noticeable than development in Swedish.

A language learner's beliefs about the relative efficacy of acquisition in naturalistic and instructed settings can influence how they approach the task of developing L2 skills. Strong beliefs about the efficacy of acquisition in naturalistic settings can mean that a person can prioritise this way of learning (e.g. Henry, 2014; Henry & Cliffordson, 2017; Ryan & Mercer, 2011, 2012). With beliefs about the primacy of acquisition in natural contexts deriving from experiences in the first host country, Sabrina placed particular value on community interactions.

In Sweden, however, a mindset favouring 'natural acquisition' created difficulties. Sabrina found that there were few opportunities for the types of pleasurable everyday communication – chatting with customers and service staff in bars, restaurants and shops – that had benefitted her in the first host country, and which she knew could fuel her development. As she observed, not only was everything in Sweden more automated, but people tended to be insular and did not seek the type of casual, spontaneous conversation characteristic of social contacts in other parts of Europe. In this very different climate, Sabrina found that the economical nature of interpersonal communication meant that TL skills did not develop in the same way. Experiencing a disconnect between her preference for engaged and convivial social interaction, and the impersonal and restrained nature of interactions in Sweden, Sabrina did not approach communication events with great enthusiasm. Consequently, while she had quickly become a fluent speaker of the language of the first host country, after three years in Sweden she remained stuck at a lower level.

With communication in community settings restricted in quantity and quality, and with the work of domestic cleaning not providing scope for regular social interactions, Sabrina found she was more willing to communicate in English. With the decision to sacrifice paid work for the sake of formal study weighing heavily on her mind, it meant that a communication event involved the need to balance efficient communication

with the need to develop listening and speaking skills. Moreover, in the absence of the types of socially oriented and engaging interpersonal exchanges characteristic of everyday communication in the first host country, Sabrina found that communication events would either be highly mundane, or would involve something important. Even though Sabrina wanted to communicate in Swedish, in this latter category of event, she would frequently switch to English:

**At public offices (Interview 1: 09 01 2020)**

- A: When you are in situations, say for example perhaps you have to go to the health centre, *health centre*, or to maybe *the employment office* perhaps, or *the population registry* or something, do you, you said at the beginning of our interview that you kind of maybe try a little bit in Swedish?
- S: Yes. I change in, to English when the, for example, I don't know how to explain everything in Swedish, so I change to English, and after I change again to Swedish. Something like a mix.

**Making use of small opportunities (Interview 3: 18 02 2020)**

- A: Do you think it makes a difference for people, for example the people, the nurses at the health centre who are taking the test, and the person you are talking with in the house, do you think it makes a difference to them whether you speak English or Swedish?
- S: Yes. Because I think in, the nurse, they don't have a problem to talk with me in English. It's, I think it's normal for them to speak in English.
- A: But you choose Swedish anyway?
- S: Yes.
- A: Why?
- S: For me.
- A: Yes.
- S: For me. Because I tell you why. I want to talk Swedish. Now maybe, I cannot make the big conversation about everything, but the normal life, everyday. I don't know. Things that happen every day... that I know how to talk to the other. Then another one. So, this is important for me.

Unlike Pranisha, Sabrina was never entirely comfortable about switching back and forth between languages. While she wanted to speak Swedish, as a means of demonstrating engagement, she could find it troubling if she had to make a switch, and if the switch was unaccommodated. If,

though, the communication event was of great importance, and if she felt that the interlocutor was unlikely to be accommodating, she would carry out the transaction in English. This is well illustrated in a story about an employment interview:

**Story One ‘If it is something important I have to know what you say to me’ (Interview 2: 23 01 2020)**

- A: You went to a job interview yesterday.
- S: Yes. I applied to, on the internet, I find an *employment site*, so I applied. And the last week a girl called me. So she’s on the telephone. I speak in Swedish. Was OK.
- A: Yes. You did OK?
- S: Yes. All the conversation was like two minutes.
- A: OK.
- S: I do in Swedish.
- A: OK. And what was she asking you?
- S: If I am looking for a job. If I can go to a job interview. OK. If I have kids. Where I am from. Normal questions. /.../ She asked me, ‘You want to come to an interview?’. I say yes. ‘When do you have time?’. OK, I have Wednesday. At Wednesday. She asked me, ‘One o’clock?’. No, I cannot at one o’clock because I have to take my kids at two o’clock. So if it is possible. First, she asked me what time you want. OK. I want to ten o’clock. So it was at ten o’clock. And this was at the telephone. And yesterday I go there. I was prepared. Like I make a conversation in my head.
- A: Right, right, what, I mean, what did you think, ‘OK, they are going to ask me these questions?’
- S: Yes. I have to ask, answer like this. So, if she ask me this, I have to say this. OK, so I was, I go there, I meet the girl. She make a presentation and she start with, explaining to me something about the company. OK. So I tell stuff because I don’t understand what she is saying.
- A: OK. You say so, you said to her, yes?
- S: Yes. And she ask me, ‘You speak English?’. Because she read on my CV. ‘Yes’. ‘You want to, we are going to speak in English?’. I, yes, it’s better, because it is not. If it is something important. I have to know what you say to me. So we start in English. /.../
- A: And what was her English like?
- S: It was very good.
- A: Yes, OK.
- S: Yes, she was good.
- A: And did you, any times, say things in Swedish? Or did you just stick to English nearly all the time?

- S: I was, ehm, depends. Sometimes I mix English with Swedish. Because it has happen when now, when I start to study Swedish, that is coming sometimes like, I miss the words. I start with Swedish, I go in English. After I change in Swedish. It is confusion.
- A: Yes. And that, and because like you told me that, like before you went there, you kind of planned in your head what you were going to say?
- S: Yes.
- A: But in the, when you are kind of just talking, it can come in, you can switch to English?
- S: Yes.
- A: You can switch to Swedish without really planning?
- S: Yes. Exactly. Because... I go with this, we talk about this. I have to answer like this, this is the word now, I think. No is in English now. I have to find the word in Swedish. So it was like a real confusing in my head.
- A: Mmm. I understand. But how did you feel, like, you know, when you were in the interview, and then afterwards, did you feel it went well? Did you feel comfortable?
- S: Yes.
- A: Do you think she felt comfortable speaking English? Did you think she was used to speak English with people who are applying for jobs?
- S: Yes, I think. She was normal. She don't have problem to speak. So it was something that she, come normal, not that it's, not like an obligation or something.

In this situation, the importance of the transaction and the interlocutor's need to efficiently proceed, meant that Sabrina quickly lost her willingness to communicate in Swedish. The conversation continued in English, without any of the switching that Sabrina says was otherwise characteristic of her interactions in public offices. In this situation, the strategy of shifting between languages as a means of supporting communication in Swedish (and promoting L2 development) was simply not tenable.

The perception that in public agencies, efficiency was a priority was something Sabrina frequently returned to in the interviews. Provided that a transaction could be successfully accomplished, she felt that staff were generally indifferent about the language in which communication might take place:

### **Interview 3 (18 02 0202)**

- A: Do you think it makes a difference to the people that you are speaking with, if you choose English or Swedish? I know you,

like, you are saying it makes a difference for you, in the sense that you feel more involved perhaps,

S: Yes.

A: More part of things,

S: Yes.

A: That you want to speak Swedish?

S: Yes. Exactly.

A: It makes it much easier. Is it in the sense of not being someone who speaks English, but being someone who speaks Swedish? Does it make a difference to the person that you are speaking with, do you think, that, if you...

S: Ehm depends. I think for example, I don't know for someone that, for example, if I work and I go to someone to clean the house and they have to speak in English, I don't think this a good way. Because you come in my house, so a little bit Swedish you have to know. This is my opinion. I don't know. But if I go, I don't know, to the hospital or to the employment office, I don't think they care so much what to, what language you speak. That they understand you. So I think this is the difference.

Like the other mothers participating in the project, Sabrina's experiences of communicating in Swedish (beyond the mundane transactions of shopping) mostly involved childcare. Communication took place when leaving and collecting her children from preschool, and when visiting the paediatric clinic. Like Pranisha, Sabrina tried to capitalise on these opportunities. Often, she would initiate and try to continue the communication in Swedish:

#### At preschool (Interview 3: 18 02 2020)

S: I try to speak only in Swedish to the *preschool*.

A: Right. Because you are there every day.

S: Yes.

A: So you are leaving in the morning, picking up in the afternoon.

S: Yes.

A: And you need to check. Have they slept? Have they been eating?

S: They sleep, yes.

A: And this kind of stuff. How does that go? Do you normally speak with the same teacher at the preschool, or it can be different?

S: It can be different. For example, yesterday was a new girl that, she start yesterday. So I speak in Swedish. And was OK. She was, also is not a Swedish person. So it was also with Swedish.

As previously noted, interactions that took place on a recurrent basis, and in the context of ‘weak tie’ relationships, were important for several of the participants’ Swedish WTC. While Sabrina did not elaborate greatly on these interactions – reflecting perhaps an instrumental approach on her part – they constituted the only type of communication event where it appeared that she was consistently more willing to communicate in Swedish than in English. As could be seen in the story about the job interview, while Sabrina believed in the use of English as a support when communicating in Swedish, she felt frustrated by her inability to fully control its activation in communication: ‘it has happen when now, when I start to study Swedish, that is coming sometimes like, I miss the words. I start with Swedish, I go in English, after I change in Swedish. It is confusion’. Although the Covid-19 pandemic meant that it was not possible to explore these ‘weak tie’ interactions more closely (through the generation of possibly more elaborated stories), it would appear that the nature of the discourse domain (preschool activities), topics that involved a manageable level of challenge (her children’s play, sleep, eating and well-being) and the limited number of interlocutors (often a designated preschool teacher), had the effect of promoting a consistency in Sabrina’s Swedish WTC.

## **Part 4**

# **Syntheses, Conceptualisations and Ethics**



# 10 At a Specific Time, with a Specific Person or Persons, Using a L2 (or a Mix of Languages)

As Larsen-Freeman (2015: 499) has argued, a second language (L2) has self-generating properties; it contains ‘the seeds for its own development’. The same seems true for willingness to communicate (WTC). In the previous chapters, we were able to trace Swedish WTC development as a process taking place under shadows cast by the past (accumulating experiences of previous communication events) and the future (anticipated events on immediate and more distant horizons). We could see how willingness to communicate in a particular situation could be influenced by experiences from preceding situations, and how situated decision-making could be affected by a myriad of social and psychological factors. In this chapter, we return to the classic definition of WTC, and consider how the research contributes to understanding the forces that shape a person’s ‘readiness to enter into discourse’ (i) ‘at a specific time’, (ii) ‘with a specific person or persons’ and (iii) ‘using a L2’ (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998: 547).

## ‘At a Specific Time’: The Dynamics of WTC

As we saw in Chapter 2, the issue of time has become increasingly important in the development of the WTC construct. Drawing on the analogy of *crossing the Rubicon* – initially used in Dörnyei’s (2005) process model to symbolise the instant in time when a language learner commits to taking action – MacIntyre (2007) has emphasised the importance of tipping points in which a learner ‘essentially says “yes, I’m willing to jump into conversation”’ (MacIntyre, 2020: 118). The notion of the Rubicon is apt not only in terms of making a commitment to communicate in an L2, but also in suggesting uncertainty, and engagement within a potentially dangerous situation that can involve risks to the individual’s positive view of self, and relations with others.

As a dynamically changing state of communicative readiness, WTC fluctuates in and between communication events (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). When communication choices extend beyond speaking or not speaking (the decision typically investigated in research in both L2 and

first language [L1] paradigms), and additionally include the *language* in which communication is initiated, situated assessments of the ‘usability’ of available linguistic resources also take place. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, assessments of psychological preparedness to initiate communication in the target language (TL) (Swedish) or in a contact language (English) have an influence beyond the immediate communication event. Over time, these evaluations pattern in ways that affect a person’s communication preferences: the probabilistic nature of WTC. In previous studies we have shown how, in its role as a contact language, English can have both enabling and constraining effects on communication in a host country language (Henry, 2016a, 2016b). In work examining time serial data, we were able to show how trajectories of host country WTC and contact language WTC can be interrelated, and how growth in Swedish WTC can involve losses of English WTC (Henry *et al.*, 2021a). Our previous work has also shown how changes in WTC can be gradual or nongradual, and how a significant change in host country or contact language WTC can reflect changes that are taking place in a person’s life (Henry *et al.*, 2021b). In the current research, we have been able to examine these processes as they occurred. ‘Walking alongside’ our participants as their lives unfolded (Neale, 2020: 10), we have been able to gain insights into temporal dynamics across shorter and longer timescales.

### Dynamics across shorter timescales: Initial conditions

Reflecting how WTC is assembled at particular moments in time, the stories told by the participants revealed how shifts in relative levels of English and Swedish WTC could take place within interactions. While on some occasions, these shifts could reflect a change in communication demand, on others they reflected a shift within the prevailing constellation of emotions, self-efficacy perceptions and state linguistic self-confidence. In a similar way, shifts in levels of WTC could also be traced within the interviews themselves. In a conversation that had begun in Swedish, a participant could switch to English to relate something complex, personal or that was difficult to explain. While it became clear that momentary dips in Swedish WTC could trigger a shift to English, and that growing confidence in ongoing communication in English could precipitate a switch to Swedish (insights that reflect the findings of idiodynamic research, see Chapter 2), we could also see how communication preferences were shaped in chains of interlinked events.

Drawing on these insights, and taking a developmental perspective, it is perhaps unproductive to think of WTC as having specific starting (or finishing) points. Rather than identifying a particular point in time when the Rubicon might be crossed, it may be more rewarding to think about how a person is continuously involved in transitioning into and out of moments, situations and events that involve interpersonal

communication. MacIntyre (2020) captures these dynamics using the example of a person who suddenly says something offensive or insulting:

WTC at that moment in time would change rapidly and significantly from just the moment before. However, immediately thereafter the communication would arrive at a new moment in time perhaps following a successful repair, explanation, elaboration, or apology that puts the conversation back on track. Then, following the communication event of making an apology, there would be another event, and then another, and then another, each moment a transition from the previous moment, in a continuous chain. (MacIntyre, 2020: 120)

The sense that communication events are ‘chained’, and that a preceding event can function as the point of departure for a subsequent event, can be understood as a function of a WTC system’s initial conditions. In Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) (Dörnyei *et al.*, 2015; Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2020; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), reactions at one moment in time are in part dependent on the moment that immediately precedes it, the antecedent event constituting the initial conditions for the next event (Verspoor, 2015). At the same time, no communicative situation is entirely the same as its predecessor; communicative demands fluctuate, and an interlocutor can be more or less accommodating. Thus, in each new situation, a newly emergent state of WTC can arise, a state which can be similar to or different from the state just experienced.

Taking MacIntyre’s (2020) example of the effects of an offensive comment, but extending timescale to minutes, hours and days, data from the project showed very clearly how communication events are interconnected. Situated assessments of willingness to enter into communication involved both the usability of the currently available languages in the unfolding situation, and an awareness of the interactional and psychological effects of similar choices made in previous communication events. These conjoined processes of *monitoring* (ongoing assessment of a current situation), *retrospection* (awareness of preceding interactions) and *prospection* (anticipation of immediately subsequent next steps) meant that levels of Swedish WTC and English WTC could fluctuate within and between communication events. Borrowing terminology from qualitative longitudinal research (Hollstein, 2021), this is what we mean by describing WTC as a process in motion that takes place under shadows cast by the past and the future.

The insight that at the medium-range timescale of minutes and hours, WTC is sensitive to initial conditions is most evident in stories where participants described things that happened during eventful days. As we saw in Chapter 6, several of the stories Kesu told were about communication events that had taken place at a health facility. Awaiting her first child, Kesu made regular visits to an antenatal clinic. In the stories

she told about these visits, we could closely follow the development of her Swedish WTC, and could map developmental patterns within and between consultations.

In a story Kesu told about her first visit to the clinic (Kesu, Story Three ‘A first visit to the antenatal centre’, p. 98), we could trace the development of Swedish WTC across four interlinked communication events: an initial interaction with a cleaner (while in the waiting room), subsequent interactions with medical staff and a transaction with a pharmacist (when collecting her prescription).

As Kesu explained, this was the first time that she had visited a service provider on her own (it not being easy for her husband to get time off work). Arriving in advance of her appointment, and spending time in the waiting room, Kesu described how she had initiated communication in Swedish with a cleaner. The interaction was successful. With time to formulate her question, Kesu was able to ask about her appointment, and could understand the answer she received. With self-confidence boosted by this interaction, she decided to initiate communication with the medical staff in Swedish: ‘whatever the doctor asked me, or wanted any information, I will give it to her *in Swedish*. If it gets hard for me, I will use English’. However, in the next communication event in this chain, when Kesu spoke Swedish and the doctor responded, she was not able to understand. This interaction, and a subsequent consultation later in the morning, continued in English. Reflecting that she might have been too ambitious, Kesu was nevertheless optimistic about her language development, and told the doctor that at her next appointment (a month later), she would be able to communicate in Swedish. Leaving the clinic in a positive frame of mind, she then went to the pharmacy to collect a prescription. Here, when the pharmacist initiated the communication in Swedish, Kesu responded in Swedish. Continuing in Swedish, she then asked questions about the dosage. The pharmacist provided the information, and the transaction was successfully concluded.

In these four events – taking place within the space of a couple of hours – each preceding event creates the initial conditions for the next event in the chain. The successful interaction with the cleaner (event one), meant that Kesu felt confident about communicating in Swedish with the doctor (event two). However, when the doctor initiated the communication in Swedish, and when Kesu realises that she would not be able to understand, they switched to English. In a second consultation (event three), her interlocutor instilled a sense of confidence. Kesu tells her that at the next appointment (in a month’s time) she will be able to communicate in Swedish. Arriving at the pharmacy in a mood of confidence, Kesu is unperturbed when the pharmacist initiates communication in Swedish (event four), and the interaction continues in Swedish.

A pair of stories from another eventful day similarly exemplify how WTC is influenced by immediately preceding events. Here, Maria

described two events connected with attempts to gain a Swedish driving licence (Stories Five and Six: ‘The test centre’, and ‘A visit to McDonald’s’, p. 121). In the first event, which took place at a driving test centre, she described having to demonstrate her knowledge of risk situations in traffic (which was examined in a small group discussion) and, later, how to control a car on a slippery surface (a mandatory part of the driving test in Sweden). In the second event, which took place after the tests had been completed, she described a visit to a McDonald’s restaurant.

Although apprehensive about the driving tests, Maria explained that she felt secure when communicating. Her mother-in-law had accompanied her, and would act as an interpreter (a resource that Maria did not appear to need). Moreover, the other three test participants were all younger (which also put her at ease). After successfully completing the tests, she and her mother-in-law went out for lunch. In previous interviews, Maria had told stories about visiting McDonald’s restaurants, but that she had never felt sufficiently confident to place her order in Swedish, and how she had chosen to communicate in English. On this occasion, however, Maria communicated in Swedish. Reflecting on why things were different, she explained how she had been buoyed by the positive experiences at the test centre, and that communicating in Swedish earlier in the day had meant that she felt confident about conducting the transaction in Swedish.

### Dynamics across longer timescales: Plotting the shape of change

Across the timescale of minutes and hours, event sequences recounted in a participant’s story could reveal dynamical patterns where a previous interaction functioned as the initial conditions for an interaction currently taking place. In CDST, shorter timescales are embedded in longer timescales. Events taking place across shorter windows of time are nested in event patterns that develop over longer periods (Steenbeek *et al.*, 2012, 2020). Scaling up, and examining development over the timescale of weeks and months, we were able to plot similar dynamical patterns. For the six participants who we followed for the duration of the research period – Kesu (11 interviews), Maria (10 interviews), Jessie (9 interviews), Olivia (9 interviews), Titly (9 interviews) and Wafaa (8 interviews) – we were able to observe WTC development as it was taking place.

In research that seeks to understand development, processes form the relevant objects of enquiry (Steenbeek *et al.*, 2012; Van Dijk & van Geert, 2007). As van Geert (2020: 172) has made clear, a process comprises a sequence of events that are connected in time, and which has ‘characteristic temporal patterns such as fluctuations, variability, continuities and discontinuities’. In studies that adopt a process-oriented design – quantitative or qualitative – the aim is to shed light on patterns of development. In focusing on the patterning of the developmental trajectories of

our participants' WTC, the aim was to understand both the *nature* of change (i.e. whether change was gradual or nongradual) and the *sources* of continuous and discontinuous aspects (van Dijk & van Geert, 2007).

