

**Migration, Language, and Feelings of Belonging:
A Linguistic Ethnography of Iranian Migrants in Germany**

By

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the interplay of language, national identification, and emotions in a multicultural and multilingual context. It questions migrants' access to linguistic resources and critiques claims that it is migrants who fail to master the national language and integrate into their host societies. This inquiry centers on an ethnographic case study of adult Iranian migrants in Germany who, due to global and national politics and growing anti-immigrant sentiment, face discrimination in nearly every aspect of life. By foregrounding the voice of these individuals, this research examines how the sociopolitical environment impacts multilingual Iranian migrants' relationship to their linguistic resources and their sense of alienation or belonging.

Combining narrative and discourse analytic methods—including participant observation, field notes, and in-depth interviews—this study argues that through negotiating the complex interplay between marginality, nationality, and language in migration experiences, Iranians highlight their position, sense of displacement, and access to language resources in Germany. In addition, it argues that by narrating their experiences and personal encounters with the host community and other migrants in Germany, Iranian migrants express their transnational ties to Iran and negotiate the oppression, discrimination, and prejudice they face in Germany.

The twofold contribution of the linguistic ethnography of Iranians in Germany which goes beyond the existing US-centered literature, highlights migrants' experiences in a country well known for its antiforeigner sentiments. It also complements traditional classroom-centered research in Second Language Acquisition by investigating the use of linguistic and cultural resources in real life situations. The narratives in this study aim to help educators understand the injustice, suffering, and inequality that migrants face in receiving societies. Finally, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about how to integrate migrants into their host societies and equip them with the language skills required for work and education.

To Mohammad Rahsepar, a 29-year-old Iranian refugee who ended his life in Würzburg's refugee dorm in January 2012.

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Introduction

As an Iranian international student and a native Persian speaker, I faced many linguistic and cultural challenges during the decade I lived in Germany (2001-2011). My experience taught me that the quality of a person's life in a new country is directly related to their proficiency in that country's dominant language. However, the language classes offered to international students at my one-year college in Cologne functioned solely as an entry ticket to other institutions of higher learning. Texts titled *Hände falten, Schnabel halten!* "Fold Your Hands and Shut Up" and *Hornhaut auf der Seele!* "A Callus on the Spirit" emphasized nitpicky grammar rules, and did not help me learn writing or speaking. Instead, they made German classes a battlefield where my defeat was guaranteed from the beginning. It was through such experiences and the emotions around them that my feeling of perpetual foreignness accompanied me until the day I left Germany.

I was not alone in these experiences. Through my volunteer work as a translator/interpreter at various refugee camps in West Germany, I became aware of the similar hardships that refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, and Syria endured. Learning German, overcoming social isolation in the host community, and becoming accepted were dreams that almost all of them harbored for years. Through interacting with these refugees and hearing their stories, I became interested in the lives of migrants from the Middle East, the ways they form social relationships and affiliative links within dominant societies, and the role language plays in these processes.

Observing migrants from various countries has influenced the ways in which I conceptualize the relationship between migration, language, and society. Through interacting with migrants, I found that although we share similar experiences, we have diverse experiences of marginality, discrimination, and prejudice within intercultural and multilingual encounters, and varied access to linguistic resources (cf. Safi 2010). Groups with varied migration backgrounds have been understudied within Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

While the category *immigrant* refers to a person who has left his or her home country to live in another country, immigrants should not be understood as an undifferentiated group. As the number of migrants from Middle Eastern countries continues to grow in the West, their experiences require more sustained attention. Much of the research in the area of migration and discourse is focused on the racist attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of members of dominant groups; on dominant institutional ideologies (e.g. Wodak and Reisigl 1999; Van Dijk 2011; 2014; 2018); and on the experiences of African Americans (e.g. Ibrahim 2008; 2011; Ladson-Billings 2014; Anya 2017), Latinos and Latinas (e.g. Kilty and Haymes 2000; Zubaran 2008), and Asians in North America and Europe (e.g. Chou 2008; Heere 2017). In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, equity issues, particularly those affecting Muslim Arabs and Pakistanis in the U.S., have become a concern for researchers (e.g. El-Haj 2002; Ibish 2003; Suleiman, Goodman, and Carey 2004; Sarroub 2005; El-Haj 2005; 2006; 2007; Fine and Sirin 2008; Ghaffar-Kucher 2009; 2012; Bartlett, Mendenhall, and Ghaffar-Kucher 2017). However, there is still a need for research on the *narratives* of the experiences of particular displaced groups, including Iranian migrants.

Today, the term “Middle East,” which likely emerged in the 1850s from the British India Office, is loosely used to include diverse Arab and non-Arab regions in countries along the Persian Gulf to the North African shore (Tehrani 2009). There is little empirical research on the language trajectories and experiences of refugees and migrants from non-Arab Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran. The experience of Iranian migrants “shows the impact of global political forces and diplomatic tensions between home and host societies as well as the historical changes and structural transformation in both integration, ethnic identity formation, and cultural (re)construction of the diasporic groups and the ways they respond to host discrimination and prejudice” (Mobasher 2018b, 4).

I seek to contribute to SLA research by paying attention to the voices and narratives of Iranian migrants in Germany. The ethnographic data that I collected through interviewing and observing these migrants gave me an opportunity to enter the private, personal, and intimate areas of second-language learning and use (Norton 2013). In addition to the perspectives of my interlocutors, I also include my voice through a series of vignettes at the beginning of most chapters. Through these vignettes, I reflect on the ways I, like my research participants, experienced the journey of a multilingual migrant living and working in a country well known for its antiforeigner sentiments (cf. Sadeghi 2018).

My Germany-based study is relatively small in scale and includes only Iranian migrants. However, the insights gleaned are valuable for second-language scholars seeking to help refugee and migrants from different backgrounds overcome key hurdles, such as marginalization and exclusion. I combine narrative and discourse analytic methods to argue that through negotiating the complex interplay between marginality, nationality, and language in migration experiences, Iranian migrants highlight their position, sense of displacement, and access to linguistic resources in Germany. In addition, I argue that by narrating their experiences and personal encounters with the host community and other migrants in Germany, Iranian migrants express their transnational ties to Iran and negotiate the oppression, discrimination, and prejudice they face in Germany.

To gain greater insight into the relationship between language and emotion in the context of migration, I first explore the research on the history of migration from the Middle East to the West, focusing on Iranians in Germany. Then I explain the theoretical framework that I use to analyze the interviews, and the methodology for collecting data for this ethnographic study. Finally, I briefly summarize each chapter to come.

Migration in Western Europe

Internal migration within single countries had long been the focus of social scientists and other researchers. However, by the end of the twentieth century, a heightened interest in globalization has shifted academic focus to international migration between different countries. In particular, scholars are researching the social organization of migration and the experiences of displaced people, analyzing the impacts of their different political and social backgrounds (Rodriguez 2018).

A 2017 report by World Education News and Reviews (WENR) estimated 65.3 million displaced individuals worldwide by the end of 2015, the largest refugee inflow since the Second World War (Bryce 2017). Cultural heritage scholar Nic Craith (2012, 1), estimates that “almost one in every ten individuals living in the more developed regions of the world is a migrant.” The large movement of refugees towards countries in Western Europe began in late 1980s, with Germany experiencing “the largest increase in absolute numbers” (Baldwin-Edwards and Schain 1994). But what were the reasons for their migration?

The causes of displacement include wars, political conflict and violence, torture, imprisonment, and fear of being persecuted for reasons of religion, race, nationality. People also leave their habitual place of residence to settle in other parts of the world for better economic opportunities, better education, and reuniting with family members (Bryce 2017). Various Western nations have responded differently to refugee and immigrant flows in various historical moments. For example, although the United States significantly increased refugee quotas in 2016, the Trump administration has significantly decreased the number of admitted refugees (Bryce 2017). Craith (2012) argues that when migrants are doing well economically, their act of migration is valued because it will benefit the host societies. However, when poorer people migrate, their migration is viewed negatively, and they are labeled as “other.”

The decrease in refugee quotas in the United States had less to do with migrants' economic background, however, than with their cultures and perceived religion. Most newcomers to Western Europe and North America are from non-Western countries, with different languages, religions, and cultures from those of their hosts. This diversity has "created new anxieties and forms of resistance among the natives but also [has] raised new questions and concerns about inclusion, citizenship, belonging, and the integration of immigrants and their children for host governments" (Mobasher 2018b, 6). Craith (2012, 2) refers to the "deficit theory": when people from the host country look at migrants from a self-centric perspective and see them as backwards. This negative perception of people from Muslim-majority countries is still prevalent in Western countries. Said (1994) argues that the West sees Middle Eastern people as inferior, primitive, and in need of saving by the West. Three decades after Said's seminal work was published, we still know very little about how such negative discourses impact migrants' sense of self, feelings of belonging, and attitudes towards their own linguistic repertoires (but see Mobasher 2006).

Hearing the stories of migrants from the Middle East helps us to explore how they negotiate the complex interplay between marginality, nationality, and language. This study addresses Iranian migrants in Germany. Due to their country's global political standing, they are treated by Western governments and populations "as political outcasts" (Rodriguez 2018, xi). Many of them also do not identify with the Islamic regime inside Iran. These political conditions help explain the sense Iranians have of not being full members of either their host country or their homeland. Examining their unique experience of displacement reveals the impact of sociopolitical environment on migrants' relationship to their linguistic resources and sense of alienation or belonging.

The first group of Iranians who migrated to the West, in the 1960s and 1970s, wanted to learn technical skills and educational training. The second group consisted of "thousands of professionals, industrialists, students, political activists, journalists, artists, members of religious

minorities, and disenchanting and alienating” intellectual Iranians who migrated to the West at the time of and after the 1978-1979 Iranian Revolution and the resultant massive cultural transformations (Mobasher 2018b, 4). Unlike some ethnic minorities who have experienced declining discrimination, incidents like the 1979 hostage crisis and the Rushdie affair of 1989 have led to backlash against Muslim-born Iranian immigrants. Iran’s continuous political conflict with Western countries has made this country a center of world attention. Global Iranophobia and Islamophobia have made Iranian migrants in the West subject to stigmatization, marginalization, demonization, and discrimination (Mobasher 2018b). These experiences have resulted in the loss of cultural and ethnic pride among some immigrants (Mobasher 2006).

The complexity of the experiences of Iranian migrants can be viewed in their relationships with each other and in their political stances. Some Iranians promote a non-Islamic Persian culture and national identity, marginalize Iranians who hold Islamic beliefs, and limit their access to diaspora communities. Some asked Obama and Trump administrations to impose more sanctions on the Islamic regime in Iran, while others asked to lift them (Mobasher 2018b). Some Iranian nationalists are proud of the Persian culture and heritage and identify themselves as Persian; others do not have a problem being identified with the Islamic government and identify themselves as Iranians (Mobasher 2006).

My personal migration experience to two different Western countries (Germany and the United States), has shown me that in addition to the pressures that Iranians feel from Western societies and the internal divide within Iranians in diaspora, the way we are treated by different hosts and their diverse migration policies further complicates our migration experiences. In this study, I assess the experiences of Iranians in Germany, which hosts a large population of Iranian migrants and refugees.

Iranian migrants in Germany

There is little research on Iranian narratives of displacement or their experience of belonging, language learning, and language use in North America or Europe (Aidani 2010). The limited social scientific research on Iranian migrants is heavily US-centered (e.g. Bozorgmehr 1992; Sabagh and Bozorgmehr 1994; Bozorgmehr 2000; Min and Bozorgmehr 2000; Mostofi 2003a; Mobasher 2006; Tehranian 2009; Sullivan 2010; Chaichian 2012; Mobasher 2013) and does not include other host countries such as Germany (but see Sanadjian 1995; Sadeghi 2014; 2019; 2018).

This dissertation examines the experiences of Iranians in Germany to help educators and policy makers gain greater insight into the educational and daily needs of migrants. Taking a close look at the unique narratives of displacement, war, and revolution, and incorporating notions of power into theories of SLA help our understanding of the effects of transnational geopolitics and the creation of hostile political climate on the lived experiences of language users with diverse political and social backgrounds (cf. Norton 2013).

It is estimated that in 2018, over twenty million migrants lived in Germany. This means that one in four people had a migration background (DeStatis 2019). It should be mentioned that Germany classifies a native-born person with one Iranian migrant parent who has not claimed citizenship at birth a “person with a migrant background” (DeStatis 2019). Germany is a popular destination for both Iranian migrants and refugees (Hakimzadeh 2006), hosting about 148,750 Iranian migrants in 2011 (Sadeghi 2018). By the end of 2016, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 22,910 refugees (excluding asylum-seekers) lived in Germany (2017). Although their citizenship status and geographical distribution is recorded, their education and employment status is absent in these reports (Sadeghi 2018).

Many Iranians regard German society as unwelcoming towards migrants. Respondents in the research conducted by sociologist Sahar Sadeghi said that unlike United States, which they perceived

as an immigrant-friendly nation, Germany is not receptive towards migrants. They argued that “immigration is not a part of Germany’s national identity or history” (2018, 59). Despite the experience of marginality and discrimination, the high educational aspirations of Iranians have made them middle class in Germany. However, Sadeghi argues that “antiforeigner prejudice and racism caps their ability to access greater opportunity structures and professional advancement” (2018, 59). She states that even if they achieve fluent proficiency in German and professional skills, Iranian migrants do not qualify for professional careers. The discriminatory and unfair employment conditions stand in the way of progress and advancement. For example, the German employment office refused to help Sadeghi’s study respondents; they claimed that this office systematically places foreigners in low-skilled jobs.

Although discrimination is part of everyday life for Iranians in Germany, many of them have developed various coping strategies to negotiate it. Some of these strategies include hiding their ethnic identities, not speaking Persian in public, not eating Persian food, socializing with and even marrying Germans, denying any relationship to Muslims, and calling themselves Persian rather than Iranian (cf. Sanadjian 1995; Sadeghi 2018). Sadeghi views these mechanisms as “a loss of status, pride, and maybe even dignity” (2018, 64).

Although Sadeghi’s comprehensive research offers insights into the impact of discrimination in German institutions on the experiences of first- and second-generation Iranians, the role of language in the experiences of these migrants is absent. By exploring the narrative of adult multilingual Iranian migrants who have lived for several years in Germany, my study illustrates how they negotiate the complex interplay between marginality, nationality, and language.

Theoretical Perspectives Informing this Study

To think critically and understand the experiences of the research participants, I employ the theoretical perspectives of discourse analytic approaches: narrative analysis, discourse analysis (DA), and critical discourse analysis (CDA). The microanalytic perspective of narrative analysis helps me to understand how people use language to make sense of their experiences in society (Souto-Manning 2005). The macroanalytic perspective of CDA illuminates how power and language work in society. The autobiographic vignettes in most chapters give me the opportunity to be an active storyteller, sharing my memories and emotions as a multilingual migrant in Germany and the United States. By combining these approaches, I highlight the links “between macro-level power inequities and micro-level interactional positioning” to show how migrants challenge their position, sense of displacement, and access to linguistic resources in host societies (Rymes 2003, 122).

Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse is contextualized language-in-action that shapes the world we live in (Toolan 1997). Critically reflecting on discourse requires “an analysis of *power effects*, of the outcome of power, of what power *does* to people, groups and societies, and of *how* this impact comes about. The deepest effect of power everywhere is *inequality*, as power differentiates and selects, includes and excludes” (Blommaert 2005, 2). By drawing upon the discursive means that we have available, we use our voices to make ourselves understood or we fail to do so. But how does language become an object of inequality and hegemony?

Discourse as an instrument of power, especially institutionally reproduced power, is established in society and is socially conditioned. Integrating ethnography and CDA can help us see the structural relationships between dominance, discrimination, power, and control that are expressed through language (Wodak 1995). CDA helps us to understand contemporary social reality

by focusing on the intersection of language, discourse, speech, and social structure. The goal of CDA analysis is “empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilizing people to remedy social wrong” (Blommaert 2005, 25). Linguist Michael Toolan (1997) argues that the critical discourse analyst who wants to present a genuine critique should make proposals for change. In this study, I use CDA to analyze language education policy in Germany to bring awareness to the issue of failed refugee policies and make proposals for change. Besides language policies in the form of texts, I use migrants’ narratives to investigate how these texts impact their lives.

Narrative Analysis

Immigration has multiple meanings related to the reasons why people immigrate, the experiences they have had before coming to the target country, and the conditions under which they live. According to applied linguist Bonny Norton (2013), North American and European studies have shown the paradoxical position of immigrant language learners in relation to target language speakers. On the one hand, in order to improve their language proficiency, they need access to the social networks of the target language speakers. On the other hand, one of the prerequisites for entering these social networks is sharing a common language. The difficulty of some migrant groups in gaining access to the speakers of dominant languages has long been a topic of research on inter-ethnic encounters (e.g. Ng 1981; Bremer et al. 2013; Ryan 2013; Norton 2013). However, as Norton mentions, absent from all these studies are the biographical insights that show “the voices of particular learners, their distinctive histories, their unique desires for the future” (2013, 85). Such personal narratives are helpful in understanding the relationship between migrants’ emotions and attitudes towards their linguistic resources.

Language users’ autobiographical narratives are valuable sources of evidence about the process of adult language and culture acquisition. Over the past two decades, first-person narratives

have become important in linguistic and SLA literature (Pavlenko 2007; Denzin 2013). Scholars have begun prioritizing the voices of common people over elites, opening the field for unknown authors with no political power or literary credentials (Chang 2008). Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, 157) reject earlier preference for third-person “objectivity” and maintain that “in the human sciences first-person accounts in the form of personal narratives provide a much richer source of data than do third-person distal observations.” While elite discourse (that of politicians and academic scholars) about ethnic relations and immigration have been widely published in textbooks and the media, this study gives migrants an opportunity to tell their own stories of migration and their encounters with xenophobic discourses in their everyday lives.

According to educational anthropologist Heewon Chang (2008, 34), “self-discovery in a cultural sense is intimately related to understanding others.” In this regard, anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1959) argues that we do not study another culture to understand it, but rather to understand our own. Anthropologist Ruth Behar (2003) found that she came into her own voice when she was translating the voice of Esperanza, the woman whose story she narrates in *Translated Woman*. Regardless of whether readers see themselves through others or against them, narratives encourage self-reflection, which in turn contributes to cultural understanding (Chang 2008). Iranian migrants’ discourse is rarely represented in either scholarly or popular media. This study’s narratives of Iranian migrants give readers an opportunity to hear stories from people who are oppressed by xenophobic discourses, and thus come to a better understanding of how these discourses work in real lives.

Autoethnographic Vignettes

The main reason for selecting Germany over other receiving countries hosting migrants was my personal decade-long experience studying as an international student and working multiple low-income, part-time jobs. When I was transcribing the interviews for the present study, I could not stop thinking about how similar my own experiences were to those of the participants. I could not

be a passive storyteller because “the inquiry [was] inseparable from who I am” (Louis 1991, 365). I wanted readers to relive the experiences of Iranian migrants through both my eyes and the eyes of other migrants (Denzin 2000). Sociologist and ethnographer John Van Maanen (1979) argues that by including their personal experiences in their research material, ethnographers are able to access an instinctive understanding of the social world that they are studying. Through presenting my experiences I aimed to enhance the “contextual richness” of my ethnographic research (Miles and Huberman 1994, 83).

The narrative turn found its way into applied linguistics after scholars such as Schumann (1977) and Bailey (1980) studied second language learners’ diaries to identify factors that impact language learning experience (Pavlenko 2007). This method has become so popular that language learning memoirs and autobiographic interviews have been supplemented by diaries. Unlike experimental methodologies that do not have access to researchers’ private lives and their view of the process of language learning, one of the contributions of this type of study to the field of SLA is that it deconstruct borders between researchers and their readers (Humphreys 2005). In addition, these vignettes are explicitly reflexive, which give authors the opportunity “to find out more about themselves and others” (Rosen 1991, 2). In these vignettes, I was an empathic participant who wanted to jointly produce story lines (cf. Davies and Harré 1990).

Although autobiographic narratives contribute to research on SLA, like any research method, they also have shortcomings. For example, all representations are partial and problematic. There is no language for representation that can achieve an omniscient point of reference. The truth in narratives can be found in the language ideologies and discourses in relation to which narrators position themselves. Certainly, a variety of analytical frameworks are needed to examine how humans author selves in narratives (Pavlenko 2007). However, I believe that by enriching our

understanding and enhancing researcher reflexivity, the contribution of the researcher's personal vignettes contribute more than its shortcomings, especially in second language acquisition research.

Methodology

In this qualitative study, I adopt a triangular research strategy with three components. First, I conducted qualitative, open-ended interviews with forty-seven Iranian migrants in Germany who, like me, have been migrating between places, languages, and cultures, and who have frequently been challenged by the notion of in-between-ness. Second, I observed their daily social interactions and took field notes about their language use and cultural experiences. Third, I employed an autobiographical textual approach, focusing on a selection of vignettes I wrote about my own lived experiences as a migrant that are similar to the experiences of other migrants in this research.

Fieldwork

I collected the ethnographic data presented in this study in Germany in Summer 2017. The research involved participant observation, writing field notes, and conducting interviews. I used personal contacts to identify potential research participants in eleven cities: Duisburg, Essen, Cologne, Bonn, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Passau, Berlin, Potsdam, and Magdeburg. I visited three refugee camps, observed four language and integration classes, and attended various social activities and events. I interviewed forty-seven Iranian refugees who have migrated to various cities in Germany since 1979, the year that the Islamic Revolution won power in Iran and the Iran-Iraq war began. Participants described their lived experiences with language and culture acquisition. I also observed their environments as they lived out their everyday lives.

In Wiesbaden, I visited one of the integration courses where refugees study German language and culture free of charge. I also taught German at one of these integration classes. The students were from Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria. I took notes on how they compared me, a native

speaker of Persian, to their German-Turkish teacher, who could not come to class on that day. (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1. Teaching an integration course for refugees.

Participants

Forty-seven Iranians took part in this research (see Table 1 below): twenty-six men and twenty-one women. I sought Iranians who were born in Iran and spoke both Persian and German. Twenty of the participants were above fifty years old, and the rest were between twenty-three and fifty years old. Sixteen were among the group of new refugees who have come to Germany since 2015, when some European countries opened their borders to refugees from countries in the Middle East. Eleven of the participants came to Germany between 2000 and 2009. Twenty have lived in Germany since 1979. Three of the participants came to Germany on student visas. One of the students came in 1985 in the aftermath of the 1980-1983 Cultural Revolution, when universities closed on the order of the religious leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, to purge un-Islamic students and lecturers (Razavi 2009). The remaining seven participants either joined their families who took refuge in Germany after the Iranian Revolution or married German passport holders and moved to Germany from Iran after 1986.

Most of the participants left Iran either because they were politically active during and after the Iranian Revolution or because they were the children of political activists. Among them were Deutsche Welle journalists; supporters of the Pahlavi dynasty, the last dynasty to rule Iran; and former heads of an exiled political opposition group. One participant was Baha’i, two were Assyrian Christians, and the rest were Muslim-born.

Table 1. Demographics of research participants.

Gender	Female	21
	Male	26
Age	Between 23 and 50	27
	Above 50	20
Language	Persian	47
	German	47
	Assyrian	2
Religious Affiliation	Muslim	44
	Christian	2
	Bahai	1
Arrival to Germany	1979 – 2000	20
	2000 – 2009	11
	Since 2015	16
Visa Type	Student	3
	Family Reunion and Marriage	4
	Refugee	40

Interviews

The open-ended interviews in this study lasted between one and three hours each and were audio-recorded. Sometimes, as the interviews moved along, I took notes to formulate new questions in order to clarify something that was said. All interviews were conducted in Persian (my first language and theirs). I gave them the option to choose the language for the interview (Persian, German, or English), and except for one participant who mixed German and Persian, everyone opted for Persian. The relationship that was established between us was based on our mutual country of origin and that we all were speakers of Persian. It is uncommon for Iranians to speak languages other than Persian to each other; when we choose not to speak Persian, it may mean we

want to keep our distance from one another. Another reason to conduct interviews in Persian was that many of the participants' German proficiency was not sufficient for narrating complex events.

Empowering Research Participants

Identifying the power relations between the researcher and the interviewees is central to qualitative research methodology. Although I shared many similar experiences with my research participants, the unequal power relationship between us, especially with those who were newly arrived refugees with few institutional protections, is undeniable (Norton 2013). I tried to create opportunities for participants to have agency in my research. I left it to them to determine the time and location of our meeting. After the brief introduction about myself and my research, most participants asked me some personal questions. The majority of them were interested in hearing about my different experiences living in Germany and the United States. Although in the beginning I sometimes felt uncomfortable opening myself up and exposing my vulnerabilities, I tried to be precise detailing my answers since I was hoping they would do the same for me when responding to my questions. Sharing my experiences with my participants gave me the opportunity to shift our relationship in ways by placing me in the same position of vulnerability that I hoped for from my participants (Ross 2017). Giving them the opportunity to ask me questions also created a space for me to clarify our similarities and differences.

Although it is impossible for me to know whether or not my participants felt empowered when they heard my stories, I got the impression that after hearing about my difficulties in Germany and my academic accomplishments in the U.S., they showed more interest to talk with me about their experiences in Germany. The interview questions were designed so that the interviewees had the opportunity to get involved in the conversation and collaborate with me in understanding their experiences. Through co-constructing narratives, I wished to develop an ethical and empowering relationship with my interlocutors. Our collaborative dialogue and interactive engagement in

producing knowledge, created a space for us to reflect on knowledge, negotiate meaning construction, and seek mutual understanding (Lather 1988; Ross 2017).

Some participants agreed to be interviewed twice and some did not. Each initial interview lasted between one and three hours, and the follow-up interviews took one to two hours. I had a list of questions from an interview protocol (Appendix A), but in most interviews, I asked participants only two or three questions. I wanted participants to share their insights into the ways they “subjectively recall, transform, and reproduce information from previous personal experiences or from other sources, even when such transformations are ‘biased’ or ‘unreliable’” (Van Dijk 1987, 19). I was interested to hear how participants interpreted and processed their experiences and how they conveyed them in their narratives.

In the in-depth interviews, I asked general questions, such as, “Tell me your life story.” I also asked them what role language played in their imagination of life outside Iran, and how they defined home. To find links between biographical experiences, emotions, and belonging, I used the *Sprachenportraits* (language portraits) tool which has been used for the last three decades by scholars of language awareness (Neumann 1991; Krumm and Jenkins 2001; Krumm 2010; Prasad 2014; Finkbeiner and Svalberg 2016; Busch 2018). In the original version of this tool, participants (usually children) were asked to visualize their linguistic repertoire by painting their languages on a body silhouette. This creative activity helps individuals to talk about their country of origin and compare their linguistic resources (Busch 2012). Since my participants were adults, I modified the method by using verbal explanations of their bodies rather than drawings. Since participants may not be aware of their implicit language ideologies (Kroskrity 2004), this method enabled me to investigate the way they experienced and interpreted their embodied relationship to their languages. I permitted respondents to describe what was meaningful and salient to them without classifying them in standardized or predetermined categories (Quinn Patton 2002).

To disrupt the traditional researcher-participant power dynamic, I tried not to interrupt participants while they were telling me their stories, allowing our conversations to develop organically. Some interviewees shared more with me about their lives and some shared less. Some told me their life stories, and some told me things that were not related to my interview questions. One man wanted to convince me to convert to Christianity and connected all the questions I asked him to Jesus and his miracles. Another interviewee introduced himself as the biggest atheist in the world and connected every interview question to atheism. Those who were more reticent had many reasons for not sharing their life stories and for being cautious about what to tell me. Some did not know me and may not have felt comfortable with me. Others were under pressure from the German government and may have had to censor themselves.

For example, one day I heard a group of young refugees speaking Persian while I was doing grocery shopping. I approached them and introduced myself and asked if I could interview them. They kindly invited me to their camp the next day. They told me that since they did not know me personally, they could not trust me enough to share everything with me. At first, I thought that they suspected me of spying on them for the Iranian government. I later learned, to my surprise, that they actually thought that I was hired by the German government to spy on them and see what they did daily. They were especially very careful to not to disclose their refugee cases and the real reasons they left Iran—which were also not the focus of my interview questions. Nevertheless, through our conversations and their different approaches to answering my interview questions, I learned about their lives, how they use language to communicate in the society, and the obstacles they face.

Since my participants and I co-constructed knowledge about the social world, it is possible that my understanding of myself and migration in general influenced my interlocutors. When a researcher chooses a qualitative method over a quantitative one, they aim to not be a passive observer of reality (Dewey 1929). I did not passively record my participants' opinions and

experiences, assuming that whatever they said was accurate or truthful, nor did I conduct “empathetic interviewing,” taking a stance in favor of them (Fontana and Frey 2005, 696). Rather, I conducted “active epistemic interviews” in which I was not always agreeing with my participants, questioning and challenged them to jointly co-construct “conversational reality *in situ*” (Brinkmann 2016, 71–72). I do not view my participation in interviews as a weakness but a strength of my research.

Translating and Transcribing

I transcribed the interviews with the interlocutors, and, with the help of an Iranian-American friend and an American student of Persian, translated some interview sections from Persian to English. I analyzed the data in Persian, not in translation. Except for chapter one, which, following Souto-Manning (2005), has English-translated quotes for ease of reading, the original Persian transcripts are available in other chapters, allowing Persian speakers to read them in the language in which they were produced (cf. Pavlenko 2007). Since I transcribed from oral to written and translated from Persian to English, both the form and the meaning of the narratives differ slightly from the original; I want to make readers aware of the limitations due to translation. If the narrators used a Persian word in a way that is not directly translatable, I explain the context to make it clear.

To capture orality in writing, I used brackets to mark laughter and pauses, parenthesis to add extra information, dashes to indicate the speaker got cut off, ellipses to mark omitted speech from the transcript, capital letters to show emphasized words or phrases (bold in the Persian transcript), hashes to mark unclear words, <VOX> for constructed speech, and italics for foreign words (German and Arabic) that participants used while speaking Persian. I translated Arabic and Persian expressions and clarified historical references in the footnotes to aid readers unfamiliar with Arab and Iranian history and religion. I left expressions that are familiar to most readers, such as *Allahu*

Akbar, untranslated (cf. Gaudio 2009). See Table 2 below for a summary of transcription conventions.

Table 2. Note on transcription.

[]	Laughter and Pause
()	Extra Information
-	Speech Cut off
...	Omitted speech
CAPITALS	emphasis
Bold in Persian	emphasis
#	Unclear
<VOX>	Constructed Speech
<i>Italics</i>	Foreign Words

Coding

While analyzing the content and the theme of the interviews, I identified emerging themes, patterns, and trends (cf. Schumann and Schumann 1977). For example, I was interested in how participants felt about experiencing marginality, discrimination, and prejudice at work and in government organizations. In the interviews, I identified variables like being the only foreigner at workplace or not having supervisors who support non-Western migrant workers, and I analyzed based on those identified variables.

After transcribing the interviews, I looked for an analytical method that could help me interpret what participants convey in our conversations without being overly reliant on my sociocultural background knowledge. According to anthropological linguists John Gumperz and Dell Hymes, as an ethnographer, the directly analyzable material I had available could be understood as “situations of speaking” or “events” (Gumperz 2018, 309). Gumperz (2018, 310) argues that “all communication is intentional and grounded in inferences.” To infer what interlocutors intended to

convey without imposing my view or interpretations of social life on them (cf. Garfinkel 1967), I looked at how we engaged in meaning-making processes. I went beyond what was literally said to find what was left unsaid.

I performed an ethnographically informed, in-depth analysis of our speech exchanges. To interpret what was said, I looked for “contextualization cues” (Gumperz 2018, 315), including verbal, grammatical, and lexical signs, as well as suprasegmental signs, including intonation, stress, codeswitching, extra emphasis, and hesitation. These cues helped me to understand how interlocutors used language to signal or index some aspects of a situation (cf. Auer 1999).

To analyze both content and prosodic contextualization cues, I identified emerging themes, patterns, and events, and marked those that were thematically coherent (cf. Schumann and Schumann 1977; Gumperz 2018). This way, I could gain insight into situated understandings, discover recurrent events, and “show how they contribute[d] to interpretation (Gumperz 2018, 318). I then compared the related events to see commonalities and differences among different participants’ narratives.

Privacy and Confidentiality

I protected participants’ identities in the interviews by changing all the names of people and institutions to pseudonyms and modifying or omitting personal information in transcripts. My vignettes in this collection are from my own perspective; however, I used pseudonyms to protect others’ identities.

Terminology

Although exile is a universal experience, because of varying political and social conditions, it cannot be essentialized. Polish-American writer Eva Hoffman (1999, 44) names several subcategories of exiles, namely “refugees, emigres, emigrants, and expatriates, designations that point to distinct kinds

of social, but also internal, experience.” The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) uses the umbrella term *populations of concern* (UNHCR 2017) to refer to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returned refugees, returned IDPs, and stateless persons. Every year, millions of people leave their home countries to start new lives. Their stories all are individual. They emigrate for numerous reasons. Their experiences as soon as they cross the first border are not the same. Likewise, the terms that categorize them may differ. For example, a family forced to flee their home because of war may be granted refugee status in the U.S.—or may end up at the Manus Island refugee detention camp designated as an asylum seeker, with no food, water, or electricity.

Migrant, asylum seeker, and refugee are not synonymous terms; people labeled with these terms may have dissimilar experiences. However, I use the term migrant as a generic term for people who move to other countries with the intention to stay for some period of time. The term migrant includes both permanent and temporary migrants with a valid residence permit or visa, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants; it excludes tourists and business visitors (Dumont and Scarpetta 2015). I also use the term *refugee* to refer to people whom I interviewed at refugee camps. In order to be precise in the representation of each participant in this study, I explain their individual stories and highlight their different experiences.

Researcher positionality

In adopting a qualitative methodology, I acknowledge my presence in my interviews, though not as an equal participant. I spoke and acted from a position of an ethnographer who, like my research participants, had experienced the journey of a migrant living and working in a foreign culture. I acknowledged to the participants my privilege of holding dual U.S. and Iranian citizenship, and I told them about my past challenges as an international student living in Germany. But even if I had

not possessed dual citizenship and held refugee status, our experiences would not have been the same. Each migrant's experience is different. I located myself in conversations, as a subjectively empathic participant who wanted to jointly collaborate to find the roots of our feelings towards our migration experiences, access to linguistic resources, and sense of alienation or belonging (cf. Davies and Harré 1990). The questions I decided to ask the participants, the themes I focused on, and my own biases and preconceptions that influenced the way I tried to understand my participants reveal that I was not a distant fly on the wall (Morehouse and Maykut 1994; Dwyer and Buckle 2009).

In both interviews and analysis, I used the pronouns “we” when I felt that I was familiar with the situation and experiences and “they” when I felt like an outsider who hoped to learn from my participants. I occupied a space in between; I was neither a total insider nor an outsider (Dwyer and Buckle 2009).

Being a partial insider in migration research—sharing a similar cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and national heritage with the participants—created complexities in the field (Ganga and Scott 2006). Because I am an Iranian who had previously lived in Germany, I had connections to reliable gatekeepers in Germany who gave me easy access to the field. In addition, our similar backgrounds helped me gain my respondents' trust, allowing me to conduct intimate interactive interviews with them (Dyck 1993; Dwyer and Buckle 2009). But feeling like a partial insider also had its potential drawbacks. My subjective insights into the situations and experiences of Iranian migrants in Germany are influenced by my personal experience, and cultural background. Sometimes it was difficult to separate these understandings from that of the participants when I was interviewing them and interpreting our conversations. I realize that “consistent with [the] feminist endeavor, the end result of interpretive analysis is a presentation of the researcher's conceptualizations, which, at the same time, retains the logic of the subjects' lives and maintains their views” (Dyck 1993, 56). With

this in mind, I explain the circumstances surrounding my analysis and the ways participants and I co-constructed knowledge about the social world.

Chapter outline

Following this introduction, the dissertation contains five chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter 1, “Language Education Policy and Resources for Migrants in Germany: The Experiences of Iranian Refugees Learning German,” critically analyzes the provisions and policies concerning refugee language education on the German Residence Act and on the websites of particular German ministries and government offices. Drawing from ethnographic work on the experiences of Iranian refugees with the German Federal Government’s subsidized language programs and volunteer-run courses, I illustrate how the tension between policy and practice affects migrants. I argue that refugees’ restricted access to and dissatisfaction with the language programs negatively impact their language learning outcomes, qualifying them only for jobs at the lower end of the pay scale. Nevertheless, to solve the failed language policies in their own favor, some refugees manage to learn the host language independent of government help. I examine the personal strategies they employ to do so.

Chapter 2, “Discourses of Racism and Feelings of Belonging: An Analysis of Iranian Refugees’ Narratives about Life and Language in Germany,” explores the relationship between migrants’ perceptions of discriminatory institutional discourses, their language attitudes, and feelings of belonging. Ever-evolving global and national political movements and growing anti-immigrant sentiment have resulted in increased discrimination against Middle Easterners. In this chapter, I investigate the impact of perceived social discrimination on their feelings of belonging and their attitudes towards their linguistic repertoires. Significantly, a critique of widespread xenophobic discourses present in their daily lives is featured in most of the participants’ narratives of migration.

The consequences of discriminatory discourses in society are alienation, the feeling of not belonging and of being the Other, and having mixed emotions and attitudes towards language, religion, and society. Most interviewees focused on their experiences of discrimination in German society, and consequently developed negative attitudes towards the German language. One interviewee, however, had a very different experience. He highlighted his attempts to integrate into German society through religious conversion and deliberate interactions with Germans. The narratives in this chapter give voice to the unique experiences of Iranian migrants, who are not often heard, at the intersection of xenophobia and discrimination.

In **Chapter 3**, “Assyrian-Iranian Migrants’ Portrayal of Emotions toward their Linguistic Resources,” I explore the relationship between migrants’ linguistic resources, memories of the past, and feelings of belonging, focusing on two participants who are Assyrian-Iranian. I examine how their memories in Iran and Germany impact the way they develop emotional attachments to Persian, Assyrian, and German. I argue that these migrants’ experiences with different languages cause them to ascribe different emotional values to each of them. On the one hand, their good memories in a language and strong feelings of belonging to a place lead them to highly value that language, to the extent that they incorporate it into most aspects of their social lives. On the other hand, memories in a language with neutral or negative connotations decrease these migrants’ reported social interactions in that language. Linguist Mary Besemeres argues that “different languages make possible distinct emotional styles, which engage different parts of a bilingual’s self” (2004, 140). This chapter shows that the language in which these participants express their emotional involvement in particular moments of their life invokes specific feelings and represents their inner world better than the other linguistic resources.

