Male Muslim Refugee Experiences of English Language Training Programmes and Links to Employment in Australia.

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This thesis is dedicated to
the memory of my dear friend, Freda,
whose serendipitous friendship always helped me
and
to my mother and father
who taught me what it means to respect difference.
ABSTRACT

Since the modern Refugee and Humanitarian Programme began in 1977, around 14,000 refugees have been granted residency in Australia every year, with Muslim communities now representing more than 50 per cent of the intake. Most of these refugees entering Australia speak little, if any, English, have little or no education in their first language, and most do not possess employment skills or qualifications valued in the Australian workplace. The Federal Government thus offers them English language training within the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) and the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme. These programmes aim to provide refugee migrants with enough English proficiency to gain employment in Australia, and to successfully participate socially and economically in Australian society. However, there has been only limited research specifically centred on these Federal English training programmes. In particular, there have been no in-depth studies centred on the opinions of the actual refugee clients attending these programmes. The research in this thesis thus investigates the perspectives of a group of eight male Muslim refugees on the effectiveness of the Federal English Language Training Programmes in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia. Male Muslim refugees were chosen as participants as they represent a particularly disadvantaged, but under-researched, minority social group in Australian society.

A qualitative research design and methodology was adopted for this research, framed within a socio-critical (transformative) research paradigm. Data was collected using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and then analysed and described using the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual tools of field, capital and habitus. The findings from this research suggest that there may be a number of key problems with the language training programmes. Most of the refugees in the study failed to find consistent employment, and many entered a repetitive cycle of intermittent attendance at the English training programmes. Additionally, many of the participants reached only a basic proficiency in oral English communication, making little or no progress in their literacy acquisition, and thus they were generally unable to complete any vocational qualifications.

The findings from this study suggest that there may be a gap between what is offered in the English language training programmes and what is actually needed by this group of refugees in order to integrate into Australian society and gain meaningful employment. The findings and recommendations from this study have the potential to influence the teaching focus and policy decisions in respect to English language training of refugees in Australia. They also contribute to the small but growing body of knowledge about the second/additional language learning and social needs of low-educated adult refugees now arriving in Australia, at least as they relate to the male Muslim refugee participants in this research.
LIST OF KEYWORDS
Additional language learning
Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP)
Bourdieu
Capital
English language training
Field
Habitus
Language learning
Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP)
Muslim
Refugee
Second language learning
Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) __________________________
Yi-jung Teresa Hsieh
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACSF</td>
<td>Australia Core Skills Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTA</td>
<td>Australia Council of TESOL Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse</td>
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<tr>
<td>CALP</td>
<td>Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGEA</td>
<td>Certificate in General Education for Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLBA</td>
<td>Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSWE</td>
<td>Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWE</td>
<td>Certificate in Spoken and Written English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEST</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAC</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIICCSRTE</td>
<td>Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIISRTE</td>
<td>Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELTP</td>
<td>English Language Training Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISLPR</td>
<td>International Second Language Proficiency Ratings</td>
</tr>
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<td>JSA</td>
<td>Job Service Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLNP</td>
<td>Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme</td>
</tr>
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<td>LSIA</td>
<td>Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia</td>
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<td>MMR</td>
<td>Male Muslim Refugee</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non-English Speaking Background</td>
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<td>NRS</td>
<td>National Reporting System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Pre-Training Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>Registered Training Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>Skills for Education and Employment</td>
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<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLPET</td>
<td>Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPP</td>
<td>Special Preparatory Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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I would also like to thank the male Muslim participants in my research who willingly contributed their time to share their experiences with me despite the gender and language barriers. Their insights, perspectives and voices have made this work convincing and potentially valuable to the field of English language education for refugees in Australia. I consider myself fortunate to have worked with these new Australians.

I would finally like to acknowledge the support and tolerance of my friends and colleagues who have demonstrated patience and understanding during the course of this work. I am indebted to them in many ways.
CHAPTER ONE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING AND MALE MUSLIM REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA

1.1 OVERVIEW

The United Nations (UN) Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was first adopted in 1951, and still remains the basis for the protection of refugees in the modern era. The Convention specifies a universal definition of the term ‘refugee’ that emphasises protection from any form of persecution:

A refugee … is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion (UNHCR, 2010, p. 3).

Refugees are admitted to Australia as part of its obligations under the UN Convention. One of the prime obligations under this Convention is that refugees are granted access to education and employment within Australia (UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees], 2010). In order to fulfil these obligations, and to allow refugees a greater possibility of successful settlement into Australian society, the Federal Australian Government provides English language training programmes (ELTPs) for refugee migrants who are allowed to settle in Australia.

The aims of these federal English language training programmes are to provide refugee migrants with enough English proficiency in order to gain employment in Australia (Liebig, 2007), and to allow them to successfully participate socially and economically in Australian society (DET [Department of Education and Training], 2015a, 2015c). There is, however, increasing evidence that these English training programmes are failing in these aims (ACTA, [Australian Council of TESOL Associations], 2012; DIAC [Department of Immigration and Citizenship], 2008; Refugee Council of Australia, 2011; Wickert, Searle, Marr & Johnson, 2007).

As will be seen in Chapter Two, over the last decade, the majority of refugees arriving in Australia are increasingly from Muslim countries in the African, Asian and Middle Eastern regions. Additionally, Muslim refugee migrants are often at particular socio-economic disadvantage in Australian society due to their relative lack of English proficiency, educational attainment and work experience in Australia (ABS, 2010b, 2011, 2013b; Hugo, 2011; Marshall, 2015), as well as the fact that they are Muslim, the only minority religious group in Australia that suffers persistent disadvantage over time (Peucker et al., 2014). This group attend the
English language training programmes offered by the federal government, thus the research in this thesis investigates the perspectives of a group of male Muslim refugees on the effectiveness of the federal English language training programmes in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present the background to this research, to identify the research problem and its significance, and to introduce the research question. This chapter is presented in six sections. Section 1.1 briefly introduces the research topic. Section 1.2 provides a snapshot of the background to this research. (The background is relatively complex, thus a brief account only is presented here, with more detail provided in Chapters Two and Three.) Section 1.3 considers the research problem areas and their significance. Section 1.4 discusses the purpose of this research and specifies the research question. Section 1.5 provides a brief account of the research design and methodology. The final Section 1.6 outlines the structure of this thesis.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THIS RESEARCH

The majority of refugees entering Australia gain residency through the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme, which allows for controlled entry of up to 14,000 refugees per year. The country of origin of these refugees varies in any year depending on the location of global conflict. In the last decade the majority of refugees have come from the African, Asian and Middle Eastern regions, and predominantly from Muslim countries (ABS, 2011; DIAC, 2011d). Most of these refugees entering Australia speak little, if any, English; have little or no education in their first language and most do not possess employment skills or qualifications valued in the Australian workplace (ABS, 2010b, 2013b; Hugo, 2011; Marshall, 2015). This is why the Australian government provides English language training programmes, which aim to facilitate the social and economic integration of refugees into Australian society. These programmes are the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP); and the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme (previously known as the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP) prior to 1 July 2013) (DET, 2015a, 2015c). Further details about these English language training programmes are provided in Chapter Three.

Given that the majority of recent refugee migrants to Australia belong to the Muslim religion (ABS, 2011; DIAC, 2011d) (a topic further explored in Chapter Two), the question may be asked as to how they fare in Australian society. However, as the number of Muslim refugees is only small compared to the total population of Australia, there is currently little Census data that relates specifically to this group of people (ABS, 2010b). Nevertheless, some appreciation of
the social position of Muslim refugees can be gained by extrapolation from the 2011 Census data concerning the larger Australian Muslim community to which Australian Muslim refugee migrants belong (ABS, 2011).

Three-quarters of the general Australian Muslim community are reported as speaking proficient English, and often having higher levels of education compared to non-Muslim Australians (ABS, 2011). Despite these attributes, the general Australian Muslim community continue to have significantly higher unemployment rates and lower incomes than other Australians and also often work in low skilled, low status occupational groups on a casual or short term basis (ABS, 2011). This pattern is not a recent phenomenon, having now been observed over three censuses (ABS, 2001, 2006, 2011). Given that even these well-educated members of the general Muslim community with good English skills are struggling to gain meaningful, long-term employment (e.g. Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Fozdar, 2011; Johnstone, 2011; Lovat et al, 2013 – these papers are reviewed in Chapter Four), it can be appreciated that low-educated Muslim refugees are going to experience similar problems at a greater level. There is further consideration of the social position of Muslim refugees within Australian society in Chapter Two.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AREAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

This section outlines three interconnected problematic areas where there are gaps in the available research, not only in relation to the Australian English language training programmes, but also the broader areas of additional language acquisition and Muslim disadvantage in Australia. The economic, theoretical and social significance of these research gaps is also considered.

1.3.1 Problematic aspects of the federal English language training programmes

The first problematic area relating to the English language training programmes is that there has been only limited research specifically centred on these programmes offered by the Federal Australian Government. For example, in respect to the AMEP, Slewa-Younanet et al. (2015) have investigated the effects of psychological stress on the English language learning of refugees attending the AMEP, and Kim, Ehrich and Ficorilli (2012) have considered the AMEP and its relationships to settlement wellbeing, English language proficiency and employment. There is also a body of research that considers the structure and outcomes of the AMEP. For example, there are numerous statements and reports about the AMEP originating from the then Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC – now the Department of Immigration and Border Protection) (e.g. DIAC, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d) which provide commentary on the AMEP and its sometimes problematic nature.
More recently, there has also been an extensive review of the AMEP by ACIL Allen Consulting (2015a) which identifies several areas of both acclaim and concern within this programme. In brief, this report discusses some creditable aspects of the new AMEP business model adopted in 2011, but also some areas of concern in relation to the outcomes of the AMEP in respect to participation, gains in English proficiency and outcomes in employment and further training.

In respect to the LLNP and its successor, the SEE programme, there have been numerous statements from various Federal Government departments about this programme since its commencement in 2002. However, these predominantly clarify and discuss the structure of the programme, and the demands to be made of its clients and those Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that deliver the programme (e.g. Department of Industry, 2013c; DEEWR [Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations], 2010a; DIICCSRTE [Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education], 2013b). These reports do not provide any significant focus on the educational, social or economic outcomes of the LLNP.

Until recently, there was only one formal report available that was commissioned by the (then) Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) in 2005 concerning the LLNP from its commencement in January 2002 to 30 June 2004. This report discussed the outcomes of the LLNP in respect to gains in language, literacy and numeracy skills, and also reference to the outcomes in employment and further training (DEST, 2005). There was otherwise little in the way of publically-available data on the LLNP or its successor in the SEE programme since 2004 other than piecemeal statistics provided in various Federal Government publications – these reported on the performance of the organisations delivering the LLNP, and the employment outcomes of clients up to 2011 (e.g. Department of Industry, 2013a; DIISRTE, 2012). However, in March 2016, an extensive review of the SEE programme was published by ACIL Allen Consulting (2015b), the same company that reviewed the AMEP. This report, as with that for the AMEP, details both creditable and problematic aspects of the SEE programme. There is also a focus on the outcomes of the SEE programme in respect to participation, training outcomes and gains in language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) levels for various client groups.

In respect to the opinions of the actual clients attending the AMEP, there are only two available reports that make brief reference to ‘client satisfaction’ with the AMEP (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a; Yates et al., 2015). A single report on the opinions of clients within the LLNP is available (DEST, 2005). For the SEE Programme, the evaluation by ACIL Allen Consulting (2015b) included the use of client focus groups from across all SEE client groupings. However,
while there is brief consideration of what the clients considered as their needs, there is no specific question as to their satisfaction or otherwise about the programme. There thus remains a research gap in this area, particularly for non-English speaking background (NESB) clients with low levels of prior education. Further consideration of these English language training programmes and the reports referred to above is provided in Chapter Three.

1.3.2 Problematic aspects of research into Second Language Acquisition (SLA)
The second problematic area of the English language training programmes relates to concerns about their theoretical basis. The main aim of the Australian English language training programmes is to raise the English proficiency levels of refugees to the point where they can more effectively participate socially and economically in Australian society (DET, 2015a, 2015c). Given this, it might be expected that these programmes would be founded on evidence-based principles of SLA research. However, as will be seen, this does not appear to be the case. Additionally, there is also a problem when the theoretical basis of SLA research is considered.

Research into second and additional language acquisition over the last three decades has largely concerned itself with children and young adults learning a second or additional language within the formal educational contexts of school or university. However, refugee migrants currently arriving in developed countries including Australia are increasingly adults from a background of little or no education in their first language (ABS, 2010b, 2013b). Current second language acquisition theory thus cannot be applied to this group of learners (Farrelly, 2013; Vinogradov, 2013; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009), and there is a research gap in this area as there are few studies on low-literate refugee adults learning an additional language (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008; Young-Scholten, 2013). There is further consideration of this topic in the literature review in Chapter Four.

1.3.3 Problematic aspects of research into Muslim jobseekers’ disadvantage in Australia
The third problematic area concerning the English language training programmes is that there is a lack of research with a focus specifically on low-educated Muslim jobseekers, particularly from a refugee background. As identified in Section 1.2, Muslim refugees are a particularly disadvantaged group within Australian society (and there is significant research in fields such as employment, housing and so on, to demonstrate this, as detailed further in Chapter Two). In terms of jobseeking behaviours, however, little attention has been given to the experiences of Muslim refugees. Not only do they generally have poor English proficiency, and little in the way of qualifications or work skills useful in the Australian context, but they are also disadvantaged simply because they are Muslim in a society that is increasingly suspicious of,
and hostile towards, members of this religion (AHRC [Australian Human Rights Commission], 2015). No other minority religious group in Australia suffers the social disadvantage characteristic of many Australian Muslims, particularly those from a refugee background (Peucker, Roose & Akbarzadeh, 2014).

There are a range of socio-cultural factors producing the disadvantage experienced by refugees in Australia, Muslim or otherwise. These include, in particular, lack of English language proficiency (e.g. Hugo, 2011; Lovat et al., 2013), and lack of Australian qualifications and work experience (e.g. Fozdar, 2011; Ibrahimi, Sgro, Mansouri & Jubb, 2010; Mahmud, Alam & Hartel, 2014). Also to be considered are the negative effects of discrimination against the ‘visibly different’ (e.g. Barkdull et al., 2011; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Lovat et al., 2013).

As noted by Hassan (2010), Khoo (2012) and Peucker et al. (2014), more research is needed into the interaction of these various factors producing Muslim disadvantage. However, in past years the majority of research in this field has generally focused on well-educated Muslim and other refugees with reasonable English proficiency. There have been recent Australian studies with a specific focus on the problems experienced by Muslim job seekers in Australia (Lovat et al., 2011; Lovat et al., 2013, 2015). However, these all use the same participants and data set, and, as in earlier studies, most respondents were well educated. There consequently remains a lack of research with a focus specifically on low-educated Muslim jobseekers, particularly from a refugee background. There is further consideration of this topic in the literature review of Chapter Four.

1.3.4 Significance of these problematic research areas

As the preceding sections make clear, there are three interrelated areas where there are gaps in available research concerning refugee migrants in Australia. First, there have been no in-depth studies centred on the opinions of the actual refugee clients attending the federal English language training programmes available to them; second, there is a lack of research into the second/additional language acquisition of low-educated adult refugees arriving in Australia, the principles of which should be applied to the English training programmes they attend; and third, research with a specific focus on the socio-cultural factors contributing to the social disadvantage of low-educated refugee Muslims is also lacking.

These interconnected research gaps are significant from an economic, theoretical and social standpoint. First, the English language training programmes offered to refugee migrants in Australia represent a significant economic investment by the Federal Government – the latest
available figures indicate a budget in the 2013-14 financial year of over $185 million for the AMEP (Department of Industry, 2014a), and over $135 million for the SEE programme (Department of Industry, 2015). Forward estimates of projected costs by 2018-19 indicate an increase to around $300 million for the AMEP (DET, 2015b), and $160 million for the SEE programme (DET, 2015c). Thus from an economic standpoint, it is important that these ELTPs should provide optimum outcomes for their refugee clients. However, the majority of refugee clients now attending these English training programmes are from low-educated backgrounds, and, as discussed in Section 1.3.2, there is little research on additional (English) language acquisition in this low educated refugee group. Thus the ELTPs are not currently framed around relevant evidence-based theoretical principles of second/additional language acquisition.

Finally, as outlined in Section 1.2, the majority of refugees currently arriving in Australia are from Muslim backgrounds (ABS, 2010b, 2013a). Additionally, there is a relative lack of research with a focus on the interaction of factors producing social disadvantage of Muslim people, particularly refugees (Hassan, 2010; Khoo, 2012; Peucker et al., 2014). It is important to better understand the causes of Muslim social and economic disadvantage so that these causes can be more effectively addressed. If this was done, this would allow this particular refugee community more chance of successful integration into Australian society. This is also of importance given the rising levels of Islamophobia in Australian society (AHRC, 2015), because if relative Muslim social disadvantage persists, then Australia risks the development of a disenfranchised Muslim community, with the risk of radicalisation and its potentially disruptive social consequences (Hassan, 2010).

In respect to this social disadvantage, reference may be made here to the notion of intersectionality. This term was introduced in 1991 to describe issues related to Black feminism in the United States, and is:

… synonymous with issues of power, social justice and oppression … [and is now] a concept … used in critical theories to describe the ways in which oppressive [social] institutions … are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another [because] oppressed groups … have social identities that are interlocking (Nakhid et al., 2015, p. 190).

In respect to discrimination and disadvantaged social status, intersectionality is understood as a term describing the condition where a particular social group are the victims of several interlocking sociocultural factors that lead to compounded discrimination:
... meaning the notion that identity, social and structural categories are intrinsically inter-related and linked in a relationship of complexity and socio-cultural power hierarchies. In an ethical sense it means the process of becoming the Other within a general majority culture (Molloy, 2010, p. 261).

Applied to the male Muslim refugee participants in this research, it may be argued that there is an intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender and religion for this group of people. These factors must be considered together as contributing to the relative social disadvantage experienced by these male Muslim refugees. The intersection of these various factors produces a structural inequality for these male Muslim refugee participants in Australian society, this inequality being due to the “relative constraints some people encounter in their freedom and material well-being as the cumulative effect of the possibilities of their social position, as compared with others who in their social positions have more options or easier access to benefits” (Young, 2000, p. 98).

The male Muslim refugee participants thus face compounding factors of discrimination. This may be on the basis of their visible racial and/or cultural difference from others in Australian society (e.g. skin colour, clothing etc); on the basis of their religion (e.g. Muslim religious practice, islamophobia); and/or on the basis of their language (e.g. their first language is not valued in Australian society, only English in which they are generally of low proficiency).

This intersection of these social, cultural and structural inequalities relative to those in mainstream White Australian society generally results in Muslim refugee migrant disadvantage, and “becoming the Other within a general majority culture” (Molloy, 2010, p. 261). In Bourdieusian terms, this becoming ‘other’ due to intersectionality may be framed as a form of symbolic violence (further considered in Section 5.4 of Chapter 5 and Chapter Nine).

While this research provided some general insights into factors contributing to Muslim social disadvantage, this was not the prime focus of this thesis. The research question concerned the perspectives of the participants on the federal English language training programmes, rather than on the intersectionality of the multiple factors contributing to Muslim disadvantage. In this respect, for the purposes of this thesis, intersectionality is “framed as an analytic sensibility … where it is a given that the research 'subjects' will fit into multiple categories, with the categories in themselves often experiencing many changes” (Nakhid et al., 2015, p. 191).

There are diverse practices of Islam within different cultures and countries of the world, and the male Muslim refugee participants in this research are by no means homogenous. In this thesis,
this diversity of the male Muslim refugees is highlighted in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 (Chapter Seven) which describe their demographics and the capitals they bring to Australian society. In fact, Chapter Seven provides a broad description of the individual experiences of the participants in this research as these experiences shape their individual perspectives on their English language training programmes, as well as their developing Australian habitus (in Bourdieusian terms).

1.4 The Research Purpose and Research Question

In order to address the research problem areas identified in Section 1.3, the research in this thesis takes as its focus the experiences of a group of male Muslim refugees within the English language training programmes offered by the Federal Government of Australia. The single research question is framed as:

_What are the perspectives of male Muslim refugees on the effectiveness of their English language training programmes in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia?_

The primary purpose of this research is to identify from the participants’ point of view what aspects of their English training programmes they found to be effective, and what aspects less effective, and the reasons why. The main contribution of the findings from this study lie in its potential for promoting change in the structure of the ELTPs – which would provide refugees (Muslim or otherwise) with more chance of gaining the English proficiency and work skills necessary to find meaningful employment in Australia.