As we have previously argued (Henry *et al.*, 2021a), when focus is directed to processes of L2 learning and acquisition, relevant variables need to be studied at the *developmental timescale* – the timescale at which development generally takes place. Making a similar point, De Ruiter and Gmelin (2021: 295) have emphasised how emergence and change at the macro level 'is qualitatively unique from emergence and change at the micro level'. Taking meteorological phenomena as examples, Klimstra and Schwab (2021) have underscored the importance of focusing on timescales that are relevant to the developmental process in focus:

Climate change cannot be observed by evaluating the weather on a particular day—or even over a week, month, or year—as it plays out at a different time scale. Yet, daily weather patterns across longer periods of time are necessary to observe climate change, while at the same time the indicators and predictors that are necessary to make sense of the daily weather are not necessarily the same ones that are relevant to understanding climate change. (Klimstra & Schwab, 2021: 276)

Van Geert (2019) takes a similar view. Using a child's problem-solving skills as an example, he explains how development can be manifested as the emergence of new patterns of problem-solving behaviour, which are a consequence of changes taking place on the shorter timescales of individual problem-solving events. This, he suggests, would be an example of bottom-up causality. However, causality can also have top-down effects. As van Geert (2019: 163) explains, 'properties that emerge on the long-term time span, have a causal, that is constraining and affording, effect on the short-term dynamics of the corresponding activities, e.g. the concrete solving of a problem by a person or group'.

Following the argument that development can be understood as 'any process where you see differences in aggregate properties on the long-term timescale' (van Geert, 2019: 163), the influence of IDs on longer-term processes of L2 learning and acquisition need to be understood as differences in observable properties over relevant periods. In relation to the development of TL WTC in migration contexts, the relevant period may best be measured in months (Henry *et al.*, 2021a). Examining the patterns of change for the six participants we followed for the duration of the research period, it is not fully satisfactory to explain changes in WTC in terms of strings of communication events, where one event in a chain creates the initial conditions for a subsequent event (although this is clearly important). Nor is it entirely adequate to identify a particular circumstance or event that might function as the trigger for a phase shift that transforms system behaviour

in a distinctive manner (although rapid shifts from one state to another did take place). Rather, as van Geert (2020) suggests, it is necessary to recognise that the dynamics taking place on different timescales may themselves be different (even though self-similarity can often be observed), and that dynamics on one timescale can create the conditions for dynamics on another. With these points in mind, and with CDST as a lens (see Chapter 2), in the next section we describe the nature and patterns of observable change (summarised in Table 10.1).

## Tracking Continuity and Discontinuity

### Kesu: Developmental continuity

For Kesu, the development of Swedish WTC took place as a gradual process (Chapter 6). Highly motivated to develop proficiency in Swedish, and viewing each communication event as a welcome challenge, Kesu's stories revealed how she became increasingly confident when interacting in Swedish in community contexts, and how she had become increasingly willing to communicate in Swedish, rather than English. Drawing on CDST's notion of attractor states (Chapter 2), which illustrate a system's tendencies to show distinctive types of behaviour, Kesu's WTC system can be understood as settling into an attractor basin representing a preference for communicating in Swedish, a basin which became broader and deeper with the passing of time.

### Maria: Developmental discontinuity

As van Dijk and van Geert (2007) could observe in a study of younger children's L1 use, some of their participants could suddenly 'jump' from infrequent use of a form or construct to regular, recurrent use. Like the phase shift observed in the Dutch children's L1 use, for Maria, a point was reached where one distinctive pattern of communication behaviour (a consistent preference to communicate in English) rapidly transformed into another, quite different pattern (a consistent preference to communicate in Swedish) (see Chapter 6). While for Kesu the location of the WTC

**Table 10.1** Patterns of change in participants' WTC

Participant	Pattern of change
Jessie	Distinct periods of growth in SWTC, and corresponding loss in EWTC.
Kesu	Growth in SWTC, and loss in EWTC as a continuous process.
Maria	A phase shift marking a rapid transformation from EWTC to SWTC.
Olivia	Stasis. Few noticeable changes in EWTC or SWTC.
Titly	Increasing and then decreasing SWTC.
Wafaa	Growth in SWTC as an S-shaped curve.

Note: EWTC, English willingness to communicate; SWTC, Swedish willingness to communicate.

system in an attractor basin representing a preference for Swedish communication became increasingly frequent, for Maria the system dynamics were very different. Once she had made the decision to only communicate in Swedish, her WTC system shifted from a broad-based and steep-sided basin of attraction representing English WTC, to an equally deep basin representing Swedish WTC. Lodged in this latter basin, it was largely unaffected by potentially perturbing influences.

### **Jessie: Between continuity and discontinuity**

Neither gradual (as in Kesu's WTC trajectory), nor a sudden non-gradual shift (as was the case for Maria), for Jessie the development of Swedish WTC was marked by a series of thresholds (Chapter 6). Evolving in distinct stages of growth, increases in Swedish WTC were connected with periods that involved intentional action. While in the first of these periods, Jessie found a place where she could spend time engaged in meaningful activity (swimming and learning karate at a leisure complex) and, in this way, was able to develop confidence to communicate in Swedish, in the second period she enlisted the support of members of family and social networks. In these stages, Jessie actively sought opportunities to communicate in Swedish with people with whom she might previously have spoken English or had not communicated with at all. While, at the end of the research period, Jessie's WTC system might have been most frequently lodged in a basin of attraction favouring the initiation of communication in Swedish, the basin was shallow. A perturbing event could easily shift the system into the counterpoint attractor state (English WTC).

### **Wafaa: Development as an S-shaped curve**

For Wafaa, the beliefs that language skills should be acquired in a systematic manner, and that the goals of learning should be accuracy in communication and situationally appropriate L2 use, point to what we have termed a 'communicative competence ideology' (Chapter 7). From this perspective, language becomes functional at a point when messages can be conveyed in a contextually appropriate manner, and with accuracy and precision.

Mediated by a communicative competence ideology, for Wafaa the development of Swedish WTC took the form of an S-shaped curve. Following an initial period when she was reluctant to communicate in Swedish, and relied on English, a period of growth took place. The start of this period coincided with the point in time when Wafaa had become linguistically more self-confident. This period was followed by a subsequent levelling off around the time when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, and when opportunities for communication in social situations rapidly diminished. While Wafaa's WTC system also became more

frequently lodged in a basin of attraction favouring Swedish WTC, shifts to a counterpoint English WTC basin could also occur.

### **Olivia: Developmental stasis**

Of these six participants, Olivia was the one who had spent the longest time in Sweden (over a year before the start of the research period) (see Chapter 8). Throughout her time in Sweden, Olivia had lived in superdiverse international environments where, as a *lingua franca*, English had functioned to meet all her communication needs. While Olivia made some progress with her formal studies, she was consistently reluctant to communicate in Swedish. Towards the end of the period, she seemed to be slowly moving towards a point where, given the right circumstances, she could be willing to communicate in Swedish in simple interactions. However, a shift in communication inclinations never took place. Following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, opportunities for communication in community contexts became far fewer. When the economic downturn meant that her partner's employment contract was not renewed, the couple moved back to their home country. For Olivia, the WTC system hardly ever shifted out of a broadly based and deep-sided basin of attraction favouring the initiation of communication in English. It was firmly lodged in this basin at the beginning, and at the end of the research period.

### **Titly: Developmental decline (loss of Swedish WTC and English WTC)**

Like Olivia, Titly had spent a longer time in Sweden (see Chapter 8). Having recently qualified as a doctor in her home country, Titly hoped to proceed as quickly as possible with her language education, her aim being to gain a practice certificate and to work in Sweden as a surgeon, or in general practice. However, the path she envisioned turned out to be strewn with obstacles. While at the beginning of the research period, Titly was positive and remained undaunted in her efforts to develop TL skills, over time her optimism gradually waned. Experiencing acculturative stress, she became increasingly disillusioned. This situation was exacerbated when she was unable to work as a hospital volunteer during the early period of the Covid-19 pandemic, a disappointment that she experienced as a further denial of recognition (Honneth, 1992). Despondent, and lacking energy, at the end of the research period Titly found herself less willing to communicate – in Swedish or in English – than she had been at the beginning. Among the six women, Titly's WTC system was the least stable. Although mostly lodged in the English WTC attractor basin, the geometry was shallow, and the system was easily dislodged. In certain situations – often in the context of friendly 'weak tie' relationships – Titly's WTC system could shift to the Swedish WTC attractor state.

## 'With a Specific Person or Persons': People, Places and Spaces

### People

While WTC is recognised as a dynamic construct (MacIntyre, 2007) that involves the readiness to enter discourse 'at a particular time *with a specific person or persons*, using a L2' (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998: 547), in WTC research so far conducted, 'specific persons' have often remained invisible. Always anticipated, yet rarely emerging from the background context, interlocutors are the 'missing persons' of the WTC paradigm. However, when WTC is examined at the individual level – in case study and person-focused research – TL-speaking interlocutors can assume a more prominent role. With the application of a CSDT perspective, and when WTC development is studied as a process in motion, the status of interlocutors is further elevated. As Steenbeek and van Geert (2008: 272) have pointed out, 'the developmental study of social interaction must take the dynamics of social interaction as its starting point'.

From this perspective, WTC needs to be conceptualised as shaped by patterns of interaction that are emergent and temporarily self-sustaining (Steenbeek *et al.*, 2020). Acknowledging that the *interpersonal relationship* (Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020) is the appropriate unit of analysis in the study of individual-level WTC (Kubanyiova & Yue, 2019), and applying a qualitative longitudinal methodology (Hollstein, 2021; Neale, 2020, 2021), we have been able to show how WTC is emergent within and across relationships, and how it is shaped in macro- and micro-level processes (Klimstra & Schwab, 2021).

To varying degrees, the L2 learning processes of our participants occurred in conditions of social and linguistic duress (Ortega, 2018a). Varying combinations of gender, ethnicity, migration background and the status of language resources meant that the acquisition of skills in Swedish took place from positions of marginalisation. Opportunities for meaningful L2 use in community contexts were few. In a societal context in which anti-immigration discourses were prominent, and in a social climate where distrust of migrants was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, opportunities for TL communication needed to be carefully negotiated. Although inimical circumstances such as these are commonplace in contexts of migration – and for many adults can constitute everyday experiences associated with L2 use in and beyond the classroom – L2 psychology is only beginning to develop understandings of the impact on learning and communication behaviours (see e.g. Lou & Noels, 2019).

Two theories from the L1 paradigm which, in combination, can provide a framework for understanding communication orientations in community contexts are anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) (Gudykunst, 1998), and communication accommodation theory (CAT) (Gallois & Giles, 2015) (MacIntyre, 2019). The premise of AUM is that,

when interacting with a person from another social or cultural group, an individual will typically experience a degree of uncertainty (a cognitive response) and anxiety (an affective response). Effective communication depends on the successful management of these responses (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001). With a focus on interactions within communication events, CAT highlights the importance of accommodation processes, and the ways in which social distance is managed (Gallois & Giles, 2015). While in some situations the interactions within a communication event can be non-accommodating, and can emphasise social difference, in others, speakers can be motivated towards greater accommodation and concordance with the speech characteristics of the interlocutor. This can include, for example, making a message more comprehensible, or expressing a desire to affiliate with the other person (Soliz & Giles, 2014). While non-accommodation creates discomfort and can engender negative evaluations of the interlocutor, accommodation encourages continued and/or future communication in a relationship, or within a particular relational context (MacIntyre, 2019).

### Weak tie relationships

In AUM, strangeness and familiarity form a continuum, where strangers are placed at the unfamiliar end (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). When a new social contact is made – particularly when this takes place in a different cultural context – uncertainty and anxiety can be triggered and need to be managed. Because communication with a stranger is a situation ‘potentially replete with novelty, unfamiliarity, anxiety, and uncertainty’, there is a tendency to avoid social interaction when uncertainty and anxiety are high, or, when this option is not available, ‘to terminate the interaction as soon as possible’ (Duronto *et al.*, 2005: 552).

Although AUM theory has been developed and applied in the study of intercultural communication, it is not immediately sensitive to the *settings* in which interactions take place, or to the *social contexts* in which an interaction with a stranger might occur. Coining the term ‘third places’, Oldenburg (1999) identified open, public spaces – the gyms, leisure centres, libraries and cafés of contemporary society – as places of particular importance for people newly arrived in a locality, and/or people who experience social isolation. Describing how these ‘third places’ can function as open arenas for social interaction, Oldenburg has suggested that the beneficial impacts would be greatest when people are able to experience affiliation through verbal and non-verbal interaction, and when they can engage in simple conversations.

For newcomers and people who lack established social networks, third places are locations where they can establish transient, yet, in their social circumstances, meaningful relationships. Described by Granovetter (1973) as ‘weak ties’, these are recurring surface-level interactions with

people in a particular locality or setting. In comparison with stronger levels of affiliation associated with friendship, ‘weak ties’ do not assume a similarity of backgrounds or interests. Nor do they require investments of time or emotional resources. Even though recurring interactions may not be deeper than a superficial exchange of greetings, weak tie relationships can play an important role in reducing experiences of otherness and social exclusion (Granovetter, 1973; McPherson *et al.*, 2001).

As a consequence of the methodology of exploring WTC through participant-generated data (Neale, 2020, 2021), most of the communication events described in the participants’ stories were in some way noteworthy. After the initial weeks, participants tended not to talk in great detail about everyday transactions, such as an exchange of words at a bus stop or at a supermarket checkout. For participants who were developing communication skills and linguistic self-confidence, these ultra-mundane interactions may not have been sufficiently meaningful to form the subject of a story. However, apart from Olivia, who was reluctant to communicate in Swedish even in repeated encounters (for example, with the owners of a local convenience store, and with a sales assistant in the cosmetics section of a local department store), all the women described recurrent surface-level interactions with people who they met on a recurrent basis. Whether collecting a prescription at a pharmacy, or a package at a parcel delivery point, each transaction formed part of a pattern of communication where, over time, preferences for communication in Swedish (rather than English) began to develop (see also Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, and Chapter 3).

With differing family circumstances and obligations, the nature of participants’ interactions with strangers also varied. For two of the women, Kesu and Maria, family and social situations meant that, beyond travelling to and attending the college, most of their spare time was spent in L1-speaking contexts. While Kesu had a wide network of acquaintances from her home country, Maria spent her time socialising with members of her husband’s extended family. For Olivia, the situation was not dissimilar. In her case, as a member of a super-diverse international community, social interactions took place in English.

For the other participants, daily life brought them into contact with strangers in situations where interaction could take place in Swedish. For the women with children – Pranisha, Sabrina and Wafaa – daily routines connected to childcare meant that they found themselves in situations where interactions with speakers of Swedish were necessary. Taking place when leaving and collecting their children from preschool, these interactions involved information exchanges about a child’s well-being and social interactions. As revealed in these women’s stories, leaving and fetching children could involve recurring interactions with a particular member of staff (often a designated contact person), infrequent

interactions with other staff members (and sometimes other parents) and one-time interactions with temporary staff.

Stories told about these interactions revealed how the women perceived differences in the degree to which preschool teachers employed accommodation strategies, and were supportive of efforts to communicate in Swedish. As described in their stories, the women sought to communicate with staff members who they perceived as being motivated towards greater accommodation, who sought convergence with speech characteristics (i.e. who tried to make a message more comprehensible by speaking slowly, clearly and using simple language), and who demonstrated a positive response to attempts made to communicate in Swedish. Even though leaving and collecting children could be stressful – neither they nor the staff had much time – the women valued communication with those teachers who were accommodating, and who were good at scaffolding interactions in Swedish. From hearing the women's stories, it became clear that interpersonal interactions could sometimes accumulate to form 'stronger ties'. In relation to members of staff identified as non-accommodating, the women's stories revealed instrumental and avoidant-focused responses (beyond ensuring that their children were happy, safe and well, not seeking further interaction), and a preference for initiating conversations in English.

For the two remaining women – Jessie and Titly – the situation of having a partner/husband who worked long and/or irregular hours, and a lack of other family obligations, meant that they had more free time. While both women spoke about being bored at home, and of wanting to get out and engage in social activities, they also described how they could sometimes feel apprehensive. Both had first-hand experiences of racially based victimisation. With a sensitivity to the prejudices of others, they were careful about the places they would visit unaccompanied.

For both women, a leisure complex functioned as a 'third place' (Oldenburg, 1999). Here, positive interactions with Swedish-speaking strangers could occur. With a desire to learn to swim (both were non-swimmers), they enjoyed spending time in the swimming pool. In stories told about visits to the leisure centre, they described how casual interactions could take place, and how they felt confident and motivated to have conversations in Swedish. They also told how, following an initial interaction, exchanges could sometimes continue when they met an interlocutor on a subsequent occasion. In these situations, the women described how engagement in a meaningful activity – learning to swim, and in Jessie's case also taking a karate class – meant that they approached communication in a positive frame of mind, and that a conversation in Swedish with a stranger did not feel intimidating.

As well as spending time at the leisure complex, Titly also made regular visits to the city library – another example of classic a 'third place'

(Oldenburg, 1999). In one of the stories she told, Titly described how an (initially negative) interaction with an older man led to a longer conversation. Following this conversation, Titly and the man exchanged greetings when they met on subsequent occasions, a pattern of interaction characteristic of ‘weak tie’ relationships (Granovetter, 1973). In other examples of ‘weak tie’ interactions, participants talked about always selecting a particular cashier at a supermarket checkout, and choosing to be served by the same pharmacist when collecting a prescription.

### Recurring interactions with health service professionals

When language learning takes place in conditions of linguistic and social duress (Ortega, 2018), a communication event in a public agency can provide important affordances for skills development (Henry, 2016a). However, experiences of interactions with public servants can differ greatly (Henry, 2016b). As suggested by CAT (Gallois & Giles, 2015), the language-developing affordances of a communication event will depend on the accommodation strategies of the interlocutor. Equally, and as demonstrated by research employing AUM theory in the context of health care (e.g. Logan *et al.*, 2016), service users can experience uncertainty and anxiety when an interlocutor (e.g. a nurse or doctor) comes from a different ethnic group. As MacIntyre (2019) has made clear, these phenomena will often interact. Together, they are likely to influence the degree to which a person is willing to communicate in the TL, or chooses to communicate in a contact language or to utilise the services of a language broker (Henry, 2016a).

In a care trajectory, a positive communication event – when the service-provider is accommodating and when the service-user is successful in managing uncertainty and anxiety – can provide the initial conditions for the next event in the chain. As revealed by Rose and colleagues (1998) in their study of the settlement experiences of migrant women in Montréal, a ‘weak tie’ relationship that might begin with a shallow interchange can sometimes develop into a ‘stronger tie’ relationship as contacts accumulate. For two of the women, Kesu and Titly, health-care needs meant that they had regular consultations with a designated medical specialist. While Kesu had monthly consultations with an antenatal midwife, Titly was under the care of a hospital consultant. In the stories they told, the healthcare professionals came across as caring, concerned and empathetic. As interlocutors, they were supportive and accommodating. In these relationships, both women experienced confidence in communicating in Swedish, and were strongly motivated to interact in Swedish (even though in these high-stakes contexts communicating in English would have had advantages).

In Kesu’s case, visits to the midwife took place during a happy period of her life. The joy of following her unborn baby’s development through

examinations and ultrasound images was enhanced by the pleasure she derived from communicating in Swedish. For Titly, however, the consultations occurred during a period when challenges could sometimes feel overwhelming, and when she could experience despondency about her situation. With concerns about her medical condition adding to the disillusionment of seeing her career thwarted, the consultations provided a space where she could experience satisfaction in communicating in Swedish. Recognising how the consultant was not going to rush her, and that he was interested in her as a person (and not just as a medical case), Titly felt confident communicating in Swedish. She spoke appreciatively of these meetings and how, beyond diagnostics and treatment, conversations had also focused on her language development and career plans.

For Kesu the monthly meetings with the midwife provided a set of progress checks. At each appointment, L2 development and communication skills could be assessed. Positive self-evaluations, and the encouragement Kesu received from the medical staff, functioned as important motivational resources (Dörnyei *et al.*, 2016). For Titly, the conversations with the consultant provided a space where she could experience the self-efficacy of communicating in a professional environment. Applying a CAT perspective, we can see how in these relational dyads, the research participants and the professionals whose care they were under were motivated to achieve accommodation and affiliation (Gallois & Giles, 2015). Equally, from an AUM perspective, we can see how the uncertainty inherent in these medical consultations could generate a desire to engage in a conversation in a manner where anxiety and communication apprehension could be overridden (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; MacIntyre, 2019).