In **Chapter 4**, “Understanding Ethnically-Framed Conflicts: An Analysis of the Portrayals of Arabs in Iranians’ Speech,” I analyze the role of language and interaction in constructing and

deconstructing groupness. I use discourse analysis to investigate how Iranian refugees co-constructed stereotypes about people from Arab countries and the Arabic language. Although participants initially claimed there were ethnic conflicts between Iranians and Arabs as groups, close analysis of their discourse shows that these tensions actually emerged between and among individuals in specific interactional contexts, and that their “groupness” was discursively constructed. My aim in this chapter is not to treat the Iranian participants as representative of “Iranians” as a group, that is by presupposing their “groupness,” but rather to examine how they use language to construct their own and others’ groupness. By looking closely at the interviews and the ways participants create selves (Iranians) and others (Arabs) through reference to ethnonational categories on the basis of languages they speak, I argue that these categorizations influence their feelings towards the incumbents of such categories and the Arabic language. However, the data also show that while negotiating their interactions and experiences with Arabic- and Persian-speaking people in Germany, participants began to discursively deconstruct the stereotypes they had reified of the other. The deconstruction of these categories helped them bridge gaps in an interactional context and created feelings of solidarity.

Chapter 5, “Representing and Positioning Self in Storytelling Practices: Iranian Migrants’ Autobiographical Narratives of Work in Germany,” explores Iranian migrants’ construction of self in their autobiographical narratives of the workplace in Germany. I investigate how these employees represent and position themselves and others interactionally in their stories to gain a critical eye on their position at the workplace. While narrating language-mediated activities, participants use markers of modalization, codeswitching, and reported speech to construct the Self in relation to Germans. Such discursive constructions help narrators to characterize their past and present selves as moral, social, and ethical. Examining how people position themselves with respect to audience

within autobiographical narratives provides a framework for studying resistance against oppressive social structures.

In the **Conclusion**, I summarize my findings and propose how educational institutions like universities and language classes can be used as spaces for welcoming migrants to new societies.

Chapter 1

Language Education Policy and Resources for Migrants in Germany:

The Experiences of Iranian Refugees Learning German

Immigrant proficiency in the language of host societies is associated with higher socioeconomic outcomes, better job opportunities, and successful adaptation and resettlement (Boyd and Cao 2009; Camps 2015). Although migrants may be aware of these benefits, some host societies accuse them of resistance to learning the majority language (Tse 2001). In examining how migrants perceive, interpret, and are impacted by language policies, we need to hear about their experiences (King and De Fina 2010; Albury 2014; Phyak and Thuy Thi Ngoc Bui 2014). A multilayered and ethnographic approach to language planning and policy (LPP) provides “unique insights into LPP processes through thick descriptions of policy interpretation and implementation at the local level” (Hornberger and Johnson 2007, 511). “The ethnography of language policy is not so much about uncovering how macro-level LPP acts on people at the micro-level, or even about conveying on-the-ground information back to policymakers, but rather it is about how people themselves actively create, contest, and mediate LPP at multiple levels—micro, meso, and macro” (Hornberger and Johnson 2011, 285). Rather than blaming migrants for neglecting to learn the host language to ensure high-income jobs, host societies need to assess their language education policies and the resources they make available to immigrants to better understand the impediments to effective policy implementation.

A comprehensive examination of a language policy is incomplete without hearing the language beliefs and ideologies of the language users (Albury 2014). In this chapter, I draw on the insights of Iranian refugees who, despite their strong investment in learning German, faced obstacles accessing and using the German government’s language resources and developed their own ways of

responding to these challenges. I use ethnography of language policy (Davis 1999; Canagarajah 2005; Hornberger and Johnson 2007; Johnson 2009) to argue that there is a gap between the provisions of the German Residence Act (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*) regarding refugee language education policy and what is actually happening on the ground for refugees who try to learn German. In the absence of effective government and private resources, some of these migrants adopt personal learning strategies to overcome their language learning obstacles. German courses for migrants and refugees in Germany have been researched by scholars such as the educational scientist Alisha M. B. Heinemann (2017), who interviewed language teachers of integration and volunteer-run courses. This chapter builds on that earlier work by including the experiences of language users in integration, vocational, and volunteer-run language resources, adding a new level of understanding of the tension between policy and practice and its impact on migrants' language learning outcome.

Research on language acquisition of adult migrants has primarily focused on the impact of language proficiency on their lives (e.g. Norton Peirce 1995; Boyd and Cao 2009), their individual characteristics for second language acquisition (van Tubergen and Kalmijn 2009), or the relationship between institutional language policies and the life and actual language practices of migrants (Feuerherm and Ramanathan 2015; Spotti, Kroon, and Li 2019). Few researchers have investigated the relationship between the goals that host governments identify for migrant language learners, the resources they provide for them, and the challenges that these learners encounter. This chapter seeks to contribute to SLA research by using the ethnography of language policy to shed light on the effectiveness of language resources from migrants' own points of view instead of from specialists and policy-makers (Canagarajah 2005; Hornberger and Johnson 2007). In particular, I critically analyze German language policy texts and compare them to the interview data I collected during fieldwork in two cities in Germany to examine how Iranian refugees perceive, interpret, and are

impacted by language policies. I conclude by connecting my findings to larger phenomena of migration, failed educational policies for refugees, and injustice.

Language Acquisition in Host Societies

It is widely understood that mastering the host language improves migrants' contact with the surrounding community (Martinovic, van Tubergen, and Maas 2009) and their economic well-being (Chiswick and Miller 1996; Shields and Price 2002). Within the common basic principles for immigrant integration policy, the Council of the European Union emphasizes that "basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration" (Council of the European Union 2004, 18). To encourage migrants to take language classes, educational institutions refer to research that shows that proficiency in the language of the host society improves social capital and helps economic and social integration (Boyd and Cao 2009). They also warn that unsuccessful language acquisition has adverse consequences for migrants such as increasing their mental health risk and causing symptoms of psychological distress (Chung and Kagawa-Singer 1995; Beiser and Hou 2001). There are also instances where host governments develop language policies and require migrants to practice monolingualism in the dominant language of the host country, while neglecting the language migrants bring from home (Li and Sah 2019). But problems arise when many receiving societies realize the challenges involved in designing and delivering effective language policies and programs. Their failure in implementing successful education policies and pedagogies is reflected in official reports (e.g. Rango and Laczko 2014). However, when language acquisition is not successful, members of the host community often put the blame on migrants and disregard the role that their education policies play on migrants' educational performance (Li and Sah 2019).

But why do most host governments fail to achieve their purpose in their language policies? Many host countries do not consider migrants' needs to successfully learn the target language (Boyd and Cao 2009; Li and Sah 2019). Linguists Guofang Li and Pramod Kumar Sah (2019) provide some reasons for the low enrollment rates of many language programs subsidized by host governments. First, migrants acquire a low level of literacy skills through the available courses which only prepare them for employment in low-paid occupations. Second, these programs neglect diversity in migrants' educational backgrounds and do not train teachers to teach heterogeneous students. Third, the majority of these language classes are short, often under six months. Finally, migrants are put on long waiting lists due to a shortage of teachers and funding cuts. Besides government-subsidized courses, there are language classes offered by poorly trained volunteers that also fail to help migrants improve their language proficiency to the level they desire (Heinemann 2017).

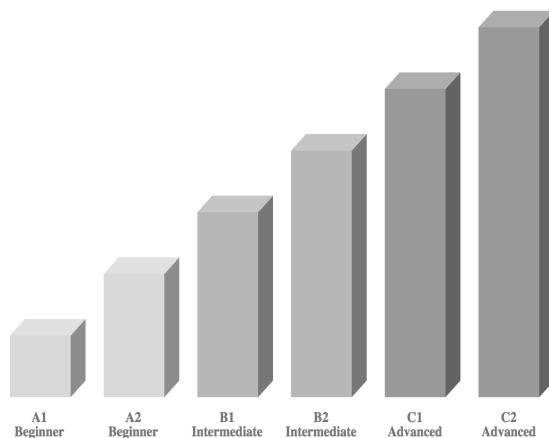
Ethnography of language policy illuminates the gap between policy and implementation. This method shows how micro-level educational practices relate to the macro-level language policies and discourse (Hornberger and Johnson 2007; Johnson 2009). An analysis of German language policy texts regarding refugee language education, and the experiences of Iranian refugees with German language resources shows little alignment between refugee language education policy and its implementation in courses offered to adult refugees. Such misalignment reduces the usefulness of these classes and leads some refugees to employ personal learning strategies to overcome their language barriers.

Immigrant language policy and resources in Germany

The ideology of “one nation, one language” is strongly present in Germany (Fuller 2012; Heinemann 2017). Knowledge of the national language is seen as essential for migrants to belong to German society and to earn the respect of German citizens (Heinemann 2017). Individuals interested in studying German can take language courses at proficiency levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1,

and C2 based on the language-level classifications of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Level A1 is “the lowest level of generative language use” (Council of Europe 2001, 33), comparable to novice high and intermediate low on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale (2016). Level C2 implies “native-speaker or near native-speaker competence”(Council of Europe 2001, 36) which is roughly equivalent to distinguished competency on the ACTFL scale (2016). The German government subsidizes language courses up to B1 level for most migrants. (See Figure 1 below.)

Figure 1. CEFR language proficiency levels



In contrast to “the 1950s, 60s and 70s when there were only very few possibilities for migrants as low-skilled labourers to take German courses” (Heinemann 2017, 180–81), since 2001 the German government has made major changes in its immigration policies, creating programs for language acquisition including integration courses. These courses are “coordinated and carried out by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees” (BMJV 2017, 58). Details and language policies for migrants in Germany are explained in the German Residence Act, and on the websites of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), and the German Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (BMJ). Some of these resources can be accessed in both German and English. Some websites such as BAMF have a list

giving users an option to access the information in six languages including German, English, Turkish, Russian, French, and Arabic. However, except for English and German, the pages of other languages inform visitors that they are currently unavailable and thank them for their understanding (e.g. BAMF n.d.).

Available in German and English, provisions regarding German proficiency are found in The German Residence Act (*AufenthG*) which is an “act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory” (BMJV 2017, 1). These rules were published by BMJV, promulgated in 2008 and amended in 2017. Section 9, paragraph 2 in this Act states that a permanent settlement permit shall be granted to a foreigner who “has sufficient command of the German language” (BMJV 2017, 8). Such competency corresponds to the third level (Level B1) of CEFR which is roughly equivalent to the intermediate high and advanced low on the ACTFL scale (2016). Individual at this level “can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc” (Council of Europe 2001, 110). The organizers of the free or state-subsidized integration and job-related language courses claim that these classes help migrants fulfill the language requirements for permanent residency.

According to the Section 44 and 44a of the German Residence Act (BMJV 2017) and BAMF (2018a), taking part in integration courses is obligatory for new immigrants who cannot communicate in German sufficiently. State officials randomly visit these courses to make sure that teachers, as “agents of surveillance” correctly record attendees’ participation (Heinemann 2017, 179). If migrants fail to meet their obligations, authorities responsible for “foreigners” inform them of the possible consequences of their actions. These authorities “may take administrative enforcement measures in order to enjoin the foreigner to meet his obligation to take an integration course. In case of non-compliance with the obligation to take an integration course, the prospective charge to cover costs may also be levied in advance in a single sum by issuing an official notice of fees” (BMJV 2017,

Section 44a). Similarly, BAMF encourages asylum applicants who are obliged to attend an integration course for prompt registration in these classes and warns that their benefits may be reduced if they fail to do so (Heinemann 2017; BAMF 2018b). To investigate how private and subsidized language programs such as integration and job-related language training courses are developed to help migrants achieve language skills, we first need to understand the content of these resources for language acquisition in Germany.

Integration, Vocational, and Volunteer-run Language Courses

Most government websites about language courses in Germany have a paragraph similar to this one: “If you wish to live in Germany, you should try to learn German as quickly as possible. It is important to do so to meet new people, to make yourself understood in everyday life, and to find work. If you learn German in a language course then you know that you are learning to speak properly right from the beginning” (BMI 2015, 12). What has been omitted in this paragraph is the prevalent mainstream ideology in Germany that reminds migrants “who speak with a ‘foreign’ accent and grammatical errors, which might reveal that the person learned German as a second language, will always be marked by the dominant society as ‘not fully belonging.’” Since such a racist ideology makes participation in language courses “*a sine qua non* for the inclusion of migrants and refugees into German” society (Heinemann 2017, 181), the German Federal Government, private institutions, and volunteers provide language resources including integration and vocational German language courses.

The integration course that the German government subsidizes for most migrants consists of three language proficiency levels (A1, A2, and B1) and one orientation course and ends with a final examination. According to BAMF, the language course covers topics related to important aspects of everyday life including work, raising children, shopping, and health. They also learn to write e-mails in German, complete forms, make telephone calls, and apply for jobs. In the

orientation course, learners discuss tolerance and gender equality, legal system, rights, and obligations in Germany. To earn the *Zertifikat Integrationskurs* ‘integration course certificate’ at skill level B1, migrants take two exams: the “German test for immigrants” (DTZ) which includes a 100-minute written and a 15-minute oral test, and the “Life in Germany” test which is about politics, religion, and gender equality in Germany. The *Zertifikat Integrationskurs* certifies that the migrant has adequate knowledge of German and basic knowledge of the society (BAMF n.d.).

The “guide to living in Germany” published by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi), Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), and The Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA), claims that the integration courses are taught by well-trained teachers (n.d.). According to BAMF (n.d.), the specialist teachers are accredited by the Federal Office. Heineman (2017, 178) describes these courses as “conveying societal rules and the imagined values of the dominant society,” and criticizes the German government for assuming that individuals “with a non-European citizenship, and even more so actually when they are from so-called Muslim countries” do not share the same values as German citizens and therefore need “a kind of citizen education in order to be transformed into democratic subjects.”

In 2019, BAMF and BMI published a press release on the evaluation of the integration courses. They estimate that 61 percent of refugees who completed a course evaluated their German proficiency as good or very good. The number of individuals who have not participated in the course is estimated at only 17 percent (BMI und BAMF 2019). The report fails to mention the opportunities that migrants get at the labor market by achieving language skills at this level. Heinemann argues that to provide migrants with German language proficiency that will support economic growth they need to have access to courses beyond the first three levels (B2 and up), an opportunity which few students get. A B1-level proficiency, in her opinion, equips migrants with only enough German to express themselves in a limited way, qualifying them only for jobs at the

lower end of the pay scale (Heinemann 2017). One benefit of an integration course certificate is that it fulfills a requirement for migrants who “apply for German citizenship after seven years, instead of the regular eight years of residency” (Hübschmann 2015, 16). The value that refugee policies place on this certificate shows that these “regulations are systemic in the sense that they aim at maintaining order through a bureaucratic system rather than protecting human, civil, and social rights and promoting humane values” (Tochon 2019, 65). Migrants who have earned the B1 certificate and are interested in studying German for professional purposes can take vocational German courses and go beyond a B1 level (BAMF 2017).

In Germany, vocational education and training (VET) is regulated by the state (Sabates, Salter, and Obolenskaya 2012). These trainings are offered to both native speaker German citizens and migrants. Some foreigners who receive benefits from the German government are obliged to take job-related language training courses (BMJV 2017). National vocational German language promotion programs claim that by combining German lessons with activities carried out by the Federal Employment Agencies they prepare language learners for the job market (BMJV 2019). These courses are more “a support rather than a complete vocational qualification” (Chadderton and Edmonds 2014, 144). Being “regarded as a good alternative to an academic education,” VET involves “practical training by companies, supplemented by theoretical training at vocational colleges” (Chadderton and Edmonds 2014, 137). Although “refugees’ experiences of VET have been the focus of only a small amount of academic research” (Chadderton and Edmonds 2014, 138), some studies investigate the challenges that the educational and social workers face in these programs (e.g. Anderson 2016).

Social scientist Philip Anderson argues that besides dealing with great ambitions, dreams, and yearnings of students and their families, the main challenge that therapists, social workers, and teachers of these classes must confront is the widely disparate levels of language skills of asylum

seekers who are “from the illiterate former shepherd to the A-level student ready to start university” (2016, 116). Although Anderson does not provide details about the great ambitions of asylum seekers in Germany, he admits that if these courses could have hired staff of ethnic and cultural diversity, they would have enhanced the linguistic profile of these classes and brought intercultural knowledge and experience. “Under the prevailing conditions in Germany it is, however, difficult to engage migrants as teachers because of the requirement that members of this profession, as a rule, be state or civil servants. This in turn entails having German nationality” (2016, 116). He then states that these classes are recruited on a voluntary basis. This information reveals realities about the lives of migrants in Germany. The first major group of people who migrated to Germany were recruited as guest workers in the mid-1950s (Göktürk, Gramling, and Kaes 2007; Euwals et al. 2010). Apparently, migrants still lack qualifications to teach courses, even as volunteers, that focus on technical skills after settling in this country for seven decades.

Another type of problematic language course includes those run by volunteers. Volunteers are mostly active in towns that have “little infrastructure and resources beyond housing available” (Karakayali and Kleist 2016, 65). Those who teach German are critiqued for their lack of pedagogical training and linguistic expertise, and the randomness of their approaches (Heinemann 2017). Some researchers claim that these volunteers are highly political and reproduce “hegemonic inequalities and hierarchies” (Fleischmann and Steinhilper 2017, 18), failing to “provide even the essentials” (Karakayali and Kleist 2016, 65). Some warn about “neo-liberal policies to out-source to volunteers the state’s obligations to refugees” (Karakayali and Kleist 2016, 66). The only positive aspect of these classes is that the absence of state surveillance and the affordability of these classes in comparison to private and government-subsidized classes make volunteer-run classes popular among undocumented migrants and refugees (Heinemann 2017).

Ethnography of language policy sheds light on the real-world flaws of language policies on the German Residence Act and the resources that government offices provide for refugee language education. The experiences of Iranian refugees in this chapter illuminate that German language provisions are not adequately implemented in the language resources that the federal government of Germany offers to refugees to study German. When there is tension between policy and practice, these refugees construct alternatives to survive their language barrier. Some of them study the language by themselves which is a form of negotiation and resistance of the failed language policies in their own favor (Canagarajah 2005; Alexander 2014). An analysis of the alternative strategies that Iranian refugees employ to overcome their language barriers help us to understand how migrants perceive, interpret, and are impacted by language policies and negotiate the linguistic challenges, within the government-subsidized integration and vocational language courses and volunteer-run classes.

Participants

In this chapter, I draw on field notes and audio recordings of eight interviews I conducted in two cities in the central and western parts of Germany. To reflect diverse experiences with government language resources in different cities, varied learning strategies, different educational backgrounds, and different language learning outcomes, I have chosen male and female interviewees within the age group of mid-twenties to late seventies. Except for two participants who came, respectively, on a family reunification visa in 1997 and a marriage visa in 1995, the six other interviewees took refuge in Germany between 2008 and 2017. Table 1 gives some general information about the participants' education, occupation, and methods that they have used to learn German.

Table 1. Information about the participants.

Name	Years of Stay in Germany	Language Learning Course	Education	Occupation in Iran	Occupation in Germany
Bitia	20 Years	-	School Diploma (Iran & Germany) Master's in Ethnic Studies (Germany)	Student	Unemployed
Laleh	22 Years	Advanced German	School Diploma (Iran)	Student	Volunteer Social Worker
Paria	Newly Arrived	Vocational Integration	Graphic Design (Iran)	Art Teacher Beauty Salon Employee	Unemployed
Keihan	4 Years	Integration Self-Study	Law Degree (Iran & India)	Lawyer (Suspended)	Unemployed
Karun	19 Months	Self-Study Volunteer-run	Master's in Plant Pathology (Iran)	Assistant Professor	Unemployed
Elyas	2 Years	Integration	School Diploma Some College (Construction Engineering)	Artist Cabinet Maker	Unemployed
Masoud	9 Years	Integration Self-Study	Bachelor's Degree (Iran)	The National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC).	Caregiver
Shapour	17 Years	Integration Volunteer-run Self-Study	Bachelor's Degree (Iran)	Teacher at technical and professional college for 36 years	Unemployed

Integration Courses

Whereas the authoritarian tone in policy texts regularly reminds refugees of the consequences of failing to participate in the integration courses with *gut qualifizierte Lehrkräfte* ‘well qualified teachers’ and teaching material (BAMF 2018c; 2019), the scarcity of the language courses, and the grammar-oriented focus of the available resources constitute the most frequently mentioned problems by those I interviewed. For example, Masoud, a self-confident man who held a bachelor’s degree from Iran and had experience working at The National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), critiqued the limited availability of integration courses to refugees. Although fluent in German, Masoud complained that during the first four years he lived at a refugee camp, the government offered them only one short class. He argued that the class was offered to them because refugees pushed the authorities at their camp.

In contrast to the estimation by BAMF and BMI in 2019 that over fifty percent of refugees who completed an integration course evaluated their German proficiency as good or very good, the poor effect of the subsidized language resources on language achievement is another issue that many Iranian refugees I interviewed faced in Germany. Many of them said that these courses had not helped them achieve German proficiency. The artist and handyman, Elyas, had recently received his B1 certificate, but estimated his German knowledge as only “one or two words.” He was scared of using his limited German skills in public even after living in Germany for two years.

The Iranian migrants’ self-assessment of their poor linguistic achievement after completing the integration courses stands in contrast to the value that the German government assigns to the certificate of these classes as a prerequisite for German classes for professional purposes (BAMF 2017). Elyas’s experience taking integration classes had proved to him that the official release does not reflect one’s actual proficiency. “It’s easy to get a degree. I mean you can easily get a certificate. I can get C1- I’m serious. ... You can get C1 certificate. But that doesn’t mean you can fluently speak

the language.” Elyas’s emphasis on C1 level, which is not subsidized by the government and is rarely offered to refugees, illuminates his awareness of the discrepancy between the standardized language proficiency measurement and learners’ performance outside of the classroom. Although he had taken all the integration courses that the German government offered him, he was anxious and scared to speak when he visited government offices. Level B1, as the highest level that is offered to all refugees, is recognized by the German Residence Act as sufficient command of the German language (BMJV 2017), but Elyas’s experience led him to believe that not even C1 would be sufficient. “This means that a certificate is not enough. You may get the C1 certificate and take it to the university, get the admission, and sit there. But at the end of the day it is important whether or not you can speak.”

While some scholars argue, as we saw above, that German educational and health caregivers should deal with great ambitions, dreams, and yearnings of refugees (e.g. Anderson 2016), many Iranian interlocutors told me that they could not fulfill these great ambitions. Most of them predicted an uncertain and ambiguous future for themselves and their families in Germany. As a former student of construction engineering in Iran, for a long time Elyas’s plan was to continue studying in the same field at a German university. Despite having taken an integration course, he told me he believes that he will never be able to become highly fluent in German, the main prerequisite for attending university in Germany. Thus he has given up on his dream of attending college. At the time I interviewed Elyas, his plan was to first “learn the very difficult and very unappealing language of German” and then if it were possible, he would do an apprenticeship in cabinet making and decoration. Considering the emphasis that Iranian families and community put toward higher education and prestigious professional careers, for Elyas, giving up on college and doing a cabinet-making apprenticeship would be considered a steep step down (cf. Mobasher and Ketcham 2018).

Despite BAMF's claims that, in their orientation courses, learners discuss legal system, rights, and obligations in Germany, many of my interlocutors complained that they did not even learn basic language skills. For example, Shapour, my oldest participant, used almost all the language resources that the government offered to him and received their certificates. Yet he told me, "We still have the certificates they signed and stamped. But we never got to the point where we could fluently speak German." Similar to Elyas, Shapour critiqued the incongruity between bureaucracy and the educational achievement in refugee language education system in Germany. The heavy focus of these classes on grammar, he said, did not help him and his wife learn how to go shopping or visit government offices. They did not even learn the legal system such as German regulations, or laws for driving and crossing streets. Not only did Shapour not master speaking German, but he said he also did not learn the grammar, even though that was often the primary focus of his language classes. These critiques exemplify scholarly claims that the bureaucratic system that undermines the educational achievements of refugees within their language policy neglects social rights and humane values (cf. Tochon 2019).

Even though the language educational policy in Germany claims that the "integration efforts by foreigners shall be supported by a basic package of measures to promote integration (integration course)" (BMJV 2017, 58), Masoud's, Elyas's, and Shapour's experiences with these resources and language learning outcomes reflect how these refugees are impacted by the tension between policy and practice. Hearing Iranian refugees' experiences with other language learning resources that the German government provides for them broadens our understanding of the impact of policy texts on the language acquisition process.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) for Adult Refugees

Whereas BAMF and BMJV sponsor vocational German language courses for applicants who have completed the first three proficiency levels of an integration course and are interested in preparing for the job market (BAMF 2017; BMJV 2019), some participants criticized these courses for their lack of applicability and value. Bitá, who worked for an employment agency, explained the corrupt nature of these classes, which she described as “worthless.” She said refugees whose asylum cases were approved by the government were sent to employment agencies that belonged to the German Federal Labor Office (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) like the one where Bitá used to work. She was responsible for unemployment benefits, advice, and financial support. She oversaw refugees from Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria. Based on Section 44a of the Residence Act, Bitá was one of the “particular authorities” whose job was to call on refugees and inform them of the possible consequences of their actions when they violated their duties as refugees. Her responsibility was to help them find a job. However, the language barrier interfered with their job search. Instead of jobs, Bitá had to find them language classes. Her change of responsibility indicates a discrepancy in Section 9, paragraph 2 in the Residence Act where it claims that a permanent residency permit is given only to foreigners with sufficient command of the German language (BMJV 2017), when in fact, in Bitá’s experience, all permanent residents—regardless of their language skill background—are sent to the Federal Labor Offices to find jobs.

In 2015, when the number of refugees who sought asylum in Germany increased dramatically, Bitá worked at that employment agency. She said during that time neither language learning resources nor jobs were available to the 800,000 refugees in Germany. To solve the job and language class scarcity issues and to occupy refugees’ time, Bitá said, the government contracted with some organizations which gave training to unemployed people regardless of their German language skills. They offered three types of training to refugees: warehouse, masonry, and kitchen

work. But, according to Bitá, refugees did not even learn these skills. “These organizations have found ways to make money. They offer these courses and get money from this office. They get thousands and thousands of Euros. That’s a lot of money,” Bitá told me. When she questioned the agency for their failed solution, they replied that “Those who have come from these countries, they should not think that here they can work within the fields that they used to work in their own countries. They have to be *FLEXIBEL* [flexible],” she said, using the German word in the midst of our otherwise Persian conversation to mock the accent of her German colleague. “Well, this is immigration,” she said, continuing to voice her colleague. “Well, this is asylum. They have to accept whatever work we give them.” Bitá’s experience offers an interesting insight into the way that the government implements its language policies through the resources they provide (or do not) for refugees. Her experience aligns with refugee education experts Charlotte Chadderton and Casey Edmons’s (2014) argument that not only are refugees’ previous experiences devalued, but VET also excludes them from the labor market in their host countries.

Whereas BMJV claims that the national vocational German language promotion programs prepare language learners for the job market (BMJV 2019), many Iranian interviewees who held the B1-level certificate told me that they did not have an opportunity to go beyond that proficiency level to get their B2 or C1 certificate. Among them there were former physicians, engineers, and lawyers whose B1-level certificate was not adequate to function in a professional workplace. Bitá told me the story of a Syrian physician who, despite all his effort, did not get the opportunity to take a class beyond B1 level. “For goodness sake, pay for a private class that he can get his B2, C1 certificate!” With an angry voice, she pounded on the table. “Then this poor guy, he ran after everything himself. He did *Praktikum* [internship]. He had gone to hospitals. I don’t know. He took some courses. He studied language by himself. They were not helpful. Because he had to get the B2 certificate.” Bitá argues that a language certificate beyond the levels that the government subsidizes and make

available to refugees is a prerequisite for refugees to find careers beyond low-income jobs. We heard from Elyas and Shapour that the language certificates issued by language institutes in Germany do not indicate the actual proficiency of language learners. From Bitá's argument we understand that the high proficiency certificate is needed if they want to enter into professional occupations. Elyas's, Shapour's, and Bitá's interpretations of policies regarding language certificates illuminate how migrants are impacted by the discrepancies between policy and practice in Germany.

In contrast to Section 45a of the German Residence Act which claims that "as a rule" job-related language training "shall build on the general language training" (BMJV 2017, 61), in fact only some of the vocational education and training centers provide language lessons (Chadderton and Edmonds 2014). Bitá says that although VETs are run by teachers, they are not necessarily trained language teachers. In Bitá's opinion, the "worthless" vocational language and further skill-building training run by "people who slightly tried to practice language with them [refugees], had nothing to do with language classes." When there were no integration classes available, Bitá's office sent refugees to these training courses. The perceived ineffectiveness of teachers in the improvement of refugee's language proficiency in VETs is similar to Shapour's depictions of his teachers as inexperienced in the integration classes.

Whereas many host societies warn migrants that failure in language acquisition might have adverse consequences for them such as increasing their mental health risk and causing psychological distress (Chung and Kagawa-Singer 1995; Beiser and Hou 2001), the experiences of my interlocutors show that the source of stress is not migrants' lack of effort to integrate but rather failure in the formation and implementation of language policy. The VETs do not completely align their policy with the rules explained on BAMF (2017) about offering these courses to applicants at the B1 proficiency level rather than to the beginner (A1 and A2) language learners. Laleh, a volunteer social worker who helped many Persian speaker refugees get resettled in Germany, told me that Paria, a

newly arrived refugee, was offered a vocational course but did not understand a word in the class. In my interview with Paria, she told me about this eight-week course. Similar to Bitá, Paria emphasized that the class was not related to learning the language at all. “It was about apprenticeship for work. I was hurt A LOT,” she said with emphasis. “It means I was COMPLETELY humiliated over there. I lost my self-confidence.” Bitá’s skepticism and Paria’s experience with these resources offered to refugees without German knowledge show that when educational resources do not match the language proficiency level of the participants, they can have a negative impact on their mental well-being.

Section 44 and 44a of the German Residence Act, obliges refugees to take integration courses in exchange for the financial benefits they receive from the government. BAMF warns that if they fail to take the course, they will lose the modest government stipend given to refugees (Heinemann 2017; BAMF 2018b). Bitá explained that in the absence of the integration classes, refugees can take the VETs to receive their stipend. She then described the administrative enforcement that she had to take when refugees under her supervision did not attend language classes. “If they had not gone to these classes, they would have cut 30% of their welfare money. THREE MONTHS, thirty percent. Then if they hadn’t gone again, the thirty percent would be sixty percent. Then it would be ninety percent. This means if you don’t listen to this agency, it would be possible that they don’t give you money. And they would not pay your rent. Well, you can’t. It means you will become homeless. As a result, whatever that agency tells you, you should say: ‘Absolutely. Yes. Absolutely. Yes. Absolutely.’” While explaining the regulations, in her constructed dialogue Bitá depicted refugees as submissive subjects who agree “to norms and rules without the power to fully politically participate” (Heinemann 2017, 178). Bitá also described a marked power asymmetry between refugees and the government organizations meant to serve them.

In contrast to the widely publicized reports within the national and international press about the billion euros that Germany spends on integrating millions of refugees every year (e.g. Deutsche Welle 2017; MacGregor 2019; Nienber 2019), many Iranian interlocutors critiqued the service that refugees receive in Germany and problems with the refugee education system. Paria said that after the eight-week VET, she was offered a literacy course, which was for people who did not have any experience with reading and writing and did not know the Roman alphabet. Her experience reflects the inconsistency in the refugee education system which places them in courses that are not appropriate for their skill levels. Although I could find no evidence to support Laleh's claim, she believed the government of Germany receives funding from international organizations and in the report that they provide, the government is only expected to state the number of participants in these courses. "But all of this money is going to waste" because, as she saw it, refugees did not learn anything. "This means that the system is messed up." The government "throws stones" in front of refugees who want to make progress, she said.

Volunteer-run Courses

Among the different language resources that are available to migrants in Germany, the volunteer-run courses are especially popular among refugees living at camps in geographically isolated areas. According to Section 58 of the Asylum Act, which in addition to the Residence Act, provides important immigration laws in Germany (Morico 2017), refugees do not have permission to leave an assigned area of residence without getting the consent of the foreigner authority (BMJV 2008). Bitā described this as a slow process that requires a lot of paperwork. This rule raises several problems including prohibiting refugees whose camps are in geographically isolated and segregated areas from taking classes in cities and preventing them from meeting people outside of their camps. Sometimes in these areas, volunteers offer language courses and become "representatives of the nation state,"

the only resource that connects refugees to the world outside of their refugee camps (Heinemann 2017, 184).

In contrast to the claims of BAMF (n.d.), BMWi, BMAS, and BA (n.d.) that the integration courses are taught by well-trained teachers, some participants critique the volunteer-run courses for their lack of “pedagogical training as well as the necessary linguistic expertise” (Heinemann 2017, 181). Karun said that when he lived at an isolated refugee camp in the state of Bavaria, the government offered them language classes “but there were no teachers. The people of the village helped us.” When asked about his future in Germany, he said that every Iranian he had met so far was either depressed or lonely. Even those rare cases who were successful did not have “normal and ideal lives.” He connected Iranians’ misfortune to the “cold nature of Germans and their cold encounters especially when they knew someone was a refugee.” Although it is not clear whether the volunteers in Karun’s village were qualified language teachers, Karun’s perception of Germans indicates that he did not have a good experience with them. If Karun had been offered a well-designed integration course by BAMF or had profited from the course that volunteers offered him, it would not have been necessary to promise himself to self-study German after more than a year and a half of living in Germany.

Similar to their critiques of integration and VET courses, Iranian interlocutors critique the volunteer-run courses for overemphasizing grammar. Shapour, who had never given up studying German during the seventeen years he had lived in Germany, took a volunteer-run course for a few years, in which the teacher solely focused on teaching grammar. “It’s impossible to learn a language just by learning its grammar. Language skills need to be practiced. You need a speaking partner.” Shapour’s criticism of these classes focusing solely on teaching grammar is additional evidence against the claims on BAMF regarding teaching refugees everyday life conversation skills.

Foreign Language Self-Study

Neither the German Residence Act nor government websites provide information about alternatives for refugees in geographically isolated refugee camps beyond the resources available in accessible areas. When refugees who have access to these resources see little improvement in their language proficiency, some of them develop self-study methods. Bitá said that many of those refugees who knew little German learned it by themselves through the internet. I asked Bitá whether those refugees who finally learn German can find jobs. In her opinion, those who knew German and those who did not struggle with similar issues: neither language classes nor jobs were available to them. The experiences of other Iranian refugees deprived of language and vocational courses demonstrate the accuracy of Bitá's observation.

In contrast to the claim by BAMF (2016) that the course "Initial orientation and learning German for asylum-seekers" helps migrants from the time they arrive in the country until a decision has been made on their refugee status, many Iranian interlocutors who lived in the state of Bavaria told me that these resources were not available to all refugees in that state. Keihan, whose law degree was suspended by the Islamic government due to his political activities in Iran, argued that during the period that he lived at a refugee camp in Bavaria (2013-17), no special language resources were offered to him, even though the BAMF website states that this class was developed in 2013.

Keihan lived at a refugee camp which was three hours far from Munich for more than three years. Refugees at his camp were not allowed to go further than 30 kilometers (18 miles) outside of the refugee camp. He described this as a "discriminatory law" which made him feel "Hitlerism" and "Rassismus" (racism) with his "skin, flesh, and bones." He criticized the government of Bavaria for discriminating against refugees more than other state governments. He said he had heard from others that in Bavaria "there were public places such as swimming pools and libraries where they prohibit refugee entrance." In his state, refugees whose status was still undecided did not have a job

permit and had to stay at camps. The 120EURO (US\$129) monthly welfare that they received was less than the amount refugees received in other states. The monotonous food they gave them was rationed. In his opinion, the frozen meat and withered fruit could not be given to animals let alone human beings. Their condition in Bavaria reminded him of World War II.

During the years that Keihan was at that camp, the government once offered them an A1 course for one month. He had already been living in Germany for two and a half years. Refugees at his camp asked the authorities to give them language courses and the authorities' reply, according to Keihan, was to say that "there is nothing at this moment. We don't have anything on our plan." Keihan instead learned German over the internet until he could get his B1 certificate. He was then able to call German Federal Office to ask them about his refugee status. He said that if he had not been able to make that phone call, he might still be waiting for the Federal office to contact him. In Keihan's view, being able to call the authorities and talk to them changed his life as a refugee. After getting his refugee status approval, Keihan got enrolled in the Master of Law at a university in the state of Hessen.

Keihan was not the only person whose disappointment with the subsidized language courses led him towards developing self-study methods. As a Christian missionary, Masoud, who preached to people in Persian and English during his first two years in Germany, wanted to learn German in order to preach to Germans in their native language. After two years attending a church with only Iranians, some Germans joined, which provided him a good opportunity to practice German. After being disappointed with the only resource that the government offered to him during his time at the refugee camp, Masoud tried to teach himself the language. "But I studied by myself eight hours a day. Vocabulary. Only vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary. But I had a very hard time." The material Masoud used to self-study the language was a book, sent by his mother from Iran, written for travelers to learn basic phrases in German.

From my conversations with other participants, I learned that self-study methods did not help everyone improve their language proficiency. Shapour also tried self-study materials. “Today, for example, I learned ten sentences. Where should I use these ten? It is like money that you find, and you put it in your pocket. But you don’t have a place to spend it.” Besides trying self-study methods, he offered free labor to a school near his home in exchange for speaking German with their students. They refused his offer and encouraged him to visit a senior center to practice German with people there. When he tried that option, the seniors who were interested in talking with him were mostly foreigners who also did not know German. Not being able to communicate in German, Shapour and his wife felt very lonely. As a result, they spent most of their time in Persian-speaking communities. Towards the end of our interview, he told me that his dream was to learn English. In his opinion, English was a language that he could speak all around the world. Shapour’s experience reflects how refugees’ investment in learning German is suppressed when they try all the resources available to them, yet do not see improvements. Despite that he says that his interest in learning German was initiated in Iran when he worked with Germans, his dream is now to learn English instead.