While language learning and the causes of Muslim social disadvantage were initially not prime considerations of this research, several insights into these areas were nevertheless gained during this study based on the experiences of the refugees both within and outside their English language training programmes. Given that the majority of the refugee participants in this study had only low levels of education in their own language, these insights contribute to the growing body of knowledge about the language learning and social needs of this disadvantaged group, at least in respect to male Muslim refugees.

It may be added here that male Muslim refugees were chosen as the participants in this research rather than other refugee groups given their particular disadvantage in Australian society (as detailed in the literature cited in Section 1.3.3 of this Chapter One, and also in Section 2.4 of Chapter Two). Muslim males were also chosen over Muslim females for two reasons. First, the problems and needs of female Muslim refugee migrants in the workplace and other contexts have been the focus of past research in Australia and elsewhere, either Muslim-specific research
or otherwise (e.g. Nilan, Samarayi & Lovat, 2012; Reeves, McKinney & Azam, 2012; Syed & Pio, 2010); in contrast, male Muslims are an under-researched ethno-cultural minority (Malik, 2015; Sav, Harris & Sebar, 2011).

Second, in my experience of working within the ELTPs, male Muslim refugees are particularly driven (more so than female Muslims or other refugee groups) towards gaining any employment they can acquire, irrespective of whether it is low status or low pay. This may be because Muslim females have different social responsibilities as compared to their male counterparts – for example, care of children and the elderly in their families (Cook, 2011; Lovat et al., 2013). Another reason may be that male Muslim jobseekers also have a religious need to be employed as the Quran states that “life without work has no meaning, and engagement in economic activities is an obligation” (Yousef, 2000, p. 515 – see Chapter Four, Section 4.5.2.1). Following on from this, the social and cultural roles of females in Muslim societies can be different from males, thus their needs within their English language training may be different. For this reason, a mixed gender Muslim group was not chosen for this research as it was felt that the presence of female Muslim refugees in the participant group would have added a potential confounding factor to this research project. Female Muslim refugee migrants require a further dedicated research project similar to the present one to identify their specific English training needs.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design and methodology was adopted for this research. The methodology is framed within a socio-critical (transformative) research paradigm which aims to understand how social institutions are structured such that some groups are privileged at the expense of others. The aim of the paradigm is to transform the status quo and provide for the needs of marginalised groups (Basden, 2011; Merriam, 2002).

Pierre Bourdieu is regarded as a critical social theorist whose work aligns with the socio-critical paradigm (Basden, 2011; Howcroft & Trauth, 2004; Klein, 2009; Myers & Klein, 2011) – thus the data from this thesis is interpreted and analysed using Bourdieu’s theoretical framework and his conceptual tools of field, capital, habitus and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 2000a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Data for this thesis was gained through a series of semi-structured interviews with eight male Muslim refugees who have attended the federal English language training programmes in Brisbane, Australia. The analysis highlights the difficulties experienced by this group within
their new lives in Australia and their English language training programmes which they generally see as flawed in several respects.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS IN THIS THESIS

This thesis is presented in ten chapters. Chapter One describes the background to this research project; the research problem areas and their significance; and identifies the research question and the methodology adopted for this research project.

Chapter Two considers the programmes that control migrant and refugee entry into Australia. There is also discussion of factors that influence the disadvantaged social position of refugees in Australia, with a particular focus on those from a Muslim background. A research gap is identified that relates to these factors.

Chapter Three provides detail on the two main English language training programmes offered to refugees (the AMEP and the LLN/SEE programme) which aim to assist them to settle into Australian society and improve their chance of gaining employment. There is also commentary on the problematic aspects of the English language training programmes.

Chapter Four reviews literature that informs the research question at the centre of this thesis – the perspectives of the male Muslim refugees on the effectiveness of their ELTPs. As the aim of these programmes is to provide their participants with enough English proficiency to gain employment and integrate into Australian society, the main theme of the literature reviewed is framed around those aspects of second language learning which are of particular relevance to the low educated refugee participants in this research, and which can potentially inform and improve the ELTPs offered in Australia. The relevance of particular research to this thesis is made explicit, and research gaps are identified to which this study contributes knowledge.

Chapter Five considers the conceptual tools (field, capital, habitus and symbolic violence) within Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice which provides the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis. This chapter also proposes how the lived experiences and perspectives of male Muslim refugees can be examined through employing this theoretical framework.

Chapter Six considers the qualitative research design and methodology used to conduct this study. The design is based on a socio-critical (transformative) research paradigm which articulates with Bourdieu’s theory of practice. The methodology is described in stages, and includes description of the research context and participants, the data collection and the process
of analysis. This chapter also considers factors that determine the credibility and ethical conduct of this research.

Chapter Seven is the first of three chapters analysing the results of this research. Using a Bourdieusian framework, this chapter describes the diverse but overlapping stories of the male Muslim participants which allows the major factors that influence their individual perspectives on their English language training to be identified. Themes of hardship emerge from the diversity of experience of these men, and these are framed within Bourdieu’s notions of field, capital and habitus.

Chapter Eight presents a more detailed and thematic Bourdieusian analysis of particular issues within the English language training programmes that emerge from the collective perspectives of the male Muslim participants in this study. These issues must be resolved if the ELTPs are to better meet the needs of their clients.

Chapter Nine demonstrates how the male Muslim participants in this research are enmeshed within a reproductive educational cycle not of their making, and in a system unable to respond to their needs. This is framed using Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence.

Chapter Ten draws this thesis to a close. The significance of this research is considered. Key recommendations for change in the federal English language training programmes are made that would improve these programmes, and assist male Muslim (and other) refugees to settle into Australian society and gain meaningful employment. The limitations of this study and recommendations for further research are also considered.
CHAPTER TWO
THE POSITION OF MIGRANTS AND HUMANITARIAN REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA

2.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter reviews literature relating to the background context of this research. There is, first, a review of the programmes that allow, but also control, migration into Australia. There is then consideration of factors that determine the socioeconomic positioning of refugees in Australian society, with a particular focus on the Muslim community. These are important considerations as they constitute the social reality within which the male Muslim refugee participants in this study must exist from day to day. This is also the context within which their English language training programmes are delivered, and which will thus influence their perspectives about the effectiveness of those training programmes in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia.

Section 2.1 presents a general overview of this chapter that provides the background context to the research conducted on the male Muslim refugee participants in this study. Section 2.2 considers the two programmes under which the Federal Government controls migration into Australia. Section 2.3 presents research data that demonstrates the disadvantaged socioeconomic position of humanitarian refugees in Australian society, including the relatively greater socioeconomic disadvantage of female compared to male humanitarian migrants. Section 2.4 presents research literature demonstrating the disadvantaged social position of the Australian Muslim population. The final Section 2.5 draws together the main themes in this chapter.

2.2 CONTROLLED MIGRATION INTO MODERN AUSTRALIA

In the period from 1945 to 2009, over 7 million people from 200 countries migrated to Australia under its planned migration policies. This number includes nearly 6.8 million skilled migrants (3.49 million males and 3.29 million females), and more than 0.7 million refugees and people in humanitarian need. In each of the decades since 1950, there have been around one million migrants arriving in Australia, with some 0.9 million since 2000. During this period, Australia’s population has increased from around 7 million in the early post-war years to the current 21.5 million, with nearly a quarter of its population born overseas in the most recent figures (DIAC, 2011c).

Currently, the Australian Federal Government administers two separate schemes that determine the number of people allowed to settle in Australia each year – namely the Migration Programme, and the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme. According to government policies, these provide a balance that allows the Australian Government not only to meet its humanitarian
obligations to the UN, but also national imperatives dictated by economic, social and environmental considerations (DFAT, 2008). Numbers entering Australia under these programmes are carefully managed by the Australian Government (Tavan, 2005).

2.2.1 The Migration Programme

The Migration Programme allows entry to Australia from three groups. The two main groups are the Skill stream that allows for migration of individuals with employment or business skills that could potentially contribute to the Australian economy and the Family stream that allows for migration of family members of individuals already granted residency in Australia (DIAC, 2010b). The third and quite small group is the Special Eligibility stream, a special category that allows for settlement of people who were formerly residents in Australia and now wish to become permanent residents (DIAC, 2009c). The criteria for migration are set out under the Migration Act 1958 – and eligibility for migration is in no way determined by an applicant’s nationality, ethnic origin, sex, race or religion (DFAT, 2008).

Over the last decade there has been a slow but sure increase in migrant numbers admitted to Australia under the Migration Programme – from around 110,000 in 2003-2004 to the current 190,000 in 2013-2014. The majority of migrants are from the Skill stream (67.7 per cent in 2013-2014) as compared to the Family stream (32.2 per cent in 2013-2014), with only 200-300 places given to the special eligibility stream (0.1 per cent in 2013-2014) (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014a). As can be seen from Figure 2.1, India, China and the United Kingdom are by far the main source countries for the Migration Programme, with smaller contributions from the remaining countries identified (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014a).
2.2.2 The Refugee and Humanitarian Programme

The modern Refugee and Humanitarian Programme began in 1977, and allows entry to Australia from two possible sources. First is the onshore protection/asylum component that offers the possibility of asylum to people already in Australia and deemed to be refugees under the UN Convention. Second is the offshore resettlement component that offers resettlement within two categories of permanent visa – a refugee category for people outside Australia subject to persecution, typically referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); and a humanitarian category which includes immediate family of those people granted protection in Australia, as well as other individuals suffering severe discrimination within their own country (DIAC, 2011e, 2011g).

The Refugee and Humanitarian Programme allows considerably fewer numbers into Australia as compared to the Migration Programme. Since the mid-1990s, the number of refugees entering Australia has been around 12-14,000, with the majority of these being refugees from the offshore component of the programme. After recommendations from the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers¹, the Labor Government of the time increased entry levels by over 30 per cent to 20,000 in 2012-2013. However, following the change of government in September 2013, the intake under the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme was again returned to 13,750 in 2013-

¹ The Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers was set up in June 2012 by the Labor government of the time to investigate ways of reducing the number of asylum seekers choosing to risk their lives on dangerous sea journeys to Australia (Houston, 2012).
2014, and this number remains the same in the 2014-2015 financial year. The reason for the reduction was cited as the costs associated with the increased numbers (Karlsen, 2015).

Putting aside the politics associated with fluctuating numbers admitted under the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme, it remains a flexible option that is able to respond to evolving global needs for resettlement. For example, toward the end of the 1990s, Europe was the greatest source of humanitarian refugees, predominantly from the former Yugoslavia. This focus shifted to Africa between 2003 and 2005, peaking at 70 per cent of the humanitarian intake in 2005, with the main nationalities from Sudan, Liberia and the Congo. From 2006 to the present time, there has been an increasing proportion of refugees coming from Asia and the Middle East (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013). This is seen in the most recent data available from the 2013-2014 year (Table 2.1), with the top five countries granted refugee visas being Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Syria and Bhutan. Refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq have been granted around 40 per cent of refugee visas over the last five years (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014b).

While the actual number of refugees granted Australian residence may seem relatively small, statistically in the first decade of this century Australia has resettled more refugees in relation to the size of its population than any other country in the world (Hugo, 2011).

Table 2.1 Top five countries of birth for refugees granted humanitarian visas in 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of birth</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2754</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2364</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2565</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11 016</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2014b)

From the previous two sections of this chapter, it can be seen that humanitarian refugee migrants are increasingly from the African, Asian and Middle Eastern regions – which have significant Muslim populations. This is in contrast to the much greater numbers for the last decade from the Migration Programme, where migrants have increasingly come from India,
China, Britain, the Philippines and Pakistan (Figure 2.1) – countries which (apart from Pakistan) have predominantly non-Muslim populations.

Migrants admitted to Australia under the Migration Programme face different prospects compared to migrants within the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme – in that those individuals within the Migration Programme are immigrating into Australia by their own choice, and under the requirements of the programme must have good English proficiency, and specific types of employment qualifications and skills – representing “the skills and attributes considered to be in need in Australia … designed to select the best and brightest skilled migrants who will make the optimum economic contribution to Australia” (DIAC, 2011f). There are consequent relatively high levels of employment of people entering Australia under the Migration Programme. This is in direct contrast to the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme, with this group admitted on humanitarian grounds with no other specific criteria for entry other than being a refugee (DIAC, 2011a) – the unfortunate result is that this humanitarian refugee migrant group have come to occupy a disadvantaged position in Australian society as discussed in Section 2.3.

2.3 The Disadvantaged Position of Refugees in Australia

As refugees admitted under the Humanitarian Programme represent only a small group relative to other migrant populations, there is a relative lack of survey data available about them as compared to the Migration Programme (ABS, 2010b). However, the survey and research data reviewed here indicates their disadvantaged position in Australian society. These indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage may be considered within the areas of employment and occupation; English proficiency; and educational attainment.

2.3.1 Employment and occupational positioning of refugee migrants

A long-term research project called the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) (DIAC, 2007a, 2007b, 2009b) looked at the long-term outcomes for Australia’s migrants in employment and other areas by surveying three cohorts of arrivals in the periods 1993-1995 (LSIA 1), 1999-2000 (LSIA 2) and 2004-2005 (LSIA 3). These cohorts were interviewed at six months and eighteen months after arrival and in the case of LSIA 1 also at forty-two months after arrival. Data for humanitarian refugee migrants was included in LSIA 1 and LSIA 2, but not LSIA 3 as there is now a separate study available on humanitarian refugee outcomes where data has been collated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics based on the 2006 Census (ABS, 2010b).
Data from the LSIA 2 for the Migration and Humanitarian Programmes is presented in Figure 2-2. As can be seen, humanitarian refugees generally have wages around two-thirds less than skilled migrants; lower rates of employment relative to skilled migrants at around 2 per cent at six months and 15 per cent at 18 months after arrival (wave 1 and 2 questionnaires), and finally minimal numbers working in skilled occupations on arrival, with only a 2-3 per cent increase by 18 months later (DIAC, 2007b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median weekly income 2005</th>
<th>Employment to population ratio 2005</th>
<th>Proportion of migrants in skilled occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Figure 2.2 Comparison of income, employment and occupation of Migration and Humanitarian programmes** *(Source: LSIA 2, DIAC, 2007b)*

Hugo (2011) provided a report to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on the economic, social and civic contributions of first and second generation humanitarian entrants to Australia. This author maintains that there is a prevailing stereotype among many in the Australian mainstream population that refugees often do not enter the workforce, and are thus heavily dependent on social welfare payments. Initial viewing of the LSIA 2 data above might seem to support this, as would other trends identified within the LSIA. The labour force participation of humanitarian refugees as surveyed within the LSIA was low eighteen months after arrival (above 50 per cent), and even after three years in Australia there was still an unemployment rate of around 33 per cent. However, the LSIA is limited in that humanitarian refugees were only followed for eighteen months after their arrival in Australia.

To counter this, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010b, 2013b) and Hugo (2011) reported collated data from the 2006 and 2011 Census linked with migrant data in the Settlement Database held by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). This allows a longer-term picture to emerge for humanitarian refugees in Australia. In general, lower levels of workforce participation are evident among newly arrived adult humanitarian refugees (around 50 per cent), particularly those from Africa, Afghanistan and Iraq, and also a higher unemployment rate (around 10 per cent) than the general Australian population (5 per cent). However, it was noticeable that as their length of residency in Australia increased and into the second generation, their workforce participation rates increased and the average unemployment rate of humanitarian refugees gradually fell towards single figure percentage (8 per cent for first
generation and 6 per cent for second generation), approaching the Australian average (5 per cent). In terms of gender, it is noted that female humanitarian migrants generally had a higher unemployment rate (11.2 per cent) and lower workforce participation rate (45.2 per cent) as compared to male humanitarian migrants (9.6 and 65.8 per cent respectively) (Hugo, 2011). The present research concerns itself only with male Muslim refugees for reasons identified in Chapter One (Section 1.4). However, the higher unemployment rate and lower workforce participation rate of female humanitarian migrants do indicate a need for further research in this area to identify the reasons for these gender differences.

2.3.2 English proficiency of refugee migrants
The self-reported English proficiency in the 2011 Census among refugee migrants was less than the general migrant population. The number speaking ‘English only’ was low, but around 62 per cent of humanitarian migrants indicated they spoke English ‘well’ or ‘very well’, despite their origin from non-English backgrounds. However, around 30 per cent did not speak English well or at all, and this had a significant impact on their employment – as for this group only 16 per cent of their number were employed, as compared to around 40 per cent of those refugee migrants speaking English well (ABS, 2013b). That English proficiency has a significant effect on employment opportunity can also be seen in reference to the Skill stream of the Migration Programme – the Skill stream must have high levels of English proficiency and specific types of employment skills for entry to Australia. This is reflected in their workforce participation rate of 95 per cent with only 5 per cent unemployment (DIAC, 2010a, 2010c).

2.3.3 Educational attainment of refugee migrants
Educational attainment was also generally lower in the humanitarian refugee group as compared to the general migrant population as can be seen in Table 2.2 (ABS, 2010b). Similarly, humanitarian refugees had a much higher level of people with no post-school qualifications (70.7 per cent) as compared to the general migrant population (43.9 per cent for the Family stream and 23 per cent for the Skill stream of the Migration Programme) (Hugo, 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Humanitarian migrants (%)</th>
<th>Total migrant group (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed year 12</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed year 8 or below</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never attended school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010)
This socioeconomic disadvantage of refugee migrants is confirmed in a more recent longitudinal study titled ‘Building a new life in Australia’ (BNLA). This commenced in 2013-2014 and will run to 2018, with yearly collection of data from 2,399 recently-arrived refugee participants. The first wave of data was published in July 2015, and particularly highlights the background disadvantage that this humanitarian migrant group face within the areas of education and work experience as can be seen from Table 2.3. This data also highlights the fact that females are at relatively greater disadvantage than males (Marshall, 2015).

Table 2.3 Indicators of background disadvantage of recently-arrived humanitarian migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator of disadvantage</th>
<th>Males (%)</th>
<th>Females (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never attended school (aged 18 or older)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never undertaken paid work (aged 18 or older)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not understand English at all before arrival</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate in own language (cannot read or write)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.3.4 Influence of gender on refugee migrant disadvantage

While the research in this thesis is concerned with male Muslim refugee migrants, it is acknowledged here that in general female humanitarian migrants commence from a position of relatively greater background disadvantage in Australia as judged from the socioeconomic indicators within the 2006 and 2011 Census (ABS, 2010b, 2011; Hugo, 2011) – which are generally slightly worse than those for males in all the areas discussed above. This is also confirmed from the initial findings reported in Section 2.3.2 for the BNLA study (Marshall, 2015). As noted in Section 2.3.1, the design of the present research focuses on a male Muslim refugee cohort, but the need for further research into the causes for this relative female disadvantage is acknowledged.

2.3.5 Humanitarian refugees in other Western countries

The indicators of employment, educational, economic and social disadvantage for humanitarian migrants are not unique to the Australian context. For instance, Connor (2010) reports similar findings in the United States to those in Australia using refugee data from the first wave of the US New Immigrant Survey in 2003. He notes several factors that impact on the earnings and occupational differences of refugees, concluding – “Refugees, on average, have less English language ability, less educational experience, different forms of family support, poorer mental and physical health, and generally reside in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods than other immigrants” (Connor, 2010, p. 377). Similar findings of humanitarian refugee disadvantage are
also reported in the United Kingdom (e.g. Aspinall & Waters, 2010; Phung, 2011); and Canada (e.g. Simich, 2004; Stewart, Simich, Shiza Knox & Makwarimba, 2012). Given this general picture of humanitarian refugee migrant disadvantage, and as this thesis is concerned with male Muslim refugees, the question may now be asked as to how Australian Muslims fare in relation to these indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage. This is the focus of Section 2.4.

2.4 MUSLIMS AS A DISADVANTAGED SOCIAL GROUP IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

There is little in the way of Census data relating specifically to Muslim refugees in Australia as statistically they represent only a small group within the Australian population (ABS, 2010b). However, their social position can be appreciated as particularly disadvantaged when Census data relating to the Australian Muslim community is considered relative to the general Australian population.