### **'Using a L2' (or Mix of Languages): Language Ideologies and Situational Assessments**

In contexts of migration, the willingness of the individual to engage in interactions in community contexts can be crucial for the development of L2 skills (Derwing & Munro, 2013; Derwing *et al.*, 2014; Segalowitz *et al.*, 2009). When a contact language provides a functional alternative to TL communication, each communication event becomes an opportunity for development that stands to be gained or lost. As the interviews revealed, the participants were conscious of trade-offs between instrumental and developmental goals: 'although I might communicate better if I speak in English, I could lose on an opportunity to develop my Swedish'. Sometimes, decisions of this sort formed part of a story told in an interview. On other occasions, a weighing-up of competing goals could come as a reflection in the surrounding conversation.

In migration contexts, self-evaluations of L2 competence have important implications for communication behaviours (Noels *et al.*, 1996; Yang

*et al.*, 2006). However, for our participants, concerns about proficiency formed just part of the assessment of a communication event. Equally important were evaluations of the situation – whether the conditions were conducive to attempts to communicate in Swedish – and assessments of an interlocutor’s ability and preparedness to be accommodating. As Sevinç and Backus (2019) have made clear, in a migration context the anxiety that can be experienced in a communication event can stem just as much from the perception of an interlocutor’s negative opinions as from an individual’s evaluation of their own communication abilities.

Beyond the immediate situational assessment of an interlocutor’s willingness to be accommodating, evaluations were also influenced by language ideologies and ‘assumptions about what constitutes successful communication and when “unsuccessful” communication occurs, who or what is the cause thereof’ (Subtirelu, 2014: 122). Having come to know the participants through the interviews and the many casual conversations that took place at the college, it became clear how narrative accounts of communication events were shaped by language ideologies. For the women who held translanguaging ideologies – most notably Kesu (Chapter 6) and Pranisha (Chapter 9) – experiences of anxiety were largely absent from the stories they told. Growing up as multilinguals, they were accustomed to switching between languages in the support of effective communication. For them, and for Sabrina (Chapter 9) and Wafaa (Chapter 7), English was a facilitating affordance that gave them the confidence to communicate in Swedish. As a contact language, English was almost always available as a resource when difficulties in expressing themselves in Swedish were encountered, or in situations where an interlocutor lacked the capacity or the willingness to accommodate their communication attempts. As Wafaa put it, such assessments were focused on the degree to which an interlocutor ‘is intelligent to hear someone who speaks his language in another accent, or in another different way’ (p. 149). Taking a similar view, Pranisha described how the monitoring of a conversation never ceased: ‘both have to feel confident with that particular language’ (p. 216). ‘I have dealt with people knowing other languages, so I keep on observing’ (p. 216).

For the participants who held a deficit ideology – a belief that it was important not to make mistakes when communicating in Swedish with TL speakers – evaluations were focused on impression management (MacIntyre & Thivierge, 1995; Wen & Clément, 2003). Most frequently encountered in the interviews with Maria (Chapter 6) and Olivia (Chapter 8), monitoring of this sort was triggered by a sensitivity to language-based rejection: the cognitive–affective process that involves a person’s ‘expectations of how they might be treated in interactions with members of the target language community’ (Lou & Noels, 2019: 481). For both women, communication apprehension apparent in community contexts – particularly an interaction with a person who was a native or highly proficient speaker of Swedish – meant that they would systematically choose

the safer option of communicating in English, or, if this was not possible, not speaking at all. While Maria reached a stage where self-confidence in her skills in Swedish meant that a fear of language-based rejection had largely subsided (the point where she rapidly switched from mostly initiating communication in English to mostly initiating communication in Swedish), for Olivia there was hardly ever a situation when Swedish WTC was not inhibited by sensitivity to language-based rejection.

Of all the participants, Olivia was the most consistently hesitant when responding to opportunities to communicate in Swedish. Even in the most simple and mundane of interactions, she experienced a reluctance to speak in Swedish. Her stories revealed how social interaction was shrouded in apprehension, and a pervading sense of being subject to the critical scrutiny not just of an interlocutor, but of other people who might be observing the communication event. Most of all, Olivia avoided opportunities to communicate with people who were native speakers of Swedish. It was in these interactions that she was most aware of her shortcomings, and where the critical gaze of the other could be most damaging to her confidence and self-esteem.

# 11 Introducing a 3D Model of the WTC Pyramid

In the preceding chapter we presented a synthesis of the project's findings in relation to the classic definition of willingness to communicate (WTC) (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). In doing so, our aim was to develop an understanding of WTC in community contexts where communication can take place in a language (or languages) other than the target language (TL), and to explore patterns of development. In the current chapter, we narrow the lens to examine how WTC is assembled in a multilingual communication event. Here, we offer a three-dimensional (3D) revision of the original pyramid model of WTC that provides a conceptualisation of assembly dynamics.

Developed by MacIntyre *et al.* (1998), and reviewed in Chapter 2, the pyramid model was described as heuristic, more of a starting point than a final product. In proposing the model, the authors noted that although WTC can be seen as a trait, or trait-like variable, perceptions of WTC do not need to be limited to long-term, regular patterns. Indeed, language development is characterised by patterns that fluctuate over time. Moreover, when the language of communication changes, shifts will affect the speaker's psychological reactions. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, many of the variables that contribute to WTC are directly or indirectly affected by language choice, and the attributes and experiences connecting to the different languages that are, or have the potential to be activated in a communication event.

WTC is also affected by language competence. Yet linguistic competence is far from the whole story. Complex emotions play a role in how competent and/or confident a speaker feels using a particular language. In a language other than the first language (L1), adult language competence can range from almost 0% to 100%. However, even when the speaker has high levels of competence, there can be a great deal of situational variability in WTC. People interact based on unique individual qualities, differing social roles, and group membership. Communication can be guided by the position or status that the interlocutor has within the community, and the roles that are taken in a particular communication episode. Roles – static and variable – bring expectations about how

individuals should behave with each other (how formal or informal they can be), how language can be used, and how communication should unfold.

The original pyramid model proposed two broad sets of motives – control and affiliation – and these continue to be relevant. Broadly defined, control motives include any way that one person might influence the actions of another: in a task-related situation where a teacher is instructing a student about how to structure a response, when someone is asking for assistance in a store, or when a person is trying to convince or persuade a conversation partner. Situations that activate control motives can involve cases in which there are status differences between the interlocutors, and where the language of the interlocutor with the greater status might be more likely to be chosen for communication. However, exceptions to this tendency are routinely made in the facilitation of efficient and effective communication. Affiliation across language groups is linked to the integrative motive (Gardner, 2010), which proposes that the fundamental goal of language learning is to engage and communicate with people of a different language group, and to take on desirable characteristics associated with the TL group through changes in identity (Claro, 2020). Affiliation and control motives are not mutually exclusive; in practice, they commonly co-occur.

As the discussion of ethics in Chapter 13 demonstrates, the lines between researcher and study participant can often become blurred. Researchers are required to evaluate ethical protocols based on considerations such as status, potential coercion and power differentials. However, as people get to know each other, additional qualities of the relationship emerge. Researchers and participants can begin to connect with each other as individuals, which engages additional – often unexplored – ethical issues that emerge in interpersonal interactions in the context of a developing friendship.

### **Additional Types of Motives: Self- and Group-Based Processes**

Since the pyramid model is framed with a focus on motivational processes – the *desire* to communicate with a particular person at a particular time – there is a need to account for additional influences, both enduring and transient, that have emerged in the second language (L2) motivation literature. Although there is no shortage of motivation concepts that could be added in a reframing of the model, research in second language acquisition (SLA) has shifted in recent years towards a focus on the self, and there is now a well-established literature. Aligning with this shift, Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivation Self System (L2MSS) model conceptualises the roots of language learning motivation as grounded within the self-system. Dörnyei's model features three concepts: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 language experience. A core tenet

of self-system theory is that learners are motivated to reduce the perceived discrepancy between their current and their ideal self (MacIntyre, 2022; Thorsen *et al.* 2018), with the ought-to L2 self having a primarily preventative function, reminding the learner of duties and obligations as a means of keeping them on track (Papi & Hiver, 2022; Papi *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, a third broad category of motive can be added to the motivational themes running through the pyramid model: motivation that is generated through processes of self-appraisal.

In relation to *communication*, and in particular a person's desire to communicate with another/other individuals, neuroscience provides additional insights into the role and functioning of the self. Damasio (2012) argues that the self is based on patterns of neural activity that create mental imagery. Mental images represent the results of physical reactions to ongoing experience integrated continuously with memories, a perspective with similarities to the concept of vibes from Epstein's (2003) Cognitive-Experiential Self Theory (CEST) (which we referred to in Chapter 2). When patterns of neural reactions occur repeatedly, they contribute to the simple 'emotions' and complex 'feelings' that become associated with personality and a person's sense of self. In addition, the nature of the processes suggests that self-perception can be difficult to change when it follows well-worn pathways. Images become collected into narratives that define our autobiographical sense of self, the self coming to mind 'in the form of images *relentlessly* telling a story' (Damasio, 2012: 216, emphasis added).

This self-narrative gives each person a unique perspective from which to interpret the world, and, when activated *in situ*, contributes to infusing events with meaning (see e.g. Henry, 2023, and Hiver *et al.*, 2020, for discussions of the role of autobiographical knowledge in shaping language learners' motivation and engagement). Because such imagery is continuously being built, it becomes complex and multi-layered. Constantly under construction, it is interpreted and re-interpreted in the context of the self as a moving picture. Yet, despite this quality, there is a sense of continuity and stability within the self that continues throughout development – *I am the same person even as I change over time* – combined with feelings of both ownership and agency (see Al-Hoorie, 2015). Indeed, as Funder (2010: 687) has observed, 'beneath all of the real, ideal, ought, and relational selves, it still seems that deep down, a single self must be running the whole show... (e)xternal appearances, attitudes, and behaviours change across situations and over time, but the one who does the experiencing is still in there someplace, watching (and perhaps directing) everything' (for further discussion, see MacIntyre, 2022).

One of the most prominent characteristics of self-related processes is how we interpret the world around us in ways that adapt to, defend and protect an autobiographical sense of continuity. Because we continuously adapt to new contexts and new situations – including those requiring the learning and use of a new language – the emergent qualities of the self become multi-layered, sometimes contradictory and extraordinarily complex. Everything

in memory and imagination has the potential to interact with a core sense of self and our motivational strivings. Over time, the self develops a long list of beliefs and biases, making it prone to contradictions and errors, as the many layers of self-related considerations interweave.

Rather than focusing on the self in isolation, the original pyramid model emphasised a social psychological perspective, bringing group-level processes into consideration (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). In WTC theory (and its associated measurement techniques), it is well established that different sized *groups* (from dyads to public speaking) in combination with differences in *affiliation qualities* (friends, acquaintances and strangers) influence an individual's WTC (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). The affiliative motivational components of the original model of WTC were linked to the concept of an integrative motive. In addition to processes related to identity development, this also includes the desire to encounter and to get to know representatives of another (language) group. In this respect, it is important to recognise that before we meet and communicate with specific TL speakers, these individuals can be perceived in an assigned role as representatives of another group. The process of individuation (Claro, 2020) describes how we transition from perceiving and interacting with another person as a representative of a group, to treating them as a unique individual. Thus, while the interlocutor may embody qualities ascribed to the group, they can equally be viewed as an exception to the norm. While group-related processes in the pyramid model would include language and ethnic group relations, they can also be expanded to include any situation in which people interact with each other based on group membership, or a role that a person is expected to play in a particular social situation. The literature on stereotyping is robust, describing how thinking about groups affects individual behaviour, including communication (see e.g. Chaffee *et al.*, 2020).

With this theoretical backdrop in place (see also Chapter 2), in the following sections we revisit the pyramid model and present a 3D reconceptualisation that, in accounting for assembly dynamics, incorporates self-theory and identifies 'corridors' through which WTC emerges in communication events. While the revised 3D conceptualisation, illustrated in Figure 11.1 (p. 262), retains the basic structure of the original pyramid model, it emphasises the complex inner workings of learner psychology in settings that can involve multilingual communication. We begin the account of this re-conceptualisation at the pyramid's apex, moving subsequently downwards, layer by layer.

## The Pyramid Revisited

### Layer 1: Communication Behaviour

The original pyramid model was based on the idea that 'authentic communication in a L2 can be seen as the result of a complex system

of interrelated variables' (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). Here, in revisiting the model, we propose a 3D revision that offers a fuller account of WTC by foregrounding decision-making in relation to the available languages in a user/learner's repertoire (i.e. the L1, and an L2 and third language [L3]). In the data generated in the study, and presented in the preceding chapters, we have seen the always potential impact of a contact language (or lingua franca) when communication takes place with a TL speaker. This can constitute a type of linguistic 'safety net' that reduces the risk when crossing the Rubicon and initiating communication, especially in day-to-day, task-related situations. Yet we should note that switching languages conveys its own meanings – implicating issues of competence and identity – which can affect a learner's self-perception and emotional reactions. As we have seen, code-switching can sometimes feel like a setback, and can be interpreted as reflecting a problem in language development. At the decisive moment when a language is used, a compromise might be necessary between promoting language development – talking in order to learn – and seeking communication efficiency in accomplishing a task. As we have seen, opportunities for TL development do not necessarily trump immediate communicative needs.

One of the bolder statements made by MacIntyre *et al.* (1998: 547) was that 'a proper objective for L2 education is to create WTC. A program that fails to produce students who are willing to use the language is simply a failed program'. If a medical school produced surgeons who refused to operate, or if graduates of a carpentry programme refused to build anything, those programmes would not be considered a resounding success. Given the breadth of language learning in numerous formal and informal contacts, a focus on engendering WTC among students helps ensure that a language is learned for its communicative purpose. However, changing interactional patterns in contemporary societies seem to be reducing opportunities for face-to-face conversation, and these must also be considered (see Chapter 12). With so many daily tasks being conducted online and through the facilitation of digital technologies, it is becoming increasingly important to take advantage of the opportunities to communicate afforded by real-time person-to-person social contacts, especially as a means of developing the fluency and comprehensibility necessary for smooth interaction (for example, see Derwing & Munro, 2013).

## Layer 2: Willingness to Communicate

In the original pyramid model, and following McCroskey and Baer (1985), WTC was conceptualised as a behavioural intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) to communicate if afforded an opportunity to do so. The definition of WTC in the 3D pyramid model can be modified to recognise the emergent quality of WTC as a choice among available languages. The revised definition views WTC as a readiness to enter into discourse at a

particular time, with a specific person or persons, using a *specific language or mix of languages* (see Chapter 10). While much of the original definition has been retained, the expansion of language choice is a significant addition.

One of the issues on which the original WTC pyramid was silent involves the conceptualisation of how the various influences are brought to bear. To fill this gap, MacIntyre *et al.* (2020) used CEST as a framework with which to model two ways of generating WTC, on the basis of ‘thinking fast and slow’ (see Kahneman, 2011). In CEST, this involves the ‘experiential’ and the ‘rational’ systems. On the one hand, much of the research on WTC from a trait-like perspective examines the conceptualisation of WTC as a stable, trait-like tendency. This pattern is reflected in the notion of ‘thinking slow’. The dynamic approach to studying WTC fluctuations during a communication episode emphasises ‘thinking fast’. As Epstein *et al.* (1996: 39) describe it, thinking fast involves the activation of the experiential system, and as ‘automatic, preconscious, holistic, associationistic, primarily non-verbal, and intimately associated with affect’. These are the rapid judgements made on the fly, as a learner becomes a speaker and vice versa. In contrast, the slower, rational system operates at the ‘conscious level and is intentional, analytic, primarily verbal, and relatively affect free’. These are the WTC judgements a speaker makes when they have time to think, to weigh options, to describe themselves and to determine a deliberate course of action.

The experiential system is used heuristically to make snap decisions, such as when asked a question in a store or on the street. In such a situation, a response is immediately required: Do I respond?; What do I have to say?; and, assuming that I know what to say, Do I begin in the L1, L2 or L3? Decisions such as these need to be made very quickly – in less than a second or two – and are based on ‘thinking fast’. The quickest forms of thinking use exemplars that spring to mind because they are recent, memorable or because they focus on similar past instances that share key attributes with the current context. As MacIntyre *et al.* (2020) have observed:

The experiential system does not require standards of logic in decision making because it is based on experience and its conclusions are self-evident. Applied to WTC, the experiential system can return a judgement quickly, one that cannot be questioned by logic, because if a person feels good about talking or does not feel like talking at the moment, that is the end of the decision-making process. Epstein refers to these experiential judgements as ‘vibes’ – affective reactions based on rapidly combining past experiences with current thinking and anticipated events. This process operates largely outside of the person’s conscious awareness. (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2020: 447)

When presented with an opportunity to communicate that requires an immediate response, the individual relies on the emotional tenor of their reaction to the situation in deciding whether to engage. Beyond the notion of language

anxiety, emotions were not foregrounded in previous descriptions of WTC. However, and as demonstrated in the participants' stories, the full range of positive and negative emotions are relevant when considering how vibes can affect WTC. While positive emotions, such as interest, pride and joy will tend to foster deeper engagement (Fredrickson, 2013), negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, sadness, shame and embarrassment can quickly lower WTC and lead to avoidance (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). In most situations, complex emotional reactions will integrate both positive and negative emotions continuously, second by second, producing WTC that is subject to change at any moment. This is thinking fast, using the self-evident, feelings-based, experiential system. Just as we could see numerous examples of rational planning (stories revealing how participants would often prepare in advance of an anticipated communication event), we could also see plentiful examples of thinking fast, where decision-making took place on the spur of the moment.

Conceptualised as part of the 3D pyramid model, ever-changing situational demands are like bolts of energy coursing through the pyramid structure, energising relevant components which are brought to bear in an exceptionally short time. Thinking fast involves the nearly instantaneous assimilation of the relevant parts of the boxes shown in the pyramid image. This can happen rapidly because the decision follows familiar, well-worn pathways. This is not a slow, deliberative process, but a rapid unconscious integration of the most salient influences, some of which can be pushing or pulling in opposing directions (towards or away from talking, and from the Lx to the Ly). The emergent result, in CEST terms, is a pulse of energy from a reaction – a relatively good or bad vibe – about initiating communication, and the language in which communication could take place. Then, as one moment transitions into the next, another pulse courses through the structure, integrating in real time what is happening at that instant with the lingering vibes from previous moments, all of which energise the WTC system. This is the beating heart of communication inside the model.

The rational system operates in parallel with the experiential system. Both are nested subsystems of a larger 'whole person' system, with the autobiographical sense of self at its core. If a person is asked to explain or to justify being willing or unwilling to communicate, a slower, rational process can provide such a rationale. As Epstein (2003: 161–162) observes, 'seeking to understand their behaviour, [people] usually succeed in finding an acceptable explanation. Insofar as they can manage it without too seriously violating reality considerations, they will also find the most emotionally satisfying explanation possible'. In this way, the experiential and rational systems not only co-exist, but depend on each other. Even if WTC resulting from the fast and slow systems might diverge, the systems inform each other. As recent research suggests, the rational system may produce lower levels of WTC than more rapidly made decisions. This is because WTC based in the rational system takes

into account different considerations, with different rules for combining underlying influences (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2020).

Whether applied in multilingual community contexts or in classrooms where translanguaging practices are encouraged (Gyllstad *et al.*, 2022), in the remodelled 3D pyramid language choice and code-switching are key elements of the decision-making that underpins WTC. Where the individuals involved can communicate in more than a single shared language, it makes sense that some negotiation will take place, to settle on the language to use, or the mix of languages that can support communication.

In a multilingual setting, language use is situationally determined, often with several viable options co-existing. As we could see in many of the participants' stories about communication events, choices about language use were not always determined in advance of an interaction. Particularly noticeable during periods of changing WTC, decisions about the language of communication – 'do I start in Swedish and see if it works, or do I choose from the start to speak in English' – arise because the use of Swedish or English implicates different layers and boxes of the pyramid. In situations when a communication event was not approached with a predetermined choice of language, or when a need to switch codes during an interaction could arise, we understand this to be what Dewaele (2001) has described as being in *multilingual mode*.

To reiterate an idea introduced in Chapter 3, Grosjean's (2001) *language mode theory*, as adapted by Dewaele (2001), suggests that in different communicative situations, a language learner can find themselves at varying points along a continuum that represents, at one end, full monolingual mode (when interacting with another L1 speaker), and at the other end, full multilingual mode (when interacting with another person who speaks the TL, a contact language or lingua franca, and perhaps also the learner's L1). In situations when a person finds themselves towards the multilingual end of the continuum, decision-making can be highly complex. As Grosjean (2015: 580) explains, the decision 'is governed by a number of factors: the interlocutors involved, the situation of the interaction, the content of the discourse and the function of the interaction'. Like WTC, language choice is a complex phenomenon, the operation of which 'only becomes apparent when it breaks down' (Grosjean, 2015: 580).