Conclusion

By foregrounding Iranian refugees’ own voices and examining their narrated experiences of accessing language resources across Germany, this chapter has shown how the misalignment between refugee language education policy and its implementation in courses affects language learning outcomes. Although immigrant integration courses aimed at improving migrants’ language skills, refugees’ restricted access to German language classes, and numerous constraints pose problems for refugees. These include the poor quality of the classes they *do* access, unequal availability of resources across Germany, lack of applicability and worth, and absence of teacher’s

pedagogical training and linguistic expertise. Nevertheless, to survive in the host country, many migrants, especially those with a strong educational background, develop personal learning strategies to improve their foreign language skills independent of the resources offered to them by host governments. It should be noted that not all refugees can solve their language barrier in host countries by themselves; many of them need professional help.

This chapter has challenged the popular discourse that blames migrants who fail to master the national language and are discriminated against in the labor market and everyday life (Die Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes 2013; Heinemann 2017). In a country where speaking German below the level of a native speaker is perceived as lack of competence and first-language speakers of the national language possess greater power than foreign-language speakers (Dirim 2010), the voice of Iranian refugees such as Elyas, Karun, Keihan, Masoud, Paria, and Shapour who put so much effort to achieve German proficiency must be heard.

To deconstruct racist and xenophobic discourse about the failure of refugees to learn German, the challenges that they face in Germany to study and use this language should be discussed and recognized in the German Residence Act, BAMF, and other official resources that provide information about language courses for refugees. There are probably many refugees like Elyas who have studied German for several years but underestimate their German skills and do not dare to use the language in public for fear of language-based racism. Based on what is actually happening on the ground for refugees who are invested in learning and using German, refugee education policies must be redesigned to ensure that everyone gets equal access to effective language support programs.

Chapter 2

Discourses of Xenophobia and Feelings of Belonging:

Iranian Refugees' Narratives about Life and Language in Germany

Sixteen years have passed since I left my home in Iran, but I still clearly remember the first few months of my migration journey. I had been living in Germany for only two months when I decided to visit a friend in a neighboring city. I bought a ticket and got on a train. After five minutes, the ticket controller came and told me that my ticket was not valid because I did not stamp it. I told him that I was new in the country and that when I had asked the ticket agent if I needed to do anything with the ticket, he had said no. I was still talking to the ticket controller when I saw two policemen coming towards me. As they escorted me to the police station, one officer told me that not only did I not have a valid ticket, but I had also lied to them about the length of the time I had lived in Germany. He told me that it was impossible that I could speak German so well after only two months in the country. After he checked with immigration authorities and found out that I was telling the truth, he handed me the ticket and said with a smirk: “You will pay the ticket to learn how to live in Germany.”

As this anecdote illustrates, language barriers and cultural differences pose significant challenges to communication between newcomers and the people of their host society who use language as an instrument of nationalism. Some nationalists claim that new immigrants bring all difficulties on themselves, primarily by refusing to learn the host country's language (cf. Blommaert 1996; Kouritzin 2000). However, research shows that political, cultural, linguistic, and social access are required for learning and using a language—access that is often denied to immigrants, as we saw in the previous chapter (Kouritzin 2000).

The experience I shared in the opening vignette shows that even producing grammatically and phonologically correct phrases is not sufficient for successful communication. In fact, any successful communication should fulfill conditions within a legitimate discourse: it should be “uttered by a legitimate speaker” in a “legitimate situation” and “addressed to a legitimate receiver” (Bourdieu 1977b, 650). It can be argued that the policeman’s evident mistrust of me stemmed from the fact that I, as a young Middle Eastern woman, was not expected to have a good command of German. I was accused of misrepresenting myself because I was an “illegitimate” speaker of German. Feeling Othered was a profound experience for me, and it continues to resonate in my attitudes towards the German language.

In this chapter, I examine the way the Iranian migrants among whom I conducted research depict their experience in Germany, with Germans, and with the German language; as well as the relationship between those depictions and their attitudes towards the German language and German people. They explain their alienation, feelings of not belonging and of being the Other, and having mixed emotions and attitudes towards their linguistic repertoires as a response to what they perceive as widespread societal discourses and their own on negative experiences. I examine why some immigrants hold negative attitudes about the people and language of their host country, and, in some instances, why they even avoid learning the language altogether. Even within the same nationality-group, some migrants talk less or differently about their experiences of discrimination than others. One factor for this discrepancy may be religion. Although more research is needed, my data suggests that the attitudes of the hosts towards religion may impact their relationships with migrants, possibly giving Christians more opportunities for interaction than Muslims. How they are treated influences their sense of belonging and their attitudes towards their language repertoires. Moreover, the experiences they have soon after they arrive are especially impactful on migrants’ sense of belonging. For many of the participants in my research, the alienating feelings that they

experience immediately upon their arrival in Germany result in isolation and long-lasting mixed feelings about German language and culture.

Researchers have explored the diversity of second language speakers and learners based on various aspects of social identity, such as gender, ethnicity, social class, and the unequal linguistic and cultural relations of power (Calhoun 2012). However, issues of racism and xenophobia have not been sufficiently addressed in applied linguistics, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) scholarship, or SLA (Ibrahim 1999; Lin et al. 2004; Kubota and Lin 2006; Calhoun 2012; Anya 2017; but see Alim, Rickford, and Ball 2016). Due to the complex social and political realities of the Middle East, many people migrate to Western countries every year. Negative images portrayed in the media impact the ways these people are treated in these societies. This chapter seeks to contribute to SLA research by exploring how Iranian migrant participants both construct a story about the past and embed discriminatory discourse they attribute to the dominant group in their narratives about their migration experiences in Germany. I aim to open up avenues for future SLA studies of xenophobia, belonging, emotions, and attitudes towards migrants' linguistic repertoires.

Western Discourse on the Middle East

The Islamic Revolution in 1979 precipitated political conflict between Iran and Western countries, and with it, a new era of focused media attention. Almost immediately, the media “covered Islam: they [portrayed] it, characterized it, analyzed it, [gave] instant courses on it, and consequently they [made] it ‘known’” (Said 1981, x–xi). Cultural studies scholar Edward Said criticized Western reporters' ignorance: they did not know the language of countries like Iran, and they employed clichés “or some bit of journalistic wisdom that readers at home [were] unlikely to challenge” (1981, xii). Said demonstrated how misinformation about Muslim-majority countries created a situation in which Islam “represent[ed] a threat to Western civilization” (1981, xii). This lack of comprehensive

investigation and the negative discourse about Iran and Shi'a Muslims has made Iranians in the West vulnerable to marginality and discrimination, and resulted in the loss of cultural and ethnic pride among some Iranian immigrants in the West (Mobasher 2006).

Discrimination and inequality in Germany, where Germans have more institutionalized power than ethnic minorities and migrants from non-Western countries, is so strong and persistent that it should be taken as a serious sociocultural and political problem (cf. Castles, Booth, and Wallace 1984; Van Dijk 1987). Vague definitions of tolerance, pluralism, and diversity marginalize people from some ethnic groups and subject them to discrimination.

Racist and xenophobic views are relevant to this study because they are treated as a topic within the discourse of each of the research participants. They talk about racism and xenophobia, which shows they are critically aware of them and they use language to challenge them. According to Wodak, "Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term" (2001, 11). Analysis of interviews I collected suggests how the social interactions interviewees depict are embedded in a power structure (Gwyn 2001). I show how prejudiced discourse is critiqued in their narratives, which reveals the impact of such discourse on participants' linguistic experience and attitudes. These narrators tell us stories about their daily interactions with locals, which suggest how discourse works in real life and how they depict themselves as vulnerable in this community.

Participants

After interviewing about half of the forty-seven participants, I noticed that when I asked them about their lives in Germany, many of them recounted a story or event that happened to them immediately upon their arrival. These stories are similar to my own personal vignette laid out at the start of this chapter. Here I explore the discriminatory and xenophobic discourse that participants attribute to

Germans by examining the talk of five Iranians who describe their migration experiences in Germany. The primary criterion in choosing these participants was their range of experiences: varying lengths of stay in Germany, their different religious affiliations, different senses of belonging, and diverse attitudes towards their linguistic repertoires. Except for Amir, they all held German citizenship. I draw on field notes and audio recordings of the interviews I conducted with them in two cities in West Germany.

The five participants you will meet in this chapter came to Germany at different times. Mr. Foumani first took refuge in France during the 1979 hostage crisis. Mrs. Foumani and their children took refuge in Germany a few years after that. (I follow Persian convention and refer to these two participants using “Mr.” and “Mrs.” because they are older than me.) Bita joined her family in Germany twenty years before our interview. Masoud was celebrating his ninth year of living in Germany. Amir, who was still trying to assess his life and German society, had been living in Germany for two years. As I discussed in the Introduction, interviews were all conducted in Persian. Masoud was the only interviewee who sometimes used complete German phrases; not coincidentally, he was the only one among these five who felt welcome in Germany. Table 2 gives some general information about the participants’ religious affiliations, citizenship status and language resources.

Table 2. Information about the participants.

Name	Age	Years of Stay in Germany	Religious Affiliation	Citizenship Status	German Proficiency	Language Resources (other than Persian and German)
Bita	~ 38	20	Muslim-born	German Citizen	Near native	English
Mr. Foumani	~ 80	28	Muslim-born, non-believer	German Citizen	No German proficiency	English French

Mrs. Foumani	n/a	28	Muslim-born	German Citizen	n/a	n/a
Masoud	36	9	Muslim-born, Christian convert	German Citizen	Fluent	-
Amir	~ 38	2	n/a	Undecided refugee status	Basic	Russian

Bita

I begin with Bita and her story of working at a refugee resettlement agency. Bita, who was introduced in chapter 1, had lived in Germany for nearly twenty years at the time of our interview. She grew up in Iran in a middle-class, educated family, and endured great hardship during the Revolution. Her father was the first person in her family to escape Iran; when Bita was three years old, right after the Revolution, he took refuge in Germany. Bita was seventeen when she finally came to Germany with her mother. In 2005, Bita and I met at a university where we were both minoring in Iranian and Islamic studies, and we have stayed in touch ever since. In 2008, she became a German citizen. Three years ago, Bita got a job working for a German government agency overseeing refugees from Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria. I remember how excited she was to finally officially help refugees. She did not know, however, what was expected of her: to force refugees to work in what she described as slave-like conditions. She tried to improve their condition by raising awareness and promoting accurate perceptions about them at her workplace, but she had little success. After working there for two years, she resigned from the agency. She said that her resignation was sad news to those refugees whose only hope was her.

During my 2017 fieldwork, I interviewed Bita twice, once at a café in a shopping center and once at her house. I chose Bita's story for this chapter because of her unique history. She is an immigrant who, based on the judgement of our mutual German acquaintances, speaks German like a native speaker. She has lived in Germany for many years, married a German, has a university

degree, and has worked for the German government. When I asked her if she had a particular memory of being discriminated against in Germany, she said that employees at the government offices treated her and her mother terribly. She told me a story about her arrival at a government organization in charge of refugee resettlement. She was seventeen years old, and since her mother did not know German, Bita had to take care of the paperwork. It was a cold winter and they needed fuel to heat their apartment. She said that she tried many times to call the office, and when they never answered the phone, she went in person. She ran into her case worker, and, excited to see a familiar face, began telling him how she had attempted several times to contact the office. Suddenly, the agent cut her off and started yelling at her. She did not remember what he said to her, because she was shocked by his reaction and felt intensely humiliated. After that incident, she suffered from an emotional crisis and did not talk about it to anyone for a long time. About eighteen years later, she worked at a similar government office. Bita told me that sitting on the other side of the desk gave her a strange feeling. On the one hand, since she could relate to her clients, she tried to treat them like humans and help them. On the other hand, in her new position, she was responsible for enforcing German laws. She felt trapped between these two impulses, and this put emotional pressure on her. In Excerpt 1, Bita talks about her experience working there, describing the situation of refugees when they first arrive in Germany and how they feel unwelcome in their new community.

Excerpt 1

<p>Bita 1 I say that these poor people come 2 here without much knowledge about 3 anything or anywhere. At best, they've 4 learned some of the language. 5 See, refugees come to a country where 6 they know nobody wants me! It 7 means when I first come, I'm illegal. 8 It means from the very beginning they 9 didn't want me here. Now I have to</p>	<p>می‌گم این بنده خداها میان، از هیچی و هیچ جا خبر ندارن، در بهترین حالت خودشون یه ذره رفتن زبان یاد گرفتن. ببین! یه پناهجو میاد، می‌ره تو کشوری که می‌دونه این‌ها من رو نمی‌خوان! یعنی من اولش که میام غیرقانونی هستم. یعنی تو از اول با این چیز که من رو اینجا نمی‌خوان. حالا من باید</p>	<p>بیتا</p>
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<p>10 apply for refugee status. Then they 11 interview. They interview multiple 12 times. Although I accept that these 13 are the laws, and this must happen. 14 But from the beginning, they already 15 have the sense that they think I am a 16 liar.</p>	<p>تقاضای پناهندگی بدم. بعد اینترویو می‌کنن. چند بار اینترویو می‌کنن. البته من هم قبول دارم که این‌ها قانونه و باید باشه. ولی خب این‌ها از همون اول این حس رو دارن که خب این‌ها فکر می‌کنن من دروغ‌گوم.</p>
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In the first line, Bita uses the term *بنده خداها*, which translates literally to ‘God’s servants’. My own translation to the colloquial ‘these poor people’ may imply that Bita has a paternalistic view of refugees. However, it should be noted that in her original Persian, Bita actually is indicating that although she currently occupies a different space than the refugees, she has empathy for them. She cannot completely distance herself and says that she is almost able to put herself back in the position of her first arrival. In lines 7 and 8, Bita says ‘when I first come, I am illegal’. Her use of the subject pronoun “I,” while not literally talking about herself, emphasizes empathy and her insider positionality. When she talks about other people, she recalls how she felt at the beginning of her life in Germany. Bita’s repetition of ‘from the beginning’ (lines 8 and 14) indicates that what happened early on mattered to her and that she thinks it matters to other migrants as well. Bita interchangeably uses the pronouns ‘they’ and ‘I’ to refer to refugees. Although she knows that she is not one of them anymore, she cannot completely distance herself from them. In contrast, throughout our interview when she talks about Germans, she only uses the pronoun ‘they’ to refer to them, even though in terms of citizenship she is now herself German.

In this excerpt, Bita’s use of constructed discourse and double voicing when she says ‘nobody wants me’ (line 6), ‘I’m illegal’ (lines 7-8), ‘they didn’t want me’ (line 9), and ‘they think I’m a liar’ (line 16) depicts her understanding of the ways that refugees build their sense of belonging in Germany. She draws on the singular subject and object pronoun *من* ‘I’ or ‘me’ to emphasize her insider positioning. In contrast, the subject pronoun *این‌ها* ‘they’ constructs distance between her and the host community. Bita’s repeated emphasis on interviews—“Then they interview. They

interview multiple times' (lines 11 and 12)—frames the interview as both a process and a means of treating the immigrant as dishonest. Bitra suggests that the multiple interviews lead many immigrants to believe they are perceived of as unwanted or liars.

In the next excerpt, Bitra talks about her experience working at the government agency I introduced above. In our interview, she told me that the great majority of her colleagues were Germans who held misgivings and false assumptions about the refugees' home countries, treating them dismissively. She describes the prejudiced language she overheard in conversations with her coworkers.

Excerpt 2

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------|
| <p>Bitra 1 A few people from the small group
2 that we were part of spoke very
3 poorly and degradingly of refugees.
4 They treated them poorly. They
5 complained all the time. ... [Omitted
6 2 and a half minutes where she talks
7 about a conversation between her
8 and a friend]. Once at a big meeting
9 they were talking about how we can
10 find them a job quicker— All they
11 did was talk. They never did
12 anything. They spoke in a way that
13 suggested that <VOX> Yeah! They
14 need to learn how people work in
15 Germany, and that the system here
16 and the system from their homeland
17 are different </VOX>. They think
18 that nobody works in the rest of the
19 world and that Germans are the only
20 ones that do. In the rest of the
21 world, people are just sitting there
22 and fanning themselves.</p> | <p>این تیم کوچیکی که ما بودیم، یه سری خیلی بد و تحقیرآمیز راجع به پناهجوها حرف می‌زدن. باهاشون بد رفتاری می‌کردن. تمام مدت غر می‌زدن. [حذف ۲ دقیقه و ۳۳ ثانیه از صحبت‌ها در مورد بحثی با دوستش]. یه دفعه توی یه میتینگ بزرگی، صحبت از این بود که چطور زودتر برای این‌ها کار پیدا کنیم – فقط هم حرف می‌زنن. هیچ وقت عمل نمی‌کردند. یک جوری حرف می‌زدند که "آره! این‌ها باید یاد بگیرن که کار تو آلمان چه جوریه و سیستم اینجا با سیستم اون‌ها فرق داره." فکر می‌کنن همه جای دنیا مردم کار نمی‌کنن و فقط تو آلمانه که مردم کار می‌کنن. بقیه جاها مردم نشستن دارن خودشون رو باد می‌زنن.</p> | <p>بی‌تا</p> |
| <p>Sara & Bitra 23 [Laughter]</p> | <p>[سارا و بی‌تا می‌خندند]</p> | <p></p> |
| <p>Bitra 24 They didn't even look for solutions.
25 They didn't want to have to look for</p> | <p>اصلاً دنبال راه حل نمی‌گشتن. نمی‌خواستن دنبال راه حل باشن. بعد هم شروع کردن به</p> | <p>بی‌تا</p> |

	26 solutions. Then they started talking	دري وري گفتن كه مثلاً اين‌ها كه توي کشور	
	27 crap. For example, they would say	خودشون ظهر كه ميشه	
	28 that in their countries they would go	ميرن دو ساعت زير درخت مي‌خوابن.	
	29 sleep under a tree for two hours		
	30 once it became noon.		
	31 [Sara laughs loudly]	[سارا با صدای بلند مي‌خندد]	
Bita	32 Eventually my boss interrupted it.	كه ديگه صدای رئيس من در اومد. اون تنها	بيتا
	33 He was the only person who	آدمی بود كه يه ذره اين چيزها رو مي‌فهميد.	
	34 understood these things a little bit.	علتش هم اين بود كه خودش دوستان	
	35 The reason was because he had some	خارجی‌تبار داشت. خودش کشورهای عربی	
	36 foreign friends of his own. He	رفته بود برای سفر-	
	37 himself had travelled to Arab		
	38 countries-		
Sara	39 He had seen that people don't sleep	ديده بود كه ظهرها مردم زير درخت	سارا
	40 under the trees at noon.	نمی‌خوابن.	
Sara & Bita	41 [Laughter]	[سارا و بيتا می‌خندند]	
Bita	42 He said <VOX> It's not like that.	اين گفت: "نه بابا ديگه اينجوری نيست و اون‌ها	بيتا
	43 They too work in their own	هم تو کشور خودشون کار می‌کنن." ... [حذف	
	44 countries </VOX>. ... [Omitted 4.5	۴ دقیقه و ۲۰ ثانيه از صحبت‌ها در مورد	
	45 minutes of her explaining her	احساسش در آن لحظه و اينکه چطور جلسه را	
	46 feelings at that moment and how she	ترک کرد]. فرداش رفتم و به رئيسم گفتم من	
	47 left the meeting]. The next day I told	می‌خوام استعفا بدم. كه خیلی هم شوکه شد.	
	48 my boss that I want to resign. He		
	49 was very shocked.		

In the beginning of Excerpt 2, Bita's use of adverbs such as 'poorly' and 'تحقیراً' 'degradingly' (line 3) illustrates how she assesses the treatment of refugees by Germans at government offices. She criticizes her colleagues for not doing their jobs properly, claiming that "all they did was talk. They never did anything" (lines 10-12), and that "they didn't want to have to look for solutions" (lines 25-26). In the first line of her narrative, Bita uses the plural subject pronoun 'ما' 'we' to refer to the group that worked together at that office. This is the only time that she refers to herself as an insider, and she soon distances herself from her colleagues, depicting them as

xenophobic, inactive, and misinformed. By using the third person plural *حرف میزدن, رفتار میکردن, غر* ... , *میزدن* 'they spoke, they treated, they complained, ...', she contextualizes her voice and depicts how she and her colleagues treated refugees as starkly different. Although Bitā could have (under other circumstances) described herself and her colleagues as a group, here she continues to use the pronoun *اون ها* 'they' when she refers to them, and she concludes her narrative with her resignation.

Strikingly, according to her own account, Bitā remained silent when her colleagues spoke degradingly about migrants. The one who finally interrupted was her boss, who had travelled to the Middle East, not Bitā, who was born and raised in Iran. This could indicate that Bitā did not have (or felt she did not have) power or a voice at her workplace. It also could demonstrate that her silence was the result of feeling that she was an illegitimate speaker in this setting. My follow-up remark, "He had seen that people don't sleep under the trees at noon" (lines 39-40), emphasized the ignorance of people who made such statements; Bitā and I then laughed about it. I also was trying to lower the tension arising from Bitā's description of this uncomfortable situation, allowing her to save face by skipping over the fact that she did not say anything when her colleagues were saying these things.

This excerpt demonstrates how Bitā recontextualizes German discourse about migrants in order to critique it. She constructs and interprets their statements as including her (a non-Western migrant) in the 'non-worker' category. The xenophobic discourse recontextualized in Bitā's talk was not just about migrants who were not present at that meeting; it also included her.

The next participants' stories demonstrate that when migrants become aware of discriminatory discourse, they become estranged from their new society. We see how this estrangement impact migrants' emotions and attitudes towards their linguistic and religious repertoires.

Mr. & Mrs. Foumani

On a sunny afternoon in July, my friend Amir took me to Mr. and Mrs. Foumani's house. Mr. Foumani was in his eighties and his wife looked somewhat younger. When I asked him about his life story, he answered by defining his religious ideology. He used the term *کافر* /kafar/ (borrowed from the Arabic *kaafir*) to introduce himself as the most "infidel" or "nonbeliever" in the world. He gave me the impression that he embraced its negative connotation and was using it ironically. Since Mr. Foumani and I had just met, it seemed to me that he wanted to tell me his religious ideology in the very beginning of the interview to make it clear in what direction he wanted our talk to go.

Right after claiming his infidelity, Mr. Foumani told me his life story. Around six decades ago, he became the first Iranian graduate at a state university in the Southern U.S. He told me that he learned English within three months, translated Persian poetry into English, and received prizes from magazines. He lived in the United States for nine years, and after he graduated from university, he went back to Iran and worked as an English teacher for ten years.

Mr. Foumani told me that because of openly expressing his religious and political ideologies, he was incarcerated both before and after the Iranian revolution. When the Islamic regime accused him of being a CIA spy, he decided to escape the country. Since he was in exile and his life was in danger, France gave him a visa, but they did not give him permission to travel outside of the country. For six years, he lived in an almshouse, cleaned offices, and learned French. His wife and two children did not get visas; he said the French government never agrees to grant visas to four people in one family because of the high cost of living. His family finally obtained visas from Germany. Mr. Foumani then left France to see them, and the Foumanis have been living in Germany since 1989.

After hearing Mr. Foumani's life story and learning that he had spent most of his adulthood outside of Iran, I was curious to know if he identified himself as an Iranian or German. He told me that because of the regime in Iran, he would be ashamed to call himself Iranian. He expressed anti-Arab sentiments and said that he was disgusted by 'فرهنگ مذهبی و آخوندی' 'the religious and Mullah culture'. Like many of the other participants in my research, Mr. Foumani tried to avoid association with the Iranian regime that he considered to be Arab.

Mr. Foumani continued telling me about his hatred for Arab culture and the Islamic government in Iran. He identified himself as 'پارسی' 'Parsi', a Persianist identity which avoids reference to the current government in Iran. He told me that he was harassed in Germany a long time ago and I asked him to tell me the story. In the following excerpt, he talks about his first encounter with the German police and explains why, even though he studied English and French, he did not study German.

Excerpt 3

Mr. F	1 I came to Germany when they [his 2 family] came. When the German 3 police found out that I had 4 brought my wife and kids with me, 5 they kicked me out of Germany to 6 force them to go to France. The 7 German police acted like fascists. 8 Because of this I didn't learn 9 German.	اینا که آمدن آلمان من هم آدم آلمان. وقتی که پلیس آلمان فهمید که زن و بچه هایم را آوردم اینجا من رو بیرون کرد از آلمان تا اینها مجبور بشن برن فرانسه. پلیس آلمان خیلی فاشیست بازی درآورد. به همین دلیل یکی از دلایلی که من زبان آلمانی رو یاد نگرفتم همین بود.	آقای ف
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Personal narratives, like Mr. Foumani's memories of his arrival in Germany, are helpful in understanding the effects of the way dominant groups treat migrants in society. These narratives, even "minimal narratives" like the first two sentences in Excerpt 3, allow us to assess how this treatment impact migrants' emotions and attitudes towards their linguistic repertoires (Labov 1972). As Ochs and Capps (2001) have argued, narratives are a critical means to help us understand the nature of society. The way that Mr. Foumani describes the discriminatory action taken by the

German police accentuates the timing of the event. This allowed me to better understand his reason for not learning German, even after living in that country for twenty-eight years. I wanted to hear more stories of Mr. Foumani's migration experience. He was reluctant, even when his wife told him to tell the story of their arrival in detail. After he demurred, she told me herself.

Excerpt 4

Sara	1 2	Do you have anything to say about your years in Germany?	چیزی دارین درباره زندگیتون توی آلمان تو این سالها بگید؟	سارا
Mr. F	3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	I've forgotten everything because I never keep any grudge in my heart. Because if I do keep it, my humanity will be destroyed. Therefore, I remember the good and forget the bad. I don't want to be someone who holds grudges. I want to be a human. This is important to me.	هر چی بوده فراموش کردم چون من هیچ وقت هیچ عقده ای رو تو دل نگه نمیدارم. چون اگر نگه دارم اون افکار انسانی من از بین میره. بنابراین من خوبی ها رو به خاطر دارم ولی بدی ها رو فراموش میکنم. نمیخوام عقده ای باشم. میخوام انسان باشم و این برای مهمه.	آقای ف
Mrs. F	12	But you do have one bitter memory!	خب یک خاطره تلخ داری دیگه!	خانم ف
Sara	13	What is it?	چی؟	سارا
Mr. F	14 15	I have one bitter memory, but I've put it aside.	خاطره تلخ دارم ولی فراموش کردم.	آقای ف
Mrs. F	16	When you came from France-	وقتی که از فرانسه آمدی -	خانم ف
Mr. F	17	I said that already-	اون رو که گفتم بابا -	آقای ف
Mrs. F	18 19 20	When you arrived, we came to Göttingen and the police came after you-	وقتی که آمدی ما آمدیم گوتینگن که پلیس آمد دنبالت -	خانم ف
Mr. F	21	Yeah, that-	خب دیگه همون -	آقای ف
Sara	22	So, you tell me-	خب شما بگین -	سارا

- Mrs. F 23 Well, since he didn't have permission 24 to come from France, after we 25 arrived, they didn't want to keep 26 bringing refugees in. Germany, the 27 German government, doesn't want 28 it. After we became known to the 29 government, the police came the 30 next day and arrested him right at 31 the door. They said he is not allowed 32 to stay here. Then Hassan [Mr. 33 Foumani] told them that <VOX> I 34 thought that only the Islamic 35 republic is like this. So even here, 36 these laws exist. You're not allowed 37 to put me in handcuffs in front of 38 my children. I'm not a murderer. I'm 39 not a convict. For what reason are 40 you doing this? </VOX>
- Sara 41 Did they handcuff him? دستبند زدند؟ سارا
- Mrs. F 42 Yes- اره دیگه - خانم ف

To understand narrative as a discursive and creative activity, according to Ochs and Capps, we should “examine prosaic as well as artistic realizations” (2001, 4). They state that all narratives illustrate the tension between the desire to construct a storyline that ties events together in a cohesive explanatory framework, and the desire to explain the complexities of the experienced events, “including haphazard details, uncertainties, and conflicting sensibilities among protagonists” (2001, 4). In Excerpt 4, Mr. Foumani expressed his reluctance to tell me the unpleasant details of his arrival to Germany. This very unwillingness is one of the complexities of that event. Instead, his wife decided to narrate it. By telling (or resisting to tell) the narratives of migration, the Foumani family critique the widespread discrimination and injustice in their everyday lives. They critique migration laws in Europe, and they challenge them by comparing them to the laws in Islamic Iran. They use language to challenge the social inequality embedded in both countries' constitutions (cf. Wodak 2001). Arresting a person is a demonstration of authority. Mr. Foumani depicts himself as

challenging that authority by questioning the police and resisting their discriminatory actions in front of his family. His protests of “I’m not a murderer. I’m not a convict” (lines 38 and 39) recall Bitá’s musings on how Germans in Germany see migrants: “But from the beginning, they already have the sense that they think I am a liar” (Excerpt 1, lines 14-16).

The following excerpt gives another example of how a particular language gains power when it is used (Souto-Manning 2005). The topics that Mr. Foumani chooses to talk about and the way he organizes his arguments not only demonstrate his cognitive representations of his knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, they also illustrate how he stores and uses ostensible prior talk in discourse production. Since we do not have direct access to people’s mental structures and strategies, discourse structures are the only empirical data that may reveal what people think about a specific topic (van Dijk 1987). In Excerpt 5, we see how Mr. Foumani’s attitudes towards a topic are expressed and formulated in his talk and interaction.

Excerpt 5

Mr. F	1 When they deported me, I was 2 working in France. At that time 3 Helmut Kohl asked the USSR to let 4 Germans visit their families. Then I 5 wrote a strongly worded letter to 6 Helmut Kohl in English. I told him 7 that you’re asking for this for 8 German people, but I asked a 9 hundred times to give me 10 permission to visit my wife and 11 children. ‘Why don’t you let me? 12 You can hit yourself in the head 13 with your humanitarianism. You’re 14 all fascists.’ My tongue cuts like the 15 ax of Nader Shah.	وقتی بیرونم کردند، فرانسه بودم، کار میکردم. اون زمان هلموت کوهل از دولت شوروی خواسته بود که به آلمانی ها اجازه بدن بیان فامیل هاشون رو ببینن. که من یک نامه تندی به زبان انگلیسی برای هلموت کوهل نوشتم. گفتم که تویی که برای آلمانی ها همچین درخواستی میکنی، من صد بار درخواست کردم که به من اجازه بدید زن و بچه های من رو ببینم، چرا اجازه نمیدید؟ بشر دوستی شما تو سرتون بخوره. همتون فاشیستین. زبان من مثل تبرزین نادر شاه است. میبره.	آقای ف
Sara	16 Well did they answer that letter?	خب جواب دادن به اون نامه؟	سارا

Mr. F	17 They did respond later, but they 18 didn't really respond. They just gave 19 me permission to come. All of this 20 was to say that democracy does not 21 exist anywhere. In Europe and 22 America trade and money have 23 value and that's why they have 24 democracy. It's not because of 25 humanity.	بعدا جواب دادن. جواب که ندادن، بعدا به من اجازه اومدن دادن. اینجا این رو میخوام به شما بگم. دموکراسی هیچ جا وجود نداره. در اروپا و امریکا تجارت و پول ارزش داره و این دموکراسی هم به خاطر اونه نه به خاطر انسان.
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The excerpt above illustrates how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse.

Usually, the singular informal form of the pronoun *تو*/to/ 'you' in Persian creates a sense of familiarity and intimacy, and the plural formal form *شما*/shoma/ creates a sense of respect or distance. By using the informal form of this pronoun in line 7, Mr. Foumani shows his lack of respect for the German chancellor. In lines 6 to 11, he compares himself to German refugees in USSR; both have difficulty visiting their families. Here, he critiques the political discourse in Germany that differentiates between German citizens and migrants. In lines 5 to 6, he emphasizes the language he says he used to talk to the chancellor: "Then I wrote a strongly worded letter to Helmut Kohl in English." To demonstrate his power, in lines 14 to 15, he states that his tongue cuts like the ax of Nader Shah Afshar, the eighteenth-century Iranian ruler who invaded the Mughal empire. Because Mr. Foumani did not have access to the German language, he used English to question the discriminatory laws in Germany. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997, 273) argue, "every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations." Although Mr. Foumani did not receive a reply from German authorities, he claims that it was the impact of his letter which made authorities give him permission to see his family.

Although Mr. Foumani claims that he just remembers the good and forgets the bad, in fact, he still remembers in detail his migration to Germany. The last excerpt from Mr. Foumani's story

illustrates how migrants learn to critique xenophobic discourse in their everyday lives, and how this discourse impacts their attitudes towards the language of that society.

Excerpt 6

Mr. F	1	I've never studied German. The	آقای ف	آلمانی اصلا نخوندم. پلیس به من گفت: "تو
	2	police told me, <VOX>You		قبلا آلمان بودی، چرا آلمانی بلد نیستی؟"
	3	were in Germany before. Why		
	4	don't you know German?		
	5	</VOX>		
Sara	6	Right.	سارا	آهان.
Mr. F	7	I told him, <VOX> Hitler died	آقای ف	گفتم: "هیتلر ۵۰ سال پیش مرده تو چرا یاد
	8	50 years ago. Why haven't you		نگرفتی به صورت انسان با من رفتار کنی؟"
	9	learned to treat me as a human?		اینو که گفتم خفه شد. مال خودشون رو
	10	</VOX> Once I said that, he		نمیبین!
	11	shut up. They don't see their		
	12	own.		
Sara	13	Interesting.	سارا	جالب بود.
Mr. F	14	I said that in English. I said,	آقای ف	به انگلیسی گفتم. گفتم:
	15	<VOX> Hitler is 50 years <i>tot</i>		"Hitler is 50 years <i>tot</i> [dead], how
	16	[dead], how come you didn't		come you didn't learn to act like a
	17	learn to act like a human?		human?"
	18	</VOX>		

In excerpt 6, once again Mr. Foumani uses the informal form of the pronoun 'you' to indicate the social relation between an immigrant and the police. In official contexts, using the informal 'you' is uncommon. In lines 2 and 7, the way that Mr. Foumani constructs his own and the police's language functions as an implicit claim that they had little respect for each other. By using the informal form of the pronoun 'you' and calling the police "Hitler" (line 7), he implies that he was courageous and not intimidated when talking to the police.

Excerpt 6 begins with Mr. Foumani's claim about his lack of knowledge of German, and it ends with him expressing his discontent with the police in English. This reinforces what he said about his good memories of his time studying English at a university in Texas, and his dislike of the German language: "The German police acted like fascists. Because of this I didn't learn German"

(Excerpt 3, line 7-9). This anecdote recalls my experience with the German police in the beginning of this chapter. Our stories indicate that both Mr. Foumani and I were aware of our perceived illegitimacy in Germany. We both felt Othered which had a profound impact on our attitudes towards the German language.

Amir

Unlike Mr. Foumani, some immigrants are not able to critique the xenophobic discourse of the German authorities because they lack sufficient language proficiency. Amir moved to Ukraine for three years, attended college, and learned Russian, beginning when he was eighteen years old. One year before getting his degree, he returned to Iran and lived there for five years. He could not find a job after he finished college, so he decided to leave Iran. At the time of our interview, he had been living in Germany for two years. We spent a lot of time together during my stay in his city near Frankfurt because he was free most of the time. Amir only had basic proficiency in German, but he was not attending language classes because he found them boring. He did not have a work permit. He told me that he saw his future as hopeless. Amir told me about the open xenophobia he had experienced in various places in Germany, and then, after being silent for a minute, he told me the story excerpted below.

Excerpt 7

<p>Amir 1 Everyone has bad experiences here. 2 In the minds of Germans, it doesn't 3 matter if you have been here for 4 one year, ten years, or thirty years. 5 You are still a foreigner. It doesn't 6 matter. You're a refugee. Germans 7 don't know about Iran. Their 8 knowledge on Iran is weak. As 9 opposed to what I had thought, 10 which was that Germans were very 11 knowledgeable, their knowledge is 12 way lower than that of Iranians. I 13 have met some Germans that</p>	<p>همه تجربه بد دارن اینجا. شما از دید آلمانی چه یک سال اینجا باشی، چه ده سال اینجا باشی، چه سی سال اینجا باشی باز هم یک خارجی هستی. فرقی نداره. پناهنده ای. آلمانی ها شناخت ندارن راجع به ایران. خیلی اطلاعاتشون ضعیفه. بر عکس اون چیزیکه من فکر میکردم آلمانی ها واقعا سطح اطلاعاتشون بسیار بالا باشه خیلی پایین تر از ایرانی هاست. با چند تا آلمانی برخورد</p>	<p>امیر</p>
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- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 14 | thought Iran was dirt, like | داشتم فکر میکردن ایران مثل افغانستان |
| 15 | Afghanistan. They though Tehran is | خاکه. فکر میکردن تهران مثل کابل. |
| 16 | like Kabul. | |

Amir's concept of a perpetual foreigner, expressed in lines 2 to 6, demonstrates his understanding that Germans believe refugees don't belong. He criticizes Germans for creating an Iranian with imagined social characteristics, and for treating Iranians as if they were this illusionary social construct. However, he himself has created a similar social construct to imagine Afghanistan and Afghans. Since 1978, millions of Afghans have taken refuge in Iran and other countries in the world. The Germans who Amir said called Iranians and Afghans terrorists, and Amir, who calls Afghanistan "dirt," both have scarce information about these two countries. What they say about refugees reflects common stereotypes about migrants used in hegemonic discourses by dominant groups.

Excerpt 8

- | | | | | |
|------|----|--------------------------------------|------|--|
| Amir | 1 | They are really behind. It's true, | امیر | اینجا واقعا خیلی عقبین. ولی کشورشون |
| | 2 | their country is holding itself up. | | درسته، سر پاست. ولی اطلاعاتشون ضعیفه |
| | 3 | But their knowledge is weak and | | به خاطر همین این برخورد ها رو با آدم ها |
| | 4 | that's why they treat people the | | میکنن. یارو اصلا نمیدونه ایران کجاست، |
| | 5 | way they do. They don't even | | چه زبونی داره. فقط تا میگی "ایران" میگه: |
| | 6 | know where Iran is or what | | "تروریست". |
| | 7 | language is spoken. When you say | | |
| | 8 | <VOX> Iran, </VOX> they say | | |
| | 9 | <VOX> terrorist </VOX>. | | |
| Sara | 10 | Has it ever happened that you say | سارا | تاحالا شده بگی ایران بگن- |
| | 11 | Iran and they say- | | |
| Amir | 12 | Yeah, yeah. | امیر | آره، آره. |
| Sara | 13 | Seriously? | سارا | واقعا؟ |
| Amir | 14 | Yes. At the first camp that we were | امیر | آره. کمپ اولی بودیم گفت "از کجا آمدی؟" |
| | 15 | at they asked where we came from. | | همون رجیستری اول که با این پسره رفته |
| | 16 | At the first registry that I went to | | بودم. گفت "کجایی هستین؟" گفتم "ایرانی،" |
| | 17 | with this guy, they asked, <VOX> | | اون پسره گفت "افغان." گفت: "تروریست." |
| | 18 | Where are you from? </VOX> I | | |
| | 19 | said: <VOX> Iranian </VOX> | | |

	20	and he said <VOX> Afghan	همینجوری. چی میتونی بگی؟ زبون بلد
	21	<VOX>. He said, <VOX>	نمودیم، هیچی نمیتونی بگی. بعدا فهمیدیم که
	22	Terrorists </VOX>. Just like that.	اینا اصلا اجازه ندارن همچین حرفی رو به
	23	What can you say? We didn't know	زبون بیارن-
	24	the language. We didn't know how	
	25	to say anything. Then I found out	
	26	they are not even allowed to bring	
	27	these words to their mouth-	
Sara	28	Of course, nowhere in the world-	سارا معلومه، هیچ جای دنیا-
Amir	29	Well they say. What can you do?	امیر ولی میگن، چی کار میتونی بکنی؟ آره
	30	They have laws, but they only	قانون داره ولی برای خودشونه. همه چی
	31	apply to their own people.	برای خودشونه.
	32	Everything applies to their own	
	33	people.	