2.4.1 Muslims within the Australian population

The number of Australian Muslims is slowly rising as is shown in Table 2.4, from 1.4 per cent in 2001 (ABS, 2001), to 2.2 per cent of the Australian population as judged from the latest data available in the 2011 Census (ABS, 2011). This relatively large numerical increase in the Muslim population was mainly due to the influx of Muslim migrants and refugees over this period. This made Islam the fourth largest religious grouping in Australia as compared to Christians (61.1 per cent), no religion (22.3 per cent) and Buddhism (2.5 per cent) (ABS, 2013b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Absolute number</th>
<th>Percentage of Australian population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>281,576</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>340,391</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>476,292</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The majority of Muslims in Australia come from overseas, with only 37.6 per cent born in Australia as identified from the 2011 Census data. This percentage has remained reasonably steady over the last three censuses with 36.4 per cent in 2001, and 37.9 per cent in 2006 (ABS, 2001 2006, 2011). The ethnic origins of overseas-born Australian Muslims are diverse, with the top six countries of birth from the 2011 Census being Lebanon (7.1 per cent), Pakistan (5.6 per cent), Afghanistan (5.5 per cent), Turkey (5.3 per cent), Bangladesh (5.0 per cent) and Iraq (3.3 per cent) (ABS, 2011).
2.4.2 Australian Muslims and English proficiency

Research has shown that the ability to speak the national language of one’s country of residence is crucial to full integration into its society (Hugo, 2011). As can be seen from Table 2.5 in respect to self-assessed English language proficiency, 13 per cent of Australian Muslims speak English only, whereas around 70 per cent speak English ‘very well’ or ‘well’. Only a relatively small percentage (around 16 per cent) have low English proficiency, particularly within the group of humanitarian migrants (ABS, 2011).

Table 2.5 English proficiency of Australian Muslims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-assessed English proficiency</th>
<th>Per cent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very well</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not well</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011).*

2.4.3 Australian Muslims and educational attainment

Data from the last three censuses demonstrate that the educational attainment of Australian Muslims in all categories except one is the same or higher than non-Muslim Australians. This can be seen in reference to the most recent data available from the 2011 Census as shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Educational attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification level</th>
<th>Non-Muslim (%)</th>
<th>Muslim (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate and postgraduate</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET qualification (Certificate III/IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree)</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11 and below</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011).*

In particular, significantly more Australian Muslims completed high school (24.7 per cent) and achieved university level qualifications (23.5 per cent) as compared to non-Muslims (16.6 per cent and 18.8 per cent respectively). However, within the Vocational Education and Training
(VET) sector, Australian Muslims had a significantly lower attainment level (15.2 per cent) as compared to the non-Muslim population (23.4 per cent) (ABS, 2011). Vocational qualifications are becoming increasingly necessary to gain meaningful employment in the modern workplace of Australia and other Western countries (Clifton, Thompson & Thorley, 2014). The lower VET achievement levels are thus interesting statistics when one considers the higher unemployment rates of Australian Muslims (Section 2.4.4), generally within lower status and lower paid employment (Section 2.4.5).

2.4.4 Australian Muslims and labour force participation
As can be seen from Table 2.7, Australian Muslims have a higher unemployment rate when compared to the working population of Australia as a whole. This was the case for all age groups considered in the 2011 Census. The unemployment rate of Australian Muslims has been at least double the national average over the last decade, though there has been a fall from a high of 19.1 per cent in 2001 to 12.6 per cent in 2011. It is also of note that the unemployment rate of those Muslims with lower English language proficiency was relatively higher than Muslims with greater language proficiency – 24.5 per cent for those who did not speak English well, and 36.8 per cent for those with no English skills, as compared to the 12.6 per cent rate of those with higher level English language skills (ABS, 2011).

Table 2.7 Australian unemployment rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Total population (%)</th>
<th>Australian Muslims (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.4.5 Australian Muslims and other markers of economic disadvantage
The 2011 Census found that Australian Muslims in general tend to work in low skilled, low status occupations, being under-represented in managerial and professional employment fields, and over-represented among labourers, manual workers and skilled blue-collar occupations. This translates to Muslims typically having lower personal and household income as compared to other Australians – in fact, the higher the income level being considered, the greater the gap between Muslims and other Australian households. It is also of note that many Muslims live in poverty – for example, around ten per cent of Muslim households have to manage on less than $200 per week compared to only 3.7 per cent of all Australian households. On a related theme,
the 2011 Census showed that only 44 per cent of Muslims owned their own home (13 per cent fully owned, 31 per cent mortgaged) compared to the national average of 67 per cent (32 per cent fully owned, 35 per cent mortgaged); and around 50 per cent of all Muslims rented compared to 29 per cent of other Australian households (ABS, 2011; Peucker et al., 2014).

2.5 SUMMARY
Over the last decade, refugees settling in Australia have increasingly originated from Muslim countries in the African, Asian and Middle Eastern regions. These Muslim people generally lie within a particularly disadvantaged socio-economic position when considered relative to the mainstream Australian population. This is not only due to such factors as their relative lack of English proficiency, educational attainment and work experience in Australia (ABS, 2010b, 2013b; Hugo, 2011; Marshall, 2015), but also the simple fact that they are Muslim as no other minority religious community in Australia suffers such persistent disadvantage over time (Peucker et al., 2014).

Hassan (2010) makes the salient point that the relative economic disadvantage of Australian Muslims increases with age which may predispose the Australian Muslim community to multigenerational endemic poverty, with the consequent risks of alienation and radicalisation relative to mainstream Australian society. This disadvantage is not only an Australian phenomenon, but has also been found in studies of Muslim communities in other Western countries (Hassan 2010). Given these considerations, it is of increasing importance to better understand the factors that are producing this disadvantage so that they can be better managed. Further research into the interaction of these factors is necessary (Hassan, 2010; Khoo, 2012; and Peucker et al., 2014). (There is further review of these issues in the literature review of Chapter Four.) In order to improve the disadvantaged position of Muslim refugees, the Federal Government provides English language training programmes which are the topic of Chapter Three.
CHAPTER THREE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN AUSTRALIA

3.1 OVERVIEW

As noted in the previous chapter, Australian migrants, particularly within the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme, often have low English proficiency levels and a relatively low employment rate compared to skilled migrants and other Australians. The aim of this chapter is to provide a contextual background to the two main English language training programmes offered to migrants in order to assist them to settle into Australian society and improve their chances of gaining employment in the Australian workplace. These are the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP), and what was known at the time this study commenced in late 2011 as the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP) – the latter changed its name to the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme on 1 July 2013. The AMEP caters only to newly-arrived, non-English speaking background (NESB) migrants, whereas the LLNP/SEE programme provides for both NESB clients and native English speaking clients.

Liebig (2007) notes that gaining employment has been the aim of these English language training programmes since just after World War II:

Language training is the principal pillar of Australia’s integration support and has been provided since the establishment of a pro-active immigration policy immediately after World War II. It is noteworthy that already shortly after their introduction, from 1952 onwards, language [and literacy] courses focused on English for employment (Liebig, 2007, p. 24).

Despite this, it will become apparent as this chapter progresses that gaining employment is often problematic for most NESB migrants, particularly those from preliterate backgrounds.

This chapter is divided into six sections. Section 3.1 introduces the two main English language training programmes in Australia. Section 3.2 provides background information on the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) and its objectives. Section 3.3 presents data on the outcomes of the AMEP. Section 3.4 provides background on the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP), and also its successor, the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme. Section 3.5 presents data on the outcomes of the LLNP and

---

2 Given that the LLNP and its successor, the SEE programme, are essentially the same, they will be referred to collectively as the LLN/SEE programme unless specific reference is being made to one or the other of these programmes.
3.2 **The Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP)**

The Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) has been funded by the Australian Federal Government since 1948. It is presently administered by the Department of Education and Training (DET) (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a). The current AMEP is described on the DET website as providing up to 510 hours of English training to eligible migrants and humanitarian refugees, the purpose being “to help them learn foundation English language and settlement skills to enable them to participate socially and economically in Australian society” (DET, 2015a).

The AMEP itself is underpinned by two items of federal legislation – the *Immigration (Education) Act 1971* and the *Immigration (Education) Regulations 1992* (Department of Industry, 2013b). Under these Acts, clients eligible for the AMEP are legally entitled for up to 510 hours of English teaching or the time it takes to achieve ‘functional English’, whichever comes first (DIAC, 2009d). For the purposes of the AMEP, functional English is defined in terms of the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) scale. This assesses English proficiency on a 12 level scale from 0 to 5, the least and highest English proficiency levels corresponding to ‘Zero English’ and ‘Native like’ proficiency respectively. ISLPR level 2 is described as having ‘basic social proficiency’ which corresponds to the functional English described in the AMEP. Functional English assumes an English language proficiency of ISLPR level 2 in all four macroskills of speaking, listening, reading and writing (AMES [Adult Multicultural Education Services], 2011).

All those who enrol in the AMEP are assessed in the four macroskills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in English using the ISLPR. Any client with an ISLPR level of less than 2 in any of the four macroskills is eligible for entry to the AMEP (AMES, 2011). Clients may self-refer to the AMEP, or be referred by their settlement support or other service providers. Attendance at the AMEP is voluntary for those migrants not seeking employment benefits from Centrelink. Otherwise clients may have mandatory AMEP attendance requirements to fulfil their Centrelink obligations in order to receive welfare payments (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a).

The exact objective of the AMEP may differ depending on the perspective of the group concerned. For example, when providing an extra $49.2 million for the AMEP in the 2008-2009
federal budget, there was the explicit statement on the Australian government website that this extra funding was “to help migrants learn English and find employment as soon as possible” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008, this author’s emphasis). In reality, while assisting migrants to learn English and find employment may be aims of the AMEP, its more immediate primary aim is to assist migrants to settle into Australia (DIAC, 2009a).

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) have noted that in the past there has been the expectation that the AMEP will provide clients with functional English within the 510 hours of English training offered within the AMEP. However, it is now generally accepted that this is an unrealistic expectation, particularly as around 60 per cent of AMEP clients begin the programme with few English skills, and many come from a background of trauma and war, and/or interrupted education (DIAC, 2009b). This led to the adoption of a new AMEP business model in 2011, its aim being to better align the AMEP with the needs of its refugee clients. There is also a restatement within this new business model of the AMEP’s main objective which is to “provide settlement focused English language tuition and related services to newly arrived migrants and Humanitarian Entrants who have less than Functional English” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a, p. 6). The ‘related services’ of the AMEP include counselling, ‘Individual Pathway Guides’ that assist clients to identify further options in training and employment after the AMEP, extra training hours for refugees with special needs within the Special Preparatory Programme (SPP), and an employment-focused programme in the form of the Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a).

The Special Preparatory Programme (SPP), which must be commenced before starting the 510 AMEP hours, offers extra hours of tuition to some humanitarian refugees. This includes up to 400 hours of extra English training for those under 25 with low levels of education and up to 100 hours for those aged 25 or over who were subject to torture and trauma (DIAC, 2009d). Around 95 per cent of humanitarian refugees attended the SPP in 2013-2014 with the majority of those granted an extra 100 hours using all these hours, but only 60 per cent of those granted 400 hours using their full entitlement (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a).

The new AMEP business model in 2011 also saw the introduction of a programme called the Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET). This acknowledged the need for the AMEP to offer training in skills required in the Australian workplace, particularly as employment in Australia is the goal of most AMEP clients and over 95 per cent of clients interviewed gave finding work as one of their main priorities in longitudinal studies of the AMEP over 2008 to 2010 (AMES, 2011) and over 2011 to 2014 (Yates et al., 2015).
The SLPET offers an additional 200 hours of tuition within the AMEP that includes up to 80 hours of work experience. However, the SLPET is of value only to those migrants who have relatively high levels of both oral and literate English as they must be at or close to achieving functional English (ISLPR level 2 in all four macroskills) to participate in the SLPET. Most AMEP clients never reach this English proficiency level, and thus the SLPET was accessed by only 9 per cent of the total AMEP cohort in 2012-2013 (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a), and around 6 per cent in the 2013-2014 year (Department of Industry, 2013a). On completion of their AMEP entitlements, and where a NESB client wishes to improve their English language proficiency further – or where they must do so because of Centrelink obligations – their only alternative is attendance at the LLN/SEE programme.

3.3 OUTCOMES OF THE ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAMME (AMEP)

Reporting of the AMEP outcomes for the last few years has generally been only a cursory reference to the different levels of AMEP certificate outcomes within the Annual Reports of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (previously the Department of Immigration and Citizenship until a name change in 2013) (DIAC, 2011b, 2012, 2013). That Department or its predecessors administered the AMEP from 1948 until September 2013 when control of the AMEP passed first to the Department of Industry, and most recently in late 2014 to the Department of Education and Training (DET). However, an independent review of the AMEP was commissioned by the Australian Government in 2014 and performed by ACIL Allen Consulting. This report was released in May 2015 and has drawn much disparate AMEP data together, including in reference to the various outcomes of the AMEP over the decade from 2004 to 2014. The outcomes considered here are in terms of three criteria: participation levels; gains in English proficiency; and outcomes in employment and further training (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a).

3.3.1 AMEP: Participation

Annual numbers in the AMEP have slowly risen from around 40,000 participants in 2004-05 to around 63,000 in 2013-14, with students from 180 countries of origin (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a). The budget required to run the AMEP in 2013-14 was around $185.4 million (Department of Industry, 2014a). There are forward estimates that the numbers of participants in the AMEP will continue to be around 60,000 per annum over the next five years, but with projected funding costs continuing to increase, reaching around $300 million by 2018-19 (DET, 2015c).
Students can take up to five years to complete their 510 AMEP hours. However, most clients (around 76 per cent) participate in the AMEP for only one to two years – these students have an average completion rate of around 330 hours, with only about 30 per cent completing their full entitlement of 510 AMEP hours. The reasons cited by clients for not completing their full entitlement of hours included the AMEP (not) meeting their language goals, difficulty in attending due to health problems or family issues, gaining employment, or transitioning to the LLN/SEE programme (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a).

3.3.2 AMEP: Gains in English proficiency
AMEP outcomes may also be considered in terms of improvements in English language proficiency. However, the desired exit level of the AMEP of functional English is a benchmark generally only achieved by around 7 per cent of the total AMEP cohort (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a). Lesser progress is made by other AMEP clients as considered in terms of certificated and (presumed) ISLPR outcomes within the AMEP. The nationally recognised and mandatory curriculum for use in the AMEP is a suite of certificates called the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). Four CSWE certificates are available within the AMEP: Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English followed by CSWE certificates I, II and III (TELLS [TAFE Queensland English Language and Literacy Services], 2015).

Clients referred to the AMEP have an ISLPR entry assessment which allows placement into a given CSWE class level. Following this initial ISLPR placement, there are generally no further ISLPR assessments during or at the end of a course of AMEP study. Instead, learner progress is tracked as judged from achievement of CSWE learning outcomes. There are two or three specific learning outcomes within each core and elective module of a given CSWE certificate. Each CSWE certificate level corresponds approximately to an ISLPR and ACSF level (TELLS, 2015). The most recent alignment of the ISLPR and CSWE assessment frameworks is presented in Table 3.1, together with their alignment against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) which is used in the LLN/SEE programme and considered further in Section 3.4.

Table 3.1 Alignment of the assessment frameworks used by the AMEP and LLN/SEE programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLPR</th>
<th>CSWE</th>
<th>ACSF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
<td>Preliminary CSWE</td>
<td>Pre-Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CSWE 1</td>
<td>ACSF1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>CSWE 2</td>
<td>ACSF 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>CSWE 3</td>
<td>ACSF 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The independent review of the AMEP conducted by ACIL Allen Consulting reports that around 34 per cent of all AMEP clients completed the pre-CSWE course or one of the CSWE certificates over 2004 to 2012. While some 66 per cent of the AMEP cohort did not achieve a full certificate, many clients within this group still completed learning outcomes or whole modules of various CSWE levels. For example, in 2013-14, an average of 5.6 learning outcomes and 2.3 modules were gained by clients who did not complete a full CSWE certificate which indicates lesser but at least some improvement in English language proficiency (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a).

The AMEP review report also attempts to collate client outcomes in terms of ISLPR gains against hours attending the AMEP:

This information conflicts with my own experience and also that reported by the TAFE Queensland English Language and Literacy Services (TELLS) which is that ISLPR assessments are generally only conducted on entry to the AMEP, language assessment thereafter being entirely based on CSWE outcomes (TELLS, 2015). ISLPR gains are thus assumed, based on the corresponding alignment level with the CSWE (Table 3.1).

Allowing for these assumed ISLPR levels, the AMEP review reports that in general the greater the AMEP hours attended, the greater the gain in ISLPR level. The gains are, however, modest. For example, humanitarian refugees may improve by up to 0.6 of an ISLPR level for speaking and listening, and up to 0.4 of an ISLPR level for reading and writing as they approach 500 hours of attendance. The AMEP review also notes that on average only 7 per cent of clients reach the functional English level of ISLPR 2 in all macroskills. Additionally, around 28 per cent of clients leave the AMEP with no demonstrable gains in English skills at all. The authors conclude that for many clients 510 hours is inadequate to produce significant gains in their English proficiency. This is offset to some degree by the fact that most clients report general satisfaction with the AMEP, and also valuable English language and settlement training gains from the programme. This was found in the review report (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a) and also in a longitudinal three-year study of the AMEP over 2011 to 2014 (Yates et al., 2015).
3.3.3 AMEP: Outcomes in employment and further training

The AMEP review concedes that the AMEP makes some contribution to English language and settlement outcomes for its clients, but “in the short term the AMEP likely only contributes to direct employment [and training] outcomes for some, normally higher level clients” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a, p. 68). This is particularly true in respect to the AMEP’s Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) programme.

In 2013-14, over 3,800 AMEP students participated in SLPET courses across Australia. They undertook LLN-supported vocational training courses that included both classroom learning and work experience placements in range of industries, including aged care, child care, hospitality, housekeeping, retail, administration, information technology and horticulture (Department of Industry, 2014a). A major provider of the AMEP reported reasonable success with the SLPET in 2013: their total of 853 participants demonstrated a 92 per cent retention rate and 115 persons (13.5 per cent) within that cohort gained employment, with a further 225 students (26.4 per cent) undertaking further study (AMES, 2014). This demonstrates the value of linking (‘contextualising’) English language training with vocational training (Navitas English, 2011). However, as noted earlier, only a relatively small proportion of AMEP clients (9 per cent in 2012-13 and 6 per cent in 2013-14) participated in the SLPET due to its entry requirement for (near) functional English proficiency levels (Department of Industry, 2014a).

The unfortunate reality of the AMEP is that even if the desired functional English level of ISLPR 2 is achieved in all four language macroskills, this is often inadequate to gain meaningful employment or to articulate with vocational training or university courses (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a). For example, in Queensland most higher level vocational training certificates in TAFE require an entry score of at least ISLPR 2+ in all macroskills (equivalent to ACSF 3 – see Table 3.1) (Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, 2012). This reality is aggravated by the fact that the LLN requirements for various vocational training packages have been raised in the last few years. For example, the Australian Core Skills Framework document of 2008 states that the English skill levels required to gain a Certificate III in Aged Care are set at ACSF level 3 for reading, writing and oral communication, and level 2 for numeracy (ACSF, 2008). Achieving these English language proficiency levels is challenging for many NESB migrants, particularly those who are illiterate in their first language. For most NESB clients, the reality is that they must therefore consider trying to improve their English proficiency further within the LLN/SEE programme. However, the actual numbers of AMEP clients transitioning to the
3.4 THE LANGUAGE LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRAMME (LLNP) AND THE SKILLS FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (SEE) PROGRAMME

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP) is the other major English language training programme available to refugees and other migrants. This has operated since January 2002, though the name of the programme was changed to the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme on 1 July 2013, coinciding with the commencement of a new federal contract (Department of Industry, 2013b). This change in name was the result of market research which found that there was a social stigma among the unemployed about attending the ‘Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme’ due to this programme starting from a presumed deficit model of their LLN skills. The new name is thought to better respect the needs of the unemployed and the objectives of the programme (Department of Industry, 2013c). Like the AMEP, the LLN/SEE programme is currently administered by the Department of Education and Training (DET), and their website states the programme objective is to provide “language, literacy and numeracy training to eligible job seekers, with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force” (DET, 2015b).

There are two specific streams within the LLN/SEE programme: language clients from a non-English speaking background (NESB) and literacy clients from an English speaking background (Department of Industry, 2013c). Thus, following the AMEP, unemployed refugees may be referred to LLN/SEE providers by Centrelink (the Australian government’s welfare agency) or the client’s Job Service Agency. The LLN/SEE providers arrange a ‘pre-training assessment’ (PTA) where the client’s LLN skill levels are assessed against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), the assessment tool used by the LLN/SEE programme (DEEWR, 2010a; Department of Industry, 2013c). The latest version of the ACSF has six proficiency levels (Pre Level, then levels 1 to 5) for its five macroskills: learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy (ACSF, 2012).