Drawing on language mode theory, we have argued that in multilingual situations, WTC is not simply an intention to speak or to remain silent, but 'is part of the assembly of the situation and involves assessment of the "fit" of a particular language in a particular interactional context' (Henry *et al.*, 2021a). In this type of setting, we have suggested that WTC in each language fluctuates, and that with greater capacity to use each language comes greater flexibility in language choice in interlocutor interactions. This sense of readiness – feeling relatively willing or unwilling to communicate in the  $L_x$  or the  $L_y$  – is the 'vibe' resulting from interactions at the lower layers of the pyramid.

## Situational influences

### *Box 3: Desire to Communicate with a Specific Person*

The desire to communicate with a specific person is a situational consideration. There are myriad reasons to talk to another individual, and even more things potentially to be said. Throughout the data, we saw instances in participants' stories of task/control motives in daily interactions, as well as occasions where relationships were formed and maintained through effective communication. As we have indicated, the original pyramid model divided motives to speak with another person into affiliation and control/task motivation, both of which concern the relationship between interlocutors. Issues related to task motives and control (broadly defined) may be relevant in multilingual situations where there is a desire to manage social distance, either to reduce it through affiliation or to increase the perceived distance between groups (e.g. Gudykunst, 2004).

The addition of self-related motives to the pyramid adds explanatory power, as communicators deal with issues of identity, self-esteem and self-presentation (including promotion and protection functions; Papi & Teimouri, 2012). As we suggested in Chapter 2, whenever a learner 'crosses the Rubicon' to initiate speaking, they are risking potential embarrassment. This can threaten a positive view of self, activating self-protective processes to prevent damage to self-esteem. Speaking is a central pathway to self-expression and positive affiliation. While talk is necessary to meet many of the goals of daily life, speaking can also bring the risk of negative self-appraisal.

### *Box 4: State Communicative Self-Confidence*

The concept of self-confidence as used in the original pyramid model included two key factors: a lack of anxiety and the perception of communication competence. In line with the proliferation of research into language learning emotions (Dewaele, 2021) the revised model proposes that, working together and serving different functions, the combination of positive and negative emotions affect state self-confidence. As MacIntyre (2007) has noted, the tension between driving and restraining forces that promote or hinder communication, and the complexity of the emotional experience, are part of that process. Importantly, Khajavi *et al.* (2021) have shown that fluctuations in WTC are more strongly and consistently correlated with enjoyment, than with anxiety. That is, we can observe that learners who are enjoying a situation are likely to experience elevated WTC. In some cases, learners may be willing to communicate despite high anxiety. This can be because they have a reason to say something to a specific person. They may enjoy the sense of affiliation or need to say something to exert control. In the case where affiliation motives are most active, enjoyment can facilitate the use of underdeveloped language skills. This a phenomenon which we could observe in stories told

by several of the participants, where they could surprise and even surpass themselves in speaking Swedish in a situation that was fun or enjoyable.

Using the CEST theory described earlier in this chapter, ‘vibes’ emerging from unconscious processing can have a substantial impact on state self-confidence. The rapid assessment of the situation resonates with the idea of appraisal from the stress literature (Lazarus, 2003). Primary and secondary appraisal processes rapidly integrate the answers to two questions: ‘What is at stake in the situation?’ and ‘Do I have resources to cope with it?’. In our view, the communication event takes the place of the potential stressor in Lazarus’s model, prompting a similar rapid appraisal process. This unconscious processing results in the relatively higher or lower state of self-confidence, which may facilitate or inhibit WTC.

In summary, the transient, situation-specific upper layers of the 3D pyramid model indicate that there is a rapidly changing, constantly fluctuating level of WTC. WTC results most directly from the desire to communicate with a specific person. This desire is based on affiliation, control and self-preservation motives that – in combination with state self-confidence – result from the rapid integration of learner-internal and social-contextual influences at an unconscious level. While we might view each WTC occasion as an independent occurrence, the cumulative effects of these processes influence the lower layers of the pyramid. In CEST terms, the rational process integrates the repeated results of the experiential process, leading to adjustments in motivational propensities, and the affective and cognitive contexts in which the learner’s psychology operates. Tendencies and traits can be generalised from repeated occurrences as the individual notices that their own probabilities of communicating change over time, and with language development. Whereas these processes can be slow to change, there can also be sudden realignments of the influences underlying WTC (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b).

## Enduring influences

### *Box 5: Interpersonal Motivation*

As we move down the pyramid, the concepts we encounter have broad reach beyond specific communication situations. Interpersonal motivations reflect all the reasons why people interact with others. A complete list of motives is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, as we previously made clear, in the original pyramid model these influences were grouped into two broad categories: affiliation and control. Control motives are often found in ‘hierarchical, interpersonal, task related situations’ (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998: 550). In these situations, social roles can affect WTC. With affiliation motives, the goal is to establish a relationship that is prompted by the personal characteristics of the interlocutor – situations in which people establish

acquaintanceships. The role of interpersonal motivation will be closely linked to other variables in the model, including personality and intergroup climate.

An important way in which interpersonal motivation can be extended is to consider the social roles of individuals, for example, teachers and students. Teachers have been found to have a significant impact on WTC among their students (Zarrinabadi, 2014). The interpersonal role of the teacher occupies something of an in-between space. The teacher–student relationship is not simply role-based, or transactional. Nor is it a friendship. Rather, elements of both can be present (Henry & Thorsen, 2018). As Henry and Thorsen (2021) have shown, the interaction between teacher and student can encourage or discourage communication beyond what is necessary or desirable for classroom instruction. Similarly, as illustrated in the many interpersonal interactions described in the participants’ stories, interpersonal motivation can be the factor having the greatest influence in shaping WTC.

#### ***Box 6: Intergroup Motivation***

Whereas interpersonal motivation is associated with the specific individuals involved, intergroup motivation derives from their membership of salient groups. With respect to language, individuals can be treated as representatives of the groups to which they belong, including nationalities and regional and ethnic groups. However, intergroup processes can also reflect other types of group membership (e.g. gendered roles, age-related groupings, religious communities and many others). Communication is a powerful way in which people maintain and reinforce their social positions, especially where there is a power imbalance among groups. Control motives highlight issues related to relative group positions within the social strata. Intergroup motivation for communication is based on a desire to maintain rapport with members of another group on the basis of group membership. As MacIntyre *et al.* (1998: 551) originally observed ‘it seems a firm conclusion that the desire to affiliate with people who use another language, and to participate in another culture, has a powerful influence on language learning and communication behaviour’. As we have seen in abundance in the participants’ stories, this too was a powerful force shaping WTC.

#### ***Box 7: L2 Self-Confidence***

The original pyramid model subsumed language competence into an affective variable: L2 self-confidence. This captures the relationship between the learner and the language. Although the learner’s current state of self-confidence can fluctuate, L2 self-confidence is defined as a more enduring reflection of language development over a longer time frame. The major components followed Clément’s (1986) higher order conceptualisation of a cognitive component (judgement of one’s L2

skills) and an affective component (lack of anxiety). The concepts of anxiety and competence are strongly linked. One of the early observations made by McCroskey and Richmond (1991) was that a person's perception of confidence is likely to matter more for WTC than their actual level of competence. Research has yet to systematically investigate the role of positive facilitating emotions in the perception of language self-confidence. The arousal of positive emotions (such as joy or pride) is likely to have a cascading effect on the development of WTC.

#### **Box 8: Intergroup Attitudes**

The original pyramid model featured a prominent role for intergroup attitudes. There can be a tension between the desire to affiliate with members of the new group, and a fear of losing one's original cultural identity and language. This conflict can be linked to the majority or minority status of the language groups involved. In a migration context, the individual can feel that their heritage is at risk if they fully integrate into the new language community. In the case of visible minorities, this might not be as much of a concern as prejudice or discrimination targeting specific groups. Learners with a positive attitude are likely to find the language more enjoyable, since the development of linguistic competence is perceived as interesting and challenging.

#### **Box 9: Social Situation**

In the construction of the original model, the social situation was a composite category. Grounded in the idea that experience in one situation may not be automatically transferred to another, and helping to account for significant variability in levels of WTC (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991), it relates to the *types* of places in which *certain activities* are typical. This would include, for example, speaking on the telephone, a teacher giving a lecture in the classroom, informally chatting with friends or going shopping for groceries. The original pyramid model identified five types of factors relevant to communication in different social settings: the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic and the channel of communication. These categories implicate different processes, levels of intimacy and knowledge, and power relationships. WTC theorising holds that variations in the *type* of event are likely to influence the *manner* in which the event is approached. Although these variations relate to contexts, it is important to emphasise that it is the person's anticipation of and response to *patterned variation* that is central to the conceptualisation of the social situation in the pyramid model. Quoting Preston (1989: 134), MacIntyre *et al.* (1998: 554) made clear that these anticipated situations become 'cognitively real elements of social structure'. Specifically, the regularity with which a person encounters particular types of social situations can generate schema-like representations of how communication events are likely to unfold.

Over time, this can produce sets of *expectations* for communication behaviour in varying types of social interaction.

**Box 10: Communicative Competence**

The origins of self-confidence (box 7) rest on the dimensions of communicative competence in box 10. In our revised 3D model, we retain the original WTC pyramid's description of communicative competence based on Hymes (1972). The first dimension is linguistic competence, which reflects knowledge of the elements of communication, grammar, syntax and linguistic forms. The second dimension is discourse competence. This refers to the ability to organise words and structures in ways that make sense. The third dimension, interactional competence, reflects the ability to accomplish tasks with speech acts. Sociocultural competence involves knowledge of how to express oneself appropriately within a given social and cultural context. The fifth type of competence is strategic competence. This refers to the verbal or non-verbal devices that allow a speaker to compensate for deficiencies in spoken language. Although language development was not in focus in the current project, we could see from the interview data how the various dimensions of communicative competence develop differently, how trajectories were often nonlinear and how different social situations demanded different competencies. Thus, as a function of the nature of the communication involved, the makeup of communicative competence is likely to differ *between* communication episodes and *within* communication events.

**Boxes 11 and 12 (combined): Enduring Foundations**

In the original pyramid design, the two most enduring influences are intergroup climate and learner personality. In our revised conceptualisation (see Figure 11.1) we have combined them into a single foundational layer (boxes 11 and 12). The elements at the base of the pyramid model are enduring, and change slowly. They set the base upon which the communication system rests. It can be argued that a substantial portion of the groundwork for both these categories is established before an individual is born. Intergroup climate reflects the relationships between culture/language groups (which can span generations). Equally, a substantial portion of personality is considered heritable (Polderman *et al.*, 2015). The intergroup climate sets the context for intergroup motivation in which people interact with each other based on group memberships (see box 6). While personality may be synonymous with the concept of traits, processes involved in personality development help establish individual preferences in language learning.

A major addition in the revised 3D model is the incorporation of self-related processes in the personality box. As MacIntyre (2022) has observed, a plethora of concepts are associated with the self. Adding

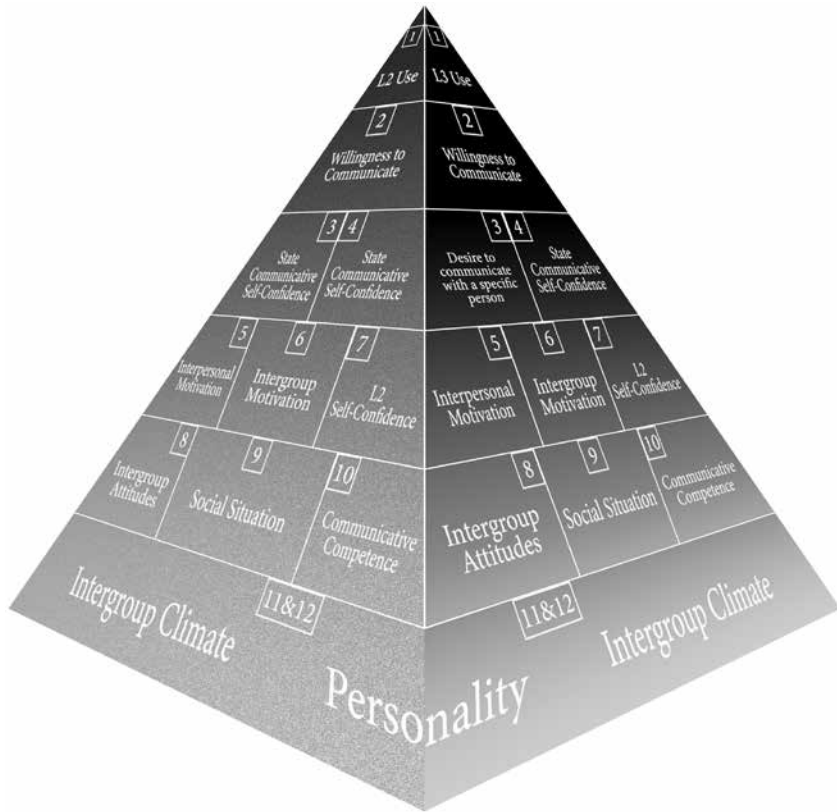
the concept of self to personality provides a way to integrate both broad and narrow traits (e.g. extraversion-introversion and WTC) with other processes of self-perception and self-evaluation. As Marcus and Wurf (1987: 301) have made clear, the self is a ‘multi-dimensional, multifaceted dynamic structure that is systematically implicated in all aspects of social information processing’ and is implicated in virtually everything we do in the social realm. In our own field, Dewaele (2012) has shown that L2 and L3 use implicate personality in different ways. He has provided evidence of how the expression of personality and the concept of self can sometimes change, depending on the language being used.

With respect to intergroup climate, an additional revision incorporated in the 3D model requires us to think about groups beyond those defined by language or culture. The experience of the participants in the present study suggests that in many situations, the most salient intergroup issue for communication might not be a person’s native language group, but rather their status as migrants, newcomers and emerging TL speakers. As we examine the 3D model, additional languages, and the language choices made within the communication mix, make group identities far more fluid and group issues far more complex.

### A 3D Approach

The challenge of accounting for WTC in a context where, in many situations, a contact language (L2 English) and a TL (L3 Swedish) could both offer communication options provided us with the impetus to extend the original pyramid model (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). Modelling the pyramid in three dimensions not only offered a means of accounting for WTC in a multilingual context; it also provided an opportunity to conceptualise the complex contributions of framework elements in the assembly of WTC in a nuanced and more context-sensitive manner. As will be recalled from Chapter 2, in the papers that presaged and then introduced the pyramid model (respectively, MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998), MacIntyre and his colleagues argued that L2 WTC is not simply a transfer of L1 WTC. Communicating in another language dramatically changes the psychological and social contexts of language use, and the dynamic construction of WTC *in situ*. Taking a step further, it is the dynamic assembly of WTC in multilingual contexts that is captured in the 3D model.

If we look at the image in Figure 11.1 (and the colour version on the front cover of this book), we can see the pyramid has a uniform base (a light grey shade in Figure 11.1, and a turquoise colour on the front cover image). However, as we ascend upwards, a divergence in shade/colour emerges on each face. At the pyramid’s apex, the shade/colour is completely different (contrasting shades of grey in Figure 11.1, and blue and green on the cover image). These changes in shading/colour are intended to illustrate how the assembly of WTC can change in a communication event



**Figure 11.1** A 3D model of the WTC pyramid

where code-switching has the potential to occur. While factors at the base layer might not change in noticeable ways (we would not expect personality or intergroup attitudes to demonstrate much situational variability), as we move up the pyramid, factors at each ascending level are more likely to fluctuate when a code switch is anticipated (box 1). In particular, we can see how the variables in Layers III and IV (boxes 3 to 7) are likely to change significantly when a shift from speaking one language to speaking another language is precipitated. Equally, while the 3D model can represent *in situ* dynamics, we can also see how it can reflect changes taking place in the factors underpinning the construction of WTC over longer timescales (see Chapter 2 for a discussion).

### **Conceptualising WTC From a 3D Perspective: The Emergence of WTC Through Corridors Connecting LEFT- and RIGHT-Side Variables**

Having presented an overview of the 3D conceptualisation, we now offer a more detailed examination of the inner workings of the revised

pyramid. To start this discussion, we begin by focusing on *pathways*. First, let us return to the original, two-dimensional (2D) model. In the triangular representation of the 12 interconnected variables, we suggest that there are two pathways through which WTC generally emerges: a LEFT-side pathway and a RIGHT-side pathway. Along the LEFT-side pathway, communication readiness is shaped by factors underlying the desire to communicate with a specific person, or a representative of a particular group. Here, intergroup-related factors have a strong influence on the emergence of WTC. Along the RIGHT-side pathway, communication readiness is shaped by factors that relate to the individual, and to levels of confidence.

Let us now trace these pathways. Moving up the LEFT-side pathway, particular variables are implicated. Here, affiliation is central. Intergroup climate [box 11] feeds into intergroup attitudes [box 8], which in turn feeds into interpersonal attitudes and motivations [box 5]. Moving up the RIGHT-side pathway, personality helps to form the basis for ways of developing communitive competence [box 10]. It shapes how a person acts and reacts across situations in which a given language is activated. Personality – and in particular how past experiences are integrated and understood within the self – feeds into the assembly processes reflected in trait-like self-confidence [box 7], and the specific instance of state communicative self-confidence [box 4].

In multilingual situations where more than one L2 can be employed – modelled in the 3D pyramid as the visible and conjoining lateral faces – communication complexity increases exponentially. In situations where code-switching can occur, it becomes necessary to consider interactions between factors relating to the pyramid's L2 *and* L3 faces. This means that we need to think beyond 'pathways' (as in the 2D representation). In the 3D conceptualisation, the emergence of WTC can be understood as taking place through *corridors* that are located within the pyramid (and which can connect L2- and L3-focused factors). For example, when the L2 and the L3 can both be used during a communication episode, and in situations where code-switching is anticipated, the individual can be in 'multilingual mode' (Dewaele, 2001). Even if there may be preferences for communication in one of two (or more) possible languages, the notion of a 'pathway' does not adequately capture the *latent influence* of the other, temporarily deactivated language. Capturing this latent influence, the metaphor of an *internal corridor* offers a better way of explaining the complex manner in which WTC is assembled in multilingual communication events.

Thus, paralleling the LEFT- and RIGHT-side pathways of the 2D representation, the 3D pyramid contains LEFT- and RIGHT-side *corridors*. In the multilingual contexts which the 3D conceptualisation seeks to reflect, LEFT- and RIGHT-side corridors become complexly interconnected. Although we would not expect changes to readily occur in the

pyramid's lowest layers (intergroup climate and personality), with each ascending level there is greater susceptibility to change as the factors become more variable. To visualise this increasing degree of complexity – illustrated in Figure 11.1 by the consistently ascending darker shading on both of the pyramid's lateral faces – we might think of the bottom layers as made of stone, and the top layers as consisting of shifting sand.

With the development of communication experiences, and as a result of situational influences, these corridors can have differential effects in shaping patterns of WTC in contexts where communication can take place in more than one language. That is, changes can take place in the ways in which the upper and lower levels of the pyramid are connected. An alteration in one corridor can have an influence on the shape of other corridors. In the sections that follow, we examine how, in the multilingual 3D conceptualisation of WTC that we propose, WTC emerges through differently constructed corridors.

### **An Application of the 3D Pyramid: Examples of WTC Emerging Through Corridors Linking LEFT- and RIGHT-Side Variables**

The notion of a pyramid with internal corridors can be valuable in understanding how WTC is an emergent property of complex interactions among factors connecting to a communication event. Reviewing the participants' stories, we could see how in some situations WTC is primarily influenced by *interpersonal* factors – attitudes and motivations – which underlie the desire to communicate 'at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2' or *mix of languages* (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998: 547; see also Chapter 10). In such cases, we suggest that WTC emerges through corridors that primarily link LEFT-side variables. Equally, we can see how, in other situations, WTC is shaped by *personality-related* factors. These feed into perceptions of communicative competence, which in turn feed into self-confidence and state communicative self-confidence. Here, we suggest, WTC emerges through corridors that primarily link RIGHT-side variables.

To illustrate the function of these corridors in shaping WTC situationally – in specific communication events – we will look at four stories told by Maria, one of the participants who transitioned to mostly communicating in Swedish in community contexts during the research period (see Chapter 6). Sensitive to the scrutiny of others, and fearful of language-based rejection (Lou & Noels, 2019), Maria was initially reluctant to communicate in Swedish in situations beyond the classroom. Instead, she chose to carry out conversations in English. In the first of two stories that now follow, we can see how influences on communication behaviour run through corridors that primarily link LEFT-side variables, and how Maria's WTC is shaped by interpersonal attitudes and motivations. In a second pair of stories, we see how influences run through corridors that primarily link

RIGHT-side variables, and how WTC is shaped by personality-related factors which feed into perceptions of competence and self-confidence.