Although Amir states that he does not understand German, he interprets what the German authority told them as a xenophobic backlash against Iranians and Afghans. When the Middle East is portrayed in the media as a place “which breeds warrior cultures” (El-Haj 2002, 309), these accusations get out of hand. Experiences like this, where migrants are called terrorists, position them as outsiders, the Other, or the “enemies within” which impacts their feeling of belonging in that society (El-Haj 2007, 287). Another important element in this excerpt is the language barrier faced by Amir and his Afghan companion. Most likely the only word that they both could understand was ‘terrorist’, because it sounds the same in both Persian and German. Although these men were critically aware of the xenophobic attitudes prevalent in Germany, they could not challenge them at that moment because they did not know German or English. Moreover, in lines 30- 33, Amir illustrates how German society creates outsiders and insiders through its laws. His interpretation of how discrimination and inequality are formulated in German law illustrates the relations of power based on ethnicity in that society.

In the next excerpt, Amir speaks appreciatively of the economic access that Germany has provided for him, but he still struggles to feel a sense of belonging.

Excerpt 9

Sara	1	In the future, do you want to stay	آینده میخوای اینجا بمونی یا میخوای برگردی،	سارا
	2	here? Do you want to leave? Or	یا چی؟	
	3	what?		
Amir	4	No, I will never go back to Iran. But	نه، ایران که هیچ موقع برنمیگردم. ولی اگر	امیر
	5	if they reject me, I will leave this	جواب منفی بدن از این کشور هم میرم.	
	6	country too.		
Sara	7	But if you get rejected, you can hire	ولی اگر منفی بیاد دوباره میتونی وکیل	سارا
	8	a lawyer-	بگیری-	
Amir	9	Yeah you can. If you put in effort,	آره میتونی، تلاش کنی بالاخره اینجا میمونی	امیر
	10	you can stay here. But it's not worth	ولی جایی که دلت خوش نباشه اونجا فایده	
	11	staying in a place where your heart is	نداره. طلا هم بدن بهت، خونه هم بدن بهت،	
	12	not happy. If they give you gold, if	فایده اش چیه؟	
	13	they give you a house, what		
	14	difference it makes?		
Sara	15	Because of their poor behavior?	به خاطر برخورد اینا؟	سارا
Amir	16	Yeah, their behavior is awful. I live	آره، برخوردها خیلی سنگینه. من تو اجتماع	امیر
	17	in a society. When someone leaves	زندگی میکنم. آدم دو دقیقه میاد بیرون نگاه	
	18	their house for two minutes and sees	مردم رو میبینه آدم رو واقعا اذیت میکنه.	
	19	people's gaze, it really bothers them.	شرایط فعلی آلمان برای من پناهنده خیلی	
	20	The contemporary situation of	سخته. امکانات میدن. دستشون درد نکنه.	
	21	Germany is very hard for refugees.	قانونشونه. قانون بین المللیه. هیچ طلبی هم آدم	
	22	They provide for you. I appreciate	از کسی نداره، ولی نگاه هاشون رو نمیتونی	
	23	that. It's their law. It's an	تحمل کنی. تو اتوبوس به زبون مادریت داری	
	24	international law. Nobody expects	صحبت میکنی چپ چپ نگاهت میکنن. میگه:	
	25	anything from anyone. But you can't	"حرف نزن، اینجا کشورت نیست. اینجا	
	26	handle their gaze. When you speak	آلمانه." باید بهش بگی: "آقا، این مادر منه	
	27	in your native language on the bus,	دارم باهات حرف میزنم." "خوب مادرت، بلد	
	28	they give you a weird look. They say,	نیستی آلمانی صحبت کنی برو بیرون صحبت	
	29	<VOX> Don't speak. This isn't	کن. اجازه نداری تو اتوبوس صحبت کنی."	
	30	your home country. This is Germany	میدونی یه سری چیزا سخته دیگه. خیلی سخته	
	31	</VOX>. You have to tell them:		
	32	<VOX> Sir, this is my mother that		
	33	I'm talking to </VOX>. They say:		
	34	<VOX> So what if it's your mom?		
	35	When you can't speak German, go		
	36	outside and talk. You're not allowed		
	37	to talk on the bus </VOX>. You		
	38	know, some things are just very		

39 difficult. It's hard for a person to put آدم کنار بیاد با یک سری چیزا. به معنای
 40 certain things aside. They're racist in واقعی نژاد پرستن.
 41 a serious manner.

When Amir says, "It's not worth staying in a place where your heart is not happy" (lines 10-12), he echoes Bitá's and Mr. Foumani's perspectives. Despite the many possibilities that the government provides for refugees, many find it difficult to live and develop a sense of belonging in a place where they are seen as liars, murderers, or convicts.

One reason why Amir and many other refugees cannot return to their homeland has to do with their asylum applications. They cite different individual reasons for seeking asylum, including religious conversion, on their applications, and based on those reasons, the federal office decides their status. Most Iranian converts prefer to keep their conversion a secret from other Iranians, because if their asylum applications are rejected and they are deported back to Iran, conversion is a capital crime (Nayeri 2012). Therefore, I was very cautious and never asked any participant about their asylum applications or their religious affiliations. However, I spent a significant amount of time with Amir, and every now and then he mentioned something about a church he attended on Sundays. Whenever this happened, he quickly changed the topic. In line 4, he says, "I will never go back to Iran." I assume that he is a convert, and that is why he will never return, even though his immediate family lives there.

Amir is like an imprisoned spirit. Not only can he not return home, he emphasizes the apathy he feels living in Germany when he says "If they reject me, I will leave this country, too" and "It's not worth staying in a place where your heart is not happy" (lines 5, 6, and 10 to 12). His claim, "They provide for you. I appreciate that. It's their law. It's an international law" (lines 22-24) recalls Mr. Foumani's critiques of Western democracy: "You can hit yourself in the head with your humanitarianism" (Excerpt 5, lines 12-13), and "In Europe and America trade and money have value and that's why they have democracy. It's not because of humanity" (Excerpt 5, lines 21-25).

Mr. Foumani, Amir, and many other refugee and migrants from the Middle East leave their home countries in search for justice, peace, and democracy; however, the democracy that Western countries provide does not satisfy.

The final part of the excerpt demonstrates how Amir perceives language as a tool for discrimination. Amir cannot communicate fluently with Germans because he has only basic proficiency in their language. He also depicts himself as brutally prohibited from using his native language and gets backlash from German passersby. In lines 38-40, when he says, “some things are just very difficult. It’s hard for a person to put certain things aside,” we see his unpleasant experiences in Germany where he feels unwelcome, alienated and isolated from the German society, a perpetual foreigner.

My own experience during my fieldwork echoed these feelings. A few days before I interviewed Amir, I was on a Cologne-Frankfurt train, talking quietly on the phone in Persian. Two men sat across from and next to me. They were also talking on the phone, though in German. All of a sudden, a woman who had been gazing at me since I boarded the train came from the next row and started yelling at me. She told me that I was not allowed to talk in my mother tongue on the train. Although I am fluent in both German and English, at that moment, I froze. I ended my phone call and did not say anything to the woman. Because of such experiences, I was not surprised by Amir’s story. Assimilation in Germany is a one-way process. The German government primarily focuses on providing language, assimilation, and acculturation classes for migrants, to help them to adapt to German cultural practices. They only look at assimilation from their own point of view, ignoring migrants’ transnational ties and practices.

Masoud

This unidirectional assimilation project, which institutionalizes Amir’s experience on the bus, is further illustrated by the story of Masoud, an Iranian refugee who was introduced in chapter 1.

His narratives shows how immigration to Germany is experienced differently by migrants who are not Muslim. I interviewed him at a café in downtown of a city near Frankfurt. He was a happy, optimistic, and self-confident young man. As with all the other interviews I conducted, I spoke in Persian; however, Masoud himself switched back and forth between Persian and German. I include Masoud's story because he had a different perspective on German people and their language. Unlike most of the other participants in my project, he talked openly about his conversion to Christianity. He told me that he was brought up in a religious family and he was a devout Muslim when he lived in Iran. However, he narrated, he found a German girlfriend upon his arrival at Frankfurt airport and converted to Christianity four days later. Masoud had visible tattoos of Jesus Christ on his arms and neck and seemed keen to talk about his religious beliefs. Thus, even though it was a topic I generally avoided with Iranians, I curiously asked him for more details.

Excerpt 10

Sara	1 2 3	Have you ever been ashamed of telling people about your religious beliefs?	تاحالا شده خجالت بکشی به مردم درباره اعتقادات دینیت بگی؟	سارا
Masoud	4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Ashamed? It's the proudest moment ever. Jesus is not something to be ashamed of. Man should be proud of Jesus. It didn't even take me four months to tell my family. Now everybody knows. They call me and say, <VOX> Masoud, pray for me </VOX>. No matter how much they say that I say this just because of my case, I tell them: <VOX> You can say that, but it's not true </VOX>.	خجالت؟ پر غرورترین حالت ممکنه است. عیسا خجالت نیست، عیسا افتخاره. به خانواده ام همون ۴ ماه نکشید گفتیم. تاحالا همه هم میدونن. به من زنگ میزنن: "مسعود دعا کن برای ما." هرچقدر هم بگن که حالا شاید به خاطر کیس میگی. میگم: "حالا شما بگید ولی همچین چیزی نیست."	مسعود
Sara	17 18 19	Has there been a time that you were ashamed to say you are Iranian?	تاحالا شده که خجالت بکشی بگی ایرانی هستم؟	سارا

Masoud	20	Don't even think about it. I've	مسعود	یک درصد تو فکرشم نکن. همیشه گفتم
	21	always said, <VOX> Ich bin		"Ich bin Perser."
	22	Perser </VOX>.		
	23	I sometimes say <VOX> Iraner	بعضی موقع ها میگم	"Iraner."
	24	<VOX>.		
	25	The they ask <VOX> Iraker?	بعد طرف میگه	"Iraker?"
	26	</VOX>		
	27	Then I say <VOX> Nein, keine	بعد من میگم:	
	28	Araber! Iraner. Perser. Schah.		"Nein, keine Araber! Iraner. Perser.
	29	Kennst du den? Ah Shaah!		Schah. Kennst du den? Ah Shaah!"
	30	</VOX>		
Sara	31	[Laughs]	[سارا میخندد]	
Masoud	32	This guy's son-in-law is named	مسعود	یکی دامادش اسمش سعیده. شوهر دخترش
	33	Saied. His daughter's husband is		ایرانیه. اصلا حال میکنه. دیوانه ایرانیان.
	34	Iranian. He is obsessed. They		
	35	are crazy for Iranians. Once	ولی اسم عرب که میاید دیوانه میشن-	
	36	they hear about Arabs they lose		
	37	it-		

Masoud constructs his identity by using words that connote pride such as پرغرورترین و 'افتخار' the proudest and proud, and the Jesus tattoos all over his body and neck further testify to his religious pride, used to demonstrate that he has not converted just for his asylum application (lines 12-16).

There are important similarities and differences between the stories of Masoud and Mr. Foumani. Both men are interested in talking about their religious beliefs or lack thereof. Mr. Foumani connects Iran to the current Islamic regime. Masoud, on the other hand, connects his Persianness to the Pahlavi dynasty. Unlike Mr. Foumani, Masoud is proud of being Iranian. And unlike Mr. Foumani and many other participants who critique the ways they are identified by Germans, Masoud depicts himself as having adapted to German society and as wanting to adopt its norms, values, and behaviors. He speaks in German when he describes how he proudly tells Germans about his heritage, whereas Mr. Foumani speaks in English when he tells me how he wrote a letter to the German authorities condemning their discriminatory behavior. Like Mr. Foumani,

Masoud distances himself from Arabs and emphasizes his Persianness. Hearing Masoud's social interactions within that environment, I was eager to know more about his positive experiences. In the next excerpt, he explains how his conversion helped him in the host country.

Excerpt 11

Sara	1	What is it like to be Christian in	اینکه تو آلمان مسیحی هستی چجوریه؟	سارا
	2	Germany?		
Masoud	3	It helps a lot with many things.	خیلی کمکم میکنه تو خیلی کارا. مثلا همین	مسعود
	4	For example, for the passport	الان برای پاسی که میخوام بگیرم یا مثلا تو	
	5	that I'm trying to get. Or in the	محیطی که داری درس میخونی. وقتی میبینن	
	6	environment in which you're	تو یک مسیحی هستی اصلا رفتارشون فرق	
	7	studying. When they find out	میکنه. میگن: "چی شد؟ کجا بودی؟ ارمنی	
	8	you're Christian, their behavior	بودی یا مسلمون بودی؟"	
	9	changes. They say, <VOX>		
	10	What happened? Where were		
	11	you? Were you Armenian or		
	12	Muslim? </VOX>		
Sara	13	Germans ask?	آلمانی ها میپرسن؟	سارا
Masoud	14	Yes, and then I explain to them.	آره. بعد توضیح میدم.	مسعود

When comparing Masoud's situation in this excerpt to the situation of the other four participants discussed in this chapter, we see that Masoud is the only one who describes himself as treated fairly in Germany. Unlike Bita, whose background was ignored by her colleagues at their meeting, Masoud depicts his background as very interesting to Germans, who wonder to which Iranian ethnic and religious minority group (such as Armenian) he belongs (lines 10-12). Masoud's experience in Germany is important because it suggests that Iranians who are not Muslim may be treated differently than those who are, and that these different treatments impact their lives. Unlike Bita, who rarely speaks German in our interview, Mr. Foumani, who does not know German after living forty years in Germany, or Amir, who finds German language classes boring, Masoud switches effortlessly between German and Persian, suggesting a much more positive attitude towards German.

Conclusion

When people feel that they are not accepted immediately upon their arrival, they may lose their motivation to join their host society. For example, Mr. Foumani's narrative highlights the impact of a hostile political climate on the lived experiences of language users (cf. Norton 2013). His story indicates that we cannot hold migrants, the people who have left their homes, solely responsible for their difficulties integrating into their host countries. In order to facilitate integration, the host societies also bear responsibility for demonstrating tolerance and accepting diversity. First experiences in new environments are very important in shaping both a sense of belonging and the emotions and attitudes towards one's linguistic repertoire. Mr. Foumani, Amir, and I all experienced unpleasant and unwelcoming interactions in the first months of our arrivals to Germany. These made us feel alienated and isolated, not only from German society but also from the language. In contrast, Masoud was deeply motivated to share both language and religious practices with Germans; he believed that this had led to a more positive experience in Germany. However, both cases are still one-sided efforts. Masoud is attempting to assimilate, by becoming a Christian and speaking German. But this does not speak at all to a German attempt to demonstrate tolerance or accept diversity.

The country of origin and religious affiliations impact migration experience. Discriminatory interactions, like the German officer's treatment of me, Bitá's coworkers' demeaning conversations, the police's ejection of Mr. Foumani, and Amir's experience on the bus, could be rooted in the negative portrayal of Muslim refugee and migrants from the Middle East in the media and public discourse. These interactions had a negative emotional effect on Bitá, Mr. and Mrs. Foumani, and Amir. This, in turn, inevitably led to negative social effects, such as feeling distant from their host-society and not learning the host language. Bitá resigned from her job, Mr. Foumani was in constant conflict with Germans, and Amir was planning to move to another country. Masoud's story in this

chapter shows that when people are treated well, they may develop a positive attitude toward the host society and the language, a feeling that may mitigate the host country's intolerance, xenophobia, and racism. Although Masoud's positive experience might be related to his mutual religious affiliation with the majority of his hosts, we need to hear more stories from migrants with similar backgrounds to draw any conclusions about the role of religion in immigrant integration.

Chapter 3

Assyrian-Iranian Migrants' Portrayal of Emotions toward their Linguistic Resources

While working on the analysis of my dissertation data and translating the interviews I conducted with Iranians in Germany, I continuously paused at the word *Farsi*, wondering whether or not to translate it into English. Even though I usually call the language *Persian* when speaking English, the English translation *Persian* did not capture the emotions inherent in what people had told me. When I think about my childhood memories, I think about them in Farsi. Farsi is the language of my heart. I speak Farsi to my parents and friends in Iran. As a proficient multilingual, moving among my first (Farsi), second (German), and third language (English) in everyday life, for me the translation equivalent of the word *Farsi* is neither *Persian* nor *Persisch*. I have such strong emotional attachments to the word *Farsi* that I find it hard to translate it between my languages. Scholars have shown that “some emotion words may have no translation equivalents” (Dewaele and Pavlenko 2002, 264), and here we see that even the name of a language can be an “emotion word.” My struggles with how to translate “Farsi” and the emotional distance between my first and other languages led me to look at the emotional attachments that my research participants had to their linguistic resources.

The strong emotional attachment of most multilingual individuals to their first language (L1), especially when they migrate to places with different languages in their adulthood, is undeniable. However, in this chapter, I examine a less common situation, wherein multilingual individuals experience stronger positive emotions towards a language that is not their L1. Although migrants “often view their mother tongue as a symbol of their past, their family of origin, childhood landscapes, familial myths, and early memories” (Tannenbaum 2005, 232), I demonstrate that people can view their *other* languages as symbols as well.

Earlier studies have argued that it makes a difference *in what order* one learns each language. “Languages of an individual may differ in their emotional impact, with the first being the language in which personal involvement is expressed, and the second being the language of distance and detachment” (Dewaele and Pavlenko 2002, 264; see also Amati-Mehler, Argentieri, and Canestri 1993; Anooshian and Hertel 1994). Interviews with people whose current positive emotions are primarily towards a language that is not their L1 reveals that perceptions of one’s linguistic resources depend on experiences with/in various languages, regardless of whether one learned them in childhood or later. This chapter contributes to the limited research on emotions in SLA (e.g. Clachar 1999; Pavlenko and Dewaele 2004; Pavlenko 2006c; 2006a; Arnold 2011; Kramsch 2013) by emphasizing the relationship between L1 and L2 language *use*, that is, the “future history” of learning (Agha 2007, 275).

This chapter aims to enrich our understanding of “the social nature of the processes which link people to particular languages” (Rampton 1990, 98). My difficulty translating *Farsi* led me to examine how the participants in my research ascribe different emotional values to each of the languages in their repertoires. Narrative theorist Michael Bamberg argues that language and emotions are parallel systems, with “one system (emotions) impact[ing] on the performance of the other (language). Both of them share their functionality in the communicative process between people” (1997a, 309). I investigate how Persian, as the second language of the two interlocutors whose conversations I examine in this chapter, becomes a preferred language for the communication of emotions and a symbol of longing and nostalgia. Although some scholars argue that language shift as part of the migration process often involves “language loss with all its attendant emotional, interactional, and psychological significance” (Tannenbaum 2005, 230), this was not true for most of the adult migrants I met during my research in Germany. My two Assyrian-Iranian interlocutors live in a country where knowledge of the national language is seen as essential

for migrants to belong and to earn the respect of citizens (Heinemann 2017). Yet they continue to hold positive attitudes toward Persian. Their memories of Iran and Persian are symbols of their social identification which are not replaceable by powerful languages or host countries.

We can hear the convoluted threads of migrants' lives through their stories about their past. Verbalizing nostalgic or melancholic feelings for the past links language with emotions. Multilinguals can express many memories (only) through a particular language. A word in one language can have connotations and meanings that are fully understandable only to speakers of that language, who share collective memories of the past. Because "meaning is multi-modal, communicated in much more than language alone" (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 6), the meaning of a given word can come to be associated with experience and emotions.

For me, some words in Persian provoke feelings of melancholy or nostalgia. For me and many other Iranians who lived in Iran after the Iranian revolution, a green Nissan Patrol 160 series vehicle connotes the van of *گشت ارشاد* /*Gasht-e-Ershad*,/ the Islamic morality police, who enforce Islamic codes, especially on women. During the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, Hezbollahis 'the partisans of God', pulled young men into these vans to send them to the warfront. This was one of the reasons why many Iranians smuggled their 14 to 17-year-old sons out of Iran during that time. For us, the phrase *پاترول سبز* 'the green patrol' is associated with pain and suffering; it reminds us of unpleasant events in the distant past such as memories of war and the pain people experienced after the Islamic revolution. Not only are there emotions attached to this phrase but there is also culture behind it, such that linguistic translation alone does not suffice to reflect its "linguacultural" meaning (Friedrich 1989, 307). The phrase "green patrol" is used by Iranians in different contexts to connote fear, enforcement, hatred, conservatism, migration, and so on.

Sargon	~55	20	35	Christian	Iranian-Assyrian	Assyrian	Engineer
Roya	~55	20	35	Christian	Iranian-Assyrian	English French	Dishwasher Janitor
Laleh	n/a	~20	22	Muslim-born	Iranian	n/a	Volunteer Social Worker
Soraya	55	~24	~31	Muslim-born	Iranian	n/a	Retired Nurse

Assyrians in Iran

The history of Assyrians in Iran helps us to better understand Sargon and Roya's feelings towards their country of origin, their host country, and their language resources. Sargon and Roya are Iranian by nationality and Assyrian by ethnicity, descendants of Christian Assyrians who settled in Urumiyah, a large city in Azerbaijan province of Iran, around the beginning of the 18th century (Macuch 1987). Although their ancestors migrated to Iran many generations ago, in Iran they are still considered different from other Iranians because they are members of ethnic and religious minority groups. Before the Islamic revolution of 1979, Assyrians had political and economic freedom, but after the revolution, the relationship between the state and non-Muslim religious minorities changed (Macuch 1987). Political scientist Eliz Sanasarian argues that in today's Iran "Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and Zoroastrians possess some valuable rights (e.g., voting for their own deputies, the right to assemble, and so forth), yet are excluded (overtly or covertly) from others and are ... clearly a subordinated collectivity" (2000, 6).

Because of Sargon's and Roya's backgrounds, I wanted to better understand how being a minority impacts their feelings of belonging and their attitudes towards their linguistic resources in both Iran and Germany. In our interviews, Sargon and Roya told me how they were discriminated against in both countries, yet their relationship to Persian and German were not the same. To explain what made them value Persian as much or even more than their first language, Assyrian, we need to understand the sociopolitical environment in Iran, their relationships with Iranians inside

and outside of the country, and their memories of an idealized Iran. Moreover, although they both have lived in Germany for decades, they have less positive feelings towards German and Germans than they do toward Persian.

Sargon

Sargon was born in Tehran in an Assyrian family. He estimated that he was between three and five years old when he realized that he was different from other Iranians in mother tongue and religion. Being different was a strange feeling in the beginning, but soon he began to believe that it was something good. He had something extra, a language and a religion that others did not possess. Speaking Persian was prohibited at home. His father allowed them to speak Persian only in public. Sargon's father told him that "an ethnic group is preserved by its language and their book. If you lose your language, the Assyrian language, or your book and script, your ethnic group will be lost." Sargon agreed with him. Nevertheless, he learned Persian, which "is considered as the lingua franca for all subethnic groups that form the Iranian national identity both within and without the Iranian nation-state" (Naficy 2002, 21) and valued it as much as his mother tongue. In his opinion, this was because he was brought up with both languages and never felt that he was speaking "the language of strangers."

When Sargon turned eighteen, the Islamic Revolution happened. He told me that everything underwent a drastic change after that. For the first time, he felt like a stranger in Iran. Within one or two months everybody, including his close friends, "turned fanatics." The grocer in the neighborhood where his family had lived for ten years told Sargon's mother that they were ritually unclean, he recalled. He mentioned the green vans of the morality police and how they preached Islamic values to him. Despite the conditions that Sargon's family and other religious minorities experienced after the revolution, during the war between Iran and Iraq they were sent to the front line by the government. When Sargon came back from the war, he heard that non-Muslims could

not get government jobs. He said the only job opportunity for non-Muslims was to open a grocery store. Sargon said “those who have fanatic ideologies” would not have shopped at stores run by non-Muslims because they saw them, again, as ritually unclean. Several times he got into arguments with state officials, causing his father concern about his safety. Eventually he came to believe that he could not have a future in Iran, and at the age of twenty-five Sargon left the country for good, taking refuge in West Germany.

Sargon told me that as soon as he got to Germany, he started feeling like a stranger once again. While it took him eighteen years to develop such feelings in Iran, it took him only a few days in Germany. Germans, he felt, looked down on him and thought that he took refuge in their country because he was hungry, while he constructed his reasons for coming as seeking human rights. He wanted to live his life free from social, political, or religious discrimination and abuse. Sargon recalled that his “never-ending war” with Germans started right upon his arrival in Germany. Like many migrants in diaspora (Naficy 2002), he positioned himself as someone who was representing his country of origin and its people. He said that since he moved to Germany, he has been defending Iran, teaching Germans the greatness of the country, its old history, and civilization.

In Excerpt 1 Sargon’s emotions answer the question raised by Bamberg of “whether emotions are ‘real’ objects in the world ... or whether they are ‘internal’ psychological states or processes” (1997a, 309). Sargon uses real objects such as foods to make sense of his cathected relationship with Iran.

Excerpt 1

- | | | | |
|--------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Sargon | 1 | I never knew myself as German. | سرگن من خودم رو آلمانی ندونستم. من ایرانی ام- |
| | 2 | I’m Iranian. | |
| Sara | 3 | But you’re Iranian-German, | سارا ولی ایرانی-آلمانی هستی، نیستی؟ |
| | 4 | aren’t you? | |

Sargon

5 Most of my time alive has been
 6 in Germany. Although the place
 7 that you grew up, I don't know
 8 what it is like, I'm just like this.
 9 There is a lot of people who are
 10 more German than Iranian. It
 11 depends on the person. For
 12 example, my wife is more
 13 German than Iranian. I don't
 14 know what it is like. I'm very
 15 Iranian. I used to be very Iranian
 16 because all of my friends were
 17 Iranian in Iran.
 18 Then I had seen a lot of Iran. I've
 19 seen all of Iran.
 20 I've traveled around Iran.
 21 Then I understood Iran.
 22 I recognize the alleys in Iran.
 23 I recognize the smell of Iran.
 24 I recognize the fruits of Iran.
 25 I recognize the people of Iran.
 26 I recognize the attitude of Iran.
 27 And exactly in the same way I
 28 also understand Germany's
 29 [things]. But I like Iran's [things]
 30 more. But you can't say why this
 31 is like this.
 32 I like Iranian food more than
 33 German food.
 34 I like Iranian fruit more than
 35 German fruit.
 36 I like Iranian weather more than
 37 German weather.
 38 For this reason, I'm more
 39 Iranian.
 40 Then I like Iranian attitudes more
 41 than German attitudes.
 42 I like this Iranian friendship more
 43 than German friendship. There
 44 are many things where Iran is
 45 more than Germany, meaning
 46 better than Germany. Germany
 47 has been very good for me
 48 personally. [But] that's not a
 49 reason. I'm not saying that
 50 Germany is bad when I say Iran
 51 is good. I don't mean that – but

سرگن من بیشتر مدت زندگیم توی آلمان بوده.
 منتها تو اونجایی که بزرگ میشی، نمیدونم
 چجوریه، من شخصا اینجوریم.
 خیلی ها هستن که بیشتر آلمانی ان تا
 ایرانی. بستگی به شخصش داره. مثلا
 خانوم من بیشتر آلمانیه تا ایرانی. نمیدونم
 چجوریه. من خیلی ایرانی ام. من خیلی
 ایرانی بودم. به خاطر اینکه تمام دوستانم
 ایرانی بودن تو ایران.
 بعد من خیلی ایران رو دیدم.
 کل ایران رو دیدم.
 ایران رو گشتم.
 بعد ایران رو شناختم.
 کوچه های ایران رو میشناسم.
 بوی ایران رو میشناسم.
 میوه های ایران رو میشناسم.
 آدم های ایران رو میشناسم.
 اخلاق ایران رو میشناسم.
 بعد عین همون مال آلمان رو هم میشناسم.
 بعد مال ایران رو بیشتر دوست دارم. حالا
 این رو آدم نمیتونه بگه چرا اینجوره.
 من غذای ایرانی رو بیشتر از غذای آلمانی
 دوست دارم.
 من میوه ایرانی رو بیشتر از میوه آلمانی
 دوست دارم.
 من هوای ایرانی رو بیشتر از هوای آلمانی
 دوست دارم.
 به خاطر اینه که بیشتر ایرانی ام.
 بعد اخلاق ایرانی رو من بیشتر از اخلاق
 آلمانی دوست دارم.
 این رفاقت ایرانی رو من بیشتر از رفاقت
 آلمانی دوست دارم.
 خیلی چیز ها هست که ایران بیشتر از
 آلمان، یعنی بهتر از آلمان. آلمان واسه من

- 52 if somebody tells me, <VOX> شخصا خوب بوده. دلیل نمیشه. نمیگم که
 53 Are you more Iranian or آلمان بده، وقتی میگم ایران خوبه. منظورم
 54 German? </VOX> I say without این نیست که - ولی یکی به من بگه که:
 55 even thinking, <VOX> I'm more "تو بیشتر ایرانی یا آلمانی؟" من اصلا
 56 Iranian </VOX>. I can't also be فکر نکرده میگم: "من بیشتر ایرانی ام."
 57 German. نمیتونم هم آلمانی باشم.

Sargon's memory of an idealized Iran is a symbol of his social identification which is not replaceable by German identification. He uses emphatic adverbs and adjectives such as *خیلی* 'a lot' in *خیلی ایرانی ام* 'I'm very Iranian' (lines 14-15), *من خیلی ایرانی بودم* 'I used to be very Iranian' (line 15), *من خیلی ایران رو دیدم* 'I had seen a lot of Iran' (line 18), *تمام دوستام ایرانی بودن* 'all my friends were Iranian' (lines 16-17), and *کل ایران رو دیدم* 'I have seen all of Iran' (line 19) to emphasize his good memories and his sense of pride and belonging to Iran. In lines 12-13, Sargon contrasts himself to his wife regarding their attachments to Iran versus Germany. As we see more a few lines later, he uses comparison and contrast to amplify his Iranianness. Not everyone from Iran, he implies, is as Iranian as he is.

Interestingly, right after he says he is Iranian in lines 14-15, he changes the verb tense and says that he "*used to be*" Iranian in line 15. Reading through our transcript and relistening to our conversation, Sargon's statement raises many questions for me: What is he now? Who do migrants become in their new linguistic and cultural contexts? Saying that he used to be very Iranian suggests that he does not link the identity or the label of being Iranian to citizenship or ethnicity. To Sargon, it appears, identification is something that can fluctuate and is quantifiable: you can be very or a little Iranian, more or less German. Paradoxically, such fluctuation shows that Sargon is not Iranian in the same sense that I am. Someone whose Iranianness has never been questioned—like myself—would never refer to themselves as 'very Iranian'.

In lines 18-26 and 31-42, Sargon uses parallelism and repetition to compare his knowledge of Iran and Germany. By repeating a pattern several times, he develops his claim over several clauses

about his cultural pride and sense of belonging to Iran in an elaborative relation, which is in contrastive relation with his claim about Germany which is also developed over the same clauses in an elaborative relation (cf. Fairclough 2003). Sargon's use of comparative adjectives such as بیشتر 'more', about غذا 'food' (line 31), میوه 'fruit' (line 33), هوا 'weather' (line 35), اخلاق 'attitude' (line 39), رفاقت 'friendship' (line 41), and بهتر 'better' (line 44) serves the same purpose of comparing Iran to Germany and creating "a nostalgic reconstitution of an imaginary homeland elsewhere" (Naficy 2002, 22). The contrastive semantic relations are frequent in Sargon's interview, as we will see more in Excerpt 4.

During our conversation, Sargon told me that he had never returned to Iran after leaving. When he compares his affection towards food, fruit, and weather in Iran and Germany, he concludes that these are the reasons why he is more Iranian than German (lines 37-38). His statement can reveal that the diasporic identity of Sargon in Germany is constructed in resonance with his identity before his departure (cf. Naficy 2002). Sargon's reflections reminded me of Flora Keshishian's autobiography about her experience moving from Iran to the U.S., in which the Armenian-Iranian migrant writes about her struggles fitting into the Western world: "I needed something that would connect my past with the present, something that could give me a sense of identity and belonging—a bridge, perhaps, that would help me gradually give up some aspects of my past cultures to make room for acquired aspects of the U.S. culture" (Keshishian 2000, 96).

Although in lines 46 and 47 Sargon states that "Germany has been very good for me personally," after almost four decades, he is still looking for the bridge Keshishian mentions, something that could connect his past to his present in Germany. His concluding remarks about his condition in Germany served the purpose of saving face for Sargon. He uses the adverb "personally" not only to describe his contentedness, but also to claim a positive social value to make a good showing for himself. Sargon talks with confidence to hold his head up, presenting

himself as someone unaffected by all the nostalgic memories and feelings he experienced in Germany (lines 46-50) (cf. Goffman 1955).

Sargon's contentedness in Germany, on the one hand, and his refusal to be identified as German, on the other hand, (lines 48-57), prompted me to ask him about his nationality and ethnicity. In Excerpt 2, we see how he constructs himself as Iranian and Assyrian. Similar to many Iranian migrants, Sargon appears to distinguish between Persian and Iranian ethnic labels which indicate the "major identity crisis" among Iranians in exile (Mobasher 2006, 100). *Persian*, in the opinion of many Iranians, refers to the golden age of the Persian Empire, while *Iranian* identifies the periods after the Arab invasion.

Excerpt 2

- | | | | | |
|--------|----|---------------------------------------|------|---|
| Sargon | 1 | I'm Iranian-Assyrian. Yes. Then, | سرگن | من ایرانی-آسوریم. آره. بعد این ایرانی- |
| | 2 | Iranian and Assyrian are separate. | | آسوری جدانه. به خاطر اینکه یکی به من |
| | 3 | Because when someone asks me, | | بگه که "دینت چیه؟" میگم من آسوریم، اول |
| | 4 | <VOX> What is your religion? | | ملیتم رو نشون میدم به یارو. چونکه واسه من |
| | 5 | </VOX> I say that I'm Assyrian. I | | ملیتم مهمتر از دینمه. میگم من آسوریم؛ |
| | 6 | first show my nationality to the | | مسیحی ام. |
| | 7 | person. Because for me, my | | |
| | 8 | nationality is more important than | | |
| | 9 | my religion. I say I'm Assyrian; I'm | | |
| | 10 | Christian. | | |
| Sara | 11 | I see- | سارا | آهان- |
| Sargon | 12 | It depends on if an Iranian asks or a | سرگن | بستگی داره ایرانی سوال کنه یا آلمانی. اگر |
| | 13 | German. If a German asks, | | آلمانی سوال کنه، بگه "تو کی ای؟ چی ای؟" |
| | 14 | <VOX> Who are you? What are | | میگم من از ایران اومدم. |
| | 15 | you? </VOX> I say, <VOX> I | | |
| | 16 | came from Iran </VOX>. | | |
| Sara | 17 | For example, if someone asks you, | سارا | مثلا اگر یکی ازت بپرسه که |
| | 18 | <VOX> Woher kommen Sie? | | "Woher kommen Sie?" |
| | 19 | </VOX> [Where are you from?] | | [شما کجایی هستید؟] |
| Sargon | 20 | <VOX> Ich komme aus dem Iran | سرگن | "Ich komme aus dem Iran." |
| | 21 | </VOX>. | | [من از ایران میام.] |
| | 22 | [I am from Iran.] | | |
| Sara | 23 | Oh, I see- | سارا | آه، اوکی- |

Sargon	24	I say, <VOX> I came from Iran	سرگن	میگم "من از ایران اومدم."
	25	</VOX>.		
Sara	26	What question would they have to	سارا	چه سوالی بکنن جوابش میشه "آسوری ام؟"
	27	ask so that the answer would be,		
	28	<VOX> I'm Assyrian </VOX>.		
Sargon	29	It depends on the person. Who is	سرگن	بستگی داره به طرفش، یارو کیه که داره از
	30	the person who is asking me. If on		من سوال میکنه. تو خیابون که سوال کنن از
	31	the street they ask me where I am		کجا اومدی فقط میگم
	32	from, I just say, <VOX> Ich bin		"Ich bin Iraner. Ich bin Perser."
	33	Perser. Ich bin Iraner </VOX>.		بیشتر دوست دارم بگم
	34	I would prefer to say		"Iraner." تا "Perser."
	35	<VOX>Perser </VOX> over		هم کلمه اش بیشتر بهم میچسبه هم فکر میکنم
	36	<VOX>Iraner </VOX>. Not only		که به شاه خیانت نمیکنم وقتی که میگم
	37	does the word sound better to me,		"Ich bin Perser."
	38	[but] I also think that I'm not		تا موقعی که شاید تو ایران بود هیچ فرقی
	39	betraying the Shah when I say,		واسه من نمیکرد که مسیحی، مسلمون، خیلی
	40	<VOX> Ich bin Perser </VOX>.		راحت زندگی میکردیم. به خاطر این من
	41	During the time that I was in Iran,		همیشه میگم
	42	Christian, Muslim, didn't make a		"Ich bin Perser. Ich bin Perser."
	43	difference for me. We had a		بعد یک جور باحالیه دیگه
	44	comfortable life. For this reason, I		"Ich bin Perser."
	45	always say, <VOX>Ich bin Perser.		
	46	Ich bin Perser. </VOX> Then it's		
	47	just cool, <VOX> Ich bin Perser		
	48	</VOX>.		