In my experience, the majority of NESB refugee clients entering the LLN/SEE programme are well below ACSF level 2 in most macroskills which equates to levels below ISLPR 1+, thus below the functional English level of ISLPR 2 (see Table 3.1). This is of potential consequence because, unlike the AMEP where eligible migrants are legally guaranteed training, there is no guarantee of placement within the LLN/SEE programme. Indeed, if a NESB migrant (or any other client) is found to have low level English proficiency at their pre-training assessment
PTA), the LLN/SEE provider then has to make a decision as to whether the client has the ‘capacity to benefit’ from the LLN/SEE programme (DEEWR, 2010a; Department of Industry, 2013c).

The LLN/SEE programme is ‘capped’, meaning that it has a limited number of funded places for clients assessed by providers as having capacity to benefit from training. While it is entirely the provider’s decision whether or not to accept a given client, the provider always has to remember the necessity to meet their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The attainment KPI is of particular relevance to refugee migrants as it concerns progress in LLN skills. Any client accepted into the LLN/SEE programme is expected to make contractually-defined progress against the LLN indicators within the ACSF. By the end of each 100-hour block of training – within the potential 800 hours available in the LLN/SEE programme – each client is expected to have progressed in at least one ACSF macroskill indicator as determined by formative and/or summative classroom assessment. If they have met this requirement, they are allowed to progress to the next 100-hour training block. However, if the client has failed to adequately progress, they may be deemed as having no capacity to benefit from further training and thus be excluded from the programme (Department of Industry, 2013c).

The attainment KPI demands that at least 80 per cent of LLN/SEE students meet this training target of progress in at least one ACSF LLN indicator per 100 hours (Department of Industry, 2013c). There is thus a 20 per cent window to allow for clients who progress more slowly than the demanded rate. This is often the case for NESB students, particularly those illiterate in their first language, who frequently struggle to progress in the training hours available. Unfortunately, LLN/SEE providers are under constant pressure to meet and exceed their KPIs. For example, the LLN/SEE programme guidelines state that: “failure to achieve improvements will be reflected in the Attainment KPI. Ongoing poor performance in the Attainment KPI will result in performance discussion” (DIICCSRTE, 2013b, p. 7) – such ‘performance discussion’ can jeopardise a provider’s ongoing LLN/SEE contract.

LLN/SEE programme providers must therefore constantly monitor student achievement to ensure the attainment KPI is met. This has implications for NESB clients, as one way of managing this KPI is to refuse entry to clients with low proficiency in English language and literacy as demonstrated at their pre-training assessment (PTA), and/or to exclude such clients

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3 This requirement for progress in one ACSF indicator per 100 hours of training was a change brought into the current SEE programme from 1 July 2013 (Department of Industry 2013c). In its predecessor programme, the LLNP, the demand was two ACSF indicators per 200 hours of training (DEEWR, 2010a).
from the LLN/SEE programme if they fail to reach the mandated ACSF benchmark achievements in the time available.

3.5 **OUTCOMES OF THE LLN AND SEE PROGRAMMES**

Prior to March 2016, the only formal report concerning the outcomes of the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP) or its successor, the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme, was performed for the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST). This was for the period from 1 January 2002 to 30 June 2004, and was in response to a request from the Federal Expenditure Review Committee (DEST, 2005)

From 2005 to 2016, there was little publically-available data on the overall outcomes of the LLN/SEE programme. The only officially-released results for the LLNP and SEE programmes before 2016 were piecemeal statistics provided in various Federal Government publications which are referred to in the discussion below. However, a report titled ‘SEE programme evaluation’ conducted by ACIL Allen Consulting (2015b) was completed in May 2015, but not publically released until March 2016. This document provides data on the outcomes of the LLN/SEE programme in terms of participation levels; gains in LLN skills; and outcomes in employment and further training. These areas are considered in the following discussion.

3.5.1 **LLN/SEE programme: Participation**

From 1 January 2002 to 30 June 2004, there were 48,554 clients who commenced the LLNP, of which 59 per cent were from a non-English speaking background. There are no publically available figures for the LLNP from 2005 to 2009. However, in respect to the 2010-2013 Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme, numbers attending were reported as 20,461 in 2010-11, rising to 23,449 by 2012-13 (Department of Industry, 2013a)

Student commencements in the LLNP’s successor programme from July 2013, the SEE programme, rose again in 2013-14 to 25,821 participants (Department of Industry, 2014a) of which 68 per cent were from NESB background and not born in Australia, and of which around one third were male and two-thirds female (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b). This represents a nine per cent increase from the NESB client levels in 2004 at 59 per cent, representing the increasing need for English language training in this NESB client group. Additionally, many of these more recent NESB clients have significantly low levels of English language skills as evidenced by the fact that, “more than half of SEE programme clients require an interpreter at some point in the programme” (ACIL Allen Consulting 2015b, p. 35).
To deal with these rising numbers, the budget allocation to the LLNP in 2012-2013 was $71.4 million (DEEWR, 2010b), rising to $135.1 million in 2013-14 (Department of Industry, 2015). There were originally forward estimates for the SEE programme that allowed for a small incremental increase in student numbers annually to around 30,000 by 2018-19, with projected funding costs reaching an estimated $159.6 million (DET, 2015b). However, in the ‘Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2015-16’ (MYEFO), there were budgetary reductions made to the SEE programme:

The Government will achieve savings of $122.9 million over four years from 2015-16 by reducing the number of training places available under the Skills for Education and Employment Programme. Funding of $472.1 million over four years will continue to be provided to assist eligible job seekers. The savings from this measure will be redirected by the Government to repair the Budget and fund policy priorities (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, p. 163).

This means that in real terms the budget for the SEE programme will be capped at around $118 million per annum over the next four years, with a consequent reduction in the number of clients able to attend the SEE programme over these years. There is no reference in the MYEFO to any reduction in funding for the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP), with that programme’s costs expected to rise to $300 million by 2018-19 to cater for the increasing number of NESB clients attending the AMEP (DET, 2015c) (see Section 3.3.1).

As already noted, 68 per cent of clients commencing in the SEE programme are from a NESB background. In respect to age profiles, clients in younger age groups are predominantly from an English-speaking background, but NESB clients make up over 70 per cent of clients after age 30, rising to 90 per cent of clients in the 60+ age group (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b).

It is an interesting statistic that of the estimated 33 per cent of registered job seekers identified as having LLN needs, only about 17 per cent are referred to the LLN/SEE programme, and out of those referred, just over half (57 per cent) actually commence the LLN/SEE programme. In total, only about ten per cent of eligible job seekers are referred to and commence the programme, and around 30 per cent of clients have been referred more than once (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b).

Around 59 per cent of LLN/SEE clients do not complete their available programme hours. It has been found that language clients were generally more likely to withdraw from the LLN/SEE programme for personal or health reasons, as compared to literacy clients who were more likely to be withdrawn from the programme due to failure to attend their LLN/SEE classes. As the
SEE evaluation report notes, NESB clients “are recognised by providers as having above average levels of commitment to the programme” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 46). This is evidenced when the average hours completed by each SEE cohort is identified – over half of the literacy stream clients complete less than 200 hours, with only a quarter undertaking more than 300 hours. This compares to NESB clients in the language stream that “are more likely to complete more hours and make up 91 per cent of the clients undertaking more than 700 hours” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 58). NESB clients, in fact, have an overall average attendance of 427 hours compared to 217 hours for most clients within the literacy stream.

The SEE evaluation report also notes that “5 per cent [of SEE clients] complete more 800 hours, indicating they are repeat participants that have re-entered the SEE programme after completing a previous allocation of 800 hours” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 59). This latter comment informs this thesis in that several of the male Muslim refugee participants in this research have attended their full entitlement of 800 hours on the LLN/SEE programme on multiple occasions, achieving only basic skills in oral communication and making insignificant progress in acquiring English literacy. The reasons for this are discussed in Chapter Four, and the consequences for the participants are further discussed in the analysis Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine of this thesis.

3.5.2 LLN/SEE programme: Gains in language, literacy and numeracy skills

In the LLNP review report of 2005, outcomes were reported from 1 January 2002 to 30 December 2003 for 41,892 clients (reflecting the fact that the remaining clients referred in 2004 were still in training). Two KPIs reflected expected performance outcomes as shown in Table 3.2. Clients entering the LLNP in 2005 were placed into one of three streams depending on their language background and initial LLN assessment levels against the NRS (the National Reporting System, the predecessor of the ACSF). A ‘successful outcome’ for KPI 1 was defined in terms of an improvement in a macroskill competence indicator within the NRS, progression to an accredited training course, or employment (DEST, 2005).

As can be seen from Table 3.2, KPI 1 and 2 were exceeded for the Basic English stream (containing only NESB clients), and also the Advanced English stream (containing both higher level NESB and English speaking clients). However, for the Literacy and Numeracy stream (containing both medium level NESB and English speaking clients), KPIs were below expected levels (DEST, 2005).
Table 3.2 Outcomes of LLNP against key performance indicators to 30/12/2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPI Target</th>
<th>Achieved overall (%)</th>
<th>Basic English stream (%)</th>
<th>Literacy &amp; Numeracy stream (%)</th>
<th>Advanced English stream (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1: Percentage of training commencements resulting in successful outcomes</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 2: Percentage of training commencements resulting in NRS skill increases</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DEST (2005)

Levels of client satisfaction with the LLNP to 2005 were reported as high across all streams: at 75 per cent, 80 per cent and 90 per cent for Basic English, LLN and Advanced English streams respectively. The report also noted that the high numbers of NESB clients commencing in the Basic English stream (i.e. those with low level English proficiency) increased to the point where NESB referrals to the stream had to be stopped in the last quarter of 2003 in order to keep the LLNP within its defined budget limits (DEST, 2005). This illustrates the demand and need for English language training among NESB clients with low English proficiency levels.

Prior to the SEE evaluation report published in March 2016, the only outcomes that could be found for the LLNP from 2005 to 2013 came from a federal discussion paper titled ‘Creating a more flexible LLNP in 2013-16’ (DIISRTE, 2012). This paper provided data in respect to the LLNP attainment KPI which at the time was that 80 per cent of clients must achieve at least two ACSF macroskill indicators per 200 hours of training. The discussion paper reported that:

In 2010-11, LLNP providers nationally achieved 94 per cent against this [attainment] KPI. The year to date figure for 2011-12 (as at April 2012) for the Attainment KPI was 96 per cent (DIISRTE, 2012, p. 24).

While the figures above for the attainment KPI would appear to indicate the success of the LLNP in achieving its goals of improving the LLN skills of its participants, this was not the view of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA). They provided a highly critical response to the LLNP discussion paper, noting that the LLNP was “especially unfair to learners starting from a very low level or pre-literate background, or people whose traumatic experiences are impeding their learning” (ACTA, 2012, p. 22). This is in respect to the difficulties faced by such clients in meeting the attainment demands of the LLNP in the hours available, and the constant threat of exclusion from the LLNP on the grounds of no capacity to benefit.
ACTA, in fact, questioned the credibility of the 94-96 per cent gains reported for the attainment KPI in the LLNP discussion paper. They suggested that this high rate of achievement may be more related to the unwillingness of the LLNP training providers to report adverse outcomes for their students, with the result that teachers ‘stretch the truth’ in respect to their reporting of LLN/SEE programme outcomes (ACTA, 2012). Such behaviour was also reported by Webb (2006) in the USA and neatly summarised as “teaching to the test … [and] producing acceptable scores at the expense of student learning” (p. 209), this being done in order to satisfy the demands of accountability.

As of March 2016 with the release of the SEE evaluation report, data for the outcomes of the LLN/SEE programme is now available over the four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14. A significant item of note in these four years is that language stream clients (i.e. NESB) had the lowest average entry scores of all client groups attending the LLN/SEE programme. A significant proportion of this NESB group had one or all of their LLN skills assessed as ‘pre-level’, that is below the lowest proficiency band (Level 1) of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). There are a total of eleven performance indicators within the five macroskills of the ACSF (Learning, Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Numeracy) and the proportion of NESB clients assessed as pre-level in all eleven of these performance indicators was around 25 per cent in 2013-14, an increase from around 15 per cent in 2010-11. This compares with an average of only three per cent of clients within the literacy Stream (i.e. English speaking background) assessed as pre-level in all ACSF performance indicators (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b). This indicates the rising need for English language and literacy training among this group of NESB refugee migrants with very low LLN levels.

The programme evaluation report also found that there was “a clear correlation between the hours clients spend in the SEE programme and the average improvement they achieve in the five ACSF core areas” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 60). This is a similar finding to that reported for clients attending the AMEP (see Section 3.3.2). Statistics are provided in the evaluation report for gains in ACSF level improvements for clients who have completed at least 500 hours, with the comment that: “The 500 hours cut off is used as it is a reasonable time in which to expect to see LLN outcomes associated with the programme” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 61): this is an interesting statement given that the SEE programme contract demands progress in at least one ACSF performance indicator per 100 hours of training (Department of Industry, 2013c). In respect to clients with low LLN skill levels, the report notes that:
The proportion of clients [at] pre-level 1 or level 1 on the 11 ACSF indicators at entry into the SEE programme is around 70 per cent. After more than 500 hours of training this share has fallen to 40 per cent (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 63).

If oral communication is factored out of the statistics – given that literacy clients have native speaking skills, and many language (NESB) clients also have oral communication skills in English at a higher level than their literacy skills – then, on average, literacy clients with pre-level in all English literacy skills fall (i.e. improve) from an average of around 55 per cent at entry to around 20 per cent after 500 hours of training. In contrast, language clients with pre-level in all English literacy skills fall from an average of around 79 per cent to 46 per cent. It should be noted that these LLN skills gains are, however, only modest – with only “an increase in the proportion at [ACSF] level 1 and level 2” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 62).

Unfortunately, based on the above statistics, there remains a significant proportion of LLN/SEE clients that make little improvement in their LLN skills even after 500 hours of training – around 20 per cent of literacy clients and 46 per cent of language clients. In respect to the demographic of interest to this research, NESB clients with low levels of education in their own language are highly likely to be within the latter group who fail to achieve significant improvement in their LLN skills, even after 800 hours of training. This may be because “the policy design underpinning the SEE programme does not intend it to cater for clients with very low LLN skills” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. xi).

3.5.3 LLN/SEE programme: Outcomes in employment and further training

The LLNP review report in 2005 found from a post-programme survey that there were successful outcomes in terms of employment or further training in approximately 50 per cent in Basic English, 46 per cent for Literacy and Numeracy, and 61 per cent for the Advanced English streams (DEST, 2005). Employment success, as can be seen from Table 3.3, appears related to English proficiency, with the lowest employment levels being among the Basic English (17.9 per cent) and LN streams (24.6 per cent), and the highest in the Advanced English stream (32 per cent).

Articulation with further courses of study was highest among those in the Basic English stream (31.9 per cent). Given that this stream contained exclusively NESB clients with low level English proficiency, this is likely to reflect their goal of finding meaningful employment which generally requires at least functional English levels (ISLPR level 2 in all macroskills). However, there is no statement as to the nature of this further study and whether it included return to the
LLNP for a further round of LLNP training (as is often the case given the generally low English proficiency of this stream).

Table 3.3 Employment and education outcomes three months after exit from LLNP (to June 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Basic English (%)</th>
<th>Literacy &amp; numeracy stream (%)</th>
<th>Advanced English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further study</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful LLNP Outcomes</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DEST (2005)*

In respect to the LLNP from 2005 to 2011, the LLNP discussion paper released in 2012 reported that:

Another measure of the results achieved is demonstrated in the 2009 Post Programme Monitoring Survey which found that 45 per cent of clients surveyed indicated that after completing LLNP they were either in employment or undertaking further education. Indicative figures for 2011 are that over 60 per cent of participants are now going on to employment or further education (DIISRTE, 2012, p. 24).

This LLNP discussion paper also noted that over 70 per cent of clients commencing in the LLNP were from NESB backgrounds, but no data was provided separating out the figures for the relative achievements of the NESB and English speaking cohorts in respect to the attainment KPI, or their relative success in going on to employment or further training (DIISRTE, 2012). There are no other publically available results for the LLNP from 2005 to 2010.

The curriculum to be used by the LLN/SEE programme is not mandated as it is in the AMEP; the choice of curriculum is instead left to individual LLN/SEE programme providers, though with the stipulation in the guidelines that training “must deliver LLN skills from accredited [LLN] curricula and/or LLN skills associated with vocational competencies from [VET] training packages (DEEWR, 2010a, p. 144). This continues to be the requirement within the SEE programme since the transition from the LLNP in July 2013 (DIICCSRTE, 2013b).

While there is no contractual requirement that LLNP clients complete any actual qualification, LLN/SEE providers are encouraged where possible to incorporate vocational qualifications into their training programmes while improving their clients’ LLN skills. Such training must also be contextualised to meet the needs (skill requirements) of local business and industry, and also the LLN needs of their students (DEEWR, 2010a; DIICCSRTE, 2013a). However, as noted earlier in Section 3.3.3, the expected LLN requirements of VET qualifications have been raised in
recent years, which makes it even more difficult for LLN/SEE clients to gain a vocational qualification, particularly those from backgrounds of low and interrupted education.

Further data on the outcomes of the LLN/SEE programme from 2010-11 to 2013-15 became available with the release of the SEE programme evaluation report in March 2016. Figure 3.1 identifies LLN/SEE programme completions over this period, where ‘programme completion’ is defined in terms of a client having completed all their available 800 hours, or having exited the programme due to finding employment or going into further education. In terms of this definition, 41 per cent of all LLN/SEE clients completed the programme: 18 per cent completed 800 hours, 12 per cent progressed to employment, and 11 per cent progressed to further training (‘All cohorts’ column in Figure 3.1).

In respect to the two cohorts attending the LLN/SEE programme, the language and literacy streams (i.e. NESB and English speaking background client cohorts respectively), it can be seen from Figure 3.1 that significantly more language clients completed 800 hours as compared to literacy clients (23 per cent versus 13 per cent respectively), only 13 per cent of language clients progressed to employment versus 18 per cent in the literacy stream, and that only 11 per cent of language clients went onto further training compared to 21 per cent of literacy clients. These statistics indicate the relatively greater difficulties NESB clients face in their search for employment and further training compared to native English speaking people.

The nature of the employment gained and the further training undertaken is not specified in the LLN/SEE programme evaluation report as this data is not required to be collected by programme providers. This, in fact, is raised in the evaluation report as a significant failing in the LLN/SEE programme monitoring, as the KPIs do not monitor outcomes in terms of employment and further training, and there is no longitudinal data collection once clients exit the programme. The previous Post Programme Monitoring Survey of the LLNP conducted in 2005 and 2009 is no longer being undertaken, thus the longer term outcomes of the LLN/SEE programme are not being tracked against its stated objectives (employment or further training) (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b).

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2009 (see Section 3.5.3) is no longer being undertaken, thus the longer term outcomes of the LLN/SEE programme are not being tracked against its stated objectives (employment or further training) (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b).

In relation to this lack of Post Programme Monitoring, there is one section in the SEE evaluation document that reports the desired outcomes of the student focus groups from attending the LLN/SEE programme. These mainly relate to their objective of finding full-time employment or articulating with further vocational training after completing the SEE programme. Some clients also expressed a wish to gain more generic workplace skills such as in communication and computer use, or just improving their ability to participate in the community. However, this is no indication of which cohort (language or literacy) expressed these opinions. There is also no reported data in respect to client opinions about, or satisfaction with, the LLN/SEE programme following completion. In fact, one of the specific recommendations of the SEE evaluation report is “reintroducing the Post Programme Monitoring (PPM) survey of participants” (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b, p. 76) which will collect such data. The reasons for ceasing this Post Programme survey of participants are unknown (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b).

It is of note that LLN/SEE clients can undertake up to 12 weeks of work experience within their 800 hours of programme training. However, over the four years of 2010-11 to 2013-14, work experience was undertaken by only four per cent of LLN/SEE clients in both the language and literacy streams. The hours of work experience have also been relatively low at around an average 36 hours for all cohorts. While work experience is regarded as a necessary introduction...
to the Australian workplace, particularly for NESB clients, it is not a popular option for LLN/SEE providers as it is resource intensive and thus expensive relative to LLN classroom training (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015b).