### Corridors linking LEFT-side variables

The first story that we will look at concerns a career consultation. In this story, Maria had been to a meeting with a study counsellor. In contrast to previous occasions, when her husband had assumed the role of a language broker, on this occasion Maria had taken charge, and had spoken with the adviser on her own. After telling her story, Maria reflected on the fact that she had chosen to communicate in Swedish:

**‘Meeting the study adviser’ (Interview 6: 12 02 2020; see also Story Four: p. 116)**

M: Why? I wanted to show her that I am not shy. I can speak with people.

A: Is that sort of important for you as well?

M: Especially for educated people.

A: Mmm.

M: She said so. She said educated people are more, ehm, willing to learn language quickly.

A: Mmm. Do you feel that there is, that people expect that of you? Because you are an educated person?

M: Maybe.

A: Because you have a master’s degree?

M: Mmm.

A: You have a high level of education, that people expect? Do you feel that since you’ve arrived? That your, for example, just take an example, your husband’s family, do you feel that they expect you to be good at Swedish? Expect you to learn quickly?

M: Yes [laughs]. Because my husband told them before, I chose my wife because she is *clever* [laughs].

A: Mmm.

M: He knows that. And they also know this.

A: Mmm. Is that, does that, those expectations, does that create pressure? Or maybe it motivates you?

M: Maybe both.

A: How do you deal with?

M: I am not pressured. But it’s more kind of, motivation.

A: Mmm. Do you think that when you meet people outside who know, like for example this *study adviser*, who know about your background, know you have a master’s degree, does that also sort of make you feel, ‘OK, I need to show, I need to prove that I’m intelligent’?

M: Yes. Of course.

A: Yes. Mmm.

M: She told me also, you have an opportunity to work, such as a *teacher*. But I told her, I don't want to work as a teacher. I don't like that. But she told me *You have an opportunity to proceed to a higher level. Maybe a school counsellor. Because I have studied for a long time.*

A: *Yes. You have studied for a long time, and you have a master's degree. You have studied psychology and management, and you have many opportunities I would think.*

In the second story, we see another example of how WTC is shaped by affiliation motives. Here, when Maria is at home on her own, sitting in her garden on a warm spring day, a neighbour passes by, and a conversation takes place:

**'At home on the deck' (Interview 8: 07 04 2020)**

M: *I was at home sitting in the garden, and someone came here. He was old. And he said to me, 'Oh, how nice'. Because our garden is [very nice]. And he asked me, 'Are you an architect?'*

A: OK.

M: [laughing] *Because my husband has made the garden really nice.*

A: *Mmm.*

M: *So, well I said to him, 'No, my husband did it'. And he asked me about, if, ehm I don't know what the name of this is. Mmm it's like wood. That is green.*

A: *Yeah, I know, a deck.*

M: *A deck.*

A: *Yeah, yes.*

M: *Yes, and I said to him that 'We bought it at IKEA'. And I said to him that 'We can help you if you like', because he lives near us. And he has a garden.*

A: *Mmm. And this took place in Swedish?*

M: *Yes.*

A: *Without any problem?*

M: *Yes.*

In both these interactions, we can see how Maria's willingness to communicate in Swedish is mostly impacted by interpersonal factors. Wanting to communicate with another person is shaped by desires to reduce social distance through affiliation, and to achieve positive self-presentation. We can see how WTC is influenced by a desire to establish a relationship that is prompted by the characteristics and status of the interlocutor. Emerging through corridors that primarily link LEFT-side variables, WTC is

shaped by intergroup attitudes [box 8], which feed into motivation [box 5], and the desire to communicate with a particular person [box 3].

With the study adviser, choosing to communicate in Swedish (rather than in English or through her husband's brokering), Maria seeks to position herself as an educated person with the capacity to interact in Swedish (even if at this stage she has only been in Sweden for nine or so months). Her desire for affiliation is important for the interaction. As we see later, the adviser suggests that Maria could study to become a teacher. Having established a degree of affiliation with the adviser, it becomes easier for Maria to make clear that teaching is not an attractive option (a move that might have been more difficult if affiliation had not been established).

In the second story, we see another example of how WTC is shaped by affiliation motives. Here, when the neighbour passes by and stops to comment on her garden, it appears from Maria's story that it is she (as much as the older man) who drives the interaction. Even when the conversation moves into semantically challenging territory – garden landscaping not being a topic area where Maria's vocabulary is extensive – her motivation in wanting to connect with a neighbour means that she persists with Swedish, and the interaction continues beyond what might otherwise be necessary (i.e. a friendly response to a well-intentioned remark).

### Corridors linking RIGHT-side variables

In each of the two preceding communication events, a desire to communicate with a specific person [box 3] was underpinned by interpersonal motivation [box 5] and intergroup attitudes [box 8]. In both communication events, the other available language (English) is a latent but unused resource. In the next two stories, we see how WTC is shaped in a different way. Here, WTC emerges through corridors that primarily link RIGHT-side variables. In these corridors, the influencing factors are communicative competence [box 10], L2 self-confidence [box 7] and state communicative self-confidence [box 4]. Occurring just before the pandemic and the changes in patterns of social behaviour that followed in its wake, in the first story Maria describes a visit she received from a religious group. In the second story, which is from the final interview at the end of the research period, Maria describes a series of driving tests, and how she experienced differences in WTC on these occasions:

#### 'A visit from church members' (Interview 7: 18 03 2020)

M: *I want to talk about something that happened to me on the last day of the national test. Two people came to my door. I was alone at home. They wanted to explain about religion.*

A: *Aha, I understand*

M: *Ah. Maybe it has.* It has happened with you maybe, before?

A: Yes

M: I am new in Sweden, so maybe they are visiting on people new in Sweden. They explained to me about a specific religion. So they, they were two persons. And I, they explain for me, and they talk about religion. But I understand. I understood everything. But I told them, *I said, my husband is more interested in religion, so they should come back again. But they talked more. And they played, showed me, a short video about religion. In Arabic. And they asked me where I came from. And then they showed me a video in the [regional] accent [laughs].*

A: OK.

M: Mm. So I also speak with them. Only in Swedish. But I told them I am new in Sweden. And don't speak much. They understood.

A: Mmm, yes.

M: That was it.

A: Which religion was it? Was it Islam or, or Christianity?

M: No Christian, Christian.

A: Christian. OK.

M: They were, they were also spreading flyers. They give me one.

A: Yes. So how long did the conversation last?

M: Umm. About ten minutes.

A: OK. Were you, and the whole time you did it in Swedish?

M: Yes. They were speaking *easy Swedish*.

A: Yes. Were you surprised? That you could do it?

M: [Laughs] It was the last day. I did *the national test*. So I was like comfortable. I felt like I wasn't shy. It was OK.

A: And this was before the test, or after the test?

M: After.

A: After. And the test went very well for you?

M: Yes.

#### 'A driving test' (Interview 10: 10 06 2020)

A: *Now you don't speak much English, I suspect.*

M: *No. I don't speak much.*

A: *It's Swedish.*

M: *Now, yes.*

A: *Almost always?*

M: *Yes. I focus on Swedish.*

A: *Mmm. But are there situations when you don't speak Swedish?*

M: *No. I speak Swedish with everybody.*

A: *Everybody? There are no situations when you don't speak Swedish?*

- M: No. Well, I had a situation when I was going to take my driving test. When I did the test the first time, he talked a lot with me. And he asked me about school, and what I do. And he said to me, 'You are really smart. You speak really well'. But the third time [laughing] there was a woman. And I felt really stressed. So I spoke in English.
- A: OK. That's interesting.
- M: Yes.
- A: Yes. That was interesting. So, on the third time, on the first time it was a man?
- M: Yes.
- A: And it was here in [place]?
- M: Yes.
- A: And then on the second time it was a man, but that time it was in [other place]?
- M: Yes. The second time also it was very good. And he also said to me that you speak very well. And we spoke also. A lot about life.
- A: Mmm, mmm. So how was it the third time? When you had a woman?
- M: I don't really know. Maybe it was because she was Arabic.
- A: So can you, this is very interesting for me, can you describe the whole thing, the whole situation?
- M: Yes. Well, she didn't say that she was Arabic. But I thought she was an Arab because I could see her family name. But she was not like. It was not the same as it was when I did it the first and second times. I don't know. Maybe it was because she was a woman [laughing].
- A: It could be that too.
- M: But I don't know.
- A: But you were stressed?
- M: Because I made a mistake. I asked her, and she said to me 'Just follow the instructions'. And then she said to me, 'Do you want you and me to speak English or Swedish?'. So I became stressed. And I said to her, 'Yes. In English'.
- A: Mmm. But the other times, the first time and the second time, did they ask you whether you wanted to do it in Swedish or in English?
- M: No. No.
- A: They just did it directly in Swedish?
- M: Yes. And I told them that I had only been in Sweden for less than a year, so sometimes I don't understand. And they said to me, 'We will speak clearly'. And I understood everything.
- A: Yes. That was very interesting. Not interesting that you were stressed. That was sad. But interesting that you can be in the same situation, but that you use different languages.

M: *Yes. But on the first occasions, I didn't feel that I was stressed. I drove just as I do on normal days.*

As we can tell from the story about the visit from the religious group, Maria is not interested in the content of communication. Nor, as clearly implied, is she interested in the invitation for further interaction. In an attempted brush-off, Maria suggests that the visitors should return later when her husband will be at home: 'my husband is more interested in religion, so they should come back again'. However, this is not successful, and Maria is coerced (it would seem) into watching a video and accepting some brochures. Explaining how the visit continued for some 10 minutes, Maria described how the conversation took place in Swedish. While this was facilitated by her interlocutors' accommodations – 'they were speaking *easy Swedish*' – Maria also explained how the visit took place immediately after a high-stakes language proficiency test, where she felt that she had done well. This meant that when entering into communication with the people from the religious group (with whom she had little desire for affiliation), she felt confident and did not experience the apprehension often associated with out-of-class communication in Swedish at this time: 'I did the national test. So I was like comfortable. I felt like I wasn't shy. It was OK'.

In the second story of this pair, we can also see how switches in communication code took place, and how Maria shifts from Swedish to English. On Maria's first and second attempts at passing the driving test, accommodations made by the examiners enabled her to speak Swedish. This, we can reasonably surmise, meant that she was able to remain calm and to drive 'just as I do on normal days'. At this point in the research period, Maria had developed good communication skills. Situations when she described communicating in English were rare. However, when it came to the third test, circumstances were different. Following a driving error, and Maria's attempt to initiate communication in Swedish, the examiner tells her to 'just follow the instructions'. This rebuff is followed by another, when the examiner asks Maria whether she wants them 'to speak English or Swedish?'. Maria describes how she lost confidence, and, in this stressful situation, opted to communicate in English. Here we see how a challenge to perceived communicative competence [box 10] has a negative influence on L2 self-confidence [box 7] and on state communicative self-confidence [box 4].

In contrast to the examples of the emergence of WTC through LEFT-side corridors (in the context of interpersonal relationships), the examples examined here show how Maria's willingness to communicate in Swedish is assembled in corridors linking RIGHT-side variables. In these examples, group membership and ascribed social roles are emphasised (i.e. the representatives from the religious group, and the male and female driving examiners). Here, perceptions of communicative

competence [box 10], L2 self-confidence [box 7] and state communicative self-confidence [box 4] are linked together in a different set of corridors through which WTC emerges.

The story told about the driving test also sheds light on the role of the social situation [box 9], and the latent influence of the other language. Going into this, her third driving test, Maria's previous experiences create expectations as to how events are likely to unfold. Here, it is important to once again recall that box 9 of the pyramid model refers to the person's anticipation of and response to *patterned variation* in social situations, and that accumulated experiences produce schema-like representations of how an event is expected to unfold. At the beginning of the story, we can understand how WTC emerges in a corridor close to the pyramid's L3 (Swedish) face. However, the combination of a new examiner (with a different approach and communication preferences), together with Maria's error, has the effect that the *in-situ* assembly of WTC takes a different form. Following the examiner's invitation to switch codes, 'Do you want you and me to speak English or Swedish?' the corridor through which WTC is shaped changes form. Now, WTC is channelled through a corridor located close to the pyramid's L2 (English) face. In both cases, WTC is assembled through a corridor that primarily links RIGHT-side variables (perceptions of communicative competence [box 10], L2 self-confidence [box 7] and state communicative self-confidence [box 4]). However, the location of the corridor within the pyramid is different. Initially close to the pyramid's L3 face, but then emerging closer to the L2 face, this reflects how in a dynamically shifting communication episode, the latent presence of the 'other' language shapes the assembly of WTC.

### Further Reflections on the Inner Structure

From these examples, we can see how, as a communication event unfolds, the relevance of the various factors in the boxes of the pyramid model can wax and wane. When changes occur within a communication episode, the shape and location of the corridors will change and the assembly of WTC takes new forms. It is in these processes that 'vibes' affect the fluctuating, emergent state of WTC. At this point it is worth reflecting further on the 3D pyramid's inner structure.

### The base

At the base of the 3D pyramid is the component of learner personality, which includes the many aspects of the self. Although different languages and situations can tend to accentuate some traits, each trait is part of the learner's overall personality, and the core of their individuality. Even if a learner might act differently when communicating in the L2, and in the L3, variation is itself part of their personality (Dewaele & Van Oudenhoven, 2009).

The other part of the pyramid's base is intergroup climate. Here, it is important to note again that we have not enclosed intergroup climate within a specific box. In the 3D geometry, personality and intergroup climate form a uniform base [boxes 11 and 12]. This is because in multilingual contexts, everyday practices of translanguaging can make such a separation reductive. In multilingual settings such as Sweden, where a contact language (English) is societally and socially ubiquitous, and where large numbers of people are equally comfortable communicating in the majority L1 or in a contact language, intergroup attitudes are not aligned to language in the same way as the variables at the pyramid's higher levels. This revision also marks a shift from the original pyramid model (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) and the social-psychological perspective of that era.

### The inner corridors

In the 3D conceptualisation, it becomes possible to consider the pyramid's different layers, and how shifts in the social and psychological nature of a multilingual communication episode can trigger changes that shape the assembly of WTC, and the conduits conceptualised as inner corridors. As we have suggested, these corridors – internal structures connecting interrelated variables – will differ from situation to situation, and from person to person. Moving beyond a situational account of the assembly of WTC, we can also understand how particular corridors can become established over time. Wide corridors can represent well-travelled paths, allowing rapid connections between factors or systems that frequently operate in concert. As experiences change, new internal corridors can develop. Over the course of a multilingual individual's L2 and L3 development, a unique set of corridors and interconnections can be constructed. Some corridors will form readily, and can operate similarly for certain groups of people. Others will be unique to specific individuals, or may function as conduits for WTC only in specific contexts. Most importantly, in each communication event, WTC will emerge through corridors that connect particular learner variables to the characteristics associated with the situation and the interlocutors. Energy invested in a communication event will flow through one set of corridors or another. The fit between person and context suggests a soft assembly of WTC in any communication event, as well as the possibility for regular patterns and shifting preferences.

### Conclusion

Reflecting the complexity and multilingual turns in SLA (Hult, 2010; May, 2014), in this chapter we have updated the classic pyramid conceptualisation of WTC to a 3D version. In a reconceptualised form, the 3D pyramid comprises lateral faces that represent different languages. As

illustrated in Figure 11.1, the 3D pyramid has an L2 face and an L3 face. Hidden from view, there is also an L1 face.<sup>1</sup> Also hidden are the *internal corridors* through which WTC emerges in communication events. Submerged beneath the surface, and reflecting how WTC is shaped by mutually interacting processes, these corridors can exist at/close to the L2 face, or the L3 face. While each corridor is uniquely constructed *in situ*, and while the exact shape of a corridor will vary as shifts in communication episodes occur, two broad routes can be identified. In corridors primarily linking LEFT-side variables, WTC is assembled through intergroup attitudes [box 8], which feed into motivation [box 5], and the desire to communicate with a particular person [box 3]. Correspondingly, there are also corridors that primarily link RIGHT-side variables. Here, WTC is assembled through a different set of processes. In this case, the factors that primarily shape emergent WTC are communicative competence [box 10], L2 self-confidence [box 7] and state communicative self-confidence [box 4].

In addition to this multilingual and complexity-informed conceptualisation, we have also extended the pyramid model to include self-related concepts (Dörnyei, 2020; MacIntyre, 2022), the prominence of which have grown since the model's inception (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998). The inclusion of the self within the foundational concept of the pyramid allows us to further conceptualise the soft assembly and unique organisation of each individual language learning journey; not only is WTC constantly 'under construction' in communication events, but the exact nature of the internal corridors will differ between individuals. Most importantly, the in-depth longitudinal data generated by 'walking alongside' our participants in their endeavours to become proficient speakers of Swedish has enabled us to see how the bedrock foundations of the pyramid remain relatively stable, while the shifting sands at the apex can facilitate or constrain language development. With focus trained on the participants' communication experiences in *social settings*, in the next chapter we embark on a further attempt at reconceptualisation. Here, we seek to locate the pyramid within a wider ecology of spatial contexts in which L2 communication can take place.

## Note

- (1) In situations where a language learner has competence in more than three languages, this will also be reflected in the geometry of the 3D pyramid. The number of lateral faces will correspond to the languages in the person's repertoire, and which can be salient in a particular communication event.

# 12 The Probability of Initiating Communication, Given *Choice and Opportunity*

## Introduction

Referencing MacIntyre's (2007) definition of willingness to communicate (WTC) as 'the probability of speaking *when free to do so*' (MacIntyre, 2007: 564, emphasis added), in Part 1 of the book we emphasised the importance of social contexts. Illustrated in the stories making up the chapters in the book's third part, we could see how there were certain places where the project participants could experience having opportunities to communicate in Swedish and were willing to initiate interactions. Here, we pointed to enabling and constraining influences associated with particular localities. Drawing on classic scholarship from urban sociology (Oldenburg, 1989) and seminal research developing social network theories (Granovetter, 1973), we argued that in migration contexts WTC bears the imprint of the localities in which language learners find themselves. We saw how in public settings such as libraries and leisure centres, apprehension normally associated with target language (TL) communication could be less acute. Because 'third places' such as these were often visited on a recurrent basis, casual contacts could be established where interactions occurred on repeated occasions. In a setting that otherwise offered few opportunities for communication in Swedish, these 'weak-tie' relationships were important in developing WTC, and enhancing participants' well-being. Described in the four chapters in this part of the book, and in line with the qualitative longitudinal (QL) approach of drawing on aural narratives (Neale, 2020), these insights emerged from stories told about communication events that took place in particular locations.

At the same time, we could also ask about communication events that might have been anticipated during this eight-month period, but which never formed the subject of a story or anecdote. While a continuous flow of small stories of everyday communication might have been expected (given the community presence of the TL, and the invitation given to the participants), the reality was more of a trickle. In any interview, it was unusual that a participant would have more than a half dozen stories to tell. On

some occasions, there was hardly a single story to recount. Reflecting on the modest number of communication events that formed the subject of a story brought to an interview, in this chapter we offer a broader-scoped perspective, focusing on locality and the influence of temporal and environmental factors on participants' WTC. In contrast to the previous chapter, where we zoomed in and explored the situated assembly of WTC, here we zoom out and consider influences at a higher-scale level, specifically, geophysical factors, factors relating to urban geography and digital infrastructures, and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on sociality patterns. Equally, if previous chapters have tended to focus on interactions which had enabling influences on TL WTC, here we focus more on factors limiting opportunities for communication, and that can be understood as having constraining effects.

With the recognition that WTC should be understood as 'the probability of initiating communication, given choice *and opportunity*' (MacIntyre, 2007: 567, emphasis added), in the sections that follow we reflect on factors influencing Swedish WTC development that relate to the *geographical locality* in which the research was conducted (provincial Sweden), *seasonal conditions* (the dark and cold of the Nordic winter), the *point in time* when the research was carried out (the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic) and the *digitalisation of society* (the use of mobile devices in everyday transactions, and people's engagement with social media). We begin, however, by considering how locality constitutes a relevant analytical lens when examining a sociopsychological construct with a focus on interpersonal communication.