In Excerpt 2, Sargon uses the concepts of nationality, ethnicity, and religion differently from the way that most Persian-speakers and American-based academics typically use them (e.g., Keshishian 2000; Stronski 2010). Although I might say his nationality is Iranian and his ethnicity Assyrian, in lines 5 and 9, he uses Assyrian as his nationality. Towards the end of the excerpt, he mentions that these distinctions were not relevant during the time Muslims and Christians had a more comfortable life in Iran. He appeared to be referring to the time before the Islamic Revolution of 1979 when Mohammad Reza Shah ruled over Iran and the political and the economic freedom of Assyrians and many other non-Muslims was guaranteed. I saw Sargon's reference to the king as an expression of his gratitude to Shah for the freedom he gave religious minorities by calling himself Persian (lines 37-39). This explains why today, about forty years after the overthrow of Shah's

regime, when someone asks Sargon where he comes from, he emphasizes his Assyrian-Christian identification (line 9). In lines 7 and 8, Sargon states that his nationality is more important than his religion. It is relatively common that even Iranian-born Muslims in diaspora identify themselves with nationality rather than faith (Bozorgmehr 1997), showing their Iranian national pride over their religious affiliation.

Sargon makes distinctions between the answers he gives to Iranians and non-Iranians (lines 29-30). Iranians are a heterogeneous group regarding religion, ethnicity, and politics. But this heterogeneity is not always apparent to outsiders, and Iranian religious minorities such as Sargon want to disambiguate themselves from Muslims. Sargon's frequent use of the German word *Perser* 'Persian' (lines 33, 35, 40, 45, and 47) indicates his nationalistic tone, one common among Iranians who are proud of Persian culture and heritage but are ashamed to be identified with the Islamic government (Mobasher 2006).

As I had asked of many of my research participants, I encouraged Sargon to think about the languages that played a role in his life and whether he could replace them with a body part (Krumm and Jenkins 2001; Busch, Jardine, and Tjoutuku 2006; Prasad 2014). Besemeres writes "when someone uses a particular emotion word to describe a feeling, the word chosen helps to shape that feeling, affecting how the person perceives and interprets it, and hence how he or she experiences it" (2004, 145). Since the heart is an integral part of the body in Persian literature and poetry, I especially wanted to hear which language deserved to be Sargon's heart.

Excerpt 3

Sargon	1 Assyrian language is one that I like. 2 I put it on my eyes. The Arabic 3 language, if you know it, is the 4 foundation of many other 5 languages. That's the reason I put	سرگن زبون آسوری زبونیہ کہ دوشش دارم میگذارم رو چشمم. زبان عربی زبانیہ کہ اگر بلد باشی خیلی از پایه های زبان های دیگره زبان عربی هست به خاطر همین زبان عربی رو میگذارم
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6	it as my leg. And all my heart and	روی پام و تمام دل و جونم ایرانه. زیون
7	soul is Iran. It's my Persian	فارسیمه.
8	language.	

The expression *روی چشم گذاشتن* 'putting something on your eyes' that Sargon uses in line 2 for Assyrian language is used by Persian speakers to refer to something very important and dear to them. Since Sargon had not gone to school after the Islamic revolution, and was not Muslim, I assumed that he did not know Arabic and so did not even ask him about it, but he brought it up himself. Surprisingly, unlike other participants, who were mostly Muslim-born Iranians and expressed negative feelings towards Arabic, Sargon had a neutral opinion about it (lines 2-5). Although I asked Sargon about languages, he chose both a place, Iran, and a language, Persian, equating them with his *دل* 'heart' and *جون* 'soul', and equating Persian itself with Iran. In line 7, he uses a first-person possessive pronoun to describe Persian, referring to it as *فارسیم* 'my Persian', another expression of strong emotional ties.

After I heard Sargon's strong emotions towards Persian, I asked him if he thought of himself as a different person in each language he spoke. His answer is in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4

Sargon	1	When I speak Persian, I fall in love	سرگن	من وقتی که فارسی صحبت میکنم عشق
	2	with Persian.		میکنم با زبان فارسی.
	3	I speak Persian more comfortably.		با زبان فارسی راحت تر صحبت میکنم.
	4	I have more memories with		با زبان فارسی خاطراتم بیشتره.
	5	Persian.		با زبان فارسی زنده ام من.
	6	I'm alive when I speak Persian.		من زندگیم بدون زبان فارسی نمیگذره.
	7	My life is not worth it without		زندگیم اصلا بدون ایران نمیگذره. کسی
	8	Persian. My life is not at all worth it		هستم که باید، باید زبان فارسی رو ببینم،
	9	without Iran. I'm a person who		باشنوم. من هنوز که هنوزه عاشق فیلم
	10	needs, needs to see and hear		های ایرانی ام. هنوز که هنوزه عاشق
	11	Persian. I'm still a great fan of		سریال های ایرانی ام. اینا رو هم نبینم شب
	12	Iranian movies. I'm still a great fan		خوابم نمیبره. من هر شب یا سریال ایرانی
	13	of Iranian TV shows. If I don't see		نگاه میکنم یا فیلم ایرانی نگاه میکنم. کسی
	14	these, I can't sleep at night. Every		هستم که دوست دارم اون زبانی رو که
	15	night I watch either an Iranian TV		صحبت میکنم، زبون مادری من نیست
	16	show or an Iranian movie. I'm the		
	17	kind of person that likes the		

18	language that they speak; it's not	منتها زبون کشورمه. زبونیه که من توش
19	my mother tongue, but it's the	بزرگ شدم. من سعی میکنم وقتی که با
20	language of my country. It's a	یک نفری فارسی صحبت میکنم تمام
21	language that I grew up in. When I	کلماتی که استفاده میکنم فقط زبان مادریم
22	speak Persian, I try to make every	باشه، فقط زبان فارسی باشه. خیلی سخته
23	word that I speak be only a word	منتها با تمرین یاد میگیری.
24	from my mother tongue, be only	
25	from the Persian language. It's very	
26	difficult but you learn with practice.	

As in the previous excerpt, when I asked Sargon about his emotions towards his linguistic resources, he appeared to be equating language with place. In this excerpt, Sargon's use of words such as *زندگی* 'life', *عشق* 'love', *خاطره* 'memory', and *زنده* 'alive' suggest his love for Persian and Iran. The fact that he says *زندگیم بدون زبان فارسی نمیگذره* 'my life is not worth it without Persian' (lines 7-8) and without Iran (lines 8-9) not only shows that Sargon equates Iran and Persian, but by expressing his national pride he also indicates the great importance that both play in his life. Although in lines 18 to 20 he says of Persian, *زبون مادری من نیست منتها زبون کشورمه* 'it's not my mother tongue, but it's the language of my country', in line 24 he contradicts this, this time referring to it as his mother tongue. For Sargon, ethnicity is intertwined with language and nationality.

He also uses repetition, as in *باید، باید* 'needs, needs' (line 10), *یا... یا* 'either, or' (lines 15-16), *فقط... فقط* 'only, only' (lines 23 and 24), and emphasis in lines 11 and 12 such as *هنوز که هنوز* 'still until now' (lit. 'now that now'), to stress the importance of Persian language and movies to him. Due to its unifying and nationalistic historical role, Persian is the language of the overwhelming majority of television programs, music videos, and movies made by Iranians in exile and diaspora (Naficy 2002). Persian media as "a dynamic process of signification, acculturation, and social relations" (Naficy 1998, 52) links Sargon to his country and culture of origin visually and linguistically. Sargon's statements such as 'If I don't see these, I can't sleep at night' (lines 13-14) emphasize the influence of Persian cultural products in his life. Sargon's hyperbolic claims about speaking Persian and watching Iranian media suggest a belief that doing so enough can somehow

contribute to one's Persianness or Iranianness. Repeated emphasis on the consumption of the Iranian cultural products may also indicate that Sargon, while physically placed in Germany, is mentally and emotionally in Iran, which prevents him from full participation in the social life of Germany (cf. Naficy 2002). Since Sargon is not in Iran, consuming Persian media further suggests his commitment to Iranianness—he has to make more effort (and spend more money) to seek out Persian media than he would to watch German TV, for example. Although I did not ask him about Assyrian language media, I assume it would be hard for him to find in Germany. Finding Persian media becomes the next-best-thing for someone like Sargon to connect to his homeland visually and linguistically.

In the following excerpt, Sargon explains how he attaches emotions to the languages he speaks.

Excerpt 5

Sargon	1	At the same time, I use three or	سرگن	من هم زمان سه چهار تا زبون استفاده
	2	four languages. I use Assyrian		میکنم. من زبان آسوری استفاده میکنم، که
	3	language so that I don't forget it.		یادم نره. زبان فارسی رو لذت میبرم. عاشق
	4	I enjoy the Persian language. I		زبون فارسی ام.
	5	love the Persian language.		
Sara	6	If you're upset or if you are filled	سارا	اگر ناراحتی، غمی داری، کدوم زبان رو
	7	with sorrow, which language do		استفاده میکنی برای اینکه احساسات رو
	8	you use to express your feelings?		بگی؟
Sargon	9	Persian.	سرگن	فارسی.
Sara	10	Persian?	سارا	فارسی؟
Sargon	11	Yes, Persian. I'm more	سرگن	آره، فارسی. با فارسی من راحت تر
	12	comfortable speaking Persian.		صحبت میکنم. فارسی رو بیشتر از هر
	13	I've used Persian more than any		زبان دیگه استفاده کردم. زمان بچگیم
	14	other language. During my		فارسی رو خیلی استفاده کردم.
	15	childhood, I used Persian a lot.		

At the beginning of our interview, Sargon told me that Persian was the language that he learned on the streets. Although it was prohibited for them to speak Persian at home in this excerpt, he states that today he is more comfortable speaking Persian than Assyrian. In lines 1 and 2, Sargon mentions his first and additional languages to show that his love for Persian does not diminish his attachments to his other languages.

The language of Sargon's emotion is the language that he learned on the streets of Tehran: Persian (line 9). In line 10, I repeated what Sargon said, expressing my astonishment. In my personal experience with Iranian ethnoreligious subgroups such as Jews and Armenians in Iran, I knew that their language and their religion were often so vital to them that many families prohibited intermarriage between religions (especially with Muslims) or speaking the dominant language.

Roya

After hearing Sargon's strong emotional ties to Iran and Persian, I decided to interview another person with an ethnic and religious minority background to hear about their relationship to their linguistic resources. I looked forward to interviewing Roya, who was also Assyrian-Iranian living in the same city as Sargon. One afternoon, Laleh invited two of her friends, Soraya and Roya, to her apartment to conduct interviews with me. I asked them to choose pseudonyms, and to my surprise, Laleh's Assyrian-Iranian friend chose *Roya*, which means 'dream', a common Persian name rather than an Assyrian one. Her real name is of European origin and is not a common name in Iran. When Roya was eighteen years old, she quit school, married her mom's cousin in Iran and took refuge in Germany with him. They lived at Zirndorf refugee camp in Bavaria for six and a half years without being permitted to study (even German) or work. She told me the camp was like a prison rumored to belong to Hitler. Roya and her husband were the only Assyrians among the five Iranian-born families at that camp; all of the others were Muslims. She said she had come from Iran to Germany with the hope of a better life, but instead their situation was worse than their presence in

Iran. She gave birth to both of her sons in that camp. They were transferred to another place, and for the next fifteen years, they had to extend their visa every two years. After twenty-one years, she divorced her husband, who returned to Iran, leaving Roya and their sons behind.

In my conversation with Roya, her translanguaging between German and Persian caught my attention. She repeatedly used single German words or whole phrases in her speech but with pronunciation errors. For example, she said *tut mi leid* 'I'm sorry' instead of *tut mir leid*, and *Bodel* instead of *Bordell* 'brothel'. She even mispronounced the name of the small town *Badbergen*, where she had lived at a refugee camp for six and a half years, calling it *Badberneg* several times. Towards the middle of our interview, Roya told me that she was dyslexic, which affected her spoken German. She told me the reason why she could not go to language school was that refugees did not have permission to go farther than 15 kilometers (9 miles) outside of the refugee camps. If they had crossed that limit and police had arrested them, German authorities would have been punished them. Since most camps are far from cities and villages where language classes take place, Roya never lived in a place where she could find a class within those 9 miles. The public transportation and commuting between camps and nearby villages were also limited; most means of transport did not operate after 6 pm. Roya's complaint that the language classes were located outside of the limited area that refugees were legally permitted to commute is one I heard from many refugees and discussed in Chapter One. She also told me that the welfare office does not give financial help for the expensive classes that are for language learners with dyslexia. She said language classes for most learners start from 3.50 EUR (US\$3.90) an hour. However, the classes for dyslexics starts from 23 EUR (US\$25) an hour.

Roya described terrible experiences she had at the camp and with her husband throughout those years. I was so upset hearing her story that I asked her *کی زندگی شروع شد؟* 'When did life start?' *بعد از سی سال من الان تازه دارم میرم کلاس. بفرما. لاله شاهده* 'After thirty years, I have been recently going

to class. 'There you go. Laleh is my witness.' She laughed. What Roya describes as the start of her life in Germany coincides with when she finally started taking German classes, even though it was not the class for learners with dyslexia. I was shocked to hear that all these years she had wanted to learn German, but she had only been able to do so recently. After Roya told me that starting to learn German made such significant impact in her life, I wanted to know more about her feelings towards the other languages she spoke. I asked her whether she could replace Assyrian, Persian, and German with a body part (Busch, Jardine, and Tjoutuku 2006; Prasad 2014). Like most other participants I talked to about a self-portrait tool to engage them reflexively representing their linguistic identities (Prasad 2014), while interested in the topic, Roya was initially confused; but then she said the following:

Excerpt 6

Roya	1	I really like Persian because it's a	من فارسی رو خیلی دوست دارم چونکه	رویا
	2	sweet language. I really like	زبون شیرینیه. فارسی رو دوست دارم به	
	3	Persian because it's both a pretty	خاطر اینکه هم زبون قشنگیه، هم آهنگ ها	
	4	language, and because I like the	رو خیلی دوست دارم. اولش بذار بهت بگم:	
	5	music. First of all, let me tell you:	اولش برای من فارسیه، حالا که اینجوری	
	6	Persian is number one for me,	گفتی. اولش برای من فارسیه، بعد مثلا میاد	
	7	now that you said it like this.	آلمانی. بعد میاد آسوری.	
	8	Persian is number one for me,		
	9	then, for example, comes		
	10	German. Then comes Assyrian.		
Sara	11	Assyrian third? How could it be?	آسوری سوم؟ مگه میشه؟	سارا
Roya	12	Well, I'm alone Assyrian	آخه آسوری تنهام من. با بچه هام آسوری	رویا
	13	[language]. I speak Assyrian to my	حرف میزنم؛ به من آلمانی جواب میدن. کسی	
	14	kids; they answer me in German.	نیست.	
	15	There isn't anybody.		

Instead of directly answering my question by replacing languages with body parts, Roya restructures our interview by ranking languages. In our interview, Roya always found ways to gain control of the conversation or topic selection. Here she reinterprets my question. In line 11, I reiterated Roya's response, showing my surprise regarding her preference in ranking her languages

numerically. Connecting Persian music to the language suggests the “linguacultural” relationship between the verbal aspects of culture (Friedrich 1989, 307). Roya has only positive things to say about Persian both in descriptive adjectives such as شیرین ‘sweet’ (line 2) and قشنگ ‘pretty’ (line 3) as well as in verbs دوست دارم ‘I like’ (lines 1, 2, and 3). In contrast, she does not say anything about Assyrian or German, similar to Sargon. When she talks about Assyrian in response to my question, she says something negative about not having anyone to talk to: آخه آسوری تنهام من ‘I’m alone Assyrian [language]’ (line 11). This phrase does not make sense in Persian (and thus I have intentionally translated it nonsensically in English). Nevertheless, I understood her to mean that there were not enough Assyrian speakers around her. Roya’s answer to my self-portrait tool question also indicates that she evaluates her language resources based on the amount she uses each of them at the moment. Since there are not enough Assyrians around her, she propels Assyrian language to third place. German wins second place probably because her children speak German to her, and Persian is first because of her love for Persian music and her Iranian friends, about whom we hear more in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 7

Soraya	1	I was expecting you to say that	من توقع داشتم بگی مثلا آسوری اوله برای	ثریا
	2	Assyrian would be first, for		
	3	example.	من.	
Roya	4	No, I like my music.	نه. من آهنگ هامو دوست دارم.	رویا
Sara	5	See, Assyrian people are very	آخه آسوری ها خیلی متعصب هم هستن. شما	سارا
	6	zealous. You’re one of the	جزو غیر متعصب هاشین، نه؟	
	7	dispassionate ones, no?		
Roya	8	Me, I’m one of the ones who	من، بی بخارشونم.	رویا
	9	doesn’t have steam.		
Laleh	10	[Laughs]	[میخندد]	لاله
Roya	11	I’m one of the ones who doesn’t	بی رگشونم.	رویا
	12	have veins.		

Sara	13 14 15 16	For example, a lot of them don't say that they are also Iranian. As in, they don't even like to say that they are Iranian.	مثلا بعضی هاشون حتا نمیگن هم ایرانیین. یعنی حتا دوست ندارن بگن ایرانیین.	سارا
Roya	17 18	No, I'm Iranian first, then Assyrian. Mine is a different type.	نه، من اول ایرانی ام بعد آسوری ام. مال من یک مدل دیگه است.	رویایا
Sara	20	Yes, you're very different.	آره، شما خیلی متفاوتین.	سارا
Roya	21	I don't know why.	نمیدونم چرا.	رویایا
Laleh	22 23	You were young when you came from Iran, too.	سنت هم کم بوده از ایران آمدی.	لاله
Roya	24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	I was eighteen years old when I came here. Then in <i>Heim</i> , I learned how to cook from my friends, for example, from Elahe. From Elahe and Simin, learned how to make <i>ghormeh sabzi</i> , how to make <i>zereshk polo</i> . Because my mom was a clean freak. She used to say that you clean in the house. You don't touch the food. Don't let your hair fall, you haven't washed your hands. She was really a clean freak. I leaned from my friends.	من هجده سالم بود اومدم اینجا. بعد من توی هایم از دوستام، مثلا از الهه یاد گرفتم آشپزی رو. از الهه، سیمین، این قورمه سبزی رو چجوری درست کنم، زرشک پلو چجوری درست کنم. چون مامانم خیلی وسواس بود. میگفت تو خونه تمیز میکنی. دست به غذا نمیزنی. موت نیفته، دستت رو نشستی. خیلی وسواس بود. من از دوستام یاد گرفتم.	رویایا

The reason that both Soraya and I (both Muslim-born Iranians) expected Roya to rank Assyrian first among her languages was because we had a particular view of the social world of Iranian ethnoreligious subgroups. We, like most Iranians, are familiar with the pressure that the Islamic State has put on religious minorities and the way most of them protect their religion and language. I, therefore, expressed a view about this minority group that positions them as being sensitive to their ethnic languages. I realized later that by calling Assyrians 'zealous' in line 6, I was generalizing about ethnoreligious minorities. I also knew about the study conducted among Iranians in Los Angeles by the sociologist Mehdi Bozorgmehr (1992), which found that those groups who were already minorities in Iran, such as Jews and Armenians, have maintained their ethnicity more

than Muslims who belonged to the majority. I presented myself as knowledgeable about minorities and tried to say that ethnoreligious subgroups are concerned with retaining their heritage language and customs. By making generalizations about minorities, Roya may have interpreted me as telling her that she is expected to speak a certain language and to have a particular emotional attachment to her ethnicity.

It is critical to note that Roya's sense of belonging to her mother tongue is different from many other migrants I interviewed for this study. Her use of two adjectives بی بخار 'steamless/spiritless' (line 9) and بی رگ 'veinless/insensitive' (lines 12-13) signal her detachment towards Assyrian language. Roya's expression of her emotional associations to Assyrian shows the relationship between emotional values and languages. Her use of these two adjectives gave me the impression that Roya felt guilty and since I wanted to understand her experience more deeply, I pushed her to elaborate on what she already said. My emphasis in line 20 where I told Roya شما خیلی متفاوتین 'you're very different', may have influenced the way Roya expressed her opinion. In response, it is not only Roya who agrees with me, but also Laleh, who, with a compassionate tone of voice says, "You were young when you came from Iran" (line 22-23), displaying understanding and empathy. As an ethnographer in the field, I had to get information through a variety of techniques. As ethnographer Harry Wolcott argues, "the fieldworker's essential research instrument has always been himself" (1975, 115). Although I was aware of my own biases, I did not find it useful, or even possible, to stay objective while collecting data.

In our interview, Roya told me that she was not in contact with many Assyrians in the city where she now lives. The main two people with whom Roya spoke Assyrian were her mother and her ex-husband. Most likely, her relationships with each of them influenced her feelings towards Assyrian, which is loaded with negative connotations for her. In lines 30-36, we see that unlike Roya's Persian-speaking friends who taught her cooking, her mother prohibited her from cooking.

In Excerpt 6, she maintained that she could not even have a complete conversation in Assyrian with her sons. She has good memories with Persian, evidenced by her use a possessive pronoun to refer to anything related to it: *آهنگ هام* ‘my music’ (line 4) and *دوستانم* ‘my friends’ (lines 26 and 36). Similar to Sargon, Roya’s relationship to her Iranian friends and her consumption of cultural products such as music and food suggests her love for Persian. Since the lyrics of the most popular Persian songs are either about love relationships or homesickness, I interpret Roya’s emphasis on Persian music as a tool that helps her to transform the nostalgic memories of home and the past into a temporary happiness in the present in Germany.

Making Muslim-born Iranian friends, cooking their food, and listening to their music transformed Roya in a new linguistic and cultural environment. Her transformation recalls Pavlenko’s statement that “attraction to language may also lead to attraction to speakers of a particular language” (2006b, 49). What is important to note here is that Roya depicts herself as becoming attracted to Persian language and cuisine not in Iran but rather in Germany. When her aunt came from Iran to visit Roya, she was surprised and noticed the cross-cultural differences between them. She accused Roya of becoming like Muslims “ای تورو خدا. تورو خفه نکنه. تو که عین” “Oh, dear Lord! May he not suffocate you. You are just like the Muslims.” “چرا؟” گفت: “آشپزی، این زردچوبه ریختنت” I said, “Why?” She said, “cooking, using turmeric.”” Roya, it seems, was seen differently when she was living in Iran. Her aunt links changes in Roya that she perceives as negative to the religion and the food of most Iranians. Sargon, Roya, and Roya’s aunt’s use of Iranian cultural and food products to emphasize their point regarding attachments to the Persian language and culture. Roya’s aunt reminds me of Eva Hoffman’s mother who told her that she was becoming English. Such attribution hurt Eva because she knew that her mom meant that she was “becoming cold” (1990, 146). But unlike Eva, who became English in a land of mostly English people, Roya became Persian in Germany. Roya’s sense of belonging to Iran and her love for

Persian language and culture comes from the cultural practices that are produced locally through her relationship with her Muslim-born Iranian friends and Persian music.

Roya ended our interview by telling me about the sacrifices she made while bringing up her two sons as a single mother with all the barriers that her lack of knowledge of German caused her. She was distraught that her sons did not understand her at all and there was a considerable gap between them. Observing Roya and hearing her story helped me to understand why she said to me that the start of her life in Germany coincides with when she finally started taking German classes. I could not help but wonder: what if this new beginning had coincided with her move to Germany, not postponed for three decades?

Conclusion

My search for an equivalent translation for Farsi was the impetus for me to ask the question of how multilingual migrants experience language in multicultural and multilingual contexts. In this chapter, I showed that Sargon and Roya were aware of the interplay of language and emotions in their lived experiences. Expressions of positive and negative emotional values towards their linguistic resources are not because of their fluency or lack of eloquence, but rather because of their different experiences with these languages in Iran and Germany. Even after living in Germany for decades, they associated their nostalgic feelings about the past mainly with Persian. They both had few social interactions in German—a language with neutral connotations.

Persian, as Roya and Sargon's language of emotions, is different from Assyrian, which they used to speak to their families at home. The ways they experience language show "the various ways language is connected to complex social processes" (Moyer 2012, 34). Tannenbaum (2005, 248) argues that language "functions as a symbol of individuals' intimate relationships with their families in the past and the present, with people in the home country, with the new family they build as

adults, with friends, and with themselves.” However, Roya and Sargon’s relationship to Persian showed that multilinguals’ relationship to their languages is more complicated than that. Persian, as a language they learned outside of the home, functioned as a symbol of their nostalgic memories due to the intense feelings of belonging they had towards Iran.

Roya and Sargon intertwined their emotions with their linguistic resources. Roya’s relationship to Persian got stronger at refugee camps in Germany even though her aunt criticized her for becoming like Muslim Iranians. Unlike Roya, Sargon experienced some challenges in Iran. After the Islamic revolution, he lost many of his friends, got laid off, and got into arguments with state officials. Although at some moments he felt like a stranger in both Germany and Iran, he never ceased loving Persian. In the current geopolitical context, ethnicities, religions, and country of origin have become extremely politicized; yet in our interview Sargon found ways to resist and negotiate the prevalent negative discourses. Sargon was rooted in Iran, and even negative experiences could not shake his strong feelings. Since Roya only remembers good experiences with Persian, she understands the power of language in her life. She connects the beginning of her life in Germany after about thirty years of living there to the moment she was given the opportunity to learn German with a hope that she would experience all those good memories in another language. Learning German enunciates desire for a new start.

The reason why Persian has a special place in Sargon and Roya’s heart is that it reminds them of good times they had in the past. Memories of Iran, relationship to their Iranian friends, and consuming Persian cultural products have shed light on their national pride and their ties to Persian. Unlike much research on the strong emotional link between multilinguals and their mother tongue, this chapter has shown that when multilinguals have good experiences with a language and develop strong feelings of belonging to a place, they may value their other languages equally to or even more than their first language.

Chapter 4

Understanding Ethnically Framed Conflicts:

An Analysis of the Portrayals of Arabs in Iranians' Speech

Although, like many Iranian-born Muslims in the United States, I identify myself as Persian or Iranian-American—an ethnic identity with no religious affiliations—I have become aware of how people in Western contexts classify me into various identity categories. One of the identity categories repeatedly externally imposed on me is religion: As soon as I reveal my Iranian origins, many identify and label me as Shi'a Muslim and assume that I speak Arabic. For example, people have offered me water instead of alcoholic drinks, greeted me with Arabic words, and asked for my insight about so-called “temporary marriage” in Shi'a Islam.

Self-identification and the identification of oneself by others are discursively articulated in certain situations and specific contexts in particular times and places (cf. Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). As illustrated above, people use common-sense knowledge (including stereotypes) to categorize people into pre-constructed categories. In these examples, the way people categorized my religious beliefs and misrecognized my linguistic repertoire presupposes that Iranians and Muslims are internally homogenous groups and obscures internal variations among them (cf. Irvine and Gal 2000). A Shi'a Muslim identification initially was externally imposed on me, like all Iranians, by “political entrepreneurs” in the Islamic state of Iran, who tried to persuade Iranians to understand ourselves as identical with one another and different from non-Shi'as (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). This imposed identification followed me to the West.

How people of Iranian origin identify ourselves and how others identify us has long been the subject of dispute. Since the beginning of the 19th century, a selective remembrance of the pre-Islamic cultural practices and history of Iranians “made possible the dissociation of Iran from Islam

and the articulation of a new national identity and political discourse” (Tavakoli-Taraghi 1990, 77). For example, while some consider Iran an Arab country, the immediate reaction of many Iranians would be to say: “We are not Arabs. We are Persians and our language is Persian, not Arabic.” Although Greeks, the Mongols, and the Turks invaded Iran, scholars see the Arab invasion as the most traumatic because it precipitated what Iranians see as “a start of a decline, the end of grandeur never restored” (Behpoor 2012, 472), after which everything changed. According to Iranian nationalist discourse, Islam is defined as the religion of Arabs; both Islam and Arabic are blamed for the nation’s ‘failed’ history. But how do Iranians identify themselves and others based on ethnicity, language, and religion?

My agenda when I first traveled to Germany was to study Iranian migrants’ attitudes about German and their migration experience. However, I soon noticed that some participants also talked about Arabic and the native Arabic speakers whom they encountered inside and outside of Iran. They criticized the Islamist discourse in Iran that impacted their attitudes towards Arabic and its users. To explain these language ideologies and attitudes, in this chapter, I present an interview with a focus group at a refugee camp in West Germany. First, I argue that the negative attitude towards Islam and Arabs that first emerged in the nationalist discourse of nineteenth-century Iran (Tavakoli-Taraghi 1990; Kia 1998) is still prevalent among many Iranian migrants. Their attitudes about Arabic and its speakers are carried over into their German language classes and the refugee camps where many of them live alongside Arab and Arabic-speaking refugees. In their narratives, participants describe their experiences with their Arab classmates and how they were disturbed by them speaking Arabic in class—a setting where I had not expected Arabic to be salient. Second, I argue that negotiating different experiences within an ethnicized discourse can be particularly useful for people to become aware of their own biases toward and stereotypes about both themselves and others. Some participants in this study began deconstructing their pre-constructed categories between ‘us’

and ‘them,’ eventually expressing solidarity towards Arabic-speaking people. Some also used strategies of positive self-presentation to establish an image of themselves as understanding of others.

As the number of migrants from various Muslim-majority countries continues to grow in the West, their experiences require more sustained attention. One significant contribution of these experiences is to present opportunities to examine a number of issues relevant to Muslim migrants and Arabic- and Persian-speakers, including their attitudes towards Islam and the tensions among them. In addition to contributing to the literature on migrants from the Middle East, this chapter offers insight into why and how stereotypes on the basis of language and religion are co-constructed, and how they impact attitudes to language. Research on language attitudes has documented how ideologies and opinions are constructed within and change discourse (Van Dijk 1984; 1993; 2009), but here I show that ideologies about languages can also be *deconstructed* through discourse and interaction.

Although some social aspects of language, like Iranians’ code-switching (Parvanehnezhad and Clarkson 2008), foreign language teaching policies in Iran (e.g., Hayati and Mashhadi 2010), and sociolinguistics of Persian in diaspora (e.g., Namei 2008) have been investigated by previous scholars, there has been little research on Iranians’ language ideologies and attitudes. In addition, the research in the area of Persian nationalism is mostly engaged with the anti-Arab/Islam sentiments in Iranian nationalist *texts*, rather than among contemporary Persian-speakers (e.g., Tavakoli-Taraghi 1990; Kia 1998; Mobasher 2006; Marashi 2008; Zia-Ebrahimi 2014). There are only a few empirical studies on the ethnic identity of Iranians in exile, and they are not engaged with the links among ethnic identity, religion, and language ideologies (e.g., Ansari 1988; Sabagh and Bozorgmehr 1994; Mostofi 2003b; Mobasher 2006; Sullivan 2010). Paying attention to the voices and narratives of Iranian migrants in Germany offers insight into language ideologies.

Ideology and language

The Iranian participants in this chapter talk about the interactional context of classroom and community. Within that context some of them construct Arabic speakers as a homogenous group and obscure their internal differences. Based on these biases, they organize Arabic speakers into pre-constructed categories. In negotiating different experiences within an ethnicized discourse with these participants, I have noticed that many of them are aware of their own linguistic and ethnic biases. It is clear that they were not born with positive or negative attitudes or beliefs towards any of these languages; they learned these perspectives as a result of their personal experiences and social environment (Erwin 2001; Garrett 2010). Sometimes, their views are observable through their favorable or unfavorable evaluative orientation, emotional reactions, beliefs, verbal statements, ideas, and opinions about these languages (Sarnoff 1970; Oppenheim 1982). This biased ideology has a long history, originating in nineteenth-century Iran's nationalist discourse about Islam and Arabs (Tavakoli-Taraghi 1990; Kia 1998). It allows the formation of ingroups and outgroups.

Group beliefs are controlled and organized by ideologies. Ideologies are systems of ideas that “are sociocognitively defined as shared representations of social groups, and more specifically as the ‘axiomatic’ principles of such representations” (Van Dijk 2006, 115). There are ideologies of social groups that organize our identity, values, and relations to other social groups. We learn, express, change, and reproduce ideologies between ingroups and outgroups in our social practices through discourse (Van Dijk 2006).

Ideologies are not acquired overnight. Based on experiences and discourses through a life period, we learn them gradually. It is also possible for us to abandon belief in a cause—disintegrate our ideological outlook—because of life experiences. One way that social groups which share an ideology identify themselves is through a feeling of group belonging. Van Dijk uses the term “ideological group” to mean “a collectivity of people defined primarily by their shared ideology and

the social practices based on them, whether or not these are organized or institutionalized” (2006, 120). He calls those who talk about their ideologies among themselves and others, act upon them, and defend their views, “communities of practice” (Lave and Wenger 1991) or “communities of discourse,” even if they do not admit they are so (Van Dijk 2006, 120). Although it should be noted that “not all members identify with an ideological group in the same way, and equally strongly” (Van Dijk 2006, 119), group members use discourse to express and acquire ideologies.

There are four cognitive and social functions of ideologies that Van Dijk (2006) identifies for members of ideological groups. First, they organize the way that members represent themselves in society. Second, they provide a basis for their discourse and other social practices as group members. Third, they allow members to coordinate their actions based on the goals of the group as the whole. Fourth, they connect social structures of groups to their discourse and other social practices. For example, the religious ideologies of the Islamic State in today’s Iran legitimate the supremacy of Arabic over Persian. In such a context, nationalists who view Persian as a tool for reclaiming the golden age of pre-Islamic Iran face the suppression of their language. To resist that suppression, they take various actions, such as emphasizing their Persianness, and/or purging Persian of Arabic words.

In general, people use ideological discourse to present a positive version of themselves, de-emphasize their deficiencies, and derogate others. Words per se cannot be ideologically biased. It is “their specific use in specific communicative situations that make them so” (Van Dijk 2006, 128). The ideological positioning of Iranians towards Arabic broadens our understanding of the social situation behind the participants’ prejudiced ideological interpretations of Arabic and Islam.

The history of Persianization and Islam in Iran

Although for many centuries Zoroastrianism was the dominant religion of the ancient Iranian states, Shi'a Islam became the dominant, state-supported religion under the Safavids in the early sixteenth century. Arabic language was introduced to Iranians as the language of Islam and the vehicle of religion. Through the interactions between Iranians and speakers of Arabic, thousands of loanwords from Arabic found their way into Persian. However, unlike some speakers who completely shifted from their own language to Arabic, including Copts in Egypt, Persian was preserved but heavily affected (Versteegh 2001). This transformation led the Persian nationalists of the nineteenth century to divide the history of Iran into two distinct periods: the pre-Islamic era—a time when Iran supposedly had one culture and one language; and the Islamic period—a time when Muslim Arabs invaded Iran, Iranians started to lose their national identity, and Arabic borrowings began to permeate the Persian language.

Some nationalist intellectuals in the nineteenth century opposed the cultural hegemony of Shi'a clergy; they wanted to replace it with Iran's pre-Islamic culture as well as the Persian language (Tavakoli-Taraghi 1990; Kia 1998; Zia-Ebrahimi 2014). They wanted to build “a modern homogenized national identity which was Persian rather than Islamic, secular rather than religious” (Kia 1998, 9). The ideology of unity through uniformity that was prevalent in the nineteenth century among intellectuals became recognized as the history of Iran in the eyes of the post-revolutionary generation (cf. Tavakoli-Taraghi 1990).

The reification of a homogeneous language—writing in ‘pure’ Persian, free from Arabic borrowings—was advocated in the early nineteenth century during the reign of the third ruler of the Qajar dynasty, Muhammad Shah Qajar. The nationalistic ideas and the dream of re-Persianizing the language continued during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, from 1925 to 1941. The endeavor to

purify Persian continued during the reign of his son, the last Shah of Iran until the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Since then, Islamic politicians in Iran have been using the Arabic language and Shi'a doctrine as tools to further their political, religious, and ideological goals. Arabic as an institutionally preferred language provides users with access to resources which ultimately become their social and economic capital (Bourdieu 1977a; 1984; 1991). The construction of an elite class based on Islamic fundamentalism creates a situation where non-Muslims and those who don't know Arabic well have difficulty finding jobs and continuing higher education; migration to another country becomes necessary for pursuing a better life. Thus, language and ideology function as push factors for emigration, rather than factors like war or famine.

Iranians struggle for legitimacy while in exile. Many Iranians in diaspora reject Shi'a Muslim identification—an externally imposed identity category. They maintain a nationalistic identity, emphasize ethnoreligious differences among Iranians, and declare themselves secular. By identifying themselves as nonreligious, expatriates attempt to prove to their host societies that their secular ideologies separate them from devout Muslims.

The unrest in the Middle East and its impact on transnational migration has created spaces where Iranians outside of Iran come in direct contact with Arabic speakers. These new spaces have forced Iranians both to share an identity with and position themselves against Arabic speakers, based on the experiences with Arabic and Islam in Iran. An integral part of this process is glorifying the pre-Islamic history of their country. The examples in this chapter show how the process of identifying self and other, in some instances, generates feelings of conflict toward Arabic and Arabic-speakers.

Participants

In this chapter, I draw on field notes and audio recordings of a focus group interview I conducted at a refugee camp in West Germany. The seven members of this focus group all took refuge in Germany between 2015 and 2017. Amir, who we met in chapter 2, was the first to arrive in Germany. He was followed by his brother Iman, his cousin Hamed, his sister Paria (who was introduced in chapter 1) and her fiancé Yashar, and his upstairs neighbors, Meisam and Nastaran. The focus group interview lasted three hours. I also conducted individual interviews with Amir and Iman on another day.

Amir was a “gatekeeper” who introduced me to many refugees in his city and at the refugee camp. During our interviews, Amir gave me some background information on his former life in Iran, where he struggled with employment discrimination. He then moved to a refugee camp in Germany in 2015, and by 2017, when I interviewed him, he was living with Iman, Hamed, and Yashar in a mostly empty room containing only bunk beds and a few plants behind a wide opaque window. They shared a kitchen and bathroom with the other mostly Middle Eastern refugees on their floor. Meisam had already lived in Germany for a year at the time of our interview. He lived on the upper floor with his wife, Nastaran, who had joined him one month prior to our meeting. Paria, Amir and Iman’s sister, was engaged to Yashar and lived in another refugee camp. Hamed was a very energetic young man in his late twenties. Iman studied industrial engineering in Iran.

Table 4 gives some general information about the time participants lived in Germany and the courses they took there.

Table 4. Information about the participants.