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a background to the two major English language training programmes currently available to NESB migrants arriving in Australia. While the AMEP is legally available to all eligible refugee migrants with low level English proficiency, most exit with less than functional English. If they are to gain sufficient English proficiency for meaningful employment, such clients must transition to the LLN/SEE programme. However, entry to this programme depends on a capacity to benefit, a mandate enforced by an attainment KPI per 100 hours of training. The LLN/SEE programme also conflates English language training with literacy training. These factors make it difficult for any refugee migrant to gain higher level English proficiency in all macroskills, but particularly those from a preliterate culture and/or a background of pre-migration trauma.

The Special Preparatory Programme in the AMEP (Section 3.2) is the only direct acknowledgement within the AMEP or the LLN/SEE programme of the fact that humanitarian refugees with a background of pre-migration trauma and/or low level literacy in their own language require a greater number of hours of tuition to gain even a basic oral proficiency in English. It may also be noted here that neither the standard 510 hours offered by the AMEP, nor the 800 hours within the LLN/SEE programme, appear to be formulated around any evidence-based criteria of additional language learning. This will become apparent from the literature reviewed in Chapter Four.

Finally, the research question in this thesis concerns the perspective of male Muslim refugee migrants about the effectiveness of their English language training programmes in assisting them in settlement and finding employment. At this stage, relatively little is known about how participants make sense of and value these English training programmes, or the more specific goal of supporting their transition into employment or training. This thesis thus contributes knowledge to research in this area, at least for male Muslim refugee migrants, a group that is considerably disadvantaged relative to the mainstream Australian population as identified in Chapter Two.
CHAPTER FOUR
INFLUENCES ON THE LEARNING OF AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

4.1 OVERVIEW

The research question in this thesis concerns the perspectives of male Muslim refugees (MMRs) on the effectiveness of their English language training programmes (ELTPs) in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia. The aim of these ELTPs is to provide their NESB participants with enough English proficiency to gain employment and integrate into Australian society. Given this aim, the literature reviewed in this chapter takes as its focus those aspects of second language (L2) learning which are of particular reference to the male Muslim refugee participants in this research, and which are potentially amenable to change towards improving the L2 learning process and/or informing the ELTPs which they attend. The relevance of particular research to this thesis is made explicit at the end of each section, and research gaps are identified to which the present research contributes knowledge.

Section 4.1 provides the background to this chapter. The remainder of the chapter is presented in four main sections. Section 4.2 discusses social and cognitive perspectives on Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and identifies the perspective relevant to the present research. Section 4.3 presents research on factors concerned with motivation and investment in second language learning, and links these to Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice which provides the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis (considered in Chapter Five). Section 4.4 considers factors influencing second language learning which are relevant to the generally low-educated male Muslim refugee participants in this research and the English language training programmes which they attend. These include discussion of the rate of second language acquisition; the acquisition of conversational fluency compared to academic language proficiency; additional language learning in low-educated adults; the influence of first language (L1) literacy on proficiency in an additional language; the time required for learning of an additional language in the adult; the principal factors influencing L2 learning in the low-educated adult; and the impact of pre and post-migrational stress on language learning. Section 4.5 adopts a broad focus in discussing those sociocultural influences that have the capacity to impact on the L2 learning and employment opportunities of the MMR participants in the present research. These include discrimination against Muslims and others within the mainstream Australian community, sociocultural factors influencing the employment outcomes of migrants including English proficiency, and aspects of human and social capital expected in the Australian workplace. The final Section 4.6 draws together the main themes in this chapter, and identifies contributions of this present study to the research gaps identified.
4.2 **SOCIAL VERSUS COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA)**

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an exhaustive review of the literature on additional language learning or Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories. The intention is to present a broad overview of current perspectives and then identify the viewpoint taken by this research. Firth and Wagner (1997) present an influential commentary on the different schools of thought in respect to Second Language Acquisition (SLA). They note that there are two possible orientations towards SLA: individual and cognitive versus social and contextual. These authors consider that, at least in 1997, cognitive perspectives on SLA were dominant in the field. In their view:

> This has resulted in a skewed perspective on discourse and communication, which conceives of the foreign language speaker as a deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 competence, striving to reach the ‘target’ competence of an idealized native speaker (p. 285).

Given this, Firth and Wagner (1997) call for, in particular, a reconceptualization of SLA towards an increased awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use and also greater consideration of cultural interactions from the perspective of the people actually involved rather than that of the non-involved observer. If such reconceptualization were undertaken, Firth and Wagner (1997) maintain that:

> SLA will be better able to understand and explicate how language is used as it is being acquired through interaction, and used resourcefully, contingently, and contextually. Language is not only a cognitive phenomenon, the product of the individual’s brain; it is also fundamentally a social phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes (1997, p. 296; original authors’ emphasis).

These authors provide several comments pertinent to the social identities of the language learner. They note that in traditional psycholinguistic SLA research, L2 learners are relegated to having only a single social identity – that of the L2 learner – that largely ignores the wider social and contextual dimensions of language learning. As they note in relation to traditional SLA research:

> This is SLA’s general preoccupation with the learner, at the expense of other potentially relevant social identities. For SLA, the learner identity is the researcher’s taken-for-granted resource, rather than, or as well as, a topic of investigation. (In most cases, “learner” is implicitly taken to be an adult receiving formal education in a S/FL.) The emic relevance of the learner identity is not an issue in SLA. More important, the learner is viewed as a defective communicator. So the focus and emphasis of research
While L2 learners do experience difficulties in learning English or any second language, they also experience periods of success even in the face of limited communicative resources. Firth and Wagner (1997) go on to point out that L2 learners are people who possess many other social identities (father, man, friend, stranger, opponent and so on) of which many can be relevant at the same time in any given social interaction. While in traditional SLA research only one identity matters at the time of study (that of the L2 learner), from a sociocultural perspective on SLA, all identities matter as all can have impact on the language learning process.

Firth and Wagner’s (1997) paper was first presented at the 1996 International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) Congress in Jyvaskyla, Finland. Commenting on their presentation a decade later, Diane Larsen-Freeman (2007) notes that the impact on those attending was considerable:

Their excitement was palpable. For many, that day in August must have seemed a watershed moment. The perceived dominance of a cognitive, mentalistic orientation to second language acquisition (SLA) had been challenged. Scholars who had previously felt excluded found a rallying point in the Firth and Wagner paper; those who believed that their positions had been ignored felt empowered in a way that they had not before (p. 773).

To set things in context, Larsen-Freeman (2007) also points out that there was similar enthusiasm demonstrated at various conferences in 1974-1975 when traditional cognitive-oriented SLA research was first presaged: “We believed that we were witnessing the birth of a new field – one that did not see language as behavior, one that no longer ignored the mind, one that put cognitivism squarely at the forefront of its explanations” (p. 775). Larsen-Freeman (2007) also notes that there were many other researchers and authors calling for SLA to include more of a social and contextual perspective well before Firth and Wagner (1997), including Norton-Pearce (1995) as discussed in Section 4.3. Whatever the case, their paper is regarded as pivotal in highlighting a move to inclusion of a social/contextual perspective in SLA research.

Larsen-Freeman (2007) reviews a number of responses to Firth and Wagner’s (1997) paper, both for and against. Two general themes emerge from those in objection to the social/contextual perspective. First, even those researchers who objected to this viewpoint nevertheless “acknowledged the merit of a social perspective” (Larsen-Freeman 2007, p. 778). Second is that there remains concern among some researchers about the distinction between
language acquisition (individual/cognitivist) and language use (social/contextual) as in this view “SLA is centrally about acquisition not use” (Larsen-Freeman 2007, p. 778). This position on language acquisition is most succinctly summarised by Kasper (1997) in an objection to Firth and Wagner’s (1997) proposals:

The paper purports to redirect the field of SLA, but has in fact very little to say about L2 acquisition. Any theory of language acquisition has to make explicit what the conditions and mechanisms of learning are. In other words, it has to address the question of how learners’ interlanguage knowledge progresses from stage A to stage B, and what events promote or hinder such progress. F&W do not address these questions. What they seem to call for are socially situated studies of second language use (p. 310; original author’s emphasis).

Despite this viewpoint, Kasper (1997) still conceded that first or second language acquisition does take place in a social context and thus it is likely that such contexts affect language acquisition. Learners actively participate in different types of social interaction, and thereby “they also construct their own identities and those of their respective others; these experiences are likely to be reflected in different parts of learners' developing L2 competence” (Kasper, 1997, p. 311).

In fact, Firth and Wagner (1998), responding in a later paper to critique of their original position, comment on the language acquisition and use debate. They concede the ‘centrality of acquisition’ but then note:

But such arguments must also acknowledge that the notion of acquisition is itself not clearly defined. It overlaps with notions of contingent application, modification, transformation, "local" design, and situational adaption. Hence … it is surely pertinent to ask where "use" and "acquisition" stand in relation to one another … we take this opportunity to venture that acquisition will not occur without use (Firth and Wagner, 1998, p. 93).

The two perspectives on SLA – cognitivist and social – lie at opposite poles of a conceptual spectrum with few areas of overlap. Thus if an individual/cognitivist view on SLA is taken, language is regarded as a mental construct with its learning as a change in mental state, and research would focus on the cognitive process of language acquisition. On the other hand, if a social/contextual view of SLA is taken, language is regarded as a social construct with its learning as a change (improvement) in social participation, and research would focus on language use in that context. While there is little overlap, neither viewpoint is mutually
exclusive. Ultimately the perspective adopted will be dictated by the context of the research to be undertaken (Larsen-Freeman, 2007).

The two main papers reviewed in this section by Firth and Wagner (1997) and Larsen-Freeman (2007) inform the present research in that a social and contextual perspective on second language learning is assumed in this research on male Muslim refugees. The research focus will be on their emic (insider) viewpoint, that is, the perspectives of the male Muslim refugees as they describe their struggle to learn Australian English, settle into Australian culture, and find employment. This links to the next section of this review that further considers motivation and investment within the social context of language learning.

4.3 Motivation and Investment in Language Learning

In the 1970s and 1980s, much research into language learning was based on the notion that the social identity of the language learner was a predetermined psychological construct that existed within a given person’s mind. This depended on the particular language learner’s personality, learning style and motivation which were regarded as unchanging constructs. However, in recent years, a poststructural view of identity has emerged which sees social identity as fluid and context-dependent, “socially and historically constructed … within particular relations of power” (Norton & Toohey, 2011 p. 424). On this basis, Norton-Peirce (1995) makes the following observation:

SLA theorists have not developed a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context. Furthermore, they have not questioned how relations of power in the social world, affect social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 12).

In keeping with this poststructural view of social identity and her perspectives on SLA theory, in a noteworthy article Norton-Peirce (1995) proposes a new SLA theory of social identity. This was developed from qualitative research data collected over 12 months in 1991 in relation to five recent immigrants to Canada whom she had previously taught in a six-month ESL course. All participants were female and from a diverse range of countries – two from Poland, and one each from Vietnam, Czechoslovakia and Peru. Data was collected using diaries, questionnaires, individual and group interviews, and home visits. The focus of this research was on “the natural language learning experiences of the women in their homes, workplaces, and communities” (Norton-Peirce, 1995, p.14). Norton-Peirce’s data demonstrated how and under what conditions her participants created, responded to and sometimes resisted opportunities to speak English.
Based on her research findings, Norton-Peirce (1995) proposes a theory of SLA based on interrelationships between a learner’s social identity and language learning which “assumes that power relations play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers” (Norton-Peirce, 1995, p. 12). Within this theory, the language learner is regarded “as having a complex social identity that must be understood with reference to larger, and frequently inequitable social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social interaction” (p. 13). Norton-Peirce (1995) proposes that these inequitable power relationships limit the opportunities of L2 learners to practice English outside the classroom context, and that this is an area that has not been adequately accounted for in SLA theory.

Alongside this fluid and context-dependent construct of social identity, Norton-Peirce (1995) provides the supporting notion of ‘investment’ which sees the motivation of an L2 learner as flexible, dependent on the learner’s social identity assumed within a given social context. This notion of investment “more accurately signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of the … [learners] to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (Norton-Peirce, 1995, p. 17).

There are those who are critical of Norton-Peirce’s (1995) theory of SLA. These centre on her theoretical conflation of the poststructural notion of subjectivity into the concept of a fluid social identity. On this basis, Price (1996) offers a different interpretation to that made by Norton-Peirce on the data collected in her research, and concludes by questioning “how far her argument does in fact integrate the language learner and language learning context … [her theory] does not explore far enough the way the individual subject/learner is implicated in social and discourse practices” (Price, 1996, p. 336). McNamara (1997) also considers that Norton-Peirce’s poststructural perspective does not adequately consider the conceptual framework underpinning social identity, though otherwise does broadly agree with the reasoning underlying the need for such a theory. Despite such critique, Norton-Peirce’s theory remains influential and her work continues to be extensively cited (Gass, Behney & Plonsky, 2013; Ortega, 2009).

In summary, Norton-Peirce (1995) proposes that the L2 learner’s social identity and motivation is fluid, dependent on the degree of their investment in a given social context. If the power relations between speakers in that context are perceived as inequitable by the language learner, then this may impact negatively on the investment of the language learner, and thus on their
developing English proficiency and/or their willingness to engage in conversation in that social encounter. Exploring this theme further, Norton and Toohey (2011) note that:

A language learner may be highly motivated, but may nevertheless have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community, which may, for example, be racist, sexist, elitist, anti-immigrant, or homophobic. Alternatively, the language learner’s conception of good language teaching may not be consistent with that of the teacher, compromising the learner’s investment in the language practices of the classroom. Thus, the language learner, despite being highly motivated, may not be invested in the language practices of a given classroom. The learner could then be excluded from those practices, or choose not to participate in classroom [or societal] activities (p.421).

Norton-Peirce (1995) acknowledges that her concept of investment originates from the economic metaphor that Pierre Bourdieu (1977b) proposes in his writings, particularly in reference to his notion of cultural capital – those tangible and intangible aspects of oneself that are worth something within the culture being considered. Thus with reference to additional language learners, they expect a return on their investment that is commensurate with the effort they put into learning English, that return being an increase in the value of their cultural capital – which in turn will improve their social position in their new society (Norton-Peirce, 1995). In fact, though not mentioned by Norton-Peirce (1995), this understanding of investment is similar to Bourdieu’s notion of ‘illusio’, broadly defined as the commitment an individual is prepared to make to improve their position in a given social field (Bourdieu, 1984). (This concept of illusio is considered further in Chapter Five which discusses Bourdieu’s theory of practice as the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis.)

While the exploration of social identity is not a focus of this thesis, the work of Norton-Peirce (1995) is still relevant to this present research as it both informs this work and also provides a link to the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis, namely Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice. In making explicit the unequal power relationships within a social interaction, Norton’s theory of SLA also helps researchers to understand why language learners, particularly lower level English learners such as the male Muslim participants in this thesis, may struggle to progress in their English learning. As Norton-Peirce (1995, p. 17) states: "It would be both inaccurate and irresponsible to assume, as some people do, that immigrants who have limited proficiency in the target language are necessarily unmotivated or indifferent“. There are, however, several other factors impacting on the learning of an additional language, and some of these are considered in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

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4 Bonny Norton-Peirce began using Norton as her only surname around 1995 onward.
4.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNING OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Past research suggests a range of influences impacting on additional language acquisition by adult learners including: affective, social, psychological, cognitive and experiential. However, children and adults do not learn an additional language in a linear manner, as demonstrated by the different rates and quality of language acquisition in L2 learners, even when they begin at similar (low) proficiency levels and receive the same hours of instruction with the same teacher/s. The reasons which account for these different proficiencies may become conflated within the rubric of ‘individual difference’ (Ross, 2000). Some of the general factors which may influence the different achievements in additional language proficiency will be considered in this section, particularly those that pertain to the male Muslim refugee participants in this research.

4.4.1 The rate of additional language acquisition

It is a persisting myth that children learn additional languages more quickly, more easily and more effectively than adults. This, in fact, is not the case. Over thirty-five years ago, Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979) reviewed research on the age, rate and eventual attainment in additional language acquisition. They found that:

Adults and older children in general initially acquire the second language faster than young children (older-is-better for rate of acquisition), but child second language acquirers will usually be superior in terms of ultimate attainment (younger-is-better in the long run) (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1979, p. 574).

These general findings have not been contradicted in research conducted since then (e.g. Dixon, et al., 2012; Johnson, 2013; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Nejadansari & Nasrollahzadeh, 2011). It has been proposed that older learners acquire the syntax, morphology and literacy skills of an additional language at a faster rate than younger learners because these facets of English language proficiency require cognitive skills which have yet to be developed in children (Cummins, 2008). It has also been found that the highest levels of proficiency are generally achieved by those students who commence learning their additional language before puberty. There are exceptions to this among adult learners which are posited as being due to very high motivation and high quality instruction over the required time (Ortega, 2009).

4.4.2 Acquisition of conversational fluency compared to academic language proficiency

In respect to research on NESB children and young adolescents attending school in a Western context, two themes have been consistently found: first, that oral second language proficiency is
acquired more rapidly than academic proficiency in a second language (L2), and second, that the factor having the greatest impact on success in learning an additional language was consistently the years of education the student had received in their first language (L1) (Collier, 1995; Cummins 1981b, 1984, 2008; García & DiCerbo, 2000; Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000).

Cummins (1980, 2008) proposes two terms to distinguish between social and academic English use: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). “BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language while CALP refers to students’ ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school” (Cummins, 2008, p. 71). Earlier research by Cummins (1981a, 1981b, 1981c, 1984, 1996) suggests that conversational fluency in English (BICS) is easier to acquire than academic language proficiency (CALP). Conversational skills took up to three years to develop, as compared to academic literacy which took five to seven years.

Further research by Collier (1989), García & DiCerbo (2000), and Thomas and Collier (1997, 2001) confirm these findings in respect to the time for acquisition of BICS and CALP. It was also found by these researchers that when a child or adolescent has little or no education in their first language, their rate of acquisition of academic language proficiency required seven to ten years to achieve. A more recent study by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (2013) also confirms that NESB children tend to develop speaking and listening skills at a faster rate than reading and writing skills, though without specifying the actual times required.

While children gradually move from BICS to CALP, BICS skills are still regarded as independent of the literacy-related CALP skills. This is on the basis that most cognitively normal children develop BICS skills, whereas CALP skills are more related to intellectual ability and explicit schooling. In this respect, Cummins (1980, 2001) proposes that children with CALP skills in their first language are able to transfer these skills to acquisition of literacy in an additional language more rapidly than children without L1 literacy skills. The rate of English literacy acquisition (CALP) will also vary due to the different sociocultural learning contexts within which learning takes place (school, home and/or other settings).

The quality of the sociocultural context of learning an additional language is also pivotal in how language acquisition progresses, and the type of language learnt. This can be appreciated by reference to a study by Nunan (2003). He found that in many countries across Asia, English is taught from a young age as part of the primary school curriculum. However, while those curricula mandate use of a communicative English teaching approach to include an equal focus on both oral communication and literacy, the reality is often different. There is a general
shortage of competent and qualified English teachers in Asia, particularly those with an ability to speak high level or native English. There is also often an intensive focus on reading and writing at the expense of conversational skills, and in such a context students lack opportunity to practice conversational English with native English speakers. The result is students who have higher proficiency in reading and writing than conversational English skills. In fact, in Hong Kong many schools operate with ‘English as a Medium of Instruction’ (EMI), with textbooks, written work and examinations in English, but with general conversation conducted in Cantonese or Mandarin. The results are students who cannot communicate effectively in English, yet are literate in English but not in their native Chinese language.

Nunan’s (2003) study makes explicit the fact that both oral communication and literacy are a learnt process requiring frequent opportunities to practice in a supportive environment, otherwise language learners will not be competent in one or the other skill set. This informs the present research in that the quality of the sociocultural environment of the federal English language training programmes emerged as a problematic theme in the responses of the participants in this thesis (detailed further in Section 8.2.3 of Chapter Eight).

The BICS and CALP distinction noted above is also informative to this thesis because as Cummins (2008) notes:

> … educators and policy-makers frequently conflated conversational and academic dimensions of English language proficiency and … this conflation contributed significantly to the creation of academic difficulties for students who were learning English as an additional language (Cummins, 2008, p. 72).

This is exactly the situation in Australia in respect to the English language programmes provided by the Federal Government (the AMEP and LLN/SEE programme). The development of conversational fluency (speaking) and literacy (reading and writing) are conflated into ‘English language training’, and assumed to take place concurrently and in a linear fashion within the basic 510 hours of the AMEP and the 800 hours of the LLNP/SEE programme, with no consideration given to the variable times required by particular learners for the acquisition of each skill set.