### Locality as a Relevant Lens

Drawing on recent interest in space in second language acquisition (SLA), and highlighting its importance in shaping the experiences of people engaged in second language (L2) learning in contexts beyond the classroom, Benson (2021a) has argued that language learning needs to be understood as arising from encounters with language-bearing assemblages (people, objects and information) present in particular localities. Continuing a line of work addressing spatial aspects of learning in noninstitutional contexts (e.g. Aronin & O Laoire, 2013; Baynham, 2015; Chik, 2017; Higgins, 2017; Lai, 2015; Lamb, 2015; Murray, 2018), Benson (2021a, 2021b) emphasises the importance of investigating the places where language learning occurs. Arguing that SLA needs to develop understandings of the ways in which L2 learning is enabled and constrained in physical, as well as social environments, he problematises a focus that is skewed towards the individual, and a tendency to treat the environment simply as a backdrop (Benson, 2021a).

In a spatially focused perspective, interactions where language development is facilitated or hindered need to be charted in relation to the particular situations of individual learners. In line with approaches that

involve scalar analyses (Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016), Benson (2021a) emphasises the importance of accounting for learning opportunities that arise in relation to the places where L2 learners live, where they attend classes, where they spend their leisure time and where they work. As Benson (2021a, 2021b) has suggested, these geographical spaces constitute *areal language learning environments*, each providing a particular potential for language learning. Within these areal environments, language learners create pathways that map out uniquely *individual language learning environments* (Benson, 2021b).

Related to a language learner's life situation – their social networks, family obligations and material resources – constellations of areal and individual language learning environments provide arrays of resources that vary in density and richness. This has the effect that, in the same geographical locality, some language learners can find themselves in learning environments where resources are plentiful, and where access is uninhibited, whereas others can find themselves in environments where resources are scarce, and where access is constrained (Benson, 2021a, 2021b).

To illustrate how contexts of language use and learning are shaped by the circumstances and routines of daily life, Benson and his colleagues have presented a series of case studies of international EFL students living in Sydney (Benson, 2021a; Benson *et al.*, 2018; Chappell *et al.*, 2018). In one case study – of a young woman from Vietnam who had come to Sydney to study English and who had the long-term goal of settling in Australia – Chappell *et al.* (2018) have shown how the circumstances of sharing accommodation with other migrants, and having to work to support herself, meant that opportunities to meet and interact with native speakers of English were far fewer than she had hoped. A similar picture emerges in the study of a first language (L1) Spanish speaker (Carita) (Benson *et al.*, 2018). As this case study revealed, Carita's weekday activities – spending time at work and college and travelling in between – provided few opportunities for interaction with native speakers of English. However, at the weekend, Carita's travels in the streets of multilingual Sydney meant that she found herself in different spatial contexts. In these spaces, English could be more easily accessed:

a restaurant in an unknown, and somewhat remote, suburb, a walk at random through the streets of the city centre, a conversation with a waiter as she charges her phone in a restaurant, a somewhat confusing meeting with a friend, a ferry trip to Parramatta and a bus journey home, and a visit to a local festival, which turns into an evening at home alone with a favourite television series. (Benson *et al.*, 2018: 29)

Similar findings emerge in case study research by Yin and Chik (2021), who studied the experiences of two Chinese sojourners. As these

researchers report, the participants in their study ‘were shocked to discover that they could use Chinese almost everywhere in Sydney’, to the degree that they were ‘unable to see how their English language could naturally improve by living and studying in a native-speaking country’ (Yin & Chik, 2021: 60).

### Spatial cards

For the international students whose lives are documented in these case studies, language learning environments were constrained by a lack of material resources. Opportunities for leisure-based out-of-class learning were often sacrificed in the interests of work and test-focused study. Nevertheless, they were resourceful in exercising agency. Consequently, as Benson and colleagues (2018: 29) have suggested, in contexts where the TL is present in the local environment, but where access to meaningful encounters can be restricted, it is necessary to make ‘the best use of the spatial cards that one has been dealt’.

Irrespective of a language learner’s status – as an international student, a study abroad sojourner or a transnational migrant – it seems that the host country environment rarely provides opportunities for the types of TL-developing interaction that might have been anticipated (e.g. Benson *et al.*, 2018; Chappell *et al.*, 2018; Devlin & Tyne, 2021; Henry, 2016a; Henry *et al.*, 2021b; Mas-Alcolea & Torres-Purroy, 2021; Yates, 2011; Yin & Chik, 2021). Even in a multicultural metropolis such as Sydney – marketed by the New South Wales ELT industry as ‘a friendly and relaxed city in which to learn English and mingle with native speakers’ – an L2 learner can experience difficulties in accessing opportunities to communicate beyond the classroom (Benson, 2021a: 131). Given that the TL may seldom be encountered, and that it may not always ‘find its way into the learner’s immediate environment’, the onus is on the learner to ‘go out and construct an environment in which it is present’ (Benson, 2021a: 97).

Even if the international students in the studies by Benson and his colleagues (Benson *et al.*, 2018; Chappell *et al.*, 2018) and Yin and Chik (2021) were rarely able to interact with native speakers, in the spatial triangles of work, home and school – constructed as they moved around the Sydney metropolitan area – ample opportunities to communicate with non-native speakers could arise. For the participants in our study, the spatial cards were of a different hue. Living in provincial communities and lacking employment, opportunities for interactions with speakers of Swedish (native or non-native) were scarce. Keeping in mind that ‘learning opportunities are reliant upon the environment’ (Murray & Lamb, 2017: 259) and that even in ‘face-to-face spoken interaction’, it is important not to ‘neglect the physical and geographical contexts’ in which communication occurs (Benson *et al.*, 2018: 23), in the sections that follow we take a

closer look at some of the factors connected to locality and temporality. As we will discuss, factors connected with the *areal language learning environments* of small-town Sweden, the high networked density of Swedish society, contemporary digital media practices and the Covid-19 pandemic, combined to create systematic constraints on the development of WTC.

### Geographical locality: Opportunity structures and local sociability styles

As demonstrated in work on superdiversity and integration in European cities (e.g. Crul, 2016; Crul *et al.*, 2013; Vertovec, 2007), spatial configurations can facilitate or constrain interactions between people who are newly arrived in a locality and those who have more enduring ties. In urban environments, significant importance is attached to so-called ‘semipublic spaces’ as contexts that are conducive to interaction (Knipprath *et al.*, 2021). Semipublic spaces are localities within an urban landscape that are open to the public, but which also have a private quality (Wessendorf, 2014). Often, urban neighbourhoods will have a variety of semipublic spaces. These include, for example, cafés, restaurants and gyms. Semipublic spaces such as these can function as ‘zones for intercultural encounters’ (Knipprath *et al.*, 2021: 200). For newly arrived migrants, these spaces are important in that they can afford increased opportunities for interdependence and equal-status relations (Knipprath *et al.*, 2021).

In addition to semipublic spaces, the localities in which they can be found are also important for intercultural interactions. Known as ‘consumption spaces’ (e.g. Piekut & Valentine, 2017), these are the shopping streets, squares and pedestrian areas where cafés and restaurants tend to be clustered. In migration research, urban localities are often categorised according to the density of consumption spaces. A modern form of marketplace, in consumption spaces people have particular reasons for interacting with strangers. When opportunities for social contacts between people unknown to each other are created, people can experience having a trigger to approach and to interact with unfamiliar others. While these interactions will often occur on one-off occasions, they can also take place on a more consistent basis (Jacobs, 2016; Knipprath *et al.*, 2021; Nassehi, 2002).

The importance of semipublic spaces for social interaction, and the creation of opportunities for everyday conversations between people with different ethnic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in research by Jacobs (2016). Studying urban spaces in 16 German cities, and with a focus on spaces where people typically congregate (such as shopping streets), Jacobs (2016) demonstrated the impact that these spaces can have on the occurrence of interpersonal interactions. From examinations of contact-promoting mechanisms at work in varying parts of the studied

cities, a strong presence of shopping streets and markets was shown to be connected to the frequency of interethnic contacts. The study also revealed a particular sociability style – ‘intimate market sociability’ – which was connected to increased interethnic interactions. In intimate market sociability, contact is mediated by types of economic exchange where partners ‘are sometimes perceived almost as friends’, and where encounters can acquire ‘a quasi-intimate character’ (Jacobs, 2016: 28). Importantly, this research showed that ‘intimate market sociability’ requires ‘a certain density of retail and eating establishments in the neighbourhood’ (Jacobs, 2016: 28).<sup>1</sup>

Building on Jacobs’ (2016) classification of urban areas, a research team from the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity carried out an extensive study examining immigration and social interaction in German cities (Schönwälder *et al.*, 2016). Findings revealed how the quality of public spaces could differ between neighbourhoods, and that the infrastructure of a neighbourhood could present ‘opportunity structures’ that either encouraged or constrained interpersonal encounters. Identifying an interrelationship between physical space and the characteristics of communication, Schönwälder *et al.* (2016) could show how *local sociability styles* can emerge. As they explain, local sociability styles are ‘patterns of initiating and cultivating interpersonal contacts and of negotiating the relation of social closeness and social distance’ (Schönwälder *et al.*, 2016: 99). Further, they demonstrate how space enables and constrains opportunities for communication. While in urban and inner-city neighbourhoods, ‘market-related interaction’ can promote intergroup encounters, in suburban neighbourhoods – where residents ‘focus on family life and on being close to nature’ – the lack of market-related activities can mean that there is little to encourage ‘the meeting and interaction of co-residents’ (Schönwälder *et al.*, 2016: 232).

The recognition that the places where newcomers live and carry out the transactions of daily life can affect possibilities for interaction, and that *local sociability styles* can facilitate or constrain the initiation of interactions, is highly relevant in understanding the influence of locality on WTC. In the context in which our research was carried out, participants lived in provincial towns and rural communities. In these settings, the types of ‘semipublic’ and ‘consumption spaces’ that can give rise to informal but meaningful social contacts – the type that Jacobs (2016) conceptualises as ‘intimate market sociability’ – do not exist in a similar way. Smaller towns in Sweden can be experienced as empty places. In a society where transactions increasingly take place online and in out-of-town retailing centres, a sizeable proportion of the retail space in smaller towns can remain unoccupied (Jonsson *et al.*, 2017). As transactional habits change, so do *local sociability styles*. In provincial Sweden, opportunities for face-to-face interactions outside the home and beyond close social circles appear to be steadily diminishing. For our participants,

who were trying to establish a life in provincial Sweden, ‘opportunity structures’ were non-conducive to interaction, and ‘local sociability styles’ meant that it was difficult to interact with TL-speaking others (cf. Schönwälder *et al.*, 2016).

### Season and climate: The effects of winter darkness

Geophysical cycles have regulating effects on patterns of human behaviour. Affected by temporally regulated programmes, where sunlight is the cue, humans have preferred times for sleeping and waking. However, in many situations ‘our biology and our society appear to be in serious opposition’; while ‘the alarm clock can drive human activity rhythms’, it ‘has little direct effect on our endogenous 24-hour physiology’ (Foster & Roenneberg, 2008: 784). In northern latitudes, seasonal shifts in the rising and setting of the sun create challenges for everyday functioning. Even though people can make successful cultural adaptations, and long-term inhabitants and newcomers alike are able to adapt to seasonal conditions, the reduced hours of daylight mean that opportunities for interpersonal communication beyond the family and close social circles can be limited.

In addition to darkness, opportunities for face-to-face communication are also affected by temperature. As demonstrated by Andersen *et al.* (1990), factors related to climate (e.g. temperature and sunshine) can account for a large proportion of variance in interpersonal arousal. Consequently, styles of communication in northern latitudes tend to be more constrained, and communication patterns more insular. As these researchers explain, ‘northern latitudes bring people indoors where they socialize together in dyads and small groups’ (Andersen *et al.*, 1990: 306).

In the current study, the research took place during the period from the end of November through to mid-June. In the first part of this period, November–March, Sweden is a dark and often cold place. People not only get up and go to bed in the dark, but their weekday journeys to and from work or school often take place in darkness. For all but one of the participants, attending college involved a daily commute. On weekdays, the participants described how they would travel directly to the college and, after classes, return directly home again. With morning classes starting at just after eight o’clock, and afternoon classes finishing after four, half of these journeys were made in the dark. While morning and evening commutes that took place in the dark (often on crowded buses and trains) were not conducive to opportunities for communication, neither were the participants’ midday journeys. At these times, buses and trains were often empty, as people tended to stay at home in the cold weather.

Beyond affordances directly related to communication opportunities, people’s perceptions of social spaces are also affected by climate. In cold climates, people can feel insecure in spaces that feel either too open or too

enclosed (Ravelli & Stenglin, 2008). This affects interpersonal communication in that people can be less inclined to spend time in a space that is experienced as insecure. For newcomers and settled residents alike, the winter conditions of the Nordic countries are not optimally conducive to social interaction. During the winter half of the year, contacts beyond the person's immediate social networks tend to diminish. People spend more time indoors and in the company of those with whom they have close social and family relationships (Friedman, 2021).

As in our previous work exploring adult migrants' willingness to communicate in Swedish (Henry *et al.*, 2021b), participants were aware of the constraints of the Nordic climate, and how cold weather and limited hours of daylight meant that opportunities for interactions with speakers of Swedish could be few and far between. In this sense, climatic conditions constitute a set of constraints associated with locality.

Beginning their formal learning of Swedish at the start of winter, the ensuing months offered fewer opportunities for community interactions than might have been the case had learning begun in the lighter, warmer months of the spring. However, while the approach of the summer months might have promised greater opportunities for communication – and could have involved an expansion of participants' 'individual language learning environments' (Benson, 2021b: 2) – the shift to lighter days and warmer temperatures coincided with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### The Covid-19 pandemic: A contraction of individual language learning environments

At the time of the spring equinox, on-site teaching at Pinewood was curtailed. From this point onwards, the participants studied at home and did not visit the campus again. While in normal circumstances, the change to the lighter and warmer months of spring and summer would mean that people might congregate more freely in open spaces (Ravelli & Stenglin, 2008), with the pandemic this did not happen. Because people spent an increased proportion of their time in the home, language resources in community spaces decreased. Thus, rather than expanding with the seasonal change, individual learning environments tended to contract.

As is well documented, measures protecting public health brought into force during the pandemic – home confinement, social distancing, remote working and the use of face coverings – all had a substantial impact on life-quality factors. Life-quality factors particularly affected were interpersonal interaction, social participation and perceptions of social connectedness (e.g. Ammar *et al.*, 2020; Eduarda Melo-Oliveira *et al.*, 2021; Zhang & Ma, 2020). While research indicates that close relationships (with partners and other household members) were largely

unaffected by social distancing, this was not the case for other social relationships and interactions with friends, neighbours and other local residents (e.g. Goodwin *et al.*, 2020). As Skalacka and Pajestka (2021) have made clear, the Covid-19 pandemic transformed communication behaviours; it ‘changed the way individuals communicate with those in direct geographic closeness’ (Skalacka & Pajestka, 2021: 276). Negative effects connected with pandemic restrictions may have been greater for certain social groups. For women and younger people in the 18–34-year age bracket – the demographic of our participant group – social distancing may have affected communication and well-being in particularly negative ways (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Spending hours on end at home, and with opportunities for face-to-face interaction restricted by social distancing, the spatial constraints of the first months of the pandemic had the effect that affordances facilitating TL communication rapidly contracted. While we found examples of individual agency – notably Jessie’s actively made decision to better utilise language resources that were close at hand (in her partner’s extended family) – for participants without such resources, opportunities for interpersonal interaction drastically diminished. While for Wafaa, an upward curve of Swedish WTC rapidly levelled off, for Olivia and Titly, WTC ebbed away, the effects of social isolation further denting their confidence and hopes of developing communication skills.

### Digital technologies and everyday transactions

Interpersonal communication displays considerable cultural variability (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986). In Sweden, McCroskey (1992) has noted that, on average, levels of WTC are lower than in a North American context, and that people’s dispositions to communicate in social contexts beyond close personal relationships may be less strong than in Canada and the United States (see Chapter 1). In recent years, this tendency may have been reinforced. Face-to-face communication is influenced by the degree to which social circumstances provide opportunities for interaction. In technologically advanced countries such as Sweden, patterns of social interaction differ from countries or regions where the impact of digitalisation is less extensive. Unlike the home countries of our participants – in Southern and South-Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia – in Sweden the transactions of everyday life are not embedded within social interaction to the same degree, and opportunities for face-to-face communication are far fewer.

As revealed by Yin and Chik (2021) in their case study of the digital practices of two Chinese students in Sydney, in highly networked societies technology shapes the routines and practices of daily life. In everyday transactional contexts – such as the purchase of groceries and consumer items – the use of self-checkouts reduces the need for face-to-face

interactions. Smartphone apps mean that it is easy to translate L2 text (for example, the descriptions on the packaging of consumer goods), further reducing the need for interpersonal interaction. Reflecting on the digitalised nature of Swedish society, and its impact on human communication, participants described how use of mobile technologies meant that they rarely needed to engage in face-to-face exchanges in the transactional contexts of everyday life. While they could sometimes be despondent about how the high levels of digitalisation in Sweden seemed to constrain opportunities for conversation, they also appreciated the ways that digital technologies enabled them to be independent, and could facilitate navigation in and between physical and virtual spaces.

In previous chapters, we have seen how English could be both an enabling and a constraining affordance in acculturation processes. As a contact language, English could enable meaningful and satisfying interpersonal interaction, and could facilitate effective transactions. At the same time, it could also constrain opportunities for interpersonal communication in Swedish (see also Henry, 2016a). As several of the participants explained, both they and their interlocutors could prioritise efficiency by communicating in English. In a similar way, technology can be understood as both an enabling and a constraining affordance in social interactions. However, while to some extent English could be switched on and off (depending on the situation, and the interlocutor's willingness and capacity to make accommodations), participants spoke about how technology had a pervading influence, and how it could have negative effects on the development of confidence and preparedness to communicate in Swedish when opportunities arose.

In research investigating consumer practices in Swedish and Canadian settings, Goldfarb and colleagues (2015, 2016) have demonstrated how pressures associated with social interactions in retail contexts can mean that customers can make 'safe choices'. In a study examining the effects of social interaction on transactions at the *Systembolaget* (Sweden's government-run alcohol monopoly), Goldfarb *et al.* (2015) found differences in purchasing patterns in 'over-the-counter' and 'self-service' stores. In relation to products with difficult-to-pronounce names, sales were significantly higher in self-service stores. Explaining this finding, the researchers suggested that this can stem from a desire to avoid stress and frustration associated with the need to accomplish a challenging transaction in public, and where there can be a fear of failing to communicate effectively. In another study, the researchers similarly found that the 'in-public' nature of over-the-counter transactions meant that there was a tendency to choose familiar items with easy-to-pronounce names (Goldfarb *et al.*, 2016).<sup>2</sup> Pointing to findings from various fields evidencing a tendency to avoid potentially uncomfortable, 'in public' interactions, they have suggested that 'personal interactions may inhibit certain

kinds of economic activity, perhaps because customers wish to avoid the potential for embarrassment' (Goldfarb *et al.*, 2015: 2979).

Newly arrived in Swedish society, and with accumulating experiences of racially based prejudice, our participants were often cautious about engaging in interactions in public spaces. Alert to indications of an interlocutor's prejudice, sensitive to language-based rejection (Lou & Noels, 2019), and wanting to avoid the negative effects on self-esteem emanating from a 'failed' TL interaction, they would often play safe. Frequently, they would describe how they deliberately chose what they considered as 'easy' communication options; selecting self-checkouts in supermarkets and using automated ordering systems in fast-food restaurants. Thus, while technology use could buffer against the risk of prejudicial treatment, and could stave off fears of embarrassment caused by communication failures observable to others, it also meant that they could feel socially isolated and could experience frustration in not using Swedish in their everyday lives.

### Mobile devices and WTC

For people who find themselves in a new society, and who face the task of learning the host country language, language development can take place in designed spaces of educational institutions, as well as in transient, noninstitutional settings that are assembled 'on the fly' (Benson, 2021a: 134; Reinders & Benson, 2017). In institutional and noninstitutional settings alike, the soft assembly of WTC in interpersonal interactions involves 'having something to say with the self-confidence to say it' (MacIntyre, 2020: 115). An emergent property of interpersonal interactions, state communicative confidence is dependent on currently pertaining emotions. Embedded in sociocultural interactions, emotions are highly dynamic and involve brain-body phenomena that operate in context (Dewaele & Pavlescu, 2021; see also Barrett, 2017; Boiger & Mesquita, 2012).

The role of emotions in shaping communicative intentions is well illustrated in MacIntyre and Wang's (2021) idiodynamic study of WTC in an activity that involved describing a self-selected, personally meaningful photograph. In this study, one of the participants – Lin – described how, because of an immediately preceding positive communication experience with a co-worker, she had arrived at the lab in a good mood. Consequently, her WTC was high. In a similar way, we saw in Chapter 6 how Kesu and Maria had both described sequences of communication events where the positive emotion stemming from a prior interaction carried over to the next event in the chain, creating the initial conditions for the experience of being willing to communicate.