Name	Years of Stay in Germany	Language Learning Course
Amir	2 Years	Integration
Iman	2 Years	Integration

Paria	Newly Arrived	Vocational Integration
Hamed	2 Years	Integration
Yashar	1 Year	Integration
Meisam	1 Years	Integration
Nastaran	Newly Arrived	n/a

In comparison to other people I interviewed—some of whom had lived in Germany for over forty years—this group was not comprised of long-settled migrants. Therefore, I was interested in assessing how their feelings about the German language and its speakers had developed during the short time they had been living in the country. I began with Hamed, asking him about the German language classes he had taken since he arrived in Germany. He described the various courses he had taken, especially the most recent integration course at level A1. He evaluated his German proficiency at level A2. Since the class at his level was full, he had to take one level lower. In addition to describing the course as boring, he had another complaint: the Arab-speaking students.

Excerpt 1

Hamed	1	There is one bad thing about the classes	این جور کلاس‌هایی هم که میریم یک	حامد
	2	we go to. Arabs, well, I think if Iranians	بدی داره. این عرب‌ها، حالا ایرانی	
	3	were also in a group- Arabs have a bad	ها هم فکر کنم جمعشون باشه-	
	4	habit. For example, when one of them	عرب‌ها یک اخلاق بدی دارند مثلاً	
	5	understands something, she/he	وقتی یکی یکی چیزی می‌فهمه برای	
	6	explains it in Arabic for everyone really	همه بلند بلند عربی صحبت می‌کنه.	
	7	loudly. For example, I think she/he	مثلاً فکر کنم نیم ساعت چهل و پنج	
	8	does this for thirty or forty-five	دقیقه-	
	9	minutes-		
Sara	10	He/She explains-	توضیح میده-	سارا

Hamed	11	He/She explains. For something stupid,	توضیح می‌دهد. سر یک چیزهای	حامد
	12	they stop. Then, for example, nobody	مسخره و ایمیستند. بعد کسی خودش	
	13	tries (forces themselves) to speak	رو و اداری نمی‌کند که مثلاً آلمانی حرف	
	14	German in class. These things really got	بزند تو کلاس. این چیزهاش واقعاً رو	
	15	on my nerves when we were going	نرو بود دیگه اون موقع میرفتیم.	
	16	there [took those classes].		
Sara	17	Yeah, coincidentally, one of these	آره اتفاقاً امروز یکی از این افغان‌ها	سارا
	18	Afghans told me today. He said	به من گفت. گفتش که: "اونها [عرب	
	19	<VOX> They [Arabs] could learn a	ها] خیلی بهتر میتونستن زبان یاد	
	20	language much better because they	بگیرن چون برای هم توضیح میدادن،	
	21	explained [concepts] to each other, I	من [مرد افغان]-	
Hamed	22	Right-	آره-	حامد
Sara	23	was the odd man out in class-	تک افتاده بودم تو کلاس-	سارا
	24	</VOX>		
Hamed	25	They screamed loudly-	بلند بلند داد میزدن-	حامد

The generic term 'Arab' and the claim that they 'have a bad habit' (line 4) at the beginning of our conversation reveals how Hamed categorizes Arabic-speaking people. Although he briefly mentions something about Iranians and their supposedly similar behavior, he leaves his sentence unfinished and continues to criticize the ethnonational category he created (lines 2-4). Making a generalization about his Arabic-speaking classmates based on the experience he had with them in class allows Hamed to organize his feelings towards them. On this foundation, he constructs an ideology that helps him to build an outgroup out of Arabs and ignores the differences among people coming from several countries sharing a language. At this moment in our conversation, I recognized an ambiguity in Hamed's claims about the behavior of his classmates. When I told him about the similar experience of an Afghan student (lines 17-21, 23), Hamed did not disagree with me about the importance of incorporating adults' native languages into class instruction (line 22). Both Hamed and the Afghan displayed negative stances toward the behavior of their Arabic-speaking classmates. However, unlike Hamed, the Afghan did not associate the issue with Arabs' ethnic backgrounds. As an Iranian, I was not surprised by the way Hamed talked about those classmates. The Afghan

student felt segregated (line 23) because there were no Persian speakers in class with whom he could share difficult classroom discussions, which Hamed's unfinished sentences at the beginning of our discussion 'I think if Iranians were also in a group-' (line 3) indicates his understanding that learners would likely use their native language with their classmates. Their concern and acknowledgment about the benefits of using L1 in L2 classrooms raised some questions for me: if there were Persian speakers in class, would they have used the opportunity? If so, would Hamed and the Afghan student have felt differently towards their Arab classmates?

Since the focus of my research was mostly on participants' experiences with German, I shifted the focus back to that using the language portrait tool (Busch, Jardine, and Tjoutuku 2006; Prasad 2014), asking participants about the different languages they spoke and whether they could replace them with a body part. They were a bit confused by the question in the beginning, but eventually, they started explaining their feelings by reflecting on their diverse experiences with languages (Busch, Jardine, and Tjoutuku 2006).

Excerpt 2

Hamed	1	Because I'm forced to use it here and	من فکر می‌کنم آلمانی مثلا چون الان	حامد
	2	now, I think I can consider German	اینجا مجبورم استفاده اش کنم بتونم	
	3	like my hands. But when I want to	دست هام حسابش کنم. ولی بخواهم فکر	
	4	think, I like to think in Iranian [sic]. I	کنم، ایرانی دوست دارم فکر کنم. انگلیسی	
	5	don't really know what to say about	را نمی‌دانم واقعا چی بگم. مثلا کسی که	
	6	English. Anyone who speaks English	انگلیسی صحبت می‌کنه خیلی حس	
	7	gives me a good feeling because it can	خوبی می‌ده به من. اینکه همه جا می‌تونه	
	8	be used everywhere. I don't think	استفاده کنه. آلمانی را فکر نمی‌کنم.	
	9	German does that. I'm sure nobody	مطمئنم کسی خودش انتخاب نمی‌کنه اگر	
	10	would choose if they want to choose	بخواهد بین دو تا زبان انتخاب کند. کسی	
	11	between the two languages. Nobody	آلمانی را انتخاب نمی‌کند.	
	12	will choose German.		
Meisam	13	No, many people would do-	نه خیلی ها هستن-	میثم
Hamed	14	Well, it's compulsory-	اجباره دیگه حالا-	حامد

The verb 'I'm forced to' in 'چون الان اینجا مجبورم استفاده اش کنم' and 'I'm forced to use it here and now' (lines 1-2), and the noun 'اجبار' 'force/compulsion' in 'اجباره ديگه' 'it's compulsory' (line 14) suggest that Hamed is obliged to use German at this moment. He refers to the compulsion of using German in the previous excerpt, where he criticized Arabs who do not force themselves to speak German in class (line 13). At the beginning of our interview, Hamed told me that he learned English by watching English movies and took a course for six months before he left Iran. He uses the indefinite pronoun 'کسی' 'anyone' in 'کسی خوبي ميده به من' 'anyone who speaks English gives me a good feeling' (lines 6-7) which stands in contrast to the pronoun 'کسی' 'nobody' in 'کسی خودش انتخاب نميکند' 'nobody would choose' (lines 9-10) and 'کسی آلمانی را انتخاب نميکند' 'nobody will choose German' (lines 11-12) to compare German to English. His emphasis on the word *nobody* which he uses twice (lines 9 and 11) suggests that without force, people would never choose German. He supports his claim by making a generalization about English—a language that unlike German (lines 8-9) can be used everywhere (lines 7-8). Although Hamed's attitude towards German sounds very negative, it is not as unfavorable as his opinion towards Arabic which he explains in the following excerpt. At this moment, the other participants joined the conversation and spoke about their feelings about Arabic and Arabic speakers. During this discussion, they bemoaned the incorporation of loanwords from Arabic into Persian and the history of relations between Iran and the Arab world.

Excerpt 3

Sara	1	What about Arabic?	سارا	عربی چی؟
Hamed	2	I don't even consider it.	حامد	عربی را من واقعاً حساب نمیکنم.
Yashar	3	Why? [With smirk]	یاشار	چرا؟ [با پوزخند]
Hamed	4	I don't know.	حامد	نمیدونم.

Sara	5	But you know Arabic!	تو که عربی میدونی!	سارا
Yashar	6	[Laughs]	[میخندد]	یاشار
Hamed	7	I can only read it.	خب بلدم فقط بخوانم.	حامد
Sara	8 9 10	Well, you can read it. ... [Omitted 18 seconds of me talking about Iranians' knowledge of Arabic].	خب, بلدی بخونی. ... [حذف ۱۸ ثانیه از صحبت های من در مورد دانش ایرانی ها از زبان عربی].	سارا
Hamed	11 12 13	Oh! I want to say that English is my eyes. I can see everything with it.	آها من میخوامم بگم انگلیسی چشم است. چون با آن میتونم همه چیز را ببینم.	حامد
Amir	14	How about Farsi?	فارسی چی؟	امیر
Hamed	15 16	Farsi is the brain. What was I talking about?	فارسی مغزه. چی گفتم اصلا؟	حامد
Sara	17	[Laughs]	[میخندد]	سارا
Hamed	18 19 20 21	I didn't mention the heart. But English is the eyes. I don't know what to say about Arabic. I don't know about Arabic-	قلب را نگفتم. انگلیسی ولی چشم است. عربی را نمی دونم چی بگم. عربی رو نمیدونم-	حامد
Yashar	22 23	Call Arabic your gills that you don't have.	عربی را آبشش بگو که نداری.	یاشار
Everyone	24	[Laughter]	[همه میخندند]	
Hamed	25	Gills	آبشش.	حامد
Everyone	26	[Laughter]	[همه میخندند]	
Sara	27 28 29 30 31	[Laughs] I ask everyone this question because many of the answers they give about Arabic are funny. ... [Omitted 16 seconds of me talking about the responses].	[میخندد] این را از همه می پرسم چون خیلی جواب های بامزه ای سر عربی همه میدهند. ... [حذف ۱۶ ثانیه از صحبت های من در مورد جواب ها].	سارا

Amir	32	Some people have really bad feelings	بعضی‌ها احساس خیلی بدی دارند نسبت	امیر
	33	toward Arabic-	به عربی-	
Sara	25	Well, why, exactly? The poor thing is	خب چرا واقعاً؟ بیچاره یک زبانه-	سارا
	26	a language-		
Amir	27	## religious and ## it's vengeance	## دینی و ## انتقام و ## احساس	امیر
	28	and ## it's filled with dark feelings.	سیاه توشه.	
Meisam	29	One reason could be political.	یکی از دلایلش می‌تواند سیاسی باشه.	میثم
	30	Perhaps about 20 percent has	تقریباً شاید بیست درصد نشست کرده تو	
	31	permeated into our language, maybe,	زبان ما و یک سری از کلمات ما را	
	32	and it has definitely changed a	واقعاً عوض کرده-	
	33	number of our words-		
Sara	34	60 percent of Persian is Arabic.	شصت درصد فارسی عربیه.	سارا
Meisam	35	Whatever, 60 percent. ... [Omitted	حالا! شصت درصد. ... [حذف ۱۳ ثانیه	میثم
	36	13 seconds of Yashar talking about	از صحبت های یاشار در مورد	
	37	Arab migrants in Germany].	مهاجران عرب در آلمان].	
Hamed	38	We also really don't have good	خاطره خوبی هم نداریم ما از این عرب	حامد
	39	memories of these Arabs.	ها.	

Since I knew that Iranians born after the Islamic revolution had studied Arabic at school, I was surprised that Hamed had not mentioned it as one of his linguistic resources. Yashar's mocking tone of voice when he questioned Hamed's knowledge of Arabic showed that his inquiry was rhetorical (line 3). Although I persisted in trying to discuss Arabic, Hamed continued to talk about English (lines 11-13). By asking him to talk about Persian (line 14) and suggesting the word gill (line 22), Amir and Yashar came to Hamed's rescue. I viewed Yashar's facetious suggestion, which prompted Hamed to replace Arabic with a body part that is necessary for fish but lacking in human beings, as another way of mocking Iranians' knowledge of the Arabic language.

To keep the conversation on track, Amir argues that Arabic makes بعضی‌ها 'some people' (line 32) feel bad about it but he does not mention who these people are. Unlike Amir, Meisam and Hamed use the pronoun 'we' in زبان ما 'our language' (line 31), کلمات ما 'our words' (line 33), ما نداریم

‘we don’t have’ (line 38) to refer to Persian and Iranians; and the present perfect, third person singular, in *نشست کرده* ‘has permeated’ (line 31) and *عوض کرده* ‘has changed’ (line 32) to refer to Arabic as the language of the other. These opinions about Arabic resist Iran’s Islamic state ideology, which valorizes Arabic as a tool to access God’s words in God’s original language. It is striking that most participants I interviewed had positive feelings towards English despite the objections of the Islamic government which accuses European languages, especially English, of being “the main means of the imperial powers to practice their ‘cultural and linguistic imperialism’, ‘hegemony’ and ‘arrogance’ upon Third World nations, Muslim countries in particular” (Borjian 2013, 4). Hamed has such a positive attitude towards English that he replaces them with his eyes—a body part with positive connotations in Persian poetry and literature (line 19).

Towards the end, both Meisam and Hamed refer to the discourse of the Persian nationalists of the nineteenth century Iran. Meisam’s response ‘Whatever, 60 percent’ (line 35) to my correcting remark indicates his lack of adequate information about the presence and influence of Arabic in Persian and his indifference towards quantifying it. By using the plural pronoun *ما* ‘we’ in *ما از این* ‘We also really don’t have good memories of these Arabs’ (lines 38-39), Hamed makes another overgeneralization and expresses an ideology that organizes his relation to Arabs. There is a possibility that the pronoun ‘we’ refers to Iranians to invoke the historical animosity between them and Arabs.

The following excerpt shows how language ideologies impact the way these participants rationalize and justify their emotions towards Arabic and its speakers.

Excerpt 4

Meisam 1 It’s not that I don’t like-

میثم نه اینکه خوشم نیاد-

Amir	2	## It's the poverty of Arab culture.	## فقر فرهنگی عرب‌هاست. من دلیل	امیر
	3	I'm saying that the reason for these	این احساس سیاه را می‌گم فقر فرهنگی-	
	4	dark feelings is the poverty of culture-		
Hamed	5	We also used to be enemies, though!	دشمن هم بودیم حالا به هر حال!	حامد
Amir	6	Look at the big picture, the traces	کلا نگاه کن اون آثاری که تو ایران	امیر
	7	that remain in Iran from war—that	مانده، از جنگ و اعراب بودند و خب	
	8	was Arabs, and everything had	همه چیز جنبه سیاسی بوده. زبان عربی	
	9	become politicized. Arabic language	هم جنبه‌ی سیاسی داشته. تو ایران هم	
	10	also became politicized. They have	اجبار کرده‌اند-	
	11	forced [it] in Iran-		
Meisam	12	Well, it's forced-	به زوره دیگه-	میثم
Amir	13	That's why there are these dark	به خاطر اینکه که این احساس سیاه هست.	امیر
	14	feelings. I'm saying it was the poverty	من می‌گویم فقر فرهنگی عرب‌ها بوده.	
	15	of Arab culture.		
Meisam	16	No, we also have the poverty of culture-	نه ما هم فقر فرهنگی داریم-	میثم
Sara	17	Iran is one country and how many	ایران یک کشور است کشورهای عربی	سارا
	18	Arab-speaking countries are there?	زبان چندتای واقعا؟ یعنی از خاورمیانه	
	19	They start in the Middle East and	شروع می‌شه می‌رود تا شمال آفریقا. ...	
	20	they stretch to North Africa. ...	[حذف ۲۹ ثانیه از صحبت‌ها درباره	
	21	[Omitted 29 seconds of the	موقعیت جغرافیایی کشورهای عربی].	
	22	discussion about the geographical		
	23	location of Arab countries].		
Meisam	24	...Look; we also have the poverty of	... ببین ما هم فقر فرهنگی داریم.	میثم
	25	culture.	ما هم بی فرهنگ داریم.	
	26	We also have people without culture.	آمریکایی‌ها هم بی فرهنگ دارن. خب؟	
	27	Americans also have people without	متاسفانه شاید مال ما پنج درصد باشن،	
	28	culture. Okay?	آمریکاییه نیم درصد باشه،	
	29	Unfortunately, maybe ours might be	مال آنها شاید پنجاه درصد باشه. چون	
	30	5 percent, Americans are 0.5 percent,	منطق اینا-	
	31	theirs might be 50 percent. Because		
	32	their logic is-		
Amir	33	Their logic is to force.	منطق اینا با زوره.	امیر
Meisam	34	Exactly, exactly. Their logic is to	دقیقا، دقیقا. منطق اینا رو زوره.	میثم
	35	force.		

Amir	36 Arab's logic is force. We can't expect 37 from Arabs, or if we think about our 38 neighboring country of Afghanistan. 39 I want to talk about Arabs now. Even 40 now, they look at people by their 41 gender. This is the poverty of culture, 42 though. It means first and foremost, 43 they look at you as a man or a 44 woman. This, in my opinion, is 45 poverty.	منطق عرب ها با زوره. انتظار نمیشه داشت از یک عرب، یا همان کشور همسایه‌مان افغانستان را حساب کنیم. حالا من می‌خواهم در مورد عرب ها صحبت کنم. هنوز که هنوزه افراد را با جنسیت نگاه می‌کنند، خب این فقر فرهنگی دیگه. یعنی اول نگاه می‌کنند که خانم هستی یا آقا. این به‌منظر من می‌شود فقر.
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In this excerpt, participants relate contemporary class tensions to those in the history of Iran and the Arab world in the last 1400 years. Meisam uses the strategy of denial of negative attributions, using phrases to conceal explicit accusations such as ‘not that I don’t like’ (line 1) (cf. Van Dijk 1984). So far the discussion was about German classes where Arab students supposedly interrupt the class. However, Amir and Hamed call our attention to the bigger picture—the history of Iran and the Arab world (line 5 and 7). Meisam joins the conversation and all three use phrases such as *فقر فرهنگی* ‘the poverty of culture’ and its derivatives (lines 2, 4, 14-15, 16, 24-25, 26, 27-28, 41, 45), *احساس سیاه* ‘dark feelings’ (line 4 and 13-14), *دشمن* ‘enemies’ (line 5), *جنگ* ‘war’ (line 7) to refer to the historical animosity of Iranians and Arabs. The phrase *فقر فرهنگی* ‘the poverty of culture’ that they use several times is a Persian expression that means a lack of education and social standing.

A concept that these participants use several times is *اجبار* ‘force’. Not only do they depict Arabic as having been forced on Iranians (lines 10 and 12) but also Arabs as exercising force (lines 33, 35, 36). The way that they use this term can be compared to the way Hamed used the word ‘force’ regarding using German in Germany and language classes in Excerpts 1 and 2 above. From a critical standpoint, I argue that one reason why these participants have developed neutral and negative feelings towards German and Arabic, the privileged languages of the Iranian and German governments, is related to the way they have been forced on them at different times and places. These feelings can be compared to the positive emotions that these participants expressed towards

Persian and English, two languages that have experienced ebbs and flows throughout the history of Iran, in our interview. Positive and negative emotions towards languages explain how ideologies of my research participants as a social group organize their identity, values, and relations to other social groups.

At this point in our interview, I felt the urge to emphasize the enormous cultural heterogeneity among Arabic-speaking people (lines 17-19). In response, Meisam modifies his strategy of denial and begins to find commonalities between Iranians ما ‘we’ (lines 24, 26, 29) and Arabs آنها ‘them’ (lines 40 and 43). He continues to use parallelism and repetition to present himself as knowledgeable about different cultures and to categorize people of Iran, United States, and the Arab world. Amir and Meisam’s several reiterations of each other’s interpretation (32, 33, 34, 36) help them to co-construct stereotypes about Arabs. The way Amir constructs Arabs and Afghans as *others* (lines 36-45) and ignores the commonalities between them and Iranians illustrated how and why people co-construct stereotypes. Here we see the patterns of overgeneralizations about the culture of own and of others by both Meisam and Amir.

Some participants continue to find commonality and connectedness with Arabs throughout the discussion recorded in the following excerpts, expressing a less biased opinion than in the previous passages.

Excerpt 5

Hamed	1	We are getting away from the subject	از موضوع زبان خارج شدیم.	حامد
	2	of language.		
Sara	3	But now in defense of Arabs, I should	ولی حالا در دفاع از عرب‌ها بگم	سارا
	4	say I really have seen a lot of good	که واقعا من عرب‌های خوب هم	
	5	Arabs.	خیلی دیده‌ام.	
Hamed	6	I already said that these are cultural	من که میگم اختلاف فرهنگی، حالا.	حامد
	7	differences. However, it can’t be called	بی شعوری هم زیاد همیشه اسمش رو	
	8	stupidity. A difference of culture.	گذاشت. اختلاف فرهنگی.	

Nastaran	9	When I was in Iran, I had no good	من همان موقع هم که ایران بودم	نسترن
	10	memories of Arabs. For example,	هیچ خاطره‌ی خوشی از عرب‌ها	
	11	when I would go to the airport and	ندارم. مثلاً فرودگاه میرفتم سوارشم	
	12	board the plane, they would hit my leg	میامدن چمدون هاشون رو میزدن	
	13	with their suitcase. In the enclosed	به پات. بچه هاشون مثلاً تو همون	
	14	space of the airplane, their kids would	فضای بسته هواپیما انقدر صدا	
	15	be so loud. They have a low level of	میکردن. فرهنگشون پایینه که این	
	16	culture which leads them to do such	کارها رو میکنن. مثلاً من خودم	
	17	things. I'm from Mashhad. We would	مشهدی ام. مثلاً میرفتیم حرم امام	
	18	go to Imam Reza shrine to pray and	رضا میرفتیم زیارت میامدن	
	19	their women would come and hit their	خانوماشون با دست می‌زدند تو	
	20	faces with their hands. The way they	صورت. یک حالتی دارند که من	
	21	carry themselves gives me bad feelings.	حس خوبی بهشون ندارم.	
Hamed	22	Since we have arrived here, our	از موقعی هم که آمده‌ایم اینجا واقعا	حامد
	23	feelings towards them really have	حس مان نسبت بهشون چند برابر	
	24	intensified in this environment. For	شده تو این محیط. مثلاً این بغلی	
	25	example, the people next to us are	های ما عربین. با صدای بلند	
	26	Arabs. They listen to music loudly.	موزیک گوش می‌دهند.	
Nastaran	27	In general, they don't do anything	اصلاً هیچ چیزی را رعایت	نسترن
	28	peacefully.	نمی‌کنند.	
Hamed	29	They don't do anything peacefully.	هیچ چیز رو رعایت نمیکنن.	حامد

Hamed's reminder at the beginning of this excerpt suggests that he wanted to change the subject. However, as the interviewer, I was in the position of power to control the topic of our discussion. I continued talking about my personal experiences with Arabic-speaking people (lines 3-5) to make them aware of the overgeneralizations based on impersonal relationships. Hamed's approval 'I already said' (line 6) may suggest that he wants to change his previous assertive attitudes toward Arabs. This time instead of using the common expression of 'poverty of culture'—the most frequently expressed prejudice of the participants towards Arabs—he used a less prejudiced term 'cultural difference' twice in a sentence (lines 6-7 and 8). However, Nastaran, who was quiet until

this moment, jumped in the conversation and presented some personal examples from the time she used to live in Iran (line 9). Nastaran's reminder in line 17 of being from Mashhad, a holy city of Shi'a Islam, reveals her familiarity with the rituals of religious people. By saying 'their women would come and hit their faces with their hands' (lines 19-20), Nastaran refers to Twelver Shi'a mourning rituals, where they are expected to actively lament and cry (cf. Szanto 2013). By criticizing their behavior, Nastaran reminds Hamed that she saw the expression 'poverty of culture' which categorized Arabs as an internally homogenous group as correct (lines 15-16). In order to articulate his confirmation, Hamed recalls a personal experience with Arabs in Germany and uses the plural pronoun "we" "از موقعی هم که آمده ایم اینجا" 'Since we have arrived here' (line 22) to contextualize the voice of the other participants in the focus group in his claim. He draws on a proposition with a time phrase, which indicates that the focus group's feelings towards Arabs inside and outside of Iran have not changed. By reiterating and confirming each other's claims, Nastaran and Hamed depict that they share an ideology which made them a small ideological group (lines 27-29).

Here, we see that once either the interviewer or one of the interviewees introduces a topic, the others develop this topic (cf. van Dijk 1984). If we compare the way that participants use the expression 'poverty of culture' in excerpt 4 and 5, we see that they are relating the history of relations between Iran and the Arab world to their ordinary experiences with Arabs in their everyday lives. Nastaran's broad examples from encountering people who she assumed were from the Arab world at airports (line 11), the enclosed space of the airplane (lines 13-14), and holy shrines (line 18), index the fact that many Iranians do not personally know many Arabs until they leave Iran. Even after they migrate, the lack of mutual language causes more misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

After hearing Nastaran and Hamed's personal stories, Meisam shared two stories about his encounter with an Afghan man and some Arab children at the laundry room in the refugee camp.

Since he shared a mutual language with the Afghan, their issue got solved peacefully. However, in the following excerpt, Meisam explains that since he could not communicate with those children, he is still confused how they could have solved the issue.

Excerpt 6

Meisam	1	Well, if we had shared a common	میثم	حالا شاید این عرب‌ها هم که ما داریم
	2	language with these Arabs that we		درموردشون بد می‌گیم، شاید اگر یک
	3	are saying bad things about, we		زبان مشترکی بین‌مان بود که ما می‌گفتیم
	4	could have talked and understood		و آنها می‌فهمیدند، یا آنها می‌گفتند و ما
	5	each other. For example, maybe if I		می‌فهمیدیم، شاید مثلاً اگر من به آن بچه
	6	told this child not to climb into the		می‌گفتم توی لباسشویی نباید بروی
	7	washing machine, he would say:		می‌گفت: 'باشه نمی‌روم.'
	8	'Okay, I won't climb in'.		
Hamed	9	Although I should say that in the	حامد	هرچند با این کلاسی هم که ما داشتیم که
	10	class we had, there were 10 Syrians.		ده تاشون سوری هستند. من حداقل با هفت
	11	I am [intimate] friends with at least		تاشون رفیقم-
	12	7 of them-		
Meisam	13	Sure-	میثم	آره-
Hamed	14	I even have a Syrian [intimate]	حامد	حتا یک رفیق سوری هم دارم. خیلی
	15	friend. He is also a really good guy.		بچه‌ی خوبی هم هست. یعنی خیلی احساس
	16	I mean, I really feel close to him.		نزدیکی می‌کنم بهش-
Yashar	17	That's for sure. Everybody is like	یاشار	اون مسلممه. همه اینطورن-
	18	that-		
Hamed	19	I mean now that I can speak	حامد	یعنی الان که می‌تونم به زبان آلمانی با او
	20	German to him! In the beginning, I		صحبت کنم! او ایل حس بدی داشتم بهش.
	21	had a bad feeling towards him.		

In excerpt 6, Meisam discursively deconstructs the categories they reified of the *other* (lines 1-8). Although he confesses that they are making false statements about Arabs (lines 2-3), the verb *شاید* which he uses three times and I translated to 'had' (line 1), 'could' (line 3), and 'maybe' (line 5) displays his skepticism. To approve Meisam's claim and to mitigate his suspicions, Hamed shares one of his personal experiences from his language class (lines 9-11). He starts deconstructing groupness by stating that after he has learned a mutual language with his Arab classmates, he can

communicate with them. To address these people, he uses the word رفیق 'intimate friend' (lines 11 and 14) which has a stronger meaning than the word دوست that is commonly used to mean 'friends' in Persian. He describes commonality and connectedness with them, despite all the dark feelings he expressed previously. In this excerpt, we see for the first time that one of the participants refers to Arabs by their nationality rather than as generic 'Arabs.' Hamed's comment about his Syrian friends (lines 10-11 and 14) are more favorable than when he refers to them as Arabs. This happens after he tells us about his personal interaction with a particular group of Arabs. He then uses the pronouns 'he' and 'him' (lines 15, 16, 20, 21) to refer to his Syrian friend, unlike before where Hamed used 'Arabs' as a generic term. Yashar draws on the indefinite pronoun همه 'everybody' (line 17) to deny prejudice which helps him discursively deconstruct the stereotypes they reified of the other. I saw his affirmation 'That's for sure. Everybody is like that' as a way to distance himself from his previous mockery (Excerpt3, line 3) and sarcasm (Excerpt 3, lines 22-23) about Arabic.

Brubaker and Cooper argue that collective solidarities and self-understandings develop through "interactive, discursively mediated processes" (2000, 16). Hamed, Yashar, and Meisam's negative attitudes towards Islam are mapped onto Arabic, and then, in turn, onto Arabs. However, over the course of our conversation, when they talk about their personal interactions with particular Arabs, there is potential for these attitudes to change. This shows that, social encounters in everyday life may break down the wall people create between themselves and others, especially when they share a mutual language. Although Hamed has not really destroyed the barrier between himself and Arabs, he is able to talk about them in less prejudiced ways when encouraged to do so. Hamed's statement 'now that I can speak German to him!' indicates how German as lingua franca functioned like a bridge between him and his Syrian classmates in Germany (lines 19-21). German, which Hamed previously claimed that was forced on him (Excerpt 2, line 1), played a mediator between him and his Arabic-speaking friends.

In the following excerpt, Meisam describes a personal experience at his language class. His is similar to Hamed's experience, but instead of Arabs, the protagonists in his story are Iranians. Although in previous excerpts we saw periods of moderately heightened groupness in the participants' discourse, these mostly lasted only a passing moment. Similar to Hamed's very brief disclosure in Excerpt 1 (lines 2-3), Meisam reminds the group of the commonalities between them and Arabic-speaking students.

Excerpt 7

Meisam	1	Now I want to ask these people a	الان من یک سوالی از اینا می‌پرسم: آقا	میثم
	2	question: YOU, during the first	شما روزهای اولی که می‌رفتی کلاس و	
	3	days you went to class and came	می‌آمدی، من می‌گفتم: 'چطور بود؟'	
	4	back, I asked you: 'How was it?'	می‌گفتی: 'وای این عرب‌ها اگر در کلاس	
	5	You said: 'Oh! If these Arabs	انقدر حرف نزنند من می‌فهمم چی میشه.'	
	6	hadn't talked so much, I would		
	7	have understood what was going on'.		
Yashar	8	I still say that even though I have	الان هم می‌گم با اینکه با خیلی هاشون	یاشار
	9	made friends with many of them.	دوستم.	
Meisam	10	How about you? [pointing to	شما چی؟ [به حامد اشاره می‌کند]	میثم
	11	Hamed]		
Hamed	12	I just said.	گفتم الان.	حامد
Meisam	13	You used to say: 'I pray to go to a	شما می‌گفتی: 'دعا می‌کنم جایی برم کلاس	میثم
	14	class where there are not many	که عرب زیاد نباشه.' حالا الان تو کلاس	
	15	Arabs'. Now there is one Arab in	ما یک دونه عرب هست-	
	16	our class-		
Hamed	17	Most of them are Iranian-	بیشتر ایرانی ان-	حامد
Meisam	18	Seven Iranians-	هفت تا ایرانی-	میثم
Hamed	19	Iranians talk more, right?	ایرانی‌ها بیشتر صحبت می‌کنند، ها؟	حامد
Meisam	20	Payam and an Iranian woman sit	پیام و یک خانوم ایرانی اینور یک	میثم
	21	on one side of an American, and	آمریکایی دوتا افغانی و دوتا ایرانی هم	
	22	two Afghans and two Iranians	میشین بغلش. واقعا من یک موقع‌هایی	
	23	[also] sit next to him. I sometimes	می‌بینم امریکاییه اینجوری کرد [دستش را	

	24	saw the American do this [Meisam	روی صورتش میگذارد و شقیقه هایش را	
	25	puts his hands on his face rubbing	به نشانه عصبانیت مالش میدهد].	
	26	his temples and showing		
	27	frustration].		
Sara	28	Oh, no!		سارا آخ!
Meisam	29	There are two Arabs left. I have	عرب ها الان شده اند دوتا. صد دفعه تا	میثم
	30	seen a hundred times that the	حالا دیده ام اون یکی که درسش ضعیف	
	31	weaker one asks the other	تر از اون یکیه، لایه لای درس ازش	
	32	questions. He says, 'Wait until the	سوال میکنه. میگه 'صبر کن تموم بشه بعد	
	33	class is over; then I'll explain to	بهت توضیح میدهم.' حالا شاید وقت پاوره	
	34	you'. He may use his Pause [break]	اش هم بگذاره برای اینکه بهش چیزی رو	
	35	to explain to him what he didn't	که نفهمیده توضیح بده.	
	36	understand.		

In excerpt 7, Meisam who previously estimated the poor culture of Arabs to be fifty percent (Excerpt 4, line 31), incorporates the voices of Yashar and Hamed with a questioning tone in his voice. Meisam's strategy suggests a possibility to separate himself from them. He then presents a concrete example from his own language class where Iranians outnumber other nationalities. By constructing the American student as annoyed by Persian speakers in class (lines 24-27), Meisam implies that Iranians do the same kinds of things that bother the other students. The fact that Hamed constantly interrupts Meisam to guess what he is going to say next (line 17 and 19) suggests that Meisam's example is not surprising to him. Meisam also incorporates the voice of one of the Arab students and directly reports what was said within some particular event, "He says, 'Wait until class is over; then I'll explain to you.'" This is the only time that they incorporate the voice of the outgroup in their conversation. Integrating the dialogue of the *other*, not only created a positive image of them it also reminded participants of their commonalities with Arabs.

In the following excerpt, Hamed provides reasons for his previously expressed claims after hearing Meisam's criticism.

Excerpt 8

Hamed	1	Of course, I think when you want	البته من فکر می‌کنم وقتی زبان می‌خواهی	حامد
	2	to learn a language, to some extent	یاد بگیری تا یک حدی هم لازمه که مثلا	
	3	it's necessary that someone	یک کسی چیزی که بلد نیستی به زبان	
	4	explains things you don't	خودت برایت توضیح بدهد. درسته؟	
	5	understand in your own language.		
	6	Right?		
Sara	7	Yes, of course.	آره، آره.	سارا
Hamed	8	Like for instance, at level B1 you	مثلا دیگه بررسی به بایننس که بتونی	حامد
	9	can speak on your own. It's better	خودت صحبت کنی بهتره که دیگه واقعا	
	10	if you really speak German,	آلمانی صحبت کنی دیگه. ولی عرب‌ها	
	11	though. The Arabs didn't even do	همین هم رعایت نمی‌کردند آخه. ایرانی‌ها	
	12	this. If the Iranians were gathered	هم اگر تو یک جمع باشه اونها هشت نفر	
	13	in a group of eight people, they	باشند شاید فارسی صحبت کنند بیشتر.	
	14	would probably speak more		
	15	Persian.		

In excerpt 8, Hamed defends his argument by showing understanding for beginner language learners. His explanation in lines 1-5 enables him to draw our attention to the value of using the L1 in L2 classes. He seeks affirmation from me by using a check-question 'Right?' (line 6). This interactional process helped us to co-construct ideologies about effective language learning methods. His final affirmation about Iranians (lines 12-15) indicates that Hamed may have started to recognize that the behavior of students in class might not be due to their ethnic backgrounds but rather to the different learning strategies they use in language classes.

Excerpt 9

Sara	1	In your opinion, aren't we Iranians	از نظر شما ما ایرانی‌ها با هم متفاوت	سارا
	2	even different from each other?	نیستیم؟	
Meisam	3	Hundred percent-	صد در صد-	میثم
Amir	4	In what regard?	از چه لحاظ؟	امیر
Sara	5	Even most of the time from a	حتی خیلی وقت‌ها از نظر فرهنگی،	سارا
	6	cultural perspective, for example.	مثلا!	

Amir	7 8 9	Think about Tehran. From top to bottom, east to west there are many cultural differences.	شما همان تهران را حساب کنید از بالا تا پایین شرق تا غرب کلی تفاوت فرهنگی دارد.	امیر
Sara	10 11	Well, it's good that you agree. I thought you would disagree.	خب پس چه خوب که قبول دارید. فکر کردم شاید بگویید نه.	سارا
Meisam	12 13	Even among brothers there are differences.	برادر با برادر هم فرق دارد.	میثم
Sara	14 15 16 17 18 19	What I wanted to say is that if we Iranians agree that we are different from each other, how can we call all people from the south of Iran, the Middle East, and North Africa "Arab"?	فقط چیزی که میخواستم بگم اینه که اگر ما ایرانی ها قبول کنیم که باهمدیگر متفاوتیم چطور میتونیم از جنوب ایران، از خازمیانہ رو بگیریم بریم همینجور به شمال آفریقا برسیم و به همه اینها بگیم "عرب".	سارا
Paria	20	Bravo!	آفرین!	پریا
Sara	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	In my opinion they are very different people. We are in one country, one language- they don't understand each other's language. It is called al-lughat ul-'Arabīyat, but they have different dialects ... These poor guys even have different food.	به نظر من اینها خیلی آدم های متفاوتی هستن. یعنی وقتی ما تو یک کشور یک زبان- اینها که تازه میبینید که زبان همدیگر رو نمیفهمن. اسمش هست اللغة العربیة ولی دیالکت های مختلف دارن ... اینها بدبخت ها غذاهاشون هم فرق میکنه.	سارا
Hamed	29	They are very different.	خیلی متفاوتن-	حامد
Paria	30	They have different cultures-	فرهنگشون فرق میکنه-	پریا
Hamed	31 32 33 34 35 36 37	Arabs have very different cultures. In the same way that they call all people from the north [of Iran] "Rashti." ¹ Well, they are the same. They call all people from Arab countries "Arabs." They make no difference.	فرهنگ هاشون خیلی متفاوته عرب ها همونجور که همه شمال رو میگن "رشتی." اینها هم اینطوری ان دیگه، هر کشور عربی که هست میگن عربن. برایشون فرقی نمیکنه.	حامد

¹ The capital city of Gilan Province in the north of Iran.