Some indication of the time required for additional language acquisition has been referred to in this section, but this research was based on the language and literacy acquisition of children and young adults being instructed within the formal sociocultural context of school or university. However, there are increasing numbers of adult refugee migrants arriving in Australia and other developed countries who have little or no education in their first language, and research on the
language acquisition of this cohort is lacking. The consequence is a current research gap, with few recent studies on nonliterate and low-literate adults (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008; Young-Scholten, 2013). Current SLA theory cannot be applied to this group of unschooled, low-educated learners, thus further study on the language and literacy acquisition of this cohort is required in order to establish principled teaching practice to best meet their needs (Farrelly, 2013; Vinogradov, 2013; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009). Despite this, some generalisations can still be made concerning this group. However, a distinction first needs to be drawn between the different types of low literacy and illiteracy as outlined in the next section of this chapter.

4.4.3 Additional language learning in low-educated adults

Adult refugee learners with little or no education in their own language represent a diverse population with varying needs and different strengths that they bring to the learning process. Huntley (1992) thus proposes four categories to describe these learners: preliterate who come from cultures with no written form; nonliterate and low-literate whose cultures have a written form, but where learners have been displaced as refugees, and thus have disrupted or no education; and non-roman alphabetic where learners are literate in a non-roman alphabetic script (e.g. Arabic, Mandarin). The characteristics of these groups are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Types of NESB learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NESB LITERACY LEARNERS</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliterate</td>
<td>Learners whose culture and native language does not have a written form – these people have had minimal exposure to the written word, and thus have no literacy skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonliterate (or illiterate)</td>
<td>Learners whose native culture and language has a written form – but as refugees are not literate due to lack of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-literate (or semiliterate)</td>
<td>Learners whose native culture and language has a written form – but whose education was disrupted as refugees, thus their literacy skills are basic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-roman alphabetic</td>
<td>Learners literate in their first language, but whose alphabet is non-roman (e.g. Arabic, Mandarin).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Huntley (1992)

Some preliterate and nonliterate adult learners may speak several languages, but due to their past circumstances have never had a chance to become literate in any of their spoken language/s. Such learners have a greater array of barriers to formal education and learning than other language learners, and the result generally is a slower rate of language learning and achievement (McPherson, 2007). This group are the focus of the next section (4.4.4) of this chapter.
As referred to previously, since the 1970s most studies of second or additional language acquisition have relied on educated, middle class secondary school and university level NESB students (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008; Young-Scholten, 2013). These studies generally confirm that such learners move along a common path in respect to the development of their morphosyntax. As with the studies of children noted above, those learners with the least education in their first language make the slowest progress, though affected by a range of affective, social, psychological, cognitive and experiential factors (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Ortega, 2009).

Research on low-educated adult additional language learners, though limited, has consistently found (as for literate children and young adults) that the level of previous L1 education has a significant impact on final language proficiency in English or the additional language concerned. For example, during the 1970s, there were several studies reported from Germany on immigrant workers recruited by Germany and other European countries to reduce labour shortages. These working class adult immigrants, generally with only a primary school L1 education, were considered as temporary immigrants and thus were generally uninstructed though immersed in their additional language – and that target/additional language was not English, but rather German or the European language of their country of employment. It was found that their naturalistic language learning progressed along similar common stages of morphosyntactic acquisition as instructed language learners, though at slower rates. Within the group itself, the rate of acquisition varied, but those with the lowest educational levels belonged to the group with the lowest levels of oral proficiency (Young-Scholten, 2013). This suggests that possession of L1 literacy skills may influence the degree of oral proficiency achieved in an additional language, and research has been done to clarify this as described in the next section of this chapter.

4.4.4 The influence of first language literacy on oral proficiency in an additional language

Research by Tarone (2010) compared the oral L2 processing of a population of low-literate and moderate-literate adolescent Somalis learning English. This research found that the higher their print literacy level in their first language, the higher their rate of oral L2 processing at the level of linguistic segments (phonemes, syllables and words). Drawing on these results and also work in cognitive and experimental psychology, Tarone (2010, p. 82) proposes that in populations of educated, literate learners: “the acquisition of grapheme-phoneme correspondence – the ability to associate a phoneme and a visual symbol – changes the way oral language is processed”. In

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5 SLA research concerning the development of morphosyntax is considered as beyond the scope of this thesis.

6 Translated from the original German by Martha Young-Scholten, with the results summarised in Young-Scholten (2013).
other words, as ability in letter-sound correspondence improves during the development of literacy, this increases the rate at which the educated learner can process oral language – this is because the literate listener is able to better discriminate between words in the sound stream.

The exact mechanism for this enhancement effect of L1 literacy on oral acquisition in an additional language is uncertain, though some proposals do exist. For example, based on their research with adult learners of English, Juffs and Rodrigues (2008) posit that the ability to process language at the phonemic level is implicit in all children, and this is what allows them to naturally acquire oral fluency in their first language. This implicit childhood ability to parse the sound stream is suggested as lost in adults, making it more difficult for them to acquire an additional language without explicit teaching and learning. However, it is proposed that if an adult language learner is literate in their first language, this provides them with:

... access to phonemic parsing necessary for language acquisition ... [L1 literacy thus] provides a parsing device that assists in noticing how the L2 sound stream might be broken up and analyzed for acquisition, compensating for the loss of [the] implicit [language] learning ability [of childhood] (Juffs & Rodrigues, 2008, p. 45-46).

Continuing this argument, the acquisition of literacy (L1 or L2) may be regarded as a “metalinguistic activity that requires a sophisticated level of [syntactic] awareness” (Young-Scholten, 2013, p. 446). Such explicit syntactic awareness of phonemes, morphemes and words comes from schooling and the acquisition of L1 literacy, and these skills provide the ‘parsing device’ necessary for higher level oral proficiency in another language.

Research on preliterate and nonliterate adult NESB learners, however, suggests that they lack such sophisticated awareness of L1 syntax as they have no L1 literacy skills. They retain only a basic knowledge of word and syllable structure from learning their first language as a child (Onderdelinden, Van de Craats & Kurvers, 2009; Tarone, 2010; Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006). This makes it very challenging for preliterate and nonliterate adults not only to acquire literacy skills in English, but also to achieve much beyond a basic oral proficiency in any additional language (Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006).

Research on schooled/educated learners consistently suggests that acquisition of literacy in L1 or L2 is a conscious process requiring explicit teaching and learning, and that possession of L1 literacy skills assists in gaining not only higher level oral L2 proficiency, but also higher level L2 literacy skills (Juffs & Rodrigues, 2008; Tarone Bigelow & Hansen, 2007). The basis for this may be because L1 literacy skills are transferable to the acquisition of literacy in an additional language (Cummins, 1980, 2001).
The question remains as to whether preliterate and nonliterate adults are able to acquire native level L2 literacy skills. There are currently no conclusive longitudinal research studies in this area which remains as a research gap. However, isolated cases of achievement of near-native levels of L2 acquisition in both oral and literacy skills are evident in the literature. This leads to the conclusion that high levels of L2 proficiency can potentially be reached by any additional language learner, but only with sufficient time, effort and resources (Ortega, 2009; Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006). The question may be asked, however, as to how long it takes an uneducated adult to become literate in an additional language, or indeed in L2 oral proficiency. This is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

4.4.5 The time required for learning of an additional language in the low-educated adult

A study by Watt and Lake (2004) has relevance in respect to the question of the time required for adult L2 learners to achieve L2 proficiency. Their research question was stated as: *How long does it take adult immigrants to learn enough English to meet their needs?* – these needs were inclusive of both oral and literate L2 skills. The study involved 1387 adult immigrants to Canada with a mean age of 33.1 years (33 per cent male, 67 per cent female). They came from a diverse range of backgrounds, the top five being China, Korea, India, Columbia, Sudan. The mean length of residence in Canada was 1.7 years.

In broad terms, Watt and Lake (2004) found that for L2 learners with minimal or an elementary level of education (0-7 years), L2 acquisition is a difficult process, with smaller gains in each macroskill relative to other groups over 250 hours of instruction. The tendency of this group over 1000 hours of instruction was to plateau in their language acquisition at a low level of English proficiency, with only a few reaching a ‘basic proficiency’ in English. There were relatively higher rates of additional language acquisition for those learners with an L1 education.

Watt and Lake (2004) made three final conclusions. First, neither multilingualism nor linguistic distance had any significant impact on the rate of English acquisition in the sample. Second, the rate of English acquisition did not proceed at an even pace, in that basic proficiency in all macroskills was gained more rapidly than proficiency at higher levels. Third, the previous educational experience of a given participant was the primary factor than predicted rate of English language acquisition in any macroskill.

This research by Watt and Lake (2004) informs this thesis in that within the Canadian context oral and literate L2 acquisition are conflated into English language training, as in Australian
English training programmes. In fact, assessment is against the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) tool which in broad terms is similar to the ACSF and ISLPR used in the Australian context. However, there is no publically-available data on the times required to reach particular discrete macroskill benchmarks available in the Australian literature, rather just broad statements about general trends in prevalence of L2 acquisition or achievement against KPIs (see Chapter Three).

The only study found specifically relating to the achievement of low-educated adults in L2 literacy was that of Kurvers, Stockman and Van de Craats (2010). This was performed in the Netherlands and investigated the number of classroom hours it might take a nonliterate or low-literate adult immigrant to reach a functional level of L2 proficiency, sufficient to read and write short and simple texts on familiar topics in their additional language of Dutch. Only those students (n=236) with a Dutch language commencement level of zero were included in the final analysis. Around 20 per cent were men and 80 per cent were woman, with a mean age of 41 years. The students came from a range of backgrounds, mainly Morocco, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. Length of residence was under five to over 20 years, the majority had no L1 schooling (61 per cent) and the remainder one to six years.

These authors found great diversity in individual hours required for learning of basic/functional L2 literacy. Despite over 800 hours of instruction, many achieved no full reading or writing level (n=92 [38.9 per cent] for reading, and n=64 [27.1 per cent] for writing). The remainder took a widely variable number of hours of instruction to reach particular levels in reading and writing proficiency. A few individuals took only 300 hours to achieve the highest tested levels; others took over 1000 hours to reach the lowest literacy levels, and some over 2000 hours. Drawing together all their data, Kurvers et al. (2010) concluded that students over 40 and without any prior L1 schooling took relatively longer to progress in second/additional language literacy as compared to younger students or students who had had at least some first language education. This indicates that age and prior first language education influence the rate of literacy acquisition.

Given this wide variation in hours to reach even basic literacy benchmarks, these authors cautioned against using such benchmarks in additional language literacy acquisition as the basis for funding language programmes (Kurvers et al., 2010). This caution informs this thesis given that such linguistic benchmarks are used to monitor NESB student progress and KPIs in the LLN/SEE programme (See Chapter Three, Section 3.4).

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7 Based on Australian language proficiency scales, this would be around an ISLPR level 1+ to 2 (that is, near the functional English level of ISLPR 2 in reading and writing).
4.4.6 Principal factors influencing second language learning in the low-educated adult

Drawing together the findings in the literature concerning second/additional language acquisition, some general comments can be made. There are two general perspectives on SLA, cognitivist and social. In broad terms, the cognitivist perspective proposes that there are several specific factors that influence second language acquisition at the cerebral or mental level. These factors include age of the learner and the degree of first language education and literacy (e.g. Cummins, 2008; Ortega, 2009). These are fixed, unchangeable attributes of the second language learner which are present when they arrive for their English language classes which can influence additional language learning.

Research suggests that the quality and time of hours provided for second language instruction can impact on the final degree of L2 proficiency achieved by an adult learner, though there is great individual variation (e.g. Ortega, 2009; Watt and Lake, 2004). Such instruction presumably changes the mental constructs of the language learner from a cognitive perspective. However, at this point the social perspective on second language learning becomes paramount, for the simple reason that opportunities to practise and use an additional language in various sociocultural contexts is believed to improve the L2 capabilities of the language learner concerned. The ultimate proficiency levels achieved depend on other factors such as the degree of motivation and investment of the L2 learner and the specific L2 needs of the learner within a given social context (e.g. BICS or CALP skills) (Dong, 2004; Ortega, 2009).

This literature suggests that what we need to find out from this present research are the perspectives of male Muslim refugees on the quality of the English learning they have achieved within their English language training programmes, and also how that English language learning was affected by the time available and context in which it was achieved. A research gap has also been identified in respect to studies on the L2 learning of low-educated refugee migrants (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008; Young-Scholten, 2013). This thesis, while only a relatively small-scale project, does provide insight into this research gap as the male Muslim participants are mostly from a nonliterate or low-literate L1 background.

4.4.7 The impact of pre and post-migrational stress on second language learning

As well as having limited or no education in their first language, refugees typically come from a background of trauma through war, displacement and violence. It is being increasingly reported that post-migration stressors on refugees interfere with their successful settlement into their host country. Such stressors include separation from family and loss of social support, acculturation
difficulties, unemployment and financial difficulties, language difficulties and discrimination (Mikal & Woolfield, 2015; Song, Kaplan, Tol, Subica & de Jong, 2015; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). Research has consistently shown that such factors can impede language learning through the effects of post-traumatic stress (e.g. Beiser & Hou, 2001; Gordon, 2011; Sondergaard & Theorell, 2004; Song et al., 2015).

Recent research in the Australian context is presented by Slewa-Younan et al. (2015). They reported on 225 adult Iraqi refugees attending the AMEP (98 men and 127 women). Their average age was 38 years, and their average length of residence in Australia was approximately five years. This research found virtually all these refugees had varying levels of psychological distress according to the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, with nearly 40 per cent suffering severe psychological distress, and a total of 31 per cent with overt post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, less than 20 per cent of participants had ever sought assistance for trauma-related mental health problems.

Other research echoes the findings of Slewa-Younan et al. (2015). For example, Steel et al. (2009) performed a systematic review of the research literature from 1980 to 2009 on refugee mental health. They found similar associations of mental health problems due to refugee trauma. Similar results were also reported by Rees, Silove, Tay and Kareth (2013) on a cohort of West Papuan refugees resettled in Australia due to unrest and war in their homeland.

The studies mentioned above generally found no statistical differences in stress or PTSD levels in respect to gender, age, religion or marital status. However, an American study by Song et al (2015) of 278 refugees (45 per cent male, 55 per cent female with average age around 40 years) found that being female, older than 40 years of age, and Muslim increased the risk of suffering from an anxiety disorder, but not depression or PTSD which showed no definite associations with these risk factors.

A paper by Sondergaard and Theorell (2004) was the only one in this literature group that attempted to quantify the effect of stress on the additional language learning process. Following study of the post-traumatic stress levels and language learning of 48 Iraqi refugees in Sweden, they concluded that: “The symptom load of PTSD … is significantly inversely related to the speed of [Swedish] language acquisition in refugees” (Sondergaard & Theorell, 2004, p. 320). In other words, the higher the levels of psychological distress, the lower the rate of additional language acquisition.
Research has shown that the pre and post-migrational stress levels of most refugees generally fall over time, though this may take up to a decade after arrival to happen (Silove, Steel, Baumann Chey & McFarlane, 2007). Longitudinal reports add to this picture. For example, Beiser and Hou (2001) found that for Southeast Asian refugees in Canada, while the overall prevalence of depression reduced over their 10-year study, persisting unemployment was associated with ongoing depression, at greater levels in males than females.

A longitudinal study Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2012) followed Muslim refugee migrants 8 to 20 years after settlement in Australia and New Zealand. This group had persisting mild to moderate psychological distress levels and slightly higher for women. This was due to a variety of post-migrational stressors, mainly persisting unemployment and also social isolation, discrimination and ‘status dissonance’ (loss of social status in Australia or New Zealand as compared to their previous life and/or a lower status occupation). However, the Muslim participants in this study by Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2012) also reported positive aspects of life in Australia and New Zealand, particularly in respect to security, peace, and a stable society and government.

It is also of note here that despite these high post-traumatic stress levels, most refugee migrants (80 per cent) never seek medical assistance (Slewa-Younan et al., 2015). Perhaps also related to this is that in a recent Australian survey of 104 Muslim jobseekers, over half were refugees and yet most ‘strongly disagreed’ or ‘disagreed’ that poor health or disability was a barrier to their employment (Lovat et al., 2013). A higher level of reported mental health problems might be expected given the high levels of PTSD reported in the papers in this section, but this is not the case. This may reflect the remarkable resilience of most refugee trauma survivors, a capacity that allows them to perceive their past as simply another aspect of their lives rather than its defining moment (Gordon, 2011), and to remain positive in the face or previous adversity (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012).

The findings from these studies inform the present research in that all the male Muslim refugee participants in this study come from a background of displacement by violence and war. In studying their perspectives on their English language training programmes, the literature alerts us to the need to attend to the possible impact of themes related to post-traumatic stress, an issue that is considered in Chapter Seven.

For the refugee migrant, learning English is always going to be a challenge. As suggested in the research reviewed in Section 4.4, a basic oral proficiency is within their capability, but much beyond this requires high motivation and many hours of high quality instruction within a
supportive sociocultural learning environment (Kurvers et al., 2010; Ortega, 2009; Watt & Lake 2004; Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006). However, the nature of the sociocultural learning environment for NESB learners may be influenced by several factors, including their social positioning in Western society due to their visible difference and/or religion, and the difficulties they experience gaining entry to the Australian workplace. These themes are considered in the remaining sections of this literature review.

4.5 **Sociocultural Factors Influencing L2 Learning and Gaining Employment**

In this section, there is consideration of sociocultural factors that may impede second language learning of Muslim and other NESB migrants, as L2 learning must be considered in relation to the sociocultural context in which it occurs. Ortega (2009) also argues that:

> L2 learning is never just about language; for many, perhaps most, people who undertake to learn an additional language, it is about succeeding in attaining material, symbolic and affective returns [resources] that they desire for themselves and it is also about being considered by others as worthy social beings (Ortega, 2009, p. 253).

In both these aims of gaining resources and being regarded by others as worthy social beings, the L2 learner is trying to improve their position in their social world, and in this case L2 learning would be considered transformative (Ortega, 2009). This essentially is the primary aim of the male Muslim refugee participants in this research: to learn proficient English, gain meaningful employment, and improve their social position in Australian society. However, this may be difficult, particularly for low-educated L2 learners, as is the case for most of the Muslim participants in this research. This can be understood by reference to the SLA theory of Norton-Pierce (1995) (reviewed in Section 4.3 of this chapter) which proposes that L2 learning may be impeded by inequitable relationships of power, and inequitable social structures (contexts), which are reproduced in daily social interactions. Even where an L2 learner is highly motivated, these inequitable social conditions can impede their L2 learning and position in their social world.

This is the case for the MMR participants in this research. Reference was made in Chapter Two (Section 2.4) to the disadvantaged position of Muslim job seekers in Australia. To recall here, despite the fact that three-quarters of Australian Muslims are reported as speaking proficient English and often have higher levels of education as compared to non-Muslim Australians, the general Australian Muslim community have a higher unemployment rate and lower incomes than other Australians, and also often work in low skilled, low status occupational groups on a casual or short term basis (ABS, 2011; Peucker et al., 2014; Sav, Harris & Sebar, 2013). In this
section, there is consideration of the major sociocultural factors that produce this disadvantaged social position.

Sociocultural factors which have the potential to negatively affect the English learning and job ambitions of the MMRs in this research can broadly be divided into two categories: in Section 4.5.1, there is consideration of the various aspects of discrimination faced by Muslim and other NESB jobseekers; then in Section 4.5.2, there is consideration of more general factors that influence employment outcomes for these communities, including English language proficiency and the importance of Australian qualifications and work experience (human capital). A focus on employment is taken given that gaining satisfactory employment is regarded as the most important feature of successful settlement by many refugee migrants, and often the Western governments who support them. ‘Satisfactory’ employment here refers to a job commensurate with the pre-migration qualifications, work experience and skills of the migrant in question (Torezani, Colic-PEisker & Fozdar, 2008). Unfortunately, as will be seen, this goal is rarely achieved by jobseekers from Muslim and other NESB communities.

4.5.1 Discrimination against Muslim and non-English speaking background jobseekers

It should be acknowledged here that the term Muslim within this thesis refers to a religion and not a culture. The Australian Muslim community are characterised by a wide range of ethnic, social, cultural and linguistic diversity, though with the common link of the Muslim religion (Kabir & Evans, 2002). However, they are often credited with the single social identity of Muslim by the mainstream media and non-Muslims. This is also the social identity that is currently being stigmatised in the Australian press and positioned as ‘other’ relative to the mainstream Australian social identity (Lovat, 2015). Furthermore, even though Australian legislation supposedly protects against discrimination on the basis of religion, unfortunately in some workplaces and other Australian contexts, stigmatisation, stereotyping and marginalisation of Muslim people continues (Lovat et al., 2013).