In noninstitutional settings particularly, the person's currently pertaining emotional mood can determine whether a *communication*

*opportunity* transforms into a *communication event*. As we have seen in the chapters in the third part of the book, for many of the participants there were periods – temporary and enduring – when a negative emotional state meant that communication in Swedish was avoided. Frequently, this translated into the choice to carry out a transaction in English. By providing opportunities to engage in an interaction without the risk of frustration, embarrassment or distress, technology use could similarly promote avoidance-focused strategies.

As is well documented, use of a personal device can be perceived as having negative effects on the quality of interpersonal communication (e.g. Drago, 2015). Equally, a tendency to rely on communication mediated via mobile phones can stem from the perception of lacking face-to-face interactions in everyday life (Kim *et al.*, 2015). The effects that mobile phone use can have on emotions and well-being have formed the focus of many studies. From this research, it appears that problematic mobile phone use (assessed by measuring aspects such as tolerance, withdrawal, escape from other problems and negative life consequences, see Bianchi & Phillips, 2005) can be connected with decreased mood and reduced psychological well-being. While directionality has not been easy to determine, certain researchers take the view that bidirectionally reinforcing spirals may be established. In such circumstances, mobile phones can be used as a means ‘to escape from negative feelings, which in the long run may act as an amplifier of such feelings because the underlying problems are not approached’ (Roser *et al.*, 2016: 313).

For several of the participants, smartphones provided an always-to-hand option for safe communication in situations when they were feeling low, or where they lacked confidence. Use of a smartphone offered a means of carrying out everyday transactions without a need for face-to-face communication, for example, by using apps providing mobile payment opportunities, and making use of synchronous translation tools. For some participants (notably Olivia, Titly and Sabrina), it was not so much that a negative mood could inhibit WTC (and promote technology use), but rather that a positive mood could disrupt established patterns of interaction where mobile technologies constituted the default means of conducting everyday transactions.

### Locality and L1 media: ‘Being at home while abroad’

In his analysis of the ways in which the study abroad experience has been affected by technology, Coleman (2015: 37) has argued that “‘abroad’ today is not the “‘abroad’ of even five or ten years ago’. Benson and colleagues (2018: 23) make a similar point, arguing that ‘the availability of digital devices and social media also means that students are never entirely away from home while studying overseas’. The sense that everyday digital practices can mean that the social contexts of ‘abroad’

and ‘home’ can become intermeshed is well illustrated in the case study by Yin and Chik (2021) previously referred to in this chapter. Here, the two Chinese participants described making frequent use of L1 media, and interacting with L1 speakers online (often in previously established social networks). They spent large parts of their days communicating with other Chinese speakers using the same social media apps – primarily WeChat – which they had used before arriving in Australia. They also spent long periods chatting with friends and relatives at home in China. Indeed, one of the participants (Harry) described how he had been surprised how, on arrival in Sydney, he had continued to use WeChat to such an extent. He came to realise that even if he was ‘physically in Sydney’, WeChat continued to function as the best way of interacting socially and carrying out daily transactions. It meant, however, that face-to-face interactions in English were ‘unexpectedly limited’, as he could ‘basically use Chinese everywhere in Sydney’ (Yin & Chik, 2021: 59).

For these research participants, the ability to carry out daily transactions in Chinese – in offline as well as online contexts – had a negative impact on the experience of being an international student. Being ‘unable to see how their English language could naturally improve by living and studying in a native-speaking country’, they felt frustrated with their situation. Being ‘at home’ while ‘abroad’, and lacking opportunities to interact with a TL-speaking social community, the disaffection this created provided reasons to continue L1 interactions. As Yin and Chik (2021: 60) have suggested, the experience of feeling isolated from local communities in a host country can mean that sojourners are *more* likely to make use of L1 media and social networks ‘as a way to de-stress from their current situation’.

Also finding themselves in a situation of being ‘at home while abroad’, our participants described similar patterns of L1-mediated communication, where online interactions took place with L1 speakers in their home countries and in Sweden. Participants described how, on a daily basis, they communicated with family and friends at home, making video calls using apps such as Facetime, Facebook Messenger and Google Duo. Three of the women – Kesu, Pranisha and Titly – had extensive social networks of L1 speakers resident in Sweden, and would communicate with people from these networks online and, on some occasions, in offline social events. While Jessie and Maria communicated in their respective L1s with family members in Sweden, Olivia was part of a highly diverse international community where English was the self-evident lingua franca. Several of the women described how they watched English language TV series using streaming services, such as Netflix and HBO Nordic, and, in Jessie’s case, Korean and Japanese TV series. These were habits which carried over from their lives before moving to Sweden. While they recognised that watching favoured TV programmes could be valuable for TL development – several of the women described how

they would activate Swedish subtitling – few made the choice to watch Swedish language films and series. In fact, only one of the women (Jessie) reported following a domestic series. Although aware that Swedish language media provided a valuable resource for TL development, like the participants in Yin and Chik’s (2021) study, our participants prioritised the need to relax and to feel at ease.

### Conclusion

We began this chapter by referencing MacIntyre’s (2007) definition of WTC as ‘the probability of speaking *when free to do so*’ (MacIntyre, 2007: 564, emphasis added). We made clear that WTC constitutes the likelihood that a person will initiate communication, ‘given choice *and opportunity*’ (MacIntyre, 2017: 567, emphasis added). We also noted how the notion of the social situation (box 9 in the pyramid model) (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) captures the sense that previous communication in particular *types* of situation can generate expectations about communication behaviour in other similar situations (Chapter 11). While the pyramid model (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) has held up remarkably well with the passing of time – it is now 25 years since its inception – as the current discussion makes clear, there is need to focus on the ‘affordances’ part of the WTC definition (MacIntyre, 2007), and to recognise how experiences of acting in social situations extend beyond the generation of sets of schema-like expectations. Drawing on insights gained from our empirical

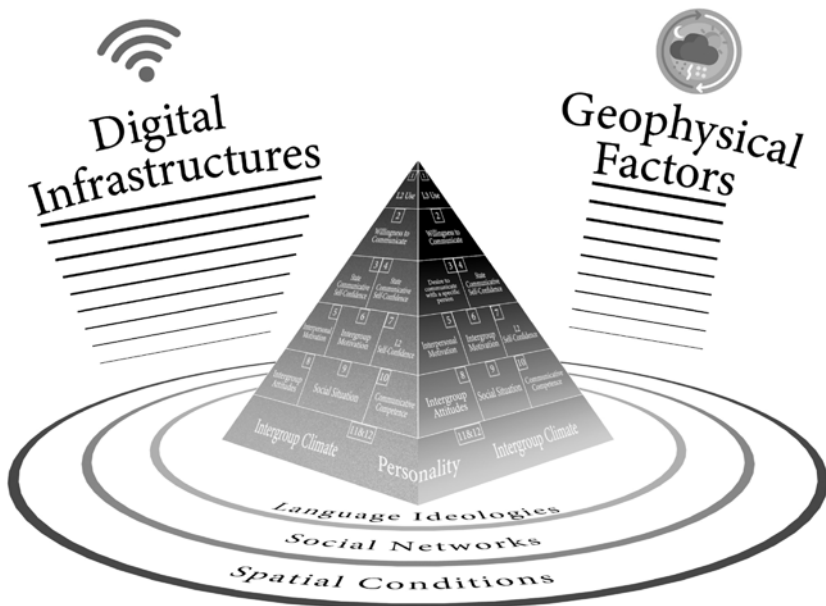


Figure 12.1 An ecological framing for WTC in community settings

work, and in line with the ecological and scalar approaches now making inroads in SLA (e.g. Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016; The Douglas Fir Group, 2016), in Figure 12.1 we sketch out the varying phenomena that can support or constrain WTC in community contexts. Extending outward from an inner circle that encompasses the learner-internal factors within the WTC pyramid (and which includes the influence of language ideologies), concentric circles represent ecologies of affordances that can facilitate and constrain WTC: the social networks in which learners move, and the spatial conditions of physical environments. Beyond these circles, and existing at higher-scale levels, influences associated with technology-related and geophysical factors can also shape communication opportunities in additionally important ways.

### Notes

- (1) Notable in this research was that two cities had a population exceeding 500,000 inhabitants, six had between 100,000 and 500,000 inhabitants, while the remaining eight were in the 50,000 to 100,000 band.
- (2) In Ontario, purchases of beer are made over the counter at ‘The Beer Store’, the province’s primary retail outlet.

# 13 The ‘Ethics of Walking Alongside’: Ethical Engagement When Studying a Process in Motion

When studying a process as it is taking place, and following participants through a period of transition, Neale (2021: 142) has described ethical engagement as an ‘ethics of walking alongside’. In this chapter, we consider the ethical questions involved when carrying out the research. Having previously described the *proactive* (Neale, 2020, 2021) or ‘macroethical’ (Kubanyiova, 2008) strategies pertaining to the research (see Chapter 4), here we engage with the ‘microethical’ issues which can emerge during a qualitative longitudinal (QL) project, and the *reactive* strategies that are required when dilemmas arise.

In the beginning of the book, we identified important ‘turns’ in applied linguistics, and in relation to which our study can be positioned. To these ‘social’, ‘complexity’ and ‘multilingual’ turns, we might also add an ‘ethical turn’ (De Costa *et al.*, 2021a: 58). Ethics have a growing importance in our field (De Costa *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b; Mahboob *et al.*, 2016; Sterling & De Costa, 2018). In carrying out research which involved closely following adult migrants during a critical period of acculturation and second language (L2) development, the handling of ethical issues was an integral part of the research process. Like Kubanyiova (2008), who emphasises the importance of microethical engagement – addressing the everyday ethical dilemmas that are encountered in research contexts – in QL research the sensitive employment of reactive strategies is of primary importance (Neale, 2020, 2021). Reactive strategies are ‘situated or emergent ethical practices that are context specific and based on a sensitive appraisal of local circumstances’ (Neale, 2020: 78). In a QL project, there is a need to develop an ethical sensitivity to situations which arise during a journey where the researcher is a fellow traveller, and in the journey with an accumulating dataset (Neale, 2021). It is a sensitivity that can be likened to the use of a compass when navigating in a changing terrain:

It relies on a mixture of proactive and reactive ethical strategies, drawing on preexisting ethical protocols and shared knowledge, and creatively re-working them to address unanticipated ethical dilemmas as they arise. The domain of applied ethics is about making difficult choices in situations where no unambiguous options exist. (Neale, 2020: 90)

In studies that apply QL methodologies, ethical decision-making is an integrated part of the process of creating the conditions in which a dataset can be generated (Neale, 2020, 2021). In a research engagement that is both fluid and enduring, the researcher needs not only to conduct work in accordance with the ethical protocols of institutional review boards and funding bodies – ‘macroethics’ (Kubanyiova, 2008) that involve use of proactive ethical strategies – but also to develop a sensitivity to dilemmas that emerge in day-to-day engagements with individuals during a period of transition, and the tension, apprehension and uncertainty that dilemmas can generate (Neale, 2020). Given that a QL project is concerned with charting movement as it takes place, and provides a means of investigating ‘the open-ended, fluid nature of social actions, reactions, effects and counter-effects in complex systems of change’ (Neale, 2021: 56), ethical dilemmas will continue to emerge throughout the process (Neale, 2020). In such circumstances, the development of a situated ethical engagement is a key part of project management.

### **Relationships and Reciprocity**

In a QL project, tasks are divided up within a research team. While certain members may be ‘engaged in field enquiry and performing the vital and sometimes emotionally challenging task of building and maintaining a panel of participants’, others will be involved with data analysis and theoretical engagement (Neale, 2021: 143). As described in Chapter 4, an important part of the project design involved the division of tasks. While we both worked with the project’s design, the data analyses and the application and development of theory, one of us (Alastair) was responsible for working directly with the participants, carrying out the interviews and spending time at the college where they were enrolled. However, when ethical issues arose, we would often discuss them together.

In contrast to an ethnographic study, where fieldwork is carried out in one or more research contexts, here the purpose was not to gather data from observations. Nor was the aim to conduct interviews focused on situated classroom engagement. Rather, the idea was simply to ‘be there’ on site. Of course, as a language professional, ‘being’ in an educational context does not simply mean ‘hanging out’. Rather, being at the college involved recognition of the ethical requirement of benefitting the participants – and the other students – in their learning. Like Menard-Warwick (2004) and Norton (2000/2013), who each spent extensive

periods in the educational settings where they encountered and subsequently recruited their participants, at the college Alastair took on varying roles. These included ‘previous student’, ‘substitute teacher’ and ‘conversation partner’ (see De Costa, 2014; Sarangi & Candlin, 2003, for discussions). In actively taking on these interchangeable and often overlapping roles, the aim was to enact an ethical reflexivity (De Costa *et al.*, 2021b), and to ensure that the presence of the researcher was beneficial for all the people in the research setting: the study participants, other non-participating students, the teachers and the teachers’ colleagues.

Beyond the situated ethical engagement of functioning as a resource while on site – treating each interaction as potentially valuable for the other person – an important *proactive ethical strategy* involved striving for reciprocity in relationships with study participants. As Ngo *et al.* (2014) make clear, when carrying out research with migrant language learners, reciprocity needs to be a central concern. Because the research process is primarily beneficial to the researcher, ethical sensitivity involves asking questions such as, ‘what skills and resources do researchers have at their disposal?’, and ‘how might research practices incorporate reciprocity such as offering to assist with tutoring, mentoring, or employment and scholarship applications?’ (Ngo *et al.*, 2014: 3). Thus, in addition to the roles of ‘previous student’, ‘substitute teacher’ and ‘conversation partner’, in interactions with participants additional roles could sometimes be assumed: a ‘study advisor’, an ‘L2 expert’, a ‘counsellor’ and a ‘trusted friend’. With the exception of the two women who were unable to continue their participation in the project (see below), I (Alastair) found myself engaged in helping with writing letters, drafting job applications and designing CVs. I offered advice about higher education and discussed strategies for gaining employment. I provided support in finding out about company recruitment policies, and acted as a referee for job applications. I helped participants to navigate the complex system of adult education, and supported them in accessing information about language tests and university matriculation requirements. I gave advice about programmes of undergraduate and graduate education, and I set up appointments with university study advisors. Even though, as a researcher, I stood to benefit far more than the participants, some degree of beneficial reciprocity was achieved.

### **Coercion Resulting from Positive Rapport**

While positive relationships are central when researchers seek to become ‘fellow travellers’ in a process of development (Neale, 2020: 89), a close relationship with a researcher can also be a source of pressure. Research participants can experience a duty or obligation to ‘live up to’

the expectations that a researcher is perceived to hold (Kubanyiova, 2008: 513). As Kubanyiova (2008) has made clear:

Positive research relationships, although highly desirable in situated research, do not guarantee ethical-dilemma-free research. On the contrary, close rapport may violate the principle of noncoercion or threaten the researcher's integrity. Although some of these tensions can be resolved by exercising a high degree of sensitivity, there are others for which no satisfactory general solution can be offered, and the resolution reached by the researcher needs to be a matter of personal conscience. (Kubanyiova, 2008: 515)

In relation to the risk that participation can be experienced as coerced, ethical sensitivity involves the need to 'read between the lines', and to be alert to situations where efforts to be supportive and accommodating of a research project might not be in a participant's genuine interests. In a project design that involved the collecting of stories about communication events, there is a risk that participants might have experienced pressure to avoid disappointment if they 'failed' to provide engaging narratives. Equally, while participants described how they looked forward to the interviews, and enjoyed telling stories of communication situations, there will inevitably have been times when a previously arranged interview might not have been convenient but – to avoid disappointment – nevertheless took place. In this respect, I adopted the *proactive ethical strategy* of deliberately downplaying my teaching commitments, and the work I was doing on other research projects. Instead, I gave the impression that my time was plentiful, that I always had space to talk and that it was never a problem to cancel a previously arranged interview. While this might not have been an entirely honest representation of my work situation, it meant that participants needed not to worry about causing inconvenience if they wanted to talk with me outside of college time, or if they wanted to rearrange an interview.

### **Participant Withdrawal**

Another aspect of sensitivity to coercion concerns withdrawal from a project. Reflecting on ethical dilemmas that arose when carrying out longitudinal classroom-based research, Kubanyiova (2008) has described how she became aware that one of her participants was struggling with demands attaching to her (Kubanyiova's) on-site engagement:

Toward the end of the project, it was obvious that the involvement in the project, especially regarding classroom observations, was becoming a burden for one participant. This was, undoubtedly, partly caused by her new personal commitments. However, because she felt a high degree of

responsibility for the project due to our close relationship, she found it difficult to admit her desire to withdraw. (Kubanyiova, 2008: 513)

Recognising how the participant's perception of an obligation to accommodate the research stemmed from the close personal rapport which had been developed, Kubanyiova offered possibilities to withdraw. Although the participant refused, Kubanyiova made every effort to downscale this teacher's engagement.

In our research, two participants chose not to continue. Both were mothers of young children. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit Sweden, they removed their children from preschool and put their own formal studies of Swedish on hold (see Chapter 9). Here, ethical sensitivity involved creating the understanding, on the one hand, that the women were free to continue to participate in the project even if they were no longer enrolled at the college (thus avoiding possible disappointment stemming from a perception of not being allowed to continue) and, on the other, that withdrawal from the project was uncomplicated and unproblematic. For one of these participants, contact fizzled out. I judged it inappropriate to send text or email messages with no overt purpose and which could have been interpreted as coercive. For the other, I was able to maintain contact through one of the other participants, with whom she was friends on Facebook. Here the thinking was that if she wanted to continue, she would be able to get in touch via the other participant.

### **Ethical Closure: The 'Research Period' and the 'Project Period'**

Because in a QL study, initiating and nurturing relationships with participants is a key concern, proactive ethical engagement is needed when the research period draws to an end. In situations where participants can lack extensive social networks – as in many migration contexts – the researcher can become an important person in a participant's life. In a QL project – where researcher and participant together reflect on development *as it is taking place* – participants can become invested to a degree where they can form a 'research identity' (Neale, 2020: 89). Consequently, when a project ends, a participant stands not only to lose a valuable relationship (with the researcher), but also a valued identity: as 'a process researcher' of their own development (Henry & Tynkkinen, 2017: 207).

At the time when the first draft of this manuscript was created, data generation had ended some 18 months previously. However, the project itself was not 'over'. From the outset, we had decided that the project would be best reported as a monograph. From first entering the research site, I received constant questions about my presence at the college. In response to these 'what are you doing here?' questions, I explained that

I and a colleague in Canada (Peter) were ‘writing a book about how people communicate’. Quickly becoming ‘the guy who is writing a book’, I presented myself in this way in most new encounters. Positioning myself in this way, the project participants also became part of the narrative: they became ‘the people talking to the guy who is writing a book’.

During the recruitment process (see Chapter 4), I explained to the participants that the stories they told would become part of this book. Thus, even though the *research period* might have been short – many of the participants recognised that their willingness to communicate (WTC) in Swedish was still evolving over a year later – the *project period* remained ongoing. Following the end of the research period, I sent regular progress updates. Thus, even though data generation had ended long ago, participation in the project still continued. Through email exchanges and face-to-face conversations, we continued to talk about communication events, the development of WTC, and mine and Peter’s work producing the manuscript.

By the summer of 2021 – a year after the end of the research period – initial drafts of the chapters in which the women’s stories appeared were finally ready. At this time, I arranged meetings where I was able to give participants a copy of the chapter in which their story was told. Four of these meetings took place in local cafés, and one on Zoom. In each case, we spent a pleasant couple of hours reminiscing, catching up on current events, discussing the participant’s L2 development and talking about future plans. At the end of these meetings, I gave each participant a printed draft of ‘their’ chapter and, via email, sent them a Word document containing the text.

These meetings were important beyond renewing social connections. They provided an opportunity to explain why we had focused on certain stories, why we had chosen to zoom in on particular aspects of these stories and why some emotional experiences were in focus and not others. As well as providing participants with an opportunity to find out about how we were planning to present the ‘results’, and to compare our analyses with their own understandings of their development (see below on respondent validation), this *proactive ethical strategy* also functioned to maintain involvement in the research process. Aligned with the framing of our engagement as a ‘book project’, the women’s participation would not be over until the book had been published and they had received a personal copy. In attempting to involve and engage the participants during the *project period* – and not just the *research period* – and at the outset identifying the point when our engagement would cease (the handing over of a copy of the book), our aim was to ensure that ethical closure was sensitively handled and could be achieved in a manner where ‘loss’ would be minimised.