Sara	38	That's it.	فقط همین.	سارا
Yashar	39 40	Guys, just be a little nicer to each other.	بچه ها فقط یک ذره باهم مهربون تر باشین.	یاشار
Everyone	41	[Laughter]	[همه میخندند]	
Hamed	42	What were your other questions?	سوال های دیگه ات چی بود؟	حامد

In excerpt 9, I introduced the topic ‘the fallacy of hasty generalizations’, which means moving from “a particular instance to a universal generalization” (Walton 1999, 161). When Amir talks about the differences between the people in Tehran, he uses the term ‘cultural differences’ (line 9). Unlike excerpt 4, in this excerpt Hamed and Paria also use this term when they talk about Arabs (lines 30 and 31). As we have seen, most of Iranians’ over-generalized images of Arabs do not come from personal interactions with them. They originate from the Islamophobic nationalist discourse of nineteenth-century Iran and negative experiences with Islam, as we saw in Hamed’s reference to the historical animosity between Iranians and Arabs in excerpt 4. The fact that these participants acknowledge the diversity among Arabic-speaking people is evident in the number of times they use the word تفاوت/متفاوت (lines 9, 29, 31) and فرق (lines 13, 30, 37) which all are translated as ‘different’ and ‘difference’ when they talked about Arabs in this excerpt.

Paria and Hamed use the “strategy of positive opinion display” (Van Dijk 1984, 61) and agree with my caution against making overgeneralizations (lines 20, 29, 30, 31). Moreover, Hamed uses the pronoun اینها ‘they’ to distance himself from his previous arguments ‘Well, they are the same. They call all people from Arab countries “Arabs.” They make no difference.’ Although during our conversation in this chapter, he uses ‘Arab’ as a generic term six times (Excerpt 1, line 2, 3; Excerpt 3, line 39; Excerpt 5, line 26, Excerpt 8, line 11, Excerpt 9, line 31). At this moment, I felt that I had convinced Hamed and Paria to recognize differences among people, especially compared

to the others in the group, who still seemed skeptical. Their reply (lines 29, 30, 31) gave me the impression that they had a tendency to give socially appropriate answers they believed I wanted in order to make them appear open-minded (Fabrigar, Krosnick, and MacDougall 2005; Garrett 2010). Our negotiation of the topic and my emphasis on not making generalizations may have influenced the way some participants expressed their opinions. Those who agreed with me may have believed what they said, or they may have simply wanted to make a good impression and not appear biased. This is how the researcher's status impacts ethnographic research. According to linguist Gabriella Gahlia Modan, "This is the nature of ethnographic research; as a researcher, what you discover is necessarily refracted through the lens of who you are" (2007, 11).

Towards the end of the interview, Yashar's reminder, 'Guys, just be a little nicer to each other' (lines 39-40) gave me the impression that he was cautioning others to be careful about what they were saying. He may have wanted the group to express less-negative opinions. "Topic changes ... are mostly strategic. They are consciously or less consciously geared towards the realization of the overall strategies of the interviewee, e.g., making some (negative) opinion plausible or making a good impression" (Van Dijk 1984, 65). Hamed requests to inform Yashar about my other questions to disrupt the discussion (line 42). Although as the interviewer I was the one who had control over the topic of our discussion, here Yashar and Hamed changed the topic. As much as I wished to consider myself to be an insider researcher, I was both insider and outsider. As an Iranian with similar experiences as the participants, I had a good understanding of the issues they faced, and I could establish an intimate relationship with the group. However, at the end of the day, I was a PhD student living in the United States; I had a different life from them. Therefore, there is a possibility that the participants wanted to change the topic to keep their personal opinion about other ethnicities to themselves.

Conclusion

Whenever people offer me water instead of alcoholic drinks or greet me with Arabic words, I wonder how much they know about Iran and the differences between people of Iranian origin. I am also not an exception in categorizing people based on my common-sense cultural knowledge. For example, whenever I read, hear, or learn something about other countries, such as various countries in Africa, I realize how little I know about the world. Through my personal interactions with students in African studies in graduate school, I have learned that people who I previously knew only as undifferentiated “Africans” are in fact tremendously different from each other. According to Brubaker, ethnicity is “a cognitive phenomenon, a way of seeing and interpreting the world and . . . , as such, it works in and through categories and category-based common sense knowledge” (2004, 184). My analysis has illustrated how and why participants used ethnic categories to make sense of the problems they had in their language class. Van Dijk argues that “ethnic prejudice is the root of racism” (1984, 153). I have shown in this chapter how these prejudices led participants to negatively interpret their experiences with Arabs in language classes.

During data collection, I noticed that the way Iranians classify people from the Middle East into various identity categories focuses more on our differences rather than our similarities. For example, Amir’s reproduction of an ideology about Arab gender discrimination (Excerpt 4, line 43-44) ignored the fact that the problem also exists among Iranians (Te Lindert et al. 2008). The way Amir categorized Arabs not only indicates his lack of adequate information about issues existing in Iran, especially those concerning women, but also his difficulty in recognizing the similarities among different ethnicities in the region.

The galvanization of groups is the business of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, and in some moments, this elicits high levels of groupness and a collective sense of solidarity. In other situations, however, groupness can remain latent (Brubaker 2004). Over the course of the interview, this group

of Iranians and I negotiated interpretations of our different experiences and encounters with Arabic-speaking people both inside and outside of language classes. Our conversation made me realize that the negative opinions expressed by most of the interviewees were influenced more by the nationalist discourse of nineteenth-century Iran than by actual interactions with Arabs. Interview participants adopted this discourse to connect the aggravating behavior of some students in their language classes to the ethnic background of those students.

But I also showed that these negative generalizations are open to change. Towards the end of our conversation these categories started to become less prominent. More research is needed into why and how stereotypes on the basis of students' language backgrounds are co-constructed in language classes, and how students and educators can become aware of the consequences of such negative attitudes. Since this chapter captured only the voices of Iranians, future research may consider the voices of Arabic speakers. Hearing their attitudes towards Persian speakers and the discourse they use to portray them opens opportunities for comparing how people from diverse ethnic backgrounds discursively construct and deconstruct stereotypes of others.

Chapter 5

Representing and Positioning Self in Storytelling Practices: Iranian Migrants' Autobiographical Narratives of Work in Germany

For the past two years, I have been volunteering as a translator/interpreter for Afghan refugees in Madison, Wisconsin. Every time I interpret at job interviews or workplace meetings, I am pleasantly surprised to see how Americans receive the refugees with warmth and kindness and I enjoy observing how they provide an inclusive work environment to help refugees succeed. In response, Afghans express their gratitude for the kindness and the services they receive by working to their full potential. I have heard from many Afghans that even after a short time, they feel at home in the United States.

This sense of welcome is something I never felt as an international student living in Germany for over a decade. After a few months of working at a fast-food restaurant, I decided to quit because of the owner's discriminatory conduct. I had not been paid for a few months, and on my last day of work, I asked him for my final paycheck. In response, he told me that he did not owe me money. When I told him that I was going to file a complaint, he said dismissively: *Das ist Ihr Problem, nicht meins* "It's your problem, not mine"—a common remark in Germany. I heard from my co-workers, who were mostly non-Germans, that this was not the first time he defrauded a foreign employee. The manager would have certainly been aware that foreigners were not only unfamiliar with the working laws in Germany, but they also had limited access to the legal language of complaint letters in a highly bureaucratic society. For many foreigners, a language barrier prevented them from accessing their legal rights. Although the complaint process took longer than I expected, I finally received my paycheck through the court system.

Years later, while studying in the United States, I told a European classmate about that experience, and she pointed out that I often position myself as a victim in the stories I tell about Germany. Realizing the way in which I construct myself as an oppressed Middle Eastern woman in my autobiographical stories about Europe led me to assess the narratives of my female Iranian research participants. In this chapter, I investigate how they construct self and other identifications within autobiographical stories about their workplaces in Germany.

Much of the research on the discursive construction of self in SLA is concerned with learners' second language production in educational settings (Kramsch 2000), daily speech (Kramsch and Whiteside 2008), diary entries (Marx 2002), and written autobiographies (Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000). However, most empirical studies of autobiographical discourse focus on the representational function of narratives rather than on their interactional or representational functions (Wortham 2000; Georgakopoulou 2000). This chapter seeks to contribute to SLA research by exploring the interactional positioning and narrative self-construction of adult multilingual Iranian migrants who have lived for several years in the target language community. Although all participants are immersed in the second cultural milieu and have achieved some level of proficiency in German, their L2, they chose to tell their stories in their L1, Persian. I use narrative and discourse analytic methods to assess the stories of migration to investigate the following questions: How do Iranian migrants represent and position themselves and others interactionally in their narratives about the workplace? What do the linguistic choices they make in their stories indicate about the way they identify themselves in relation to Germans? The autobiographical narratives of Iranian participants who have worked in Germany for several years illustrate how they make self and other identifications and evaluate their position at work. To understand how narrators create their autobiographical narratives, I focus on how they use markers of modalization, reported speech, and codeswitching.

Representing and Positioning the Self

The autobiographical stories that we narrate do more than describe our preexisting self (Wortham 2000). They bring past events which involve other people into the present, and project the present into the future (Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000). They help us make sense of what we know and experience (Souto-Manning 2005; Pavlenko 2009; Pomerantz 2012). Narratives of the self give us the opportunity to construct ourselves in our stories, transform who we are, in part, and create a person who we want to be (Freeman 1993; Wortham 2000). When we narrate a story, we usually have a particular audience in mind. The narrative discourse positions us and our audience in the interactional event of the storyworlds that we create (Davies and Harré 1990; Bamberg 1997b; Wortham 2000). In order to construct self in our narratives, both the interactional and representational function of autobiographical discourse come to our help.

Positioning Self

My European classmate was not the only person I told about my job experience. Although she got the impression that I always depict myself as an oppressed Middle Eastern woman, I have received different, generally more sympathetic, reactions from other audiences. Linguistic anthropologist Stanton Wortham argues that “autobiographical narrators act like particular types of people while they tell their stories, and they relate to their audiences in characteristic ways as they tell those stories” (2000, 158). When I think about how I narrate the same story to different people, I realize that I use different linguistic and paralinguistic cues to represent and enact myself in my narratives. This is because positioning is a discursive process: it is either interactive, when one person positions another, or it is reflexive, when one positions oneself. Positioning in either cases is not necessarily intentional (Davies and Harré 1990). In what follows, I use my opening vignette to illustrate Wortham’s claims about how storytellers shape their narratives.

According to Wortham, narrators utilize cues “to position themselves and others interactionally in storytelling events” (2000, 172). Sometimes, I position myself as a victim, looking for the audience’s sympathy; at other times, I position myself as a strong woman, expecting their praise and admiration. Such positioning emerges during a storytelling event and can also be observed in the transcripts of the interviews I conducted for the current research. While looking over my transcripts, I noticed that my Persian interviewees used their various linguistic resources without translating their non-Persian utterances to me. At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself briefly as a graduate student in the United States who used to study in Germany. The interviewees then positioned me within their stories as an audience who has both German and English knowledge, and therefore, they did not translate.

The words and expressions that we choose to denote characters in our stories often communicate something about our interactional position (Wortham 2000). In my opening vignette, I mentioned that I quit my restaurant job due to “the owner’s discriminatory conduct.” Such a description positions me with respect to the type of person the owner represents: I am unlike him, and I resent him. To describe past events, we often use verbs that presuppose “something socially-relevant about the character” (Wortham 2000, 172). For instance, I said that the foreign employees were “defrauded” by my boss; I characterized them as being abused and victimized. This might have given my European classmate the impression that I wanted to elicit her sympathy.

In order to connect linguistic elements to social meanings, narrators use certain linguistic cues that have indexical qualities. Not only may indexicals convey signals to our audiences about the relevant context that makes sense of what we say, they may also evaluate our stance and position ourselves in relation to other characters in the story (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). By using “evaluative indexicals” (Wortham 2000, 173), narrators implicitly characterize a situation or event “that presupposes something about characters’ social positions and position the narrator with

respect to those” and express their evaluations (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012, 165). Evaluative devices help us infer “the interactional functions of a narrative” (Wortham 2000, 168). In my story about my restaurant job, I described my coworkers as mostly non-Germans. My use of ethnicity indexes foreigners’ social positions and positioned myself with respect to them. I used evaluative indexicals to construct foreigners as people who get exploited and since I was a foreigner, too, I positioned myself as a victim. Such indexicals also helped me to position the boss as someone who employed foreigners to defraud them. Narrators also reveal their epistemic status with respect to their characters by using “epistemic modalization” which “compare[s] the epistemological status of the storytelling and narrated events” (Wortham 2001, 74). They can claim to have “a God’s-eye-view or to be merely participating in a contingent event of speaking” (Wortham 2001, 74). I characterized my own epistemic status with respect to other characters when I heard about Afghan refugees’ feelings in the USA. Comparing my foreign student self to them, I described their sentiments as “something I never felt while an international student in Germany.” Now that I have met Afghans in the U.S., I know that migrants can develop feelings of belonging to their host countries. However, when I lived in Germany, I did not know about such emotions. By presupposing my own past lack of knowledge, I characterize my past self as unknowledgeable.

Representing self

Critical discourse analyst Norman Fairclough argues that “how one represents the world, to what one commits oneself, e.g. one’s degree of commitment to truth, is a part of how one identifies oneself, necessarily in relation to others with whom one is interacting” (2003, 166). As social agents, the words that we use in our utterances indicate what we are and how we identify ourselves; in other words, we texture our personal and social identities. In the opening vignette, I used the manager’s assertive phrase “It’s your problem, not mine,” to signal how he imposed his authority on me in the workplace. Fairclough maintains that in the processes of texturing self-identity and expressing

commitments, attitudes, judgements, and stances, authors use markers of modalization (e.g. modal verbs and adverbs, participial adjectives, mental process clauses, verbs of appearance), intonation, and reported speech. For example, in the story presented above, I used the modal adverb “certainly,” to strongly commit myself to the truth of my prediction about the manager’s awareness of foreigners’ unfamiliarity with the working laws and the legal language in Germany. Modalization markers help us make commitments to truth in varying degrees. It should be noted that we are socially limited in our choice of different markers in our utterances when we authoritatively talk about “what is, what will be, and what should be” (Fairclough 2003, 176). While making predictions, the one who has the social authority of prediction is “able to commit themselves to strong truth claims about what will happen” (Fairclough 2003, 167). For example, in my story above, my boss used the verb *is* to strongly commit himself to truth claims.

Another linguistic choice in the narratives of multilinguals is the juxtaposition of languages. This permits us to combine various linguistic resources to convey meaning, and make self and other identification (Auer 1999). We do not necessarily use different languages in conversation because we find some external value attached to either of those languages (Wei 1998). We switch codes to signal to our co-participants how we wish our “utterances to be interpreted on that particular occasion” (Wei 1998, 290). Linguist Peter Auer argues (1999) that codeswitching, extra emphasis, and hesitation are prosodic contextualization cues that help speakers index some aspects of a situation. Both highly proficient and novice bilinguals insert a content word (e.g., verb, noun, adjective or adverb) “into a surrounding passage in the other language” for many reasons, among which are their “momentary incompetence in the established language-of-interaction” (Auer 1999, 314). Blommaert (1992, 62) argues that speakers’ preferred lexical choices for the flow of speech is called “borrowing” and not codeswitching, especially when there is no emphasis on words or phrases. In research conducted by Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) on adult bilingual American and French authors of

Eastern European origin, they found that authors' second language (English or French) in which they worked provided them with both power and prestige. But I argue that there are other reasons why my participants switched codes. Applied linguist Li Wei claims that since codeswitching is a conversational activity, "the indexical value of the code-switching is derived from the analysts' perceptions" (1998, 290). The meaning of codeswitching comes from the interactive process. Therefore, the conversational context, which is shaped, maintained, and changed by participants, should be taken into account when we interpret language juxtaposition (Wei 1998).

To make our narratives engaging and make meaning, we often (re)voice the words we heard from other people, "altering them with [our] own voice" (Higgins 2007, 5). When we report someone else's utterance, we create two different texts with two different voices that express different perspectives, objectives, and interests; however, the reported utterance "retains its own constructional and semantic autonomy" (Vološinov 1986, 115). Fairclough calls this form of intertextuality "discourse representation," where "parts of specific other texts are incorporated into a text and usually explicitly marked as such, with devices such as quotation marks and reporting clauses (e.g., *she said* or *Mary claimed*)" (1993, 107). To index some aspects of a situation, not only do we include some voices as direct (quotation) or indirect reports (summary), we also exclude others. To better understand the relationship between texts and contexts, we first need to define the co-processes of recontextualization and entextualization.

By incorporating other voices into a text, we move them from one context to another context, texture the different voices together, and recontextualize them (Fairclough 2003). For example, when we use "metalanguage—references to rumor, gossip, overheard talk" (Thompson 2017, 18) as reported speech in our narratives, we recontextualize utterances from one context to another. Linguistic anthropologist Katrina Daly Thompson (2017) argues that metalanguage may help us either mask our own opinions or convey a sense of shared thinking. Using reported speech

in our narratives permits us to connect it to other reported actions. Studying the relationship between these actions enables us to gain “access to native representations of the functions of language use, that is, to how the relationship between speech and action is conceptualized by the users of the language” (Urban 1991, 59). For example, in the opening vignette, in order to make my narrative acceptable in the context at hand and represent myself as a decent and ethical person (cf. Ochs and Capps 2001; Vásquez 2007), I re-constructed the speech of my employer. I used the boss’s phrase “It’s your problem, not mine,” to re-contextualize his behavior as racist and xenophobic.

Among re-contextualization processes, entextualization is particularly significant (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). Stories about our past social interactions lift texts from their originary contexts and transport them to other contexts (Katriel 1998). The process of entextualization is when speakers take “some fragment of discourse and quote it anew, making it seem to carry a meaning independent of its situation within two now distinct co(n)texts” (Silverstein and Urban 1996, 2). We can say that our narratives are intertextual, constituted by “prior texts that they are ‘responding’ to and subsequent texts that they ‘anticipate’” (Fairclough 1993, 101). To produce new texts, we transform prior texts and restructure existing genres and discourses. However, similar to modalization markers, the ways in which we transform these texts respond to power relations within society (Fairclough 1992; 1993). For example, first I orally told the story about my experience at work to my classmate, and now I am entextualizing that narrative into this chapter. I use the processes of re-contextualization and entextualization to transform a narrative I once told someone into another kind of text, aware that different genres of a narrative have different functions (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012).

In this chapter, the analyses of short segments of three autobiographical narratives will help explain the tension between constructing a cohesive storyline, which narrators use to narrate their

migration experiences; and will show the complexities of resistance to prevalent xenophobia (cf. Ochs and Capps 2001).

Participants

All three participants I focus on in the current chapter—Soraya, Donya Alizadeh, and Mehregan—had several years of experience working in Germany. All three were born in Iran, lived in Germany at the time of my fieldwork, and spoke both Persian and German. At this point, Soraya and Donya had lived more years in Germany than in Iran.

Table 5 gives some general information about the time participants lived in Germany and their occupations.

Table 5. Information about the participants.

Name	Years of Stay in Iran	Years of Stay in Germany	German Proficiency	Occupation in Germany	Historical Information
Soraya	~24	~31	Fluent	Retired Nurse	Domestic Violence Survivor
Donya	~24	~31	Fluent	Former Project Manager	Former Political Activist
Mehregan	n/a	~8	Beginner	Journalist	Former Political Prisoner

Soraya

Soraya and Laleh were introduced in Chapter 3. I interviewed Soraya at Laleh's apartment in a city near Frankfurt. Hearing Soraya's heart-rending narratives was one of the saddest moments in my research. I prompted her with only one request—*Tell me your life story*—and she spoke for an hour in response. She was a fifty-five-year-old woman who, due to her large size, could hardly walk even with a cane. Soraya grew up in Iran but had lived in Germany for nearly thirty-one years at the time of our meeting. She survived domestic violence in both Iran and Germany. She began her story by

presenting herself as a victim, banned by her brother from going to school and beaten by him. Soraya presented her twenty-three-year-old self in 1985 as a brave woman, who escaped home and went to Germany. However, again she was beaten, first by an Iranian husband and later a Moroccan one. She characterized these men as both alcoholic and abusive. After her second divorce, when her only son from her first marriage was about six years old, Soraya decided to attend nursing school. She worked as a nurse for a few years before she got sick and had to take early retirement with a meager salary. When she was describing her work experience, she told me that her coworkers regularly harassed her, and when she became a head nurse, they did not follow her orders. The following narrative, embedded in her longer life story, is about a conflict at work between Soraya and a nurse colleague. The incident happened on a day Soraya was a head nurse on the shift and an epileptic patient had a seizure. Since Soraya could not leave the patient by himself, she asked another nurse for help. In her narrative, Soraya utilizes the voice of the nurse, which recurs in other episodes of the story, to criticize the conversational discourse of her workplace.

Excerpt 1

Soraya	1 To one of the nurses who works 2 under my command, I tell <VOX> 3 Hurry, go get his medication. It is 4 over there </VOX>. She says 5 [shouting] 6 <VOX> Ach, leck mich am Arsch! 7 </VOX> 8 [Ach, kiss my ass!] 9 To me! Like this! Like the way I'm 10 telling you! It sounds like we're 11 living in Chaleh Meydoon or as if 12 we're behaving like people in 13 Chaleh Meydoon. [She repeats with 14 an angry voice] <VOX> Leck mich 15 am Arsch! </VOX> [Kiss my ass!]	ثريا به يکي از پرستارهاي که مثلا زير دست من، ميگم: "بدو برو داروش رو بيار. فلان جاست." ميگه: [داد ميزند] "Ach, leck mich am Arsch!" [برو به جهنم] به من! همينجوري! همينجوري که بهت ميگم! انگار مثلا تو چاله ميدون داريم با هم زندگي ميکنيم يا چاله ميدوني رفتار ميکنيم. [خيلي با لحن عصباني دوباره تکرار ميکند] "Leck mich am Arsch!" [برو به جهنم]
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Soraya indicates her ostensibly powerful position in the workplace by indexing her role as someone with another nurse working under her command (lines 1-2). Through her narrative, Soraya

represents and assesses the voice of her co-worker. By constructing dialogue (line 6), she positions herself as faithful representor of the conversation to highlight her own ethical position (cf. Ochs and Capps 2001; Fairclough 2003; Vásquez 2007). Through talk, gesture, facial expression, and movements, Soraya creates the ‘good guys’ against the ‘bad guy’ in her story. The changing tone positions her with respect to the type of person the nurse represents. She is unlike her, and she disdains her. It also gives her a tool to represent herself as an oppressed person whose coworkers exclude her from interactional practices in the workplace. By changing her voice, Soraya indicates her subordinate social status at work.

Soraya uses the metaphor *Leck mich am Arsch* (lines 6 and 14-15) in German, avoiding using a curse word in Persian. By constructing the dialog in German, she presents the other nurse as vulgar, and because she does not herself translate it into Persian, she is able to retain a presentation of her own self as more polite. Soraya negatively assesses her coworker’s taboo speech by comparing it to the language of Chaleh Meydoon (lines 11, 12-13), a working-class neighborhood in the southern suburbs of Tehran. According to Iranian stereotypes, people of Chaleh Meydoon speak disrespectfully and use impolite language. Through evaluation, Soraya indicates “her perceptions of what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable” (Thompson 2017, 4). She uses German in reporting nurse’s speech (lines 6 and 14-15) to contextualize some aspects of the situation: since Persian limits her ability to curse, only German is valid to be used in such interaction (cf. Auer 1999). By using the exact words of the nurse in German, she continues to present her narrative as faithful to what was actually said, whereas translating to Persian would more obviously be her own words.

In the following excerpt, Soraya once again speaks with the voice of the nurse to explain what happened when she asked the nurse to clarify her behavior at that moment.

Excerpt 2

Soraya	1	Later, when the fighting stopped,	ثريا	بعدا كه دعواها خوابيد و اون موقع كه من البته
	2	and at the time I held my tongue-		زيونم رو نگه داشتم - خودم هم /شترس داشتم.
	3	I was also under <i>Stress</i> [stress]. I		ترسيده بودم. اون ميميره اونجا. مسوليتش
	4	was scared. He is dying there. The		ميفته گردن من.
	5	responsibility will be on me.		
	6	Anyways, later, I asked her		خلاصه بعدا گفتم: "چرا ميگي؟"
	7	<VOX> Why do you say that?		"آخه تو خيلي احساس شفين ميكني!"
	8	</VOX>		[با عصبانيت داد ميزند] "كجا حس شفين
	9	<VOX> Because you act too		هست اون لحظه كه من به تو ميگم برو دارو
	10	much like a <i>Chefin</i> [female boss]		رو بيار يارو داره ميميره؟"
	11	</VOX>. [shouting angrily]		
	12	<VOX> When do I act like a		
	13	<i>Chefin</i> [female boss] the moment I		
	14	tell you to go get the medication		
	15	when the guy is dying? </VOX>		

In the beginning of this episode, Soraya moves out of the narrative to describe her feelings and the situation at the moment that her story happened. She uses the metaphor 'I held my tongue' (line 2), presenting herself as polite. Telling me that she was under stress (line 3) and scared (line 4) not only positions her as an overwhelmed and vulnerable employee, but also elicits my sympathy. Like in Excerpt 1, Soraya indicates her ostensibly powerful position in the workplace by indexing her role as a head nurse who had all the responsibility in her shift (line 5). The fact that Soraya uses different verb tenses to explain the sequence of events in the past indicates that "all recapitulation of experience is not narrative" (Labov and Waletzky 1967, 12). For example, Soraya uses past (I was scared) (lines 3-4), present (He is dying there) (line 4), and future tenses (The responsibility will be on me) (lines 4-5) to explain what actually happened and what could have happened as the consequence of nurse's disobedience. By explaining the event out of the narrative, Soraya indicates the vulnerability and victimization she endured.

By using the female form of the German word *Chefin* 'boss' (lines 10 and 13) while otherwise speaking Persian—a language without grammatical gender—Soraya creates a coherent and logical story and continues to position herself as a faithful representor of the conversations. In the

constructed dialogue, through explaining the situation to the nurse, Soraya negotiates her legitimacy, signaling the inequitable power relations between her and the nurse (lines 12-15).

Soraya continued to share her reflections with me about her relationship with her coworkers and their interactions. In this excerpt, she moves out of the narrative and draws conclusions from her story.

Excerpt 3

Soraya	1	I didn't dare to tell them change	ثريا	اصلا من جرات نداشتم بگم از اينجا بشينين
	2	your seat from here to there. They		اونجا.
	3	couldn't akzeptieren [accept].		نميتونستن اكسپتيرن [قبول] كنن.
Sara	4	Foreigner-	سارا	خارجي-
Soraya	5	Do you know why? Foreigner.	ثريا	ميدوني چرا؟ خارجي. بهشون مثلا دستور بده.
	6	[He/She], for example, give them		بگه اين كار رو كن اون كار رو كن. حتا اگه
	7	an order. Tell them to do this, to		كلاينسته انوايزونگ [كوچكترين دستور] هم.
	8	do that. Even the		
	9	kleinste Anweisung [smallest		
	10	instruction].		

In the beginning of her explanation of the situation at work, Soraya presents herself as fearful—"I didn't dare to tell them ..." (line 1)—and disadvantaged—"They couldn't accept" (lines 2-3)—to indicate her lack of power at work. The salient character in her story was the disobedient nurse, whose voice has been present so far. However, by using the third person plural object pronoun 'them' (line 1) and subject pronoun 'they' (line 2) in this episode, she brings in other characters with silent voices. These are the people who have oppressed Soraya at work. Through asking my opinion (line 5), Soraya positions herself and me interactionally in the storytelling event. The fact that in our response we both position her as a *foreigner* emphasizes our joint assessment. My response in the storytelling event indicates my adoption of a sympathetic position as a person who can relate to the storyteller. Our similar judgements indicate the stance that we take towards the social and cultural environment of the workplace in Germany. We both have lived and worked in Germany and are aware of foreigners' social position at work. Her status as a foreigner put her at a

disadvantage. Soraya is aware of the social structure of her workplace, and by saying that her coworkers rejected even her trivial instructions (lines 8-10), she positions herself as a powerless foreigner in relation to them.

My anticipation of the reason for Soraya's coworkers' behavior positions us interactionally in the storytelling event. She positions herself as a foreigner who has been victimized at work, and my reply indicates my understanding of the situation. Since through my response, I already supported her (line 4), she asks me a rhetorical question and goes on to complete her explanation. This extra emphasis gives her the opportunity to stress her knowledge and express her dissatisfaction about not feeling like a fully accepted member of the workplace community.

Over the course of our conversation, Soraya explained the responsibilities of the head of nursing who, in addition to managing and supervising, had to monitor the same number of patients as the other nurses in the shift. In the following, she delineates the consequences of workplace harassment on her personal well-being.

Excerpt 4

Soraya	1	It means you had all these tasks, in	ثريا	يعنى تمام اين كارا رو داشتى، ده تا پاتسينتنت
	2	addition to your ten Patient		رو هم داشتى. بعد تو اون لحظه حرفت رو هم
	3	[patient]. And at that moment they		گوش نکنن و بگن: "نه" و بگن: "اره" و بگن:
	4	don't listen to you and say		"فلان" و بگن: "بهمان." خب معلومه که ديورونه
	5	<VOX> No, </VOX> and say		ميشى و اعصابت خراب ميشه. معلومه که
	6	<VOX> Yes, </VOX> and say		اشترس دارى. خلاصه من خيلى خودم رو
	7	<VOX> This, </VOX> and say		موبينگ [قربانى زورگويى] احساس ميکردم.
	8	<VOX> That </VOX>. Well,		مثلا يک وقت هاى ميادم خونه از سر کار
	9	it's obvious that you become		گريه ميکردم. فردا صبحش که ميخواستم بيام
	10	insane and that your nerves get		سر کار دوباره ميشستم يک پرس گريه ميکردم
	11	out of control. It's obvious that		که مثلا يک جورى خودم رو آماده کنم براى
	12	you have Stress [stress]. In short, I		اشلاخت [سلاخى]. مثل اين ميمونه يکى رو
	13	felt Mobbing [bullying] a lot. For		
	14	example, sometimes, I got home		
	15	from work and cried. The morning		
	16	after, when I wanted to get to		
	17	work, I CRIED a good portion to		
	18	somehow make myself ready for		
	19	the SCHLACHT [slaughter]. It's		

20	similar to when they want to send	میخوان بفرستن جنگ. این اول میشینه گریه
21	someone to WAR. First, this	زاری میکنه که میخواد بره جنگ. مجبوره بره
22	[person] cries and moans because	جنگ! بعد بره تو میدون جنگ! یک همچین
23	he/she is going to war. He/She is	چیزی بود برای من. این حس بود برای من.
24	forced to go to war! Then he/she	همش نه ولی بیشترش. خیلی خیلی خیلی خیلی
25	enters the battlefield. It was	افت [اغلب اوقات]. اینجوری هم ما کاربیره
26	something like this for me. I had	[شغل] من رو ب اندن [تمام] کردیم. [میخندد]
27	such a FEELING. Not all of it	دیگه مریض شدم. پا درد گرفتم. دست درد
28	but most of it. VERY VERY	گرفتم. سردرد گرفتم. اینو گرفتم. اونو گرفتم.
29	VERY VERY OFT [often]. This	
30	was how we beenden [finish] my	
31	Karriere [career]. [She laughs]	
32	Then I got sick. I got foot pain. I	
33	got hand pain. I got headaches. I	
34	got this. I got that.	

In this excerpt, Soraya continues drawing conclusions from the story she told me in Excerpts 1 and 2. By mentioning the magnitude of her responsibilities at work (lines 1-2) she presents herself as someone who was overworked. She then uses the third person plural subject pronoun ‘they’ (line 3) to enter more characters in this episode. Soraya positions herself as a head nurse who was rejected not only by the one coworker she mentioned in Excerpt 1, but by more people at her workplace. She presents herself as a victim whose disobedient coworkers did not listen to her (lines 3-4). By using reported speech, “say: ‘No,’ and say: ‘Yes,’ and say: ‘This,’ and say: ‘That.’” (line 4-8), Soraya presents an array of language practices as marginalizing her at the workplace. She uses the indefinite *you* (lines 9 and 11) to distance herself from the narrated events (cf. Wortham 2000). She twice uses the modal adjective ‘معلوم’ ‘obvious’ (lines 9 and 11) to signal her certainty that she was a victim who was incapable of changing her situation. While describing her feelings about her work milieu, Soraya uses German words such as *Stress* (line 12), *Mobbing* (line 13), and *Schlacht* ‘slaughter’ (line 19), all of which have negative connotations. In this way, she presents herself as a victim and indexes her negative stance toward the environment of the hostile workplace. In like manner, the extra emphasis on ‘cried’ (line 17), ‘*Schlacht*’ (line 19), ‘war’ (line 21), ‘feeling’ (line

27), and ‘very very very *off*’ (line 28-29) indicates her marginalized position as a foreigner in her workplace.

Soraya’s use of metaphors signal her disappointment about the violated social expectations. She compares her workplace to ‘slaughter’ (line 19), ‘war’ (line 21, 23, and 24), and a ‘battlefield’ (line 25) to express her sense of alienation and marginalization. She evaluates her job as an undesirable workplace where they abuse foreigners. Through her narrative, Soraya recounts the violation which provides her a discursive forum “to clarify, reinforce, or revise” what she believes and values (Ochs and Capps 2001, 46). By making an example about her mood the night and the day after being harassed (lines 13-19), she makes a bid for my sympathy.

Soraya’s summary of the consequence of the negative social interactions between her and her coworkers in the last four sentences (lines 31-34) construct her as a victimized and oppressed woman at workplace who pleads for sympathy. Throughout her narrative, in addition to language, Soraya utilizes paralanguage, such as laughter in line 31, which has a “rhetorical function” (Wood and Kroger 2000, 38), displaying her deep dissatisfaction with her job experience. In response, I decline to laugh at her trouble, demonstrating my sympathy for her. Soraya also uses laughter to terminate her story (cf. Jefferson 1984). Although Soraya’s autobiographical narrative had the power to represent her as a vulnerable and victimized employee, it constructed her as a foreigner who resisted oppressive social orders.

Donya

Donya Alizadeh is one of my relatives. She left Iran in 1985 in the aftermath of the 1980-1983 Cultural Revolution, the religious leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, ordered the universities closed as part of the Islamization of society. He purged thousands of students and lecturers from the universities since they, in his opinion, “were serving the interests of the imperialists and the enemies of Islam” (Razavi 2009, 8). Donya was not planning to go to Germany. However, a friend got her a

business visa, and since this was a good opportunity, she decided to move. Donya was a political activist and fond of reading. She told me that when she lived in Iran, she was very interested in famous German philosophers, authors, and musicians—“even more than its war or Hitler.” Donya attended a preeminent engineering college in Germany and got her degree in computer science. She held a stressful project manager position at a German telecommunication company for ten years before she resigned. Although she said that being a foreigner in “Forschungsgruppen” (research groups) in computer science does not place migrants in unfavorable positions, she told a story that reveals that her status as a foreigner put her at a disadvantage.

I interviewed Donya at her home in a small city in the state of Bavaria. She told me about her project management experiences, where “cooperation and communication are critical to the success of their projects” (Vickers 2007, 267). After only a year on the job, the company assigned her a project worth three million D-Mark (about \$1.5 million). Since her team and another project manager (a German male coworker) who worked on a different part of the same project, had a concern, they collectively filed a complaint. The division and department managers of the company arranged a meeting with both Donya and the German project manager, and invited their bosses. On the day of the meeting, everyone except Donya and the project manager were gathered in a conference room. In the following excerpt, Donya explains what happened when the two of them tried to enter.

Excerpt 5

Donya	1 We wanted to enter the meeting. 2 Then they said <VOX> No, no! 3 Enter one by one </VOX>. Then 4 I told my boss <VOX> What is 5 this about? We have the same 6 problem. Is this an <i>Arztpraxis</i> 7 [doctor's office]? Is this a <i>Zahnarzt</i> 8 [dentist], where we need to come 9 one by one? </VOX> Then he	میخواستیم بریم تو جلسه. بعد گفتند: "نه، نه! دونه دونه بیان." بعد من به این رئیس گفتم: "داستان چیه؟ ما که مشکلمون یکیه. مگه این آرتز پرکسیسه [مطب دکتر]؟ مگه سان آرتزه [دندون	دنیا
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10	[the boss] laughed, sarcastic. I	پزشک] که دونه دونه بیایم؟" بعد خندید،
11	always joked around.	مسخره. من همیشه شوخی میکردم.
12	I realized that since he [the	من فهمیدم داستان اینه که چون اون آلمانیه
13	coworker] is German, they want to	میخوان حرفش رو گوش کنن. من چون
14	listen to him. Since I'm not	آلمانی نیستم و زرم دوتا مشکله. میخواستن
15	German, and I am A WOMAN,	باز دوباره من رو خر کنن. بگن: "این همیشه
16	there are two problems. Once	حرف گوش میکنه." خلاصه اون رفت تو. ۵
17	again, they wanted to make me a	دقیقه بعد آمد بیرون خندون و شاد. گفتم:
18	donkey. To say <VOX> She	"چی شد؟" گفتش که "آره، گفتن ما میریم تو
19	always listens </VOX>. Anyways,	یک آبتایلونگ دیگه."
20	he went inside. Five minutes later,	
21	he [the coworker] came out, happy	
22	and smiling. I said <VOX> What	
23	happened? </VOX> He said	
24	<VOX> Yes, they said that we	
25	will move to another <i>Abteilung</i>	
26	[department] </VOX>.	

The episode contains four characters: Donya, the German project manager, Donya's boss, and the meeting attendees. Donya starts her story by using the inclusive pronoun 'we' (lines 1 and 5). She uses the power of making "we-statements" (Fairclough 2003, 171) on behalf of the project manager whose voice is absent from the story. By comparing their meeting to a visit at a doctor's office, Donya indicates that she perceived her status to be similar to the male German project manager, whom the other meeting attendees wanted to talk to separately. By using both the doctor's office and dentist as examples, she shows that she is aware of the culture and social stratification in her workplace; it is different from places with strict privacy policies, such as doctors' offices. Donya tried to elicit the reason for separate meetings by questioning the boss, but by depicting him as laughing sarcastically (line 10) instead of giving a proper reply, she constructs him as a man who disregards her question. At the same time, Donya recounts her humor while questioning her boss and states that she always joked around at workplace (lines 10-11), thereby representing herself as self-confident woman who asserts power by expressing her thoughts.