Research shows that discrimination against an individual or their community will generally affect second language learning in a negative manner (e.g. DECS, 2007; Ortega, 2009; Pavlenko, 2002; Sulaiman-Hill, & Thompson, 2012). This section thus considers research demonstrating various facets of discrimination against Muslims – including attitudes to the Muslim community among other members of Australian society, and how these attitudes are constructed in terms of the religious practice and other characteristics of the Muslim community. Many of these considerations also apply more generally to the NESB community, but the focus of this thesis remains on the experiences of male Muslim refugees in Australia.
4.5.1.1 Attitudes to Muslims within the non-Muslim Australian community

The lives of Muslim people in the West appear to have been made more difficult as the result of recent global events related to terrorism. For example, Barkdull et al. (2011) interviewed a range of Muslim people in four Western countries (Australia, Argentina, Canada and the United States), the majority of whom (90 per cent) were immigrants from a range of Muslim countries within the Middle East, Asia and Africa, and most of whom were professionals or academics. With the exception of Argentina, the remaining Muslims in Australia, Canada and the United States stated that there had been little discrimination before 2001, but after the terrorist event of that year (the attack on the World Trade Center) their experiences of discrimination markedly increased. This included verbal harassment, racial slurs, rejection by non-Muslim friends, mistreatment during international travel, and discrimination in the workplace (e.g. exclusion from job interviews, reduced job opportunities, alienation from colleagues). These experiences were still continuing ten years after 2001, with many blaming the media for their continuing problems with stigmatisation and discrimination. The worst problems occurred in the United States, with Australian Muslims experiencing relatively lesser amounts of discrimination (Barkdull et al., 2011). However, since this report by Barkdull et al in 2011, research suggests that attitudes in Australia towards the Muslim community may be deteriorating.

There have always been prejudiced attitudes among mainstream Australian culture towards so-called minority cultures such as Australian Muslims (e.g. see Hamilton, 1990; Poynting & Mason, 2007; Rizvi, 1996). However, following the recent increase in terrorist activity attributed to Muslims, there has been increasing vilification of this group within the media of the Western world (Salleh-Hoddin & Pederson, 2012). Research shows that a significant proportion of mainstream Australians believe that certain cultural and ethnic groups do not integrate well into modern Australian society. Muslims and people from the Middle East are frequently mentioned as belonging to such minority groups (Dunn, 2003; Dunn, Klocker & Salabay, 2007). Some Australian politicians, predominantly those with reservations about multiculturalism, have even called into question the ability of Muslims to integrate into Australian society and respect its values (Johnson, 2007).

In 2004, a telephone survey of residents in Queensland and New South Wales was conducted by Dunn, Forrest, Burnley and McDonald (2004). This involved people aged 18 and over, and generated 5056 valid responses. There were several interesting discrepancies in answers given to the survey questions. For example, while around 85 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement “It is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures”, there
were still 45 per cent of respondents who believed that “Australia is weakened by different ethnicities sticking to their old ways”. Also, while about 45 per cent of respondents believed that there are “cultural or ethnic groups that do not fit into Australian society”, the majority of respondents (83 per cent) still agreed with the statement that “all races of people are equal” (Dunn et al., 2004, pp. 419-420). While cultural diversity in Australia was thus favoured by most respondents, a substantial number were still concerned about racial and cultural difference. Dunn et al. (2004) account for these findings as follows:

Interpretation of this contradiction can be related to competing discourses of the nation and nationalism. A belief that strong societies and communities can only be constructed in circumstances of cultural homogeneity is widespread (Dunn et al., 2004, p. 416).

It may be that there are concerns among some Australians that cultural pluralism may potentially lead to fragmentation of the Australian state. There are thus competing discourses within Australia about the migrant experience: there is a difference between being included (e.g. multiculturalism) but not being valued (e.g. experience of racism and discrimination), and there is a difference being supported (e.g. equity legislation) but not being recognised equally (e.g. visible difference) (Dunn et al., 2004).

Attitudes among the mainstream Australian community and employers about Muslim people do not appear to have significantly changed since the research reported above in 2004. For example, research by Booth, Leigh and Varganova (2012) investigated Australian employer responses to applications for entry level jobs with distinctive names indicating ethnicity. A thousand Curriculum Vitaes (CVs) were sent out for each of four ethnic groups – Anglo-Saxon, Italian, Chinese and Middle Eastern. All CVs indicated the person as having attended school in Australia. It was found that those CVs with Anglo-Saxon names received a significantly higher call-back rate for interview than other ethnicities. Italians suffered virtually no discrimination, but it was found that someone from the Middle East or China would have to submit at least 50 per cent more CVs than Anglo-Saxons to gain the same number of call-backs. Indigenous Australians also suffered discrimination, but less so than the other ethnic groups. While this research did not specifically concern the Muslim community, it does indicate a persisting discrimination against non-White Australians among Australian employers, and indicates the need for research into English language training programmes to identify the extent to which Muslims are prepared for this potentially hostile employment context.

More specifically in relation to the Muslim community, a recent 2015 report from the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) suggests rising levels of Islamophobia within both the
general Australian community and the Australian workplace, particularly after the recent siege in Sydney’s Martin Place in 2014 (AHRC, 2015). This impression of rising levels of concern about Muslim Australians appears confirmed by the most recent findings from the Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion Report of 2015. In response to the question regarding ‘personal attitude towards Muslims’, 22.3 per cent of respondents reported themselves as Strongly Negative or Negative (five times the levels for Christians and Buddhists) (Markus, 2015b). However, these levels of negativity may be understated as the data is gathered by telephone interview, and many respondents do not report their true feelings in such circumstances (Markus, 2015a). The AHRC maintains that anonymous internet surveys suggest a level of negative attitudes towards Muslims among the Australian community as currently approaching 50 per cent (AHRC, 2015).

4.5.1.2 Religious and cultural difference as the basis for discrimination

Research into Muslim jobseekers consistently suggests that the major factors impacting on employment are educational background, ethnicity, English-speaking proficiency, gender and age, with religion of minor importance (Lovat et al., 2013). However, reports vary in their findings over whether Muslim religious practices are a major problem for Muslim jobseekers, or whether other factors take precedence. For example, Fozdar (2011) reported on a study concerning the employment market integration of 150 skilled Muslim humanitarian refugees. These came from three countries: the former Yugoslavia (mainly Bosnians), the Middle East (mainly Iraqis), and Africa (mainly Somalis and Ethiopians). All had arrived in Australia in the 1990s and 2000s, and had good levels of English proficiency, as well as education and employment skill levels. Results indicated that 28 per cent were without work, 49 per cent were working below their skill level and 62 per cent reported difficulties in finding employment. Around 47 per cent reported discrimination in seeking employment – this was variably on the basis of accent, name, language ability and appearance. However, only a small number reported discrimination directly due to Muslim religious practice.

Overall, then, this group of Muslim jobseekers in Fozdar’s (2011) study faced considerable barriers to gaining meaningful employment in the Australian workplace, and given that the group in this research possessed reasonable English, education and work skills, a lack of human capital cannot be posited as the reason for their poor job outcomes: the more likely cause is racism and discrimination in the Australian workplace. Fozdar (2011) also found that there was no statistically significant relationship between the Muslim religious practices of the participants and their negative employment outcomes.
More recent research by Lovat et al. (2013) contradicts the findings of Fozdar (2011) in respect to the impact of Muslim religious practice on employment. Their study concerned discrimination against Muslims in the Australian labour market, drawing on data originally gathered by Lovat et al. (2011). Surveys and interviews were carried out on 104 Muslim jobseekers across New South Wales aged 18 to 54; 48 per cent were men and 52 per cent women. Around 54 per cent of the respondents were humanitarian refugees, with another 21 per cent being migrants under the family stream. The remainder were Australian-born Muslims. Most respondents were well educated with over 73 per cent having finished secondary school or higher. Of the migrants, around a third had been in Australia less than four years.

In contrast to the research findings of Fozdar (2011), nearly half of the respondents in Lovat et al. (2013) believed they had failed to find employment as a direct consequence of their Muslim religion and its associated practices. Several of those interviewed reported on overtly discriminatory comments during their job searching, mainly relating to the theme of terrorism and violence. Another theme was the issue of employing Muslims as being complicated due to their religious needs for prayer time during the day, due to their request for no contact with non-Halal food, and due to their requirements for no or minimal mixed sex contact in the workplace (Lovat et al., 2013).

The research literature, in fact, generally demonstrates an overwhelmingly negative attitude and general intolerance towards Muslim jobseekers and their religious needs in the Australian workplace and the general community (e.g. Barkdull et al., 2011; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Phua, Dunn & Ozguc, 2010). This is also true within the international context. For example, similar findings of anti-Muslim attitudes in the workplace and general community are reported in the Netherlands (e.g. Savelkoul, Scheepers, Tolsma & Hagendorn, 2011), in Canada (e.g. Bauder, 2003; Klie, 2006), in the USA (e.g. Beaubrian, 2010), in the United Kingdom (e.g. Tackey et al., 2006) and in Sweden (Rydgren, 2004). Overall, then, it would seem that there is clear discrimination against members of the Muslim religion in the Australian workplace and other countries across the Western world. However, as noted in the next section, there are some reports that suggest slow change in workplace attitudes.

4.5.1.3 Gender and family responsibilities as the basis for discrimination

In respect to gender, discrimination in the workplace and general community is often directed against Muslim women wearing the hijab (a headscarf that covers the head and chest, but leaves the face uncovered) as a visible label of being Muslim. This has been reported in several studies, for example in Australia Lovat et al. (2013) report that 66 per cent of their respondents felt that visible difference from other Australian communities was a barrier to employment, especially
for Muslim women who chose to wear a hijab. In the latter circumstances, even high level English proficiency did not offset this barrier. Syed and Pio (2010) also report the generally negative experiences of Muslim women in Australia in both finding employment, and also within the workplace if they succeeded in gaining employment, again often due to the headscarf as the marker of being Muslim. Nilan, Samarayi and Lovat (2012) also report that the wearing of a hijab is a significant factor in causing the consistently slightly higher unemployment rate of Muslim females as compared to Muslim men in Australia.

Studies internationally also generally report intolerance and discrimination against Muslim women who choose to wear a hijab. For example, research by Reeves, McKinney & Azam (2012) found that Muslim females are often employed within US healthcare organisations, but where they chose to wear a hijab, participants generally experienced prejudice, discrimination and barriers in the workplace. Some Muslim women thus chose not to wear a hijab as they did not wish to be identified as Muslim. Similar generally negative findings are reported from studies in Canada (e.g. Klie, 2006) and in Europe (e.g. Bader, Alidadi & Vermeulen, 2013).

While the reports reviewed here contain mainly negative experiences of Muslim women who choose to wear head coverings, all do make the point that Western workplaces are slowly becoming more accommodating of Muslim religious needs: for example, by allowing wearing of a Muslim headscarf, by enforcing tolerance of religious diversity in the workplace, and by allowing Muslims time for prayer and other observances as required. Additionally, research has found that positive contact with work colleagues from ethnic minorities reduces negative attitudes towards Muslims and other NESB groups (Reeves, McKinney & Azam, 2012; Savelkoul et al., 2011).

There are other influencing factors in respect to the higher unemployment rate of Muslim women. Muslim religious practices within the workplace have already been noted in Section 4.5.1.2 as an area of concern for employers. Another factor is that cultural expectations for Muslim women mean that they are expected to care not only for their young children, but also elderly relatives. Some Muslim families also prefer not to place their children in Western childcare centres. This greatly reduces the employment opportunities of Muslim women (Cook, 2011). In the study by Lovat et al. (2013), it was also found that while family responsibilities were a particular problem for female Muslim jobseekers (50 per cent), they were also reported to be an issue for a significant number of males (25 per cent). This was considered as indicative of the strong family bonds within the Muslim community, but also possibly a lack of social networks among recently arrived refugees.
The research presented in this Section 4.5.1 has considered the discrimination that Muslims face in Australia based on an apparently increasing Islamophobia in Australian society, and also prejudice against the religious practices of Islam, particularly as they relate to the Australian workplace. As referred to previously, research has found that discrimination generally impacts negatively on learning of an additional language (e.g. DECS, 2007; Ortega, 2009; Pavlenko, 2002; Sulaiman-Hill, & Thompson, 2012). This research thus informs the present study as it concerns the perspectives of male Muslim refugees on their English language training in respect to settlement and employment, sociocultural contexts where they may encounter discrimination. Additionally, as Fozdar and Torezani (2008) note, most research on Muslim discrimination considers relatively well-educated participants whom these authors believe would be “[better] able to make positive use of their experiences of discrimination – such an outcome may be less likely for a less-educated sample” (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008, p. 57). More research is thus required on a less-educated population. The participants in the present research generally have low levels of education, thus their perspectives on their English language learning will add knowledge to this research gap.

4.5.2 Factors impacting on the employment outcomes of migrants
Research conducted by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) in 2009 found that English language proficiency, work skill levels (gained in Australia), younger age in adults, and increasing time in Australia generally resulted in better work outcomes for migrants and refugees arriving in Australia (DIAC, 2009b). Similar findings from other countries confirm the importance of these four factors in labour market performance of recent migrants. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007, 2008, 2012) present an extensive analysis of labour market integration of immigrants within Australia, and also the more economically-developed countries of Europe (Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Austria, Norway and Switzerland). That review also echoes the importance of these general themes (L2 language proficiency, human capital, length of residence) and also noted the potential negative impact of discrimination on migrant job outcomes (as considered in the previous section).

Similar findings were reported for NESB migrants in the United Kingdom (Clark & Drinkwater, 2008), in the United States (Chiswick & Miller, 2010; Moran & Petsod, 2003) and in Canada (Hiebert, 2006). Some of the themes have already been briefly considered in Chapter Two in discussion of the disadvantaged social and economic position of Muslim communities in Australia. These will be considered in more detail in the next section, with particular reference
to the importance of English proficiency and Australian skills and qualifications in gaining employment.

4.5.2.1 English language proficiency, occupational status and settlement well-being

Proficiency in the language of their new country remains a particularly important determinant of the successful employment of migrant refugees in their country of settlement. Thus Hugo (2011) found in Australian refugees that:

… there is a consistent relationship between ability to speak English and level of labour force participation. Those who are able to speak English very well have a 70.2 per cent labour force participation rate compared with only 12.1 per cent for those who cannot speak English at all and 36.3 per cent for those who cannot speak the language well … Similar striking patterns are apparent for the unemployment rate, with 7.7 per cent of those who speak English well being unemployed compared with almost a third (31.5 per cent) among those who cannot speak English at all (Hugo, 2011, p. 132-133).

As the OECD (2007) note in their extensive study of Australian and European immigrant employment outcomes, “language proficiency is arguably the most important element of human capital with respect to [labour market] integration … [but] low language proficiency does not seem to be an obstacle to the filling of lower skilled jobs” (OECD, 2007, p. 44). These are also the findings of Chiswick and Miller (2010) in respect to migrants to the United States, namely that a good command of English results in higher earnings, but immigrants with lower level English skills still find employment in lower status, lower paid jobs where English proficiency is not as important.

Several research studies in the Australian context confirm the importance of English proficiency for the employment success of migrants and refugees (e.g. Chiswick, Lee & Miller, 2005; Colic-Peisker, 2009; Ehrich, Kim & Ficorilli, 2010; Liebig, 2007). Further research, however, shows that this relationship between English proficiency and job attainment is not as simple as first assumed. For example, a paper by Kim, Ehrich and Ficorilli (2012) investigated 46 newly-arrived adult immigrants from eleven AMEP centres across Australia. This research analysed the relationships between immigrant perceptions of settlement well-being (levels of happiness), progress in oral English language proficiency and employment status. This research demonstrated that:

… increased English language proficiency … increased the likelihood of settlement well-being and happiness … [but] job attainment did not increase immigrant happiness.
Furthermore, English language proficiency did not appear to have an effect on immigrant job attainment (Kim, Ehrich & Ficorilli, 2012, p. 50).

The authors speculate that these unexpected findings may relate to the fact that immigrants often accept low status, low paid jobs due to financial pressure and no other choice, and these jobs do not need high levels of English proficiency; nor do they necessarily improve the levels of happiness of those doing them who might be frustrated by their inability to progress beyond such employment. Other research reports contrasting results. For example, while Johnstone (2011) notes the distress of some professional African migrants at loss of their occupational status in Australia, the opposite was found by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) who reported that “despite high unemployment and loss of occupational status, predominantly highly educated refugees were relatively satisfied with their lives in Australia” (p. 59). The complexity of this situation is explored further in analysis of data from this present research.

A recent research report from DIAC (2011h) on settlement outcomes of new arrivals also found that humanitarian refugees did not necessarily regard employment as an indicator of successful settlement. In fact, this group defined successful settlement in terms of four life outcomes: their level of happiness about themselves, their confidence about making choices about living in Australia, being treated well by their local community and the ease of finding a place to live in Australia. This report also makes the point that these refugee migrant viewpoints stand in contrast to the perspectives of the Australian government who see successful settlement more pragmatically as refugee migrant success in social and economic participation (i.e. employment) (DIAC, 2011h).

Australian Research conducted by Sav, Sebar and Harris (2010) further adds to the complexity of this issue. They found that Muslim men often worked in low status, casual employment and for many this was despite having reasonable proficiency in English and marketable educational qualifications. It was reported that the main reason that the Muslim men worked in such occupations was related to religious obligations, rather than communication difficulties, lack of educational qualifications or discrimination. The men believed that these jobs gave them control and flexibility in balancing work and religious demands, such as daily prayer times and mosque attendance on Fridays (Sav et al. 2010).

There may, however, be another perspective on this acceptance of low status, casual employment by Muslim males. Research by Lovat et al. (2011) (described previously in Section 4.5.1.2) on the Australian labour market experiences of Muslim job seekers found that Muslim men will generally accept any employment, lower status or otherwise, due to economic
necessity. Work is preferred over unemployment or attending English language training programmes. The patterns of any employment gained are also an important concern. Using the same data set, Lovat et al. (2013) found that the most frequent patterns of employment were casual and short term for only one to two months, with periods of unemployment in between. This pattern was the same for males and females, but reportedly relatively more common for those of refugee status. The authors speculated that such fragmented work patterns may reflect discrimination in the Australian workplace, with more firings than hirings.

Muslim males may also have a religious need to be employed wherever and whenever possible. This is because Muslim religious beliefs originate from the Quran (the central religious text of Islam) which argues that “life without work has no meaning, and engagement in economic activities is an obligation” (Yousef, 2000, p. 515). This may account for the findings of Australian research by Sav, Harris and Sebar (2013) on the attitudes of employed Muslim men to work-life balance. This report found that participants believed that “engagement in paid employment was a religious obligation, which corresponded to their Muslim identity” (Sav, Harris & Sebar, 2013, p. 678). From this perspective, Muslim men see paid employment and a breadwinner role as corresponding to their religious beliefs, undertaken to fulfil the demands of the Quran. Unemployment is thus an affront to Muslim religious beliefs which may make it even more difficult for the Muslim jobseeker to remain with the label of unemployed, thus they will accept any employment they can find, low status or otherwise.

While the relationships between English proficiency, job status and settlement well-being are thus complex, there is nevertheless a generally positive relationship between employability and English proficiency. This is arguably the reason why the Australian government invests millions of dollars per annum in its English language training programmes for immigrants and refugees. However, Liebig (2007) makes the point that:

> Despite Australia’s substantial investment with respect to language training – which is by far the most important item on the budget with respect to integration services – there has been no evaluation on how much and what kind of language training is most effective with respect to the aim of labour market integration. Indeed, there are no data publicly available on employment status after completion of language courses (Liebig, 2007, p. 41).

Interestingly, while the intended government focus of the AMEP and LLN/SEE programmes is employment, the reality is different. For example, as noted in Chapter Three, the AMEP uses a competency-based curriculum in the Certificate in Spoken and Written English. A survey by Gunn (2000) found that 69 per cent of tasks within these certificates had a settlement as
opposed to employment focus. There have been some recent moves towards including employability tasks and work experience within the AMEP, but the competency-based outcomes of the CSWE certificates are low-stakes as they are not usable for the purposes of employment or tertiary entrance (Kim et al., 2012).

Similarly, for the LLN/SEE programme, rather than employment, the actual focus is on gains in language, literacy and numeracy skills as judged against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), again an assessment framework that cannot be used for employment or tertiary entrance. There is provision to offer vocational education and training within this programme, but this is not mandatory, and any employment outcomes are not formally recorded within the KPIs of the LLN/SEE programme (DEEWR, 2010a; DIICCSRTE, 2013a). It can thus be thus argued that there are competing agendas in the contractual assessment demands of the AMEP (CSWE) and LLNP/SEE programmes (ACSF) relative to the realities and demands of the workplace and tertiary education, which require vocational experience and qualifications (Australian) and formal English proficiency testing respectively.

The research presented in this section indicates the importance of English language proficiency in respect to employment and settlement into Australian society, though also noting the complex relationships between English proficiency, occupational status and settlement well-being. The problematic focus of the AMEP and LLN/SEE programmes is also noted. This research informs the present study given that the male Muslim refugee participants must face these challenges. There is also no research concerned with the perspectives of male Muslim refugees on the effectiveness of the English language programmes offered in Australia. This present study will attempt to address this research gap.

4.5.2.2 The importance of Australian human capital in refugee employment

In respect to the integration of refugees and migrants into the Australian workplace, Mahmud, Alam and Hartel (2014) conducted interviews with 19 skilled immigrants, and also their employers. They found three key factors affecting the workplace integration of migrants into Australia. First was English proficiency, and both employers and employees agreed that a sound knowledge of conversational English was vital in order to effectively communicate with other employees and customers. The second factor impacting on workplace integration was lack of Australian qualifications and work experience. Adding to this was the general negative attitude of employers towards any education or work experience gained overseas, especially in Africa and Asia. Australian employers wanted Australian work experience and qualifications, even in cases where there had been recognition of a migrant’s first culture qualifications by Australian
skills assessment authorities. The final problematic issue was a lack of knowledge of Australian workplace culture among NESB Australian migrants. Generally, immigrants from developing countries were regarded as unlikely to have this potential as opposed to immigrants from Western countries (Mahmud, Alam and Hartel, 2014).

In broad terms, the factors impacting on the workplace success of NESB migrants reflect the degree of human capital they hold, or more correctly human capital valued in Australian culture. Human capital here refers to the skills and experience an individual brings to the labour market (Torezani, Colic-Peisker & Fozdar, 2008): for example, their degree of (English) language proficiency and their (Australian) work skills and qualifications. Lack of such skills is frequently reported as impacting on the employability of Muslim and other refugee migrants. For example, in Fozdar’s (2011) Australian research on the employment integration of Muslim refugees (referred to earlier in Section 4.5.1.2), several employers were interviewed. They justified not accepting Muslim jobseekers as they did not fit in with other staff because they lacked appropriate English communication skills and/or cultural knowledge of the Australian workplace. Some employers also maintained that many customers would not accept service from Muslim employees. These findings echo those of Mahmud, Alam and Hartel (2014) reported above.

An Australian study by Ibrahimi, Sgro, Mansouri and Jubb (2010) is also relevant as this emphasises the importance of Australian human capital. These researchers used a survey method to examine the relationships of a range of factors to employment outcomes in Australia. The 403 respondents were African refugees, predominantly from Eritrea and Sudan, 63 per cent males and 37 per cent females; age range was from 18 to 55, with the majority being from 21 to 40 years of age. The major findings were that male gender, higher English language proficiency, and Australian training and work experience have the greatest positive impact on finding work in Australia. Another positive factor affecting employment outcomes was the extent of a migrant’s social network and links to their own ethnic community. Interestingly, there were no statistically significant relationships found between age, prior employment and work experience in the country of origin, or higher levels of education and qualifications before leaving the country of origin – these factors did not impact on Australian employment outcomes.

The findings of Ibrahimi et al. (2010) that age had no relationship to Australian employment outcomes of NESB jobseekers is in contrast to other studies. Research typically shows that older workers have greater difficulty than their younger counterparts in gaining employment (Cook, 2011). This is further aggravated for older Muslim refugee migrants due to their often low English proficiency and lack of current Australian workplace skills. In fact, their employment
disadvantage relative to other Australians has been found to increase as they become older (Hassan, 2010). Similar findings were reported by Lovat et al. (2013) who found that the highest levels of unemployment were experienced by older, female Muslim refugees with poor English proficiency.

Australian research by Torezani, Colic-Peisker and Fozdar (2008) is also of significance here. Their survey of 150 skilled refugees and their employment service agencies found that lack of Australian work experience and a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications were the main barriers for refugees in finding meaningful employment. The result was an occupational downgrading for nearly 50 per cent of these refugees, particularly where NESB jobseekers used social networks from within their own communities to find work. There were also problems identified with employment service agencies and employers expecting NESB jobseekers to not only gain Australian work experience and qualifications, but also to adapt to the culture of the Australian workplace: for example, in respect to the way interviews are conducted, the kind of clothing one is expected to wear, and knowledge of the customs and behaviours of the Australian workplace. Many NESB refugee job seekers reported that their employment agencies failed to provide such training and skills, thus they lacked the Australian human capital attributes regarded as important in the Australian workplace.

4.5.2.3 The importance of Australian social capital in refugee employment

The studies by Ibrahimi et al. (2010) and Torezani et al. (2008) reviewed in the previous section found that NESB refugee migrants were often able to find work due to social links within their own communities. More recent and specific research with a focus on the social networks of Muslim jobseekers in Australia was reported by Lovat et al. (2015). They found that over 50 per cent of both male and female Muslim jobseekers used social links within their own Muslim families and communities to find employment. The major reason specified for this was that the employment agencies contracted by the Federal Government either failed to link Muslim job seekers with suitable jobs, or, where they did, the jobseeker often failed to gain that job due to their identification as Muslim. The result was that many Muslim jobseekers rely on their own social networks to find employment. However, as noted by Lovat et al. (2015) and Torezani et al. (2008), the disadvantage of using Muslim social networks is that any work obtained is often within the Muslim community where there are significantly reduced opportunities to speak English. Additionally, this can also lead well-qualified Muslim job seekers to accept lower paid, lower status work out of pure economic necessity.
In defence of the Australian employment agencies, it should be noted that they are driven by economic stringencies, each agent has a large client list, and Muslim job seekers are only one of the demographics they have to deal with. Some agents are supportive, others less so. However, where a Muslim refugee meets kindness and compassion, they will generally respond in kind, and this can assist in forming social networks with the wider Australian community (Lovat et al., 2015). Additionally, one interesting theme to emerge from the report by Torezani et al. (2008) was that several job seekers found job agencies a useful place to improve their social capital, through meeting other migrants, meeting other mainstream Australians and improving their contacts with employers. From the findings noted earlier in Section 4.5.1.3 that contact with people from ethnic minorities may reduce negative attitudes towards them (Reeves, McKinney & Azam, 2012; Savelkoul et al., 2011), any improvement in the Australian social networks and social capital of refugees has potential benefit for Muslim and other NESB jobseekers.

4.5.2.4 Employment niches and occupational downgrading

Regardless of their human and social capital attributes, the reality for many Muslim and other NESB migrants is that they must often accept lower skilled and lower paid jobs. In this respect, Liebig (2007) found that even after five years of residence in Australia, around 40 per cent of highly qualified migrants remained in lower status employment. This long-term occupational downgrading is also found in the research already reviewed, this being regardless of the skills and qualifications of Muslims or other refugees (Ibrahimi et al., 2010; Lovat et al., 2011; Torezani et al., 2008).

The result of this occupational downgrading is what Tilbury & Colic-Peisker (2006) term ‘occupational niches’. In their study, 150 working-age skilled refugees were found to have ended up clustered in low-skilled occupational niches including cleaning, driving taxis, aged care, and the security and building industries. As one African noted: “We can have these jobs because Australians do not want them” (Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2006, p. 215). However, this particular finding on refugee employment niches differs to an earlier study by Adhikari (1999). That research was done retrospectively using data obtained from the 1988 Survey of Issues in Multicultural Australia conducted by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. That study concludes:

The results did not support the presence of well-developed ethnic enclaves [occupational niches] among NESB immigrants in Australia. The difference in socioeconomic attainments among different birthplace groups of workers in Australia was not because some workers had access to employment in ethnic enclaves, but because these workers differed in their possession of human capital and other variables (Adhikari, 1999, p. 205).
In general, however, research generally finds that there is labour market segregation of NESB people into low paid, low skilled occupations, often regardless of their possession of human capital attributes such as education, work skills and English language ability. As Ho and Alcorso (2004) argue, the human capital approach fails to take into account the cultural and ideological prejudice of employers against NESB jobseekers. Employers regard the requirement to ‘fit in’ to the Australian workplace as more important than other human capital attributes that NESB jobseekers might have. This brings us full circle back to consideration of the negative effect that discrimination has on the employment opportunities of Muslim and other NESB migrants, and thus their language and cultural learning.

The research presented in this Section 4.5.2 highlights the importance of gaining not only English proficiency, but also Australian qualifications and workplace experience due to the generally negative attitudes of employers to any such human capital gained outside Australia. There is also the expectation that refugee migrants will have cultural knowledge of the Australian workplace and social links with the wider Australian community. What we need to find out from the research in this thesis is the degree to which such Australian workplace skills, qualifications and cultural knowledge (including knowledge of potential barriers to employment linked to racism and/or cultural misunderstandings) are specifically taught or offered within the federal English language training programmes, and whether those programmes foster social links to Australian employers and the wider Australian community.

It may also be noted here that human capital represents a form of cultural capital within Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and social networks fall within his notion of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Given the significant impact of these types of capital on the employment success of Muslim jobseekers such as in this present research, this provides justification for using Bourdieu’s theory of practice as the theoretical framework to underpin this thesis and analyse the data obtained.

4.6 SUMMARY

Lower-educated refugee migrants are a cohort which have generally not been considered in existing research on adult second and additional language learning. The research literature presented in this chapter thus takes as its particular focus factors that impact on the learning of an additional language by this refugee migrant group. The research question and the analysis of the data from this thesis primarily provide information on the effectiveness of the federal English language training programmes in providing the English skills and cultural knowledge required for successful employment and settlement into Australian society, at least for the male
Muslim refugee participants in this study. However, this research also provides qualitative information on the research gaps identified in this chapter in respect to refugee migrants with low levels of education in their own language, as represented by the participants in this research. Finally, links have been identified in respect to Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice which provides the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis, and which is the topic of Chapter Five.
CHAPTER FIVE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – PIERRE BOURDIEU’S THEORY OF PRACTICE

5.1 OVERVIEW

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) is widely regarded as one of the most eminent sociologists of recent times (Wacquant, 2003). His notions draw on, among others, the concepts of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, themselves eminent sociologists and/or economists. Bourdieu’s theory of practice was developed as the result of research into the social world of the Kabyle peoples in Algeria over 1958-1962, and resulted in one of his major publications, Outline of a theory of practice, published in English in 1977. Bourdieu’s theoretical framework can be used to better understand the social worlds and realities of individuals and groups, and the power structures and mechanisms that tend to promote their reproduction or transformation (Reay, 2004). It is a generic theory in that it has been applied across a diverse range of research areas in the social sciences and humanities (Wacquant, 2011), leading one author to describe him as “the doyen of practice theory” (Brink, 2008, p. 135)

During his life, Bourdieu himself applied his conceptual tools to education, art, academia, urban dispossession, gender inequality, and the state (Wacquant, 2014). In more recent times, these tools have been used within anthropology, sociology, geography, literature, feminist studies and cultural studies (Silva & Warde, 2010). In Australia, however, his notions have been predominantly used in research within the fields of education and cultural enquiry (Woodward & Emmison, 2015). This present research carries on this educational tradition as it uses Bourdieu’s theory of practice as the theoretical framework of this thesis to better understand the perspectives of the male Muslim participants on how their English language training programmes (ELTPs) assist them in settlement and finding employment in Australia.

This chapter is divided into eight sections. Section 5.1 introduces Pierre Bourdieu and sets the context for this chapter. Section 5.2 discusses why and how Bourdieu developed his theoretical framework. Section 5.3 outlines the major components of Bourdieu’s theoretical framework including capital, field, doxa, illusio and habitus, and provides examples of how these are applied in educational research. Section 5.4 considers the notion of symbolic violence and how it may be applied in educational research. Section 5.5 identifies how Bourdieu’s theory is proposed as reconciling structure and agency. Section 5.6 presents the viewpoints of some academics who disagree with Bourdieu’s perspectives. Section 5.7 demonstrates how Bourdieu’s theoretical framework can be applied to the present research. The final Section 5.8 draws the major themes of the chapter together.
5.2 **BOURDIEU’S RECONCILIATION OF STRUCTURE AND AGENCY**

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were two opposed philosophical viewpoints in structuralism and existentialism. These corresponded with the epistemological perspectives of objectivism and subjectivism respectively, with the objectivist emphasis on social structures, and the subjectivist focus on individual consciousness, as the driver for determination of meaning in social reality (Wolbreys, 2000). From these viewpoints, the social world can be seen in two opposed ways: “a ‘structuralist’ [objectivist] one that seeks out invisible relational patterns operating behind the backs of agents and a ‘constructivist’ [subjectivist] one that probes the ordinary perceptions and actions of the individual” (Wacquant, 1998, p. 267).

In these dualistic views, social structure is regarded as “those patterns of social life that are not reducible to individuals and are durable enough to withstand the whims of individuals who would change them” (Hays, 1994, pp. 60-61). The structuralist perspective here sees social agents interacting with these social structures rather like robots following a structured pattern of rules. The opposite perspective is that of agency which “implies that an array of alternative forms of behaviour are possible, and that people make (conscious or unconscious) choices among those alternatives” (Hays, 1994, p. 62). Bourdieu, however, argues against accepting such dualisms which he regards as “canonical oppositions … [which are] quite absurd” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 31). He thus termed his own theoretical viewpoint as both “structuralist constructivism” and “constructivist structuralism” (Bourdieu, 1989). This was to “stress the dialectical articulation of the two moments (objectivist and subjectivist) of his theory” (Wacquant & Bourdieu, 1992, p. 11).

Bourdieu’s theory of practice was thus developed to transcend a range of dualities inherent in sociological positioning: of structure and agency, of structuralism and constructivism, of determinism and freedom and of the macro and micro (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990b). In fact, overcoming such oppositions was a driving force in Bourdieu’s professional life, as evidenced in his statement that: “The most steadfast (and, in my eyes, the most important) intention guiding my work has been to overcome [these oppositions]” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 15). To do this, Bourdieu developed a conceptual array of what he termed ‘thinking tools’ including capital, field, and habitus (Bourdieu, 1985a). These theoretical concepts are considered in the following sections of this chapter before we return to how Bourdieu used these conceptual tools to locate the social agent conceptually between but influenced by such dualisms, and also to consider the viewpoints of those who regard his ideas as problematic.
5.3 **CONCEPTUAL TOOLS IN PIERRE BOURDIEU’S THEORY OF PRACTICE**

The diverse applications of Bourdieu’s theory of practice referred to in Section 5.1 attest to the flexibility of his theoretical framework or lens given that they can be applied to interpretation of data in a range of research areas. However, the components of this framework are holistic in that one presupposes understanding of another. This section describes the major elements of Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and provides examples of how they have been applied in educational research.

5.3.1 **Capital as sociological currency**

Pierre Bourdieu draws many of his theoretical concepts and analogies from the world of economic theory. In this respect, in Bourdieu’s view, each field of social practice values particular forms of resources or capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). He also argues that, “It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241). Bourdieu also regards the different types of capital as potentially interchangeable and synonymous with power – noting the importance of establishing “laws whereby the different types of capital (or power, which amounts to the same thing) change into one another” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). From this viewpoint, then, capital or power in its various forms is necessary to function successfully in a social field of practice. Additionally, within any field of practice, one form of capital is interchangeable with another providing there is a market for it. Capital is thus essentially a form of sociological currency which buys social position (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu identifies four types of capital – economic, cultural, social and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1986). The first type of capital, economic capital, represents material wealth “which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). The second type of capital, cultural capital, may exist in three possible forms – embodied, objectified or institutionalised – and “is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). The embodied form of cultural capital is “an integral part of the person” (p. 243) in that it is acquired over time, and becomes integrated into one’s habitus. Examples are knowledge and skills a person may acquire (Loos, 2000), and includes languages acquired which represent linguistic capital. The objectified form of cultural capital includes culture as realised “in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc.” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245). The final form of cultural capital is institutionalised cultural capital as represented in tangible form, particularly educational or technical qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245).
The third type of capital is social capital, “made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). Social capital represents “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to … membership in a [social] group” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 246).

The final type of capital is symbolic capital, represented in any form that has a symbolic and intangible nature in respect to agents in a field. In this respect, it may not be seen as capital by those agents but rather as a distinctive “legitimate competence” (e.g. skill or knowledge) necessary to improve social position in the field of concern, and manifest in any other type of capital, be this economic, cultural or social in type (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244). Examples of symbolic capital include language/s acquired, education, and friendship (Norton-Peirce, 1995); or other forms of accumulated prestige or honour (Loos, 2000).

All other forms of capital – economic, cultural and social – can assume symbolic form when considered relative to the agents in a social field. Such capitals may become symbolically powerful in identifying the social position of a group within a given field of practice, buying or assigning to that group power and prestige, and thus defining their superior social position in the field concerned (Grenfell, 2011). An example of symbolic capital is linguistic capital, an embodied form of cultural capital, which can be a legitimate competence expected in the majority of Australian workplaces. Put bluntly, no English means either no job, or only jobs that are subject to poor pay and possible exploitation. English is now considered as a major form of linguistic capital, and hence Australian universities make a lot of money from teaching English to overseas students who want to ‘buy’ this form of linguistic capital. Other languages, such as Arabic or the community languages of refugee migrants, have less value as linguistic capital in Australia.

Related to this theme of linguistic capital, Bourdieu argues that language both imposes and is imposed upon those doing the communicating in a linguistic exchange, thus “language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge but also an instrument of power [linguistic capital]. A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished” (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 648). Bourdieu also regards an educational system that teaches (English) language as an object of struggle:

The educational system is a crucial object of struggle because it has a monopoly over the production of the mass of producers and consumers, and hence over the
reproduction of the market on which the value of linguistic competence depends, in other words its capacity to function as linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 652).

From this viewpoint, a language is worth only what those who speak it are worth in terms of their economic, cultural and other capital, and their relative power relationships within the exchange (Bourdieu, 1977a).

Bourdieu also proposes that the various forms of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) have different values depending on the field in which they are realised. Further, capital can be used “both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield a power, an influence, and thus to exist in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98, original author emphasis). Thus actors entering a new social field seek to improve the capital they possess in order to gain legitimacy and better their social positions in that field. These notions of social positioning of agents related to their possession of capital in a social field are further considered in Section 5.3.2.

5.3.1.1 Capital as applied in educational research

A study by Major, Wilkinson, Langat and Santoro (2013) illustrates how the concept of capital can be applied to analysis of research in the field of education without directly invoking Bourdieu’s other conceptual tools. This research was a pilot study of Sudanese refugee youth and their families in rural and regional Australia. Education offered to these refugees is typically characterised by deficit discourses that fail to take into account the significant resources and capital that these young people and their families bring to Australia. The authors’ aim was to investigate whether the “social and other capitals generated outside the formal schooling setting, can play a significant role in generating conditions that may in turn, facilitate educational success for these students” (Major et al., 2013, p. 97).

The study by Major et al. (2013) investigated the out-of-school activities, networks and practices of four boys and four girls of Sudanese origin living in regional NSW, and ranging in age from 13-17. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews; through observation of the young people in some form of community activity; and through interviews with significant others related to each young person. This was a pilot study and does not provide a detailed report on the research. However, several key factors were reported that were able to operationalise the particular forms of social capital important to the success of these young people – these included family, friends, church, sport, the regional location and community, and
school. The authors finally conclude that these young people drew on various types of capital outside formal schooling and other resources to positively engage with Australian society. If these capitals and the factors influencing their generation can be more clearly identified by schools and utilised in teaching, then it may be possible to move away from locating these learners as deficit (which in turn keeps this group in a marginalised and dependent social position) towards empowerment of such communities.

This paper by Major et al. (2013) informs the present research in that the Muslim participants also bring various types of capital to their new life and culture in Australia, but are also educated under a model that locates them as deficit learners. When brought to bear on the participants in this thesis – male Muslim refugees (MMRs) – the concept of capital encourages close exploration of how they seek to improve their cultural, social and economic capital, and the impact of their ELTPs on these efforts. The next section of this chapter further considers Bourdieus’s notion of the field of practice, the social