## Making the Research Output Explicit

Framing the undertaking as a book project was valuable in three additional ways. First, although the participants had higher education backgrounds, and some understanding of research processes and scientific publishing, because the project was to be reported in a tangible form – a book – there was a clear sense of what the output would be like. Second, by presenting findings in a monograph, the participants knew that at least some of their stories would be included. Thus, the potential for disappointment in participating in a project, only to find that in the final product experiences have been glossed over or not deemed worthy of inclusion, could be minimised. Finally, writing a book also provided a good fit with the data generation strategy. Participants were aware that, like the nested dramas in a Shakespearean play, a story of a communication event could become part of a larger, more complex story of the experiences of people who have relocated to Sweden and who have attempted to learn the language.

As De Costa and colleagues (2021b: 6) have pointed out, ‘being a L2 narrative researcher comes with the huge ethical responsibility of not only honoring what participants share in their stories, but also how they narrated their stories’. While in articles and anthology chapters space constraints mean that few (if any) of the stories that a participant shares with a researcher are eventually included, here participants knew from the outset that sections of the book would be about them and, through the stories which they brought to the interviews, that their ‘story’ as an emerging speaker of Swedish would be told through their own words. We suspect that by making explicit the link between the *data collection strategy* and the *data presentation strategy*, the sense of active participation in knowledge generation may have increased. This was evidenced by frequent questions about who the readers of the book might be, for whom the research might be meaningful, why the results could be important and who could benefit.

## Integrity in Reporting Results and Recursive Interviewing Techniques

While the participants knew that changes in WTC during the research period would be illustrated chronologically, through their stories, they were not aware of *how* stories of communication events would be linked together, or how the bigger stories of migration experiences would be told. As we have discussed in previous chapters, a participant’s stories not only provided a window onto the factors operational during a particular communication event (i.e. the assembly of WTC as conceptualised in the 3D pyramid) but also onto the social contexts in which communication events occurred (see Chapters 11 and 12). Moreover, as recognised by

researchers with a strong commitment to the epistemological premises of narrative-based inquiry (Barkhuizen, 2013), a story is not so much a ‘reflection’ or ‘representation’ of reality, as a practice that enables ‘speakers/narrators to position a display of situated, contextualised identities’ (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008: 379). As we have shown in the preceding chapters, a participant’s personality, life history, identity, migrant status and beliefs about language use and language learning all have strong and interacting influences on communication behaviours. In making sense of a participant’s experience of being willing or unwilling to communicate, in Swedish or in English, and in plotting trajectories over the research period, our analyses revealed the imprint of these factors. That the analyses would have this broader scope may not have been apparent to the participants at the times they were talking about and reflecting on communication events. Thus, we recognise that when receiving the draft of ‘their’ chapter, participants may have been surprised at how – as protagonists – they had been portrayed.

As Kubanyiova (2008) has pointed out, in longitudinal work conflicts will inevitably arise between the responsibility to report findings in a trustworthy manner and respect for the trust built up in an enduring relationship. Recognising that there is no satisfactory solution to these dilemmas, Kubanyiova (2008) has offered the following advice:

Personally, I have made the decision to report the research findings as I understand them, while making the best effort possible to adhere to the principles of respect for persons and responsible caring by applying some of the advice suggested in the literature (see, e.g. Polio, 1996; Richards & Morse, 2007). Even so, I cannot guarantee that in the process, some feelings of individual participants will never be hurt, nor can I rule out the possibility of unwittingly subjecting them to public shame if they can be recognized by others in my reports. It seems, then, that this is the type of ethical dilemma that precludes straightforward prioritization of principles, and the final decision how to approach it will have to remain a matter of the researcher’s personal conscience. (Kubanyiova, 2008: 515)

In addition to the measures taken to protect the participants from recognition by others – not disclosing information about nationality, first languages (L1s), or the gender of children – and by providing only generalised information about relationships, previous education and occupations, we did not include sections of a story where a participant spoke about an intimate or sensitive issue (for example, involving health). On the other side of the scale, we did include situations which could have been experienced as distressing or painful (both at the time, and when revisiting the situation in the manuscript). While we feel that the strategy of providing chapter drafts and creating opportunities for subsequent discussion may have provided opportunities for a participant

to question the inclusion of an event or an experience that was in some way sensitive, we also recognise the limitations inherent in asking the participants to ‘member-check’ our analyses. Although we did not follow the procedure outlined by Harvey (2015: 34) – where participants are given opportunities ‘to theorize their own experience’, and where at each analytical stage interpretations are co-constructed and form the basis for subsequent stages – the use of recursive interviewing techniques (Neale, 2020) meant that the participants could map WTC trajectories as they unfolded. In this way, participants were able to generate understandings of factors enabling and constraining the development of their Swedish WTC as it evolved, or, in some cases, regressed.

### **Integrity in Using Stories**

In addition to the integrity owed to both the study participants and the research community, integrity also involves how stories are used. Reviewing the literature on narrative analysis, a frequently discussed challenge concerns the role of participants’ stories as data, and the degree to which stories are present in research outputs (e.g. Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021; De Costa *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). While our aim was to maintain integrity by including the stories in the form in which they had been told to us, it is naïve to assume that the stories represent the participants’ unfiltered experiences, and that they are unaffected by ‘the researcher’s voice and its idiosyncratic impacts’ (Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021: 6). Rather, the stories should be seen as shaped by a participant’s interpretation of our research interests, as well as by our decision-making processes (relating to inclusion and sequencing in the manuscript) and the metanarrative that we constructed. As De Costa and colleagues (2021b: 6) have pointed out, because ‘participant stories inevitably get (re)shaped by narrative researchers’, researchers working with narrative data ‘have to wrestle with the ethical tension of how to (re)present these stories’. As with the issue of integrity in the reporting of results (discussed in the preceding section), and Kubanyiova’s (2008: 515) identification of how ethical dilemmas often preclude a ‘straightforward prioritization of principles’, here too we sought to tread a fine path between balancing obligations owed to the participants, in faithfully representing experiences recounted in a story, and to the academic community in providing insights into the complexity of WTC as a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon and the challenges of developing host country language skills in contexts of linguistic and social duress (Ortega, 2018a).

### **Integrity in the Telling of Stories**

A third aspect of integrity relates to the generation of data. Throughout the research period there was never a time when Swedish provided

the most effective medium for the telling of a story, or for engaging in conversation during an interview. Even on occasions when we met beyond the end of the research period, English was still the medium that participants were most comfortable with, and which they seemed to most enjoy using in conversation. We should also recognise that, in interactions with a native-speaking university teacher (Alastair), English provided a means by which participants could position themselves in positive ways, as articulate, well-educated, intelligent and career-focused young people (see also Chapter 3, and Henry, 2016a, 2016b). At the same time, it is equally important to recognise that the interview interactions and the telling of stories also provided valuable opportunities to practise speaking Swedish. Indeed, for participants without Swedish-speaking friends or family members, the interviews were among the few occasions that afforded opportunities for extended target language (TL) interaction with an engaged, understanding and accommodating interlocutor.

In these circumstances, the ethical balance involved, on the one hand, recognising how the use of English could provide a comfortable medium in which communication could take place, and where events and experiences could be described in detail, with precision and in a nuanced manner, and, on the other, recognising how an interview conversation or the telling of a story could provide a valuable opportunity for developing skills in Swedish. Taking the same approach as Menard-Warwick (2004), who in her conversations with Spanish-speaking adult migrants enrolled on an ESL programme in California, gave her participants the option of choosing whether to tell their stories in Spanish or in English, participants were encouraged to use the language that felt best for them at the time, and to switch to the other language whenever it felt appropriate. Like De Costa and colleagues (2021b: 8), who make the point that giving participants options about language use ‘is in and of itself an ethically-inspired move’, we found much merit in adopting this flexible approach. Not only was recognition of the value attaching to extended TL interactions an ethical imperative – the *TESOL Quarterly* Research Guidelines make clear that researchers have an obligation to ensure that participants can benefit from taking part in a study – but in giving recognition to participants’ agency, it generated trust and security.

### **Integrity in Managing Influence**

With an interest in processes and process dynamics, QL research involves engagement through a horizon of time (Neale, 2021). Often, as in the current research, the time window is chosen to fit the timescale on which development occurs (see de Bot, 2015, for an informed discussion). As in our previous work (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b; see also Chapter 3), the research period was designed to cover a timespan where development might be expected to be intense, and where changes in WTC could be

anticipated. When focus is directed to a developmental timescale that is measured in months, and when interactions with participants frequently occur, ‘a cyclical, reflexive and processual understanding’ of development can emerge (Neale, 2021: 103). However, a researcher’s intensive engagement during a critical period will also have an influence on the developmental process. When a process is of great personal significance, interactions with the researcher (the interviews) and research activities (collecting and telling stories) will directly influence this process. Because influences can be negative as well as positive, the ‘influence’ of the researcher needs to be managed with great care.

As, among others, De Fina (2011: 35) has pointed out, ‘research contexts have a constitutive role in shaping the data collected’. Even when a researcher’s neutrality is ethically inappropriate – as in the current project where participants had few social contacts and/or opportunities to communicate in Swedish – the role and status of the researcher is nevertheless negotiable. In that researcher influence is negotiated ‘within research situations’ (De Fina, 2011: 36), this can lead to potentially different developmental trajectories, depending on the way in which researcher and participant choose to align to one another.

In an insightful study reflecting on the influence that he had on participants in a multi-year undertaking, Lamb (2018) identified a range of effects stemming from his involvement. Recognising how his presence had become an enduring influence on his participants’ language learning trajectories, Lamb (2018: 368) argued that ‘greater awareness of how I would be perceived by my young research participants, as an adult, educator and foreign friend of their teacher, would have assisted me in data interpretation and in anticipating the ethical consequences of the study’. In Lamb’s case, the research was longitudinal by chance, rather than by design. Moreover, his presence was intermittent (Lamb carried out interviews on a maximum of six occasions over a 13-year period). While Lamb had clearly been successful in establishing relations of trust, the researcher–participant relationship was not a key aspect of his design (at least not initially).

Not only was the researcher–participant relationship of central concern when planning our work, but the relational symmetry was more complex. On the one hand, there was a significant imbalance in social capital. On site, the researcher arrived and left at will. I (Alastair) had access to parts of the college that were not accessible to students. I also spent time talking with teachers and school leaders. Moreover, participants knew about our work, our research interests and our standing (several had carried out internet searches). At the same time, I also had a migrant background. Even though I had a privileged status, I had some awareness of the struggles involved in settling into a new country as an adult. I had also previously passed through the same Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme.

In QL research, Neale (2021: 130) describes ethical literacy as ‘a moral compass that helps set a project on its course and navigate it on its way’. In our work, ethical navigation required flexibility and the need to align strategies and relationships. Several of the participants described how participation in the project was motivational (cf. Lamb, 2018). Not only were they keen to talk about situations where they had communicated in Swedish, but the design of the project meant that they may have more actively sought out communication opportunities than had they not been taking part. For these participants, a researcher’s interest in their development, and the effect this may have had on communication behaviour (actively seeking opportunities) and reflexivity (carrying out self-appraisals), was probably beneficial. In subsequent communications (after the end of the research period), several participants described how the project had been a positive influence on their motivation to learn Swedish, and how it had helped them in their endeavours to develop communication skills.

Beyond the motivational influences attributable to our interest in the participants’ language development, and a sympathetic understanding of the multiple challenges associated with transnational migration, one participant described how I (Alastair) had become a role model and a consistent source of inspiration. For this participant, my ‘moral compass’ indicated that, for personal and career reasons, having a role model might be beneficial (for a discussion of the influence of role models in L2 learning, see Muir *et al.*, 2021). For other participants, however, I felt that I needed to critically differentiate our respective migration experiences. Specifically, I felt the need to problematise inequalities associated with gender, race and socioeconomic status, and how prejudicial treatment could differ depending on whether a person has a background in the Global North or the Global South.

### **Longitudinal Ethics: A Process in Motion?**

Finally, Neale (2021: 162) has described ethical engagement in prospective projects as a longitudinal ethics ‘in which ethical principles and practice are transformed through the longitudinal frame of a QL study’. Ethical engagement becomes an active process that involves the constant act of balancing:

between maintaining a sample and respecting and revisiting consent as an ongoing process; between establishing rapport with participants and respecting their privacy; between developing reciprocal relationships and maintaining the bounds of a professional research relationship; and, finally, between protecting confidentiality and addressing the equally compelling drive towards authenticity, empowerment and shared authority with participants. (Neale, 2021: 161–162)

In our endeavours to construct an ethical engagement that encompassed our roles as researchers and fellow travellers, we have been fortunate in being able to draw on a rich tradition of qualitative longitudinal research in second language acquisition, including pioneering work by scholars such as Norton (2000, 2013), Kanno (2003), Harklau (2009) and Bigelow and Tarone (2004). We hope that the report of this project, and in particular the current discussion, can contribute to the continued development of a longitudinal ethics appropriate to investigations of issues of relevance to language development.

# Conclusion

We began this book with two observations: first, that communication lies at the heart of language learning, and second that the decision to speak or to remain silent – reflected in the learner’s constantly fluctuating *willingness* to communicate (WTC) – is one of the most important factors in the entire learning process. Seen this way, WTC can be understood as the lynchpin that connects the complexity of the learner’s psychology with the sociocultural contexts in which learning takes place.

The work that we have reported on in the book contributes to filling several gaps in the literature on WTC. A comparison of WTC theory reviewed in Chapter 2 and the revisions and extensions presented in Chapters 10 and 11 reveals how insights generated in the project have enabled development of the original pyramid model, shifting it from a 2-dimensional representation (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) to a more complex geometry. In the 3-dimensional (3D) rendering that we propose, it becomes possible to conceptualise the concurrent roles of more than one language, enabling the power of the pyramid metaphor to be leveraged in a further and valuable way. As part of this multilingual extension, and reflecting the assembly dynamics of WTC, the notions of ‘solid foundations and shifting sands’ and ‘internal corridors’ provide conceptualisations that support understandings of continuous and unique individual development.

Allied to these enhancements, we have also expanded the theory of WTC to encompass the ways in which decision-making processes operate *in situ*, and how they involve a combination of continuous, rapid and (potentially) contradictory cognitive and emotional processing. Drawing on a two-systems approach associated with Cognitive Experiential Self Theory (CEST), we were able to more fully articulate the push-and-pull of using incipient language skills in real-world communication, something that has long been part of the theoretical account of first language (L1) WTC (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). As was clearly apparent in the communication events recounted in the participants’ stories, each encounter with language produces an experience that is added to the person’s memory, functioning to set the initial

conditions for the next encounter. The addition of explicit reference to the self in the revised pyramid model is consistent with a focus on the self as part of CEST. The resulting theory reflects both the longer-term stability that tends to be foregrounded in ID research (Li *et al.*, 2022), as well as the potential for unpredictable and rapid change that is emphasised in complex dynamic systems theory (Hiver, 2022).

In addition to remodelling the pyramid's geometry – introducing a 3D version with lateral faces and a uniform base – we have suggested that, like other IDs, WTC should be understood as a ‘system functioning in context’ (Henry, 2020; Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020). Reflecting integrative and ecological perspectives – where second language acquisition (SLA) ‘begins with the social-local worlds of L2 learners and then poses the full range of relevant questions, from the neurobiological and cognitive micro levels to the macro levels of the sociocultural, educational, ideological, and socioemotional’ (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016: 39) – WTC and the environments in which communication occurs should not be seen as separate entities. Rather, they need to be understood as closely interacting elements. With a focus on geophysical factors, locality, urban infrastructures and technological innovations, in Chapter 12 we zoomed out to offer a spatially informed (Benson, 2021a) understanding of constraints on WTC.

Methodologically, the book addresses three gaps in the literature. First, we studied development over a months-long time window. While this is a timescale infrequently encountered in the research literature, it is at the timescale of weeks and months that language development often occurs (Henry *et al.*, 2021a). Second, we designed the study in accordance with the principles of qualitative longitudinal (QL) research (Neale, 2017, 2020, 2021). While longitudinal studies building on qualitative data are not uncommon in SLA (Norton's [2000, 2013] work being a classic example), methodologies lack systematisation. By applying methods for systematised and temporally directed research that are offered by the QL framework, and by studying a phenomenon key to language learner psychology, the project brings important knowledge about the possibilities and challenges of studying IDs in long-term, participant-focused and contextually sensitive engagements. Third, we have also addressed the need to develop narrative methods in the study of IDs. Fully concurring with researchers who argue that learner internal processes are mediated by contextual circumstances, and that participant narratives can provide insights into person–context dynamics (e.g. Barkhuizen & Consoli, 2021; Gao, 2022), our stance is that the fine-grained investigation of a single story, or extracts from a longer narrative, will be insufficient if we want to understand the complexity of a developmental process. Rather than retrospective reconstructions of a ‘critical incident’, ‘turning point’ or ‘key event’, we believe that a narrative approach can be of most value when it forms a part of designs that are developmentally focused, and which seek

understandings of processes and process characteristics (see e.g. Henry & Mollstedt, 2022, for similar arguments). Aligned with Neale's (2020, 2021) emphasis on participant-led data which is generated throughout a research period, analysed by means of recursive techniques, and interpreted through a temporal lens, our work provides a methodological template for narrative-based research that seeks understandings of complex processes that unfold through a window of time (see also Henry, 2016c, 2021).

Shifting back some three decades, it is important to recall how early research on WTC (in both communication and SLA paradigms) was conducted primarily using cross-sectional, quantitative designs, where standard measures were used to test each participant at a single point in time. The resulting correlations were then used to support theoretical accounts of the processes underlying WTC development, presumably over the respondents' lifetime of relevant experiences with language and communication. With the months-long timescale and narrative methods applied here, we have been able to model processes of growth and loss *sequence by sequence*, and as they are experienced and described by participants during a process which continues to unfold. This, we would argue, draws theory development closer to people's experiences as they go about the long-term process of learning a language.

The stories recounted in Part 3 of this book reflect processes of language learning in a multilingual setting where communication is central to adaptation, and where it mediates and is mediated by experiences of inclusion and exclusion. Closely following the communication experiences of the eight women who participated in the study, we were able to see how linguistic and psychological resources were utilised as they navigated language use in and between communication events. Over the eight-month time window, we could observe the ways in which the patterning of communication initiation preferences reflected the challenges the participants encountered as international migrants, and their aspirations for a life in new cultural surroundings. While, at some time, all the women experienced a development of Swedish WTC, and some experienced a concurrent decline in English WTC, the nature of trajectories differed. For some, patterns of growth and loss were steady, coordinated and consistent. For others, shifts were dramatic. Equally, periods of development and regression could be rapid or slow, steady or intermittent. Along with our earlier research (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b), these insights are important, going some way to bringing WTC research into line with the 'new, rethought SLA' envisaged by the Douglas Fir Group (2016), where research 'begins with the social-local worlds of L2 learners', and where the objective is 'to understand the varying conditions that enable and constrain opportunities for and outcomes of language learning across private, public, material, and digital contexts of social action and interaction' (Douglas Fir Group, 2016: 39).

To conclude, it can be instructive to recall once more how the WTC concept was imported into the literature on second and foreign language learning from the L1 communication paradigm. Reflecting on work conducted in communication science, McCroskey and Richmond (1991) offered a conclusion that, from the current vantage point, is interesting to reappraise:

The view taken here is that the most basic difference in communication patterns between cultures may indeed be the amount of verbal communication which is preferred and the circumstances calling for talk as opposed to those which call for silence. A primary direction for future research in the WTC area is in the intercultural arena. With the global expansion of business, government, and other intercultural contacts, the need for people able to communicate effectively in multicultural settings has far outstripped academia's output of knowledge needed in this area, to say nothing of its output of people with command of that knowledge. The impact of willingness to communicate within the general American culture is now fairly well understood, although additional research in this area certainly is needed. Comparable knowledge concerning other cultures, for the most part, is virtually nonexistent. Filling this void should be the primary concern for scholars interested in conducting research in this area. (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991: 34)

Some 30 years after McCroskey and Richmond's (1991) observation, this book and our associated research projects (Henry *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b) mark important steps in re-orienting the WTC concept away from the stability implied by the original, trait-like conceptualisation (MacIntyre, 2007). In exploring how people are 'able to communicate effectively in multicultural settings' (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991: 34), our research offers a more fluid and developmentally focused conceptualisation of WTC. For researchers seeking to investigate the complexity of language learners' communication in a globalised, technologised and multilingual world, it provides valuable methodological guidance. We hope that it will inspire work in other contexts where WTC can similarly be investigated as a process in motion.

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