Donya's use of epistemic modality such as "I realized" (line 12) and "they want" (line 13) not only suggests her commitment to the truth of what she says (Palmer 1986; Karkkainen 2003), it

also indicates her knowledge and realization of the company norms and expectations. By making strong statements such as “I’m not German and I am a woman” (lines 14-15), she suggests that her colleagues devalued her because of her gender and ethnicity. Gender norms seem to have affected her position at the workplace, as she states that her co-workers believed that as a female foreigner she could be fooled. To strengthen her claims about her limited power at the workplace, she uses the adverbs of frequency باز دوباره ‘once again’ (line 16) and همیشه ‘always’ (line 18), denoting repeated occurrence of gender discrimination and racism. To reinforce the characterization of the meeting attendees she uses the metaphor من رو خر کنن ‘to make me a donkey’ (line 17), which has a very negative connotation in Persian. She uses adverb of frequency ‘once again’ (line 16) making such strong claim, suggesting that it happened repeatedly. Donya speaks with the voice of the meeting attendees to emphasize the truth about her claim: they will say “She always listens” (line 18). The modal adverb همیشه ‘always’ places her in a victimized position and constructs the boss and the committee attendees as manipulative and abusive, especially towards a female foreign worker. She then explains what happened when she got her turn that day:

Excerpt 6

Donya	1	It was MY turn. Now my story is	نوبت من شد. حالا من هم داستان اینه که واقعا	دنیا
	2	that I was hurt QUITE SO MUCH.	انقدر اذیت شده بودم. نزدیک شش ماه خیلی	
	3	For nearly six months, they hurt me	اذیت کردند. بعد رفتم خودم رو بورین	
	4	VERY MUCH. Then I went and	[درخواست دادن] کردم یک جای دیگه. با	
	5	<i>Bewerben</i> [apply] at another place.	حقوق ۲۰ درصد بالاتر قبول کرده بودند. من	
	6	They accepted, with a 20% higher	رو میخواستند. این پرونده رو گرفتم دستم رفتم	
	7	salary. They wanted me. I took the	تو. گفتم دیگه تمومه. من با اینها بحث میکنم.	
	8	file in my hand and entered. I said	میدونم اینا حرف اون رو گوش میکنند. رفتم	
	9	it’s over now. I will discuss with	اونجا. شروع کرد رئیسه به داد و بیداد: "این	
	10	them. I know they will listen to him	پشت سر من رفته چیز گفته. "گفتم: "نه، من	
	11	[the boss]. I went there. The boss	همیشه به خودت گفته بودم. "جلسه گنده انقدر	
	12	started yelling <VOX> She has	این داد و بیداد کرد که نگو.	
	13	spoken behind my back</VOX>. I		
	14	said <VOX> No, I always told you		
	15	</VOX>. At this HUGE		
	16	MEETING, he yelled so much that		
	17	you wouldn’t believe it.		

Donya finished the narrative in Excerpt 5 by using the evaluative terms ‘happy and smiling’ (line 20) to refer to her colleague and began this excerpt by positioning herself as ‘hurt’ (line 2). Unlike in Excerpt 5, where she used the pronoun ‘we’ to use the power of making statements on behalf of the male German project manager, here she emphasizes herself by using the singular pronoun ‘my’ (line 1), ‘I’ (line 2), and ‘me’ (line 3). Donya uses first person statements to exclude her coworker in the rest of the story. To express the magnitude of the emotional impact of her negative experience, she moves out of the narrative and explains what she did in response. To express her dissatisfaction about her job, she puts emphasis on quantifiers such as ‘quite so much’ (line 2) and ‘very much’ (line 4). She makes a statement about her condition at work—‘I was hurt’ (line 2)—and right after that, she uses the plural pronoun ‘they’ (‘they hurt me’) (line 3) to position herself with respect to her coworkers. Such statement helps Donya to reveal the character of these people as cruel, and to position herself as a victim of such people. Her other statements about other places where ‘they accepted’ (line 6) and ‘wanted me’ (line 7) position her as a marketable employee.

The epistemic modality ‘I know’ (line 10) indicates Donya’s degree of certainty about her claim of technical competence (‘They wanted me,’ line 7). It also helps her express her distrust of the meeting attendees (‘they,’ line 10) who listen to her boss (‘him,’ line 10). In this excerpt, Donya depicts her male colleagues as powerful. In reporting the boss’s speech, she uses assertion: ‘She [Donya] has spoken behind my back’ (lines 12-13), coupled with assertive denial: ‘No, I [Donya] always told you’ (line 14) to challenge the power relations between her and the boss. Placing emphasis on the magnitude of the meeting (lines 15-16) allows her to depict the boss as someone who yells at female co-workers (line 16) in such environment, and the company as following his lead. She then explains how she responded to the harassing and discriminatory behavior:

Excerpt 7

Donya	1	Then I said <VOX> Look! First, I	دنيا	بعد منم گفتم: "ببینین! من اولاً میخوامستم
	2	wanted to thank you. Because I		ازتون تشکر کنم. چون من الان نزدیک ۵
	3	have been here for five years and		ساله اینجا هستم و شما تمام امکاناتی که برای
	4	you have given me ALL the		یک مرد آلمانی حتا دکترا داشته و بالاتر از
	5	permission to use ALL the		من بوده تمام اون کارا رو به من اجازه دادین
	6	resources that you would have		و من تونستم بکنم. پیشرفت کنم. و هیچ سدی
	7	given a German MALE who would		برای من نداشتین. من باید از شما تشکر کنم
	8	even have a PhD and would have		و تشکر هم میکنم. ولی زمانیکه ما جنگ
	9	been higher than me. To make		داشتیم، ما قیام داشتیم، اون موقع که شماها تو
	10	progress. And you put NO		دانشگاه هاتون سوت میزدین و لذت میبردین
	11	obstacles in front of me. I have to		و اینجا پارادیس بود ما اونجا جهنم بود
	12	express my gratitude to you and I,		برامون. من الان داره ۴۰ سالم میشه. من
	13	indeed, thank you. BUT when we		نزدیک ۴۰ سالگی دیگه نمیخوام قیام کنم.
	14	had WAR, we had UPRISINGS, at		اون موقع میخوام قیام کنم ولی اینجا من
	15	the time when you were whistling		قیام نمیکنم. من از شما تشکر میکنم. این هم
	16	in your universities, and you were		پرونده منه. این هم من بوربونگ [درخواست]
	17	enjoying and here was a paradise,		کردم. من میخوام فقط ازتون خداحافظی کنم
	18	over there was HELL for us. I'm		با تشکر. من جنگ نمیخوام با شماها بکنم."
	19	about to turn forty. I don't want		اینو که من گفتم یک دفعه رئیسه گفت: "نه
	20	another uprising in my forties. I		خیر، نمیذاریم بری پهلو کونکورنت [رقیب]
	21	used to want uprising, but here, I		ما. نمیذاریم. فرا [خانم] علیزاده نمیذاریم."
	22	don't rise up. I thank you. This is		
	23	my file. I put in the <i>Bewerbung</i>		
	24	[application] (I've applied for a		
	25	job). I only want to say farewell to		
	26	you with gratitude. I don't want to		
	27	go into WAR with you </VOX>.		
	28	When I said this, suddenly the boss		
	29	said <VOX> No, we won't let you		
	30	go to our <i>Konkurrent</i> [competitor].		
	31	We won't let you. <i>Frau</i> [Ms.]		
	32	~Alizadeh, we won't let you		
	33	</VOX>.		

Starting her speech by thanking the company (line 2) presents Donya as a self-confident employee. Her topic shift essentially constructs her as being a competent female computer scientist. She sends this message by identifying herself in relation to her male colleagues, equating her expertise to that of her co-workers in higher positions who have PhDs (lines 7-8). This way, she takes control of the topic. Although she mentioned in Excerpt 5 that she was disadvantaged as a woman, here she depicts herself reminding the meeting attendees that her gender did not affect her

position. She then negotiates her legitimacy by ironically expressing gratitude (lines 2, 12, 12, 25) for the equality and diversity in her workplace.

Donya changes the topic once more to compare Iran and Germany. Unlike her long speech of thanks in the beginning of this excerpt, here she uses contrastive words like ‘paradise’ (line 17) and ‘hell’ (line 18) to compare the atmosphere in the two countries. She uses the plural pronouns ‘we’ (lines 13 and 13) and ‘us’ (line 18) to construct a victimized character for herself and Iranians in the past. She positions vulnerable Iranians in contrast to secure Germans. Like Donya, Soraya uses words such as ‘slaughter’ (Excerpt 4, line 19), ‘war’ (Excerpt 4, line 21, 23, and 24), and ‘battlefield’ (Excerpt 4, line 25) to express her vulnerability and victimization in her workplace. Now that she is in her forties, Donya says, she does not want another uprising (lines 18-20); she thereby characterizes her present conformist self in opposition to her past young, rebellious self. She says, ‘I used to want uprising, but here, I don’t rise up’ (lines 20-21). The implication is that participating in a community of practice throughout all these years has made her a wise old-timer who thinks her current situation does not require another outbreak. Concluding her speech by emphasizing the word ‘war’ and stating that she did not seek confrontation (lines 25-27) characterizes her as a peaceful employee, in contrast to the belligerent meeting attendees.

Telling them about her prestigious offer (line 23) indicates that not only is Donya aware of her power and position in that company, she also thinks she knows how her competence makes the meeting attendees feel. Through using the plural pronoun ‘we’ and repeating the phrase ‘we won’t let you’ (lines 29, 31, 32), Donya constructs the boss and other meeting attendees as manipulative supervisors who, despite seeing her value, tried to provoke her. When constructing the boss’s dialogue, she makes ‘we-statements’ (lines 29, 31, 32) to emphasize the involvement of the other meeting attendees. In this way, Donya constructs the power relations of male dominance and female

employees in that company, thereby positioning herself as a vulnerable person and the meeting attendees as abusive.

In the following excerpt, Donya explains what happened after the meeting.

Excerpt 8

Donya	1	Now the story changed. Every day,	حالاً داستان عوض شد. دیگه فیلیپ هر روز	دنیا
	2	Philip would come <VOX> Donya,	میامد: "دنیا خواهش میکنم" و اینا. گفتیم:	
	3	please, </VOX> and the like. I said	"ببین فیلیپ من دیگه نمی تونم. راجع بهش	
	4	<VOX> Look, Philip. I CAN'T	فکر میکنم. ولی واقعا خیلی من رو اذیت	
	5	DO THIS ANYMORE. I'll think	کردی. یک بار، دوبار. " من رو واقعا به	
	6	about it. But you REALLY hurt me	گریه انداخته بود. ... [حذف ۱۶ ثانیه از	
	7	VERY MUCH. Once, twice	صحبت ها در مورد پروژه]. دیگه گفتیم:	
	8	</VOX>.	"نه، من نمیخوام." ... [حذف ۱۷ ثانیه	
	9	He really made me cry. ... [Omitted	درباره اینکه چطور دنیا و تیمش به یک	
	10	16 seconds of her explaining her	دیپارتمان دیگه رفتند].	
	11	project]. Then I said <VOX> No, I	این دیگه دشمن شد. "این دیگه باید دنیا	
	12	don't want </VOX>. ... [Omitted	سریع اتاقش رو بلند کنه، عوض کنه، و	
	13	17 seconds of her explaining how	بره. " دیگه اخم و تخم. همیشه مثل یک	
	14	Donya and her team moved their	دشمن. بعد خلاصه ما رفتیم. آهان، یک	
	15	department].	رئیسی، برایشس لایتری	
	16	He then became the enemy.	(مسئول بخش) از برلین به من گفتش که:	
	17	<VOX> Donya should	"Von Frau Alizadeh muss man	
	18	immediately lift [sic] her room,	Angst haben. Sie kommt aus einem	
	19	change it, and leave </VOX>.	anderen Kulturkreis!"	
	20	Then frowning. Always like an	[آدم باید از خانم علیزاده بترسه. ایشون از	
	21	ENEMY. Then, in short, we left.	یک فرهنگ دیگه میان].	
	22	By the way, one boss, a <i>Bereichsleiter</i>	بعد گفتیم: "چه ترسی باید داشته باشه؟ حرفی	
	23	[division manager], from Berlin told	که اون زده، من هم زدم. کاری که اون	
	24	me that <VOX> <i>Von Frau Alizadeh</i>	کرده، من هم کردم. چرا پس فقط من؟ چرا	
	25	<i>muss man Angst haben. Sie kommt aus</i>	اون رو به اون راحتی چیز کردن؟" من هم	
	26	<i>einem anderen Kulturkreis!</i> </VOX>	وایسادم. اون رو بهش زود گفتین: "بدو	
	27	[Man should be scared of Ms.	برو. " آلمانی بود ولی من نه. بعد دیگه ما	
	28	Alizadeh. She comes from another	جامون رو عوض کردیم.	
	29	cultural environment!]		
	30	Then I said <VOX> What kind of		
	31	fear should they have? I said the		
	32	same thing that he said. I did the		
	33	same thing. Why only me? Why that		
	34	day, they easily did something?		
	35	</VOX> I indeed stood up. You		
	36	quickly told him <VOX> Hurry, go		
	37	on</VOX>. He was German, but		
	38	I wasn't. Then we changed our		
	39	location.		

In this excerpt, unlike in the previous one, Donya states that her boss called her by her first name when he was asking her to return (line 3). She also refers to her boss by his first name (lines 2 and 4) for the first time. Using first names at work in Germany and Iran is not as common as it is in the United States. This type of informal language indicates an unusual pattern of communication in her narratives of social interactions at the workplace, which might indicate she was challenging her company's power relations. The constructed dialogue between Donya and Philip positions Donya as a victim who was repeatedly abused by her boss (lines 7-8). By telling me that he made her cry (line 9), she distances herself from the narrated event and represents herself as a vulnerable employee, thereby eliciting my empathy. However, a few lines later she constructs herself as a courageous woman who did not succumb to vulnerability (lines 11-12).

Describing how Philip harassed her after the meeting and became her enemy (lines 16 and 21), Donya once again positions him as an abusive and manipulative boss. When she narrates how others from outside of the company judged her (line 22), Donya relates these experiences to existing discourses beyond the workplace. The constructed dialogue of the division manager from Berlin (lines 24-26) is re-contextualized and helps Donya point to his xenophobic attitude. She also compares herself to her German co-worker by constructing a defensive dialogue between her and the meeting attendees (lines 30-34). Donya thus positions herself as a harassed female employee who works with people who impose their patterns of communication and condemn the argumentative voice of non-Germans. Donya's self-defense argument indicates her knowledge of the norms of the company. Her resistance—'I indeed stood up' (line 35)—positions her as a powerful female employee who resists changing her personality based on the modes of social interaction valued at the workplace. Although she emphasizes throughout her narration that she was equal to her male colleagues, her final remark about her co-worker—'He was German, but I wasn't' (line 37-38)—indicates that she sees herself as a foreigner within a system that held her back. Nevertheless, even as

a female foreigner with less power than her male co-workers, Donya is capable of changing her situation by moving her department (lines 38-39).

Mehregan

Unlike Donya and Soraya, who had lived and worked for many years in Germany, my third interviewee, Mehregan, was a relative newcomer to the country. She had a different perspective on the work environment in Germany. Mehregan was a quiet young woman in her early twenties when I first met her in a city near Düsseldorf in 2009, during the protests about Iran's disputed presidential election. Mehregan grew up in Iran and had worked as a journalist since the age of seventeen. Her articles challenged Iran's status quo, agitating for change. During the six years that she worked as a journalist, she was expelled from college, arrested, and imprisoned several times in Tehran. On the day of the 2009 election, she and many other journalists and political activists were smuggled out of Iran without having a chance to say farewell to their families. The sorrow of not being able to say goodbye to her parents and the stress of landing in a foreign country without knowing anything about its culture or language gave Mehregan severe depression. The only way I could help her during those days was to interpret for her while she tried to enroll in a journalism program at various colleges. Due to her record as a former political prisoner, the Iranian ministry of education did not issue her any certificate demonstrating her college expulsion. Therefore, she was required to get a German high school degree before she could re-enter college. Since she was not mentally or financially ready to attend high school, Mehregan eventually gave up her dream of getting a college degree in Germany. After several years of searching, she found a job in a German news agency and worked as a journalist in their Persian broadcasting service.

During my 2017 fieldwork, I visited Mehregan and her husband in a small city near Cologne and interviewed her at their apartment. They had recently been married and Mehregan had recovered from her depression. I spent two days with them, observing their lives. During the eight

years she lived in Germany, Mehregan only took a year and a half of German language classes. In the beginning of our interview, when Mehregan was talking about her first few years in Germany, she represented herself as vulnerable and traumatized. For a while, she received refugee cash assistance and had to take a so-called “One-Euro-Job” (Hohmeyer 2012, 4469)—a temporary job for unemployed people where they earned one euro (US\$1.12) an hour. But then her boss refused to work with her after seeing her interview in a German TV report on refugees. This incident impacted the way Mehregan’s refugee caseworker, who was in charge of helping her attain basic needs like housing, food, and health care, treated her. For example, since most new refugees do not know German, they receive cash assistance until they learn the target language and enter the job market. Her case worker once refused to give Mehregan her monthly cash, accusing her of hiding her proficiency in German. Even after eight years, this incident still affects Mehregan. She told me that for a long time she did not speak German at government offices, and she is still sometimes afraid of speaking German in public.

Mehregan represented herself as a marginalized migrant, saying, ‘In Germany, you always feel that you are a foreigner.’ I chose her story because she has triumphed over the many challenges she’s faced. She was among the few interviewees who included positive remarks when describing their job experiences in Germany. Although Mehregan seemed satisfied with her career, she did tell me that its downside was that she had limited contact with non-Iranian co-workers. Several times during our interview, Mehregan called her colleagues “nice” because they acted like “intellectuals.” She evaluated her workplace atmosphere as different from “companies and supermarkets.” Since I wanted to know more, I asked her to give an example of a pleasant encounter at work.

Excerpt 9

Mehregan

1 Well, for example, the boss of
 2 the boss of our boss who we, for
 3 example, are now more *connected*
 4 to is a German man. In my
 5 opinion, he is really a VERY
 6 good German. He really hasn't
 7 done anything special for me.
 8 But the way he looks at people.
 9 The way, I don't know, he treats
 10 [people]. For example, I
 11 remember the first time that I
 12 was supposed to go- we had a
 13 meeting that he, kind of, was
 14 talking privately to each staff
 15 member in the Persian language
 16 service. I went there and I was
 17 telling him. He didn't know my
 18 story. I was about to tell him. He
 19 said <VOX> Well, tell me about
 20 yourself. What brought you
 21 here? </VOX> Then I
 22 explained to him. Then even at
 23 some point, I told him that
 24 <VOX> I apologize if it's a
 25 thing. I've been in the Persian
 26 language service for three or four
 27 years. The truth is that compared
 28 to the years that I have lived in
 29 Germany, I haven't learned that
 30 much German. If at some point
 31 you think- </VOX> Then he
 32 said [She changes her voice and
 33 starts talking with excitement]
 34 <VOX> NO! </VOX> Then
 35 he rose. I was astonished. [Sara
 36 laughs]. Then he said [She
 37 changes her voice and continues
 38 talking with excitement]
 39 <VOX> No!!! I have a lot of
 40 *Respekt* for you. I can't believe
 41 this. You say you have kind of
 42 been here for seven, eight years.
 43 [she laughs].
 44 And you are speaking German
 45 like this for me! [she laughs].

مهرگان خب مثلا این رییس رییس رییس ما که
 الان مثلا خب ما بیشتر باهش کانکت ایم
 یک آقای آلمانیه. که به نظر من خیلی
 آلمانی خوبیه واقعا. واقعا برای من هیچ
 کار خاصی هم انجام نداده. ولی از نوع
 نگاهش به آدمها. نوع چه میدونم برخورد
 کردنش. مثلا من یادمه دفعه اولی که من
 قرار بودش که برم- یک جلسه داشتیم که
 مثلا داشت خصوصی با هرکدوم از
 کارکنان بخش فارسی حرف میزد. که من
 رفته بودم باهش صحبت میکردم. بعد
 نمیدونست مثلا داستان من چیه. که من
 داشتم براش توضیح میدادم. گفت: "آره،
 خب بگو از خودت. چی شد اصلا آمدی
 اینجا؟" بعد من داشتم توضیح میدادم. بعد
 یک جایش هم حتا برگشتم گفتم که:
 "ببخشید مثلا اگر چیزه. من الان سه
 چهار ساله که تو بخش فارسی ام.
 واقعتش اینه که به نسبت سالهایی که من
 تو آلمان بودم من خیلی آلمانی نخوندم.
 اگر مثلا یک جایی فکر میکنید- بعد
 گفت: [صدایش را عوض میکند و با
 هیجان حرف میزند] "نه!" بعد پا شد.
 اصلا من همینجوری مونده بودم. [سارا
 میخندد] بعد گفت: "نه!!! من انقدر
 رسپکت دارم به تو. من اصلا باورم
 نمیشه. تو مثلا میگی من هفت سال،
 هشت ساله اینجا. [میخندد]"

46	And you have come here, and	بعد تو داری اینجوری برای من آلمانی
47	you're WORKING. And you are	حرف میزنی! [میخندد]
48	paying US taxes </VOX>. [she	بعد آمدی اینجا داری کار میکنی.
49	laughs].	
50	Then I said <VOX> Don't	داری به ماها مالیات میدی. [میخندد]
51	strangle yourself. You will have a	بعد من گفتم: "حالا خودت رو خفه نکن.
52	heart attack! </VOX> [We both	الان سخته میکنی!" [هر دو میخندیم] ولی
53	laugh]. But, well, he is one of the	خب واقعا یکی از آدم هایه که خیلی برای
54	people whom I have A LOT of	
55	respect for.	من محترمه واقعا.

Mehregan's position in that agency can be inferred through her introduction of her supervisor, 'the boss of the boss of our boss' (lines 1-2). She uses the adjective 'good' (line 6) and the quantifier 'very' to evaluate him. Mehregan opportunity for social interaction at her workplace impacts the way she evaluates her membership in that community. For example, she constructs "good" Germans not based on what they have done for her (lines 6-7) but based on their social interactions at work. The verbal and nonverbal discourse processes—such as her emphasis on the word 'very' (line 5) when she describes her boss, and her voice change when she excitedly recounts his dialogue—help her to construct him as a liberal person who welcomes her at work. By mentioning that the boss spoke privately to each staff member in the Persian service, Mehregan uses "evaluative indexicals" (Wortham 2000, 173) to construct him as caring and position her current self as a satisfied employee.

Mehregan intends to describe the friendly atmosphere of the private meeting. However, the first thing she mentions about her conversation with the boss is the issue of access to linguistic resources; this positions her as an insecure foreign employee. Mehregan's apology for her lack of proficiency in the target language (lines 23-24) indicates her awareness of the community's norms. It signals her "desire to belong, to 'fit in,' to be understood" (Pavlenko 1998, 8). Mehregan then represents herself as a disadvantaged person who, due to working in the Persian language service, has not been sufficiently immersed in the target language environment (lines 24-30). By using

modality such as ‘the truth is’ (lines 26-27), she signals her degree of certainty about such claims. Although Mehregan describes herself as an old-timer who regrettably has not learned German even after many years living and working in Germany, her boss reminds her that seven to eight years is not actually a long time. His argument, in contrast to Mehregan’s self-identification, positions her as a newcomer. By using parallelism and repetition in reporting her boss’s praise about her achievements (‘And you are talking,’ ‘And you have come here, and you’re working,’ ‘And you are paying us’), Mehregan positions herself as an ethical migrant and constructs her boss as accepting her as a legitimate member of the agency.

In my interview with Mehregan, I adopted a more emotionally involved position than in the two other interviews. In this excerpt, both Mehregan and I display our “affective stances” (Ochs 1996, 410) through laughter. Unlike Donya and Soraya, whose narratives of personal experience were full of frustration, confusion, and irritation, Mehregan expresses joy while telling her story. As a recipient, by constantly laughing with her, I participated more actively in her storytelling than in the two other interviews. By laughing at the unexpected behavior of the boss when Mehregan expresses her astonishment (line 35-36), I demonstrate understanding and validation (cf. Jefferson 1984; Attardo 2015). Although her apology for her language competency despite living in Germany for a relatively long time (lines 23-24) indexed her embarrassment, her laughter at the boss’s comment about devaluing these years (lines 43-49) minimizes Mehregan’s feeling of shame. When she laughed at her boss’s assertions about her language competency (line 43), her working, and her paying taxes (lines 46-48), Mehregan demonstrates her amusement in narrating this story to me. The humorous metaphor “Don’t strangle yourself. You will have a heart attack” (line 50-52) and our laughter that follows it terminate the joke segment. Mehregan then uses positive politeness strategy in her concluding remark about having respect for her boss to emphasize solidarity (cf. Wood and Kroger

2000). Using the present form of the verb ‘I have’ and emphasizing on the quantifier ‘a lot’ (line 54) indicate that the good experience still affects Mehregan in the present.

Conclusion

The narratives of Soraya, Donya, Mehregan, and myself provide insight into the relationship between language and our experiences in life. Linguistic and paralinguistic cues in our autobiographical narratives provide us with a powerful tool to overcome the oppression that we experienced at work in Germany. By criticizing discourse we perceive as prejudiced, we position ourselves with respect to our audience as alternatively vulnerable, bullied, or powerful women who overcome exploitation in the workplace.

In order to position ourselves, our audience, and our story characters interactionally in our storytelling events, and in order to make strong commitments to the truth of our statements, we use markers of modalization, codeswitching, reported or quoted speech (Wortham 2000; Fairclough 2003), evaluative indexicals, and verbs that imply something socially relevant about our characters (Wortham 2000). The audience that I had in mind when I explained my European classmate’s reaction to the opening vignette are people who are interested in reading a paper written by someone with Middle Eastern background. By highlighting my classmate’s ethnic background and pointing out that the responses from other audiences were more sympathetic than hers, I positioned her in a distanced way, implying that her Europeanness affected her reaction. Other narrators in this chapter told their stories to help me interpret our conversations. In my interview with Soraya, I interjected a guess about what she was going to say before she said it (Excerpt 3, line 4). Donya moved out of her narrative a few times to explain a situation to me. Mehregan and I constantly laughed together, adopting emotionally involved positions in the interview. These specific techniques helped us to organize our storytelling events.

Autobiographical narratives give authors a chance to represent themselves as particular type of person and relate themselves to others in characteristic ways (Wortham 2000). Comparing my foreign student self in Germany to grateful Afghan workers in the United States represents me as a vulnerable person who was victimized by an abusive boss. Soraya's frustrated tone in her voice constructs her experience as one of vulnerability and victimization endured while working with German nurses. Donya's authoritative tone positions her as a powerful foreign employee who resisted the discrimination and gender inequality that were imposed on her by the German management at her company. Mehregan's report of her accepting German boss who praised her achievements helps her construct herself as a welcomed foreign employee at work. The constant use of laughter in her utterance represents her as an employee who enjoys her job experience. Such discursive constructions helped each of us to characterize our past and present selves to create the person who we want to be.

Conclusion

My emotion-laden memories in a second language, and my ambivalent sense of connection to Germany, where I spent a decade of my life, inspired my research on the links between language, migration, and feelings of belonging. By combining my voice alongside the voices of my Iranian interlocutors, I delved into the understanding of ourselves and of our relationships with the geographical spaces we inhabit. Although most of the narrators in this study migrated later in life, all of our narratives show traces of transnational ties to homeland.

Hamid Naficy (2002, 16), an Iranian scholar of diaspora studies, describes Iranians in exile as people with a contradictory but highly cathected relationship with Iran. Although most of us do not return to Iran, we have an intense desire to do so. “As exiles, their relationship is with their country and cultures of origin, and the sight, sounds, taste, and feel of an originary experience, of an elsewhere at other times.” Anthropologist Mohsen Mobasher argues that these ties, in conjunction with the political relations between Iran and the West, have caused Iranians to have a troubled relationship with both Iran and their host societies.

My dissertation builds on earlier work on Iranians in diaspora by foregrounding the voice of Iranian migrants in Germany. Their firsthand stories of migration provided an opportunity to examine the triadic relations between language, migration, and feelings of belonging. This dissertation began by questioning how Iranian migrants’ transnational ties to Iran and experiences of marginality in Germany impact their relationship to their linguistic resources. Chapter 1 scrutinized the German language education policy for refugees and argued that the limited resources that are made available to migrants only minimally help their language learning and integration processes. Chapter 2 built on the previous chapter by showing the impact of restrictive language policies on the lives of migrants. It demonstrated the challenges that Iranians face upon their arrival in Germany due to their limited access to the dominant language and culture. Chapters 3 and 4 continued to

show the relationship between language, emotions, and sense of belonging. The positive social interactions in Iran increased the two ethnic-, religious-, and language-minority participants' feelings of belonging and enhanced their positive emotions towards Persian; however, the negative perception of people from Muslim-majority countries decreased the positive attitudes of the Muslim-born focus group towards Arabic, Arabic speakers, and Islam. Adopting a holistic view, Chapter 5 investigated the ways in which Iranian migrants represent and position themselves and others interactionally in their narratives about their migration experiences in Germany.

The discussions in these five chapters revealed that Iranians are a complex group of migrants from the Middle East. On the one hand, they deal with the negative perception of people from Muslim-majority countries, a perception which is still prevalent in Western countries. On the other hand, they are critical of the Islamic regime inside Iran. They are suspended in the present, occupying culturally “in-between” spaces which are neither in their host country nor in their homeland (cf. Stroinska and Cecchetto 2003; Pratt Ewing 2006). It is overly simplistic to claim that language or integration courses alone will allow Iranians in diaspora to break through the (in)visible walls around them. Mobasher (2018a) argues that the troubled relationship of Iranians to their homeland and host societies will continue to exist as long as the political relations between Iran and the West remain combative. It is estimated that between two and four million Iranians live outside of Iran; due to the Trump administration's sanctions, this number may increase in coming years (Mobasher 2018a). Given these circumstances, it is important to think about how host-country governments can better help Iranian settlers overcome sociopolitical barriers to integration.

Through sharing their experiences of migration, Iranians in this study respond to the oppression and discrimination they face within the current global geopolitical context. By including migrants' voice in processing experiences of migration and representing themselves, I gave Iranian migrants the possibility to be heard. Together we discussed the problems of migration and

sometimes negotiated solutions. This study opened “the circle of ‘us’ by accepting the stories of lives that are different from one’s own and therefore placing oneself in the condition of being welcoming, respecting, desiring, and of being curious to know the ‘other’ and share his or her world” (Musarò and Parmiggiani 2017, 251). Many of my Iranian interlocutors in this study constructed dialogues between themselves and Germans to show how they resisted the inequalities they faced in Germany. By combining their voice alongside the voice of others, they performed their agency and represented themselves as humans who challenged injustice. While it is impossible for me to know whether Mr. Foumani in Chapter two, for example, wrote a strongly worded letter to former Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl, in English, our collaborative dialogue and interactive engagement in producing knowledge, created a space for him to reflect on his migration experience and demonstrate his power to question the discriminatory laws in Germany.

The diverse migration narratives in this dissertation demonstrated that it is not only Iranians who experience social detachment from their host communities. Migrants from all over the world find it challenging to become accepted by German society, even after living in the country for many years. They are not solely responsible for these integration difficulties. My hope is that this study will help receiving countries improve their refugee language policies and find ways to encourage their communities to demonstrate tolerance and accept diversity.

According to migration scholar Néstor P. Rodríguez (2018), the 2016 United States presidential election and the UK withdrawal from the European Union both demonstrate widespread anti-migrant sentiment. An optimistic future for migrants from the Middle East, especially Iranians, is not assured in this xenophobic climate.

Despite this sociopolitical situation, however, we should not underestimate the efforts that migrants make to thrive and survive. Some Iranians who I interviewed in this study anticipated a bright future for themselves. I was touched by the story of Paria, the young and emotional

interlocutor who we met in chapters one and four. She told me the story of her encounter with an old German woman on the bus when she first moved to Germany. Paria's desire to become part of the German society and her optimistic view of the future surprised me:

She [the old lady] was very friendly and always initiated conversation. I remember we met two or three times. I don't know why we were so attracted to each other. Several times she initiated a conversation [laughs], but I couldn't understand a word. I was so ashamed that I couldn't even say: "Yes! Yes!" To handle the strange situation, I played with my phone, pretended that I was talking [laughs]. Not being able to communicate with this woman has become my biggest regret in life. I always say: "God, I wish, one day, I could improve my German language skills so that I can talk to her. I want to share my feelings with her." I don't think that even our age difference will stop us from becoming friends. The day that I finally speak German will come soon and everyone who I met in the past and couldn't talk to, will become a part of my life.

What makes Paria's story unique is that despite all the challenges she faced in Germany to learn German, she does not give up her dream of learning the language. The future that she imagines goes beyond the "in-between" space where Iranian migrants inhabit. Language gives her an opportunity to create a "third place" located in language, "a place filled with memories of other languages, [and] fantasies of other identities" (Kramersch 2006, 98). Each migrant in this study created a unique third place in language where they found their linguistic identity and position in the world. Sargon, who was introduced in chapter three, located his third place in Persian where his heart and soul laid. Mr. Foumani from chapter two located his third place in English, in which his memorable days in the United States took place. Language enabled these migrants to disclose some aspects of their migration stories. Stories of loss, desire, disappointments, constraints, and joy.

The need for anti-xenophobic refugee language programs

One of the objectives of the current research was to draw the attention of educational researchers and practitioners on migrants' different emotional stances towards their linguistic resources and the way they romanticize homeland and their national identification. This study showed that the relationship between Iranian migrants' positive or negative emotions towards their L1 and L2s depends on reciprocal interactions between them and their surrounding environment. In Chapter 2, Amir and I depicted ourselves as brutally prohibited from using our native language in public and the backlash we received from Germans when we did use it. We perceived language as a tool for discrimination. In Chapter 3, Sargon's good memories in Iran made him value Persian as much or even more than his first language, Assyrian and equated Iran and Persian with his heart and soul.

Based on the observations and experiences of Iranian migrants in this study, I make a few key recommendations for developing education programs that consider migrants' strong emotional ties to their language resources and national identification which create anti-xenophobic educational environment. The narratives of participants in this study reveal how xenophobia works its way into workplaces, refugee camps, and even encounters with police.

Creating anti-xenophobic language learning programs requires collaboration between educational researchers, policymakers, and volunteers. Research shows that effective language learning pedagogy is built based on who students already are (Bartlett and Garcia 2011). Second language acquisition expert Jim Cummins (1996, 75) argues that "our prior experience provides the foundation for interpreting new information. No learner is a blank slate." Using learners' funds of knowledge—"the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills" such as languages in their linguistic repertoire in class create an environment full of trust, respect, and acceptance (Moll et al. 1992, 133). Integrating students' funds of knowledge into classroom

curriculum is a step toward welcoming them into classroom and making them feel that they belong to that community.

But how can educators use this knowledge? Literacy is a socio-cultural practice that is more than just reading and writing (Prior and Shipka 2003). Adult learning also does not need to take place only in classrooms. Following applied linguist Li Wei (2013), technological advancement and global migration have challenged the traditional role of teachers as the providers of knowledge and students as the recipients of that knowledge. In co-learning “several agents simultaneously try to adapt to one another’s behavior so as to produce desirable global outcomes that would be shared by the contributing agents” (2013, 169). Teachers become facilitators of knowledge without imposing the information they think is valuable on learners. They construct knowledge with learners. Wei proposes that facilitators and learners should develop a collaborative learner-centered curriculum that considers learners’ linguistic, education, and cultural background.

Although most participants in this study were unemployed at the time I interviewed them, they received education or training in Iran. They used to hold jobs as lawyers, artists, university professors, teachers, and other professions. The rich funds of knowledge of these migrants can also benefit facilitators when they design inclusive learning environments. Learners’ funds of knowledge help teachers, researchers, community members and global citizens to rethink their conceptions of the immigrant students they encounter in classrooms (Norton 2013). A sense of belonging is developed in societies where everyone is treated with the same level of respect as others in schools, workplace, and other environments.

Implications

The antforeigner climate prevalent in Germany has caused the rapid rise in popularity of extreme nationalist and populist far-right political parties, such as National Democratic Party of Germany

(NPD) and Alternative for Germany (AFD). However, there are still Germans and migrants who are trying hard to bring about change in Germany, including the political party *Die Grünen*, “The Greens,” and volunteers who help refugees. This study may help them to better understand the challenges that migrants with different language and cultural background face in their country.

Based on my personal experience both in Germany and in the U.S., I believe that volunteers are a great source for marrying cultures and languages. During my 2017 fieldwork, I visited a German language course that was offered through the Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen (SkF) in Wiesbaden. These classes were offered to migrant mothers with toddlers. The entire staff, including teachers and interpreters, were volunteers. This group regularly organized different events to create an environment for migrant families and volunteers to get together and co-learn from each other’s funds of knowledge. I attended an SkF barbecue held in an old cemetery that has been transformed into a park. There were about eight Afghan families with their German foster families; they regularly spent time with each other, eating together and doing grocery shopping. The Germans and the Afghans barely understood each other’s language, but they communicated with each other by using a mix of linguistic and paralinguistic cues. I could feel the friendships that were built between them. When I compare SkF’s barbecue to my research participants’ unsuccessful experiences with volunteer language teachers, I conclude that language is not necessarily learned in classrooms. Not only are more opportunities needed for migrants to learn and use the language of the host country, but more research is needed to explore the impact of such opportunities on their experiences, emotions, and aspirations.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Interview Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Research Title: Immigration and Multilingualism: An (Auto)ethnography of Iranian Emigrants and Refugees

Interview questions for research participants

Principal Investigator: Professor Katrina D. Thompson

Student Researcher: Sara Farsiu (farsiu@wisc.edu)

The ethnographic interviews will be conversational, open-ended, and unstructured. The interviews are informal and free flowing. The questions below represent some possible avenues for discussion.

Introduction:

The goal of this interview is to hear your narratives about your experience as an emigrant or refugee learning and using different languages in different contexts. Before we begin, do you have any questions about my research?

I want to remind you that you don't have to answer any question that make you uncomfortable or upset. Please remember you can end the interview at anytime.

1. Questions for all participants

Personal Information:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Possible follow up questions on age, where they grew up, education, profession, etc.
- You mentioned X. Could you tell me more about that?

Language repertoire:

- What are your earliest memories of the languages used around you as a child?
- Do you remember when you first heard/learned Arabic/German/English/other? What was most surprising to you about foreign languages?
- You mentioned X. Could you tell me more about that?

Second language:

- What was your experience learning x language like?
- What was the biggest challenge you faced while learning a second language? Could you give me a specific example of how you handled it?
- Do you ever think you are a different person in different languages you speak? Could you tell me a story about an event in your life that illustrates that?
- Have you ever wished you were a native speaker of another language? Please tell me about that.
- You mentioned X. Could you tell me more about that?

Interactions with native speakers:

- Is there a particular moment or memory that stands out for you about your experiences with Germans/Americans evaluating your language proficiency?
- Have you been discriminated against based on your native language? Could you tell me a story about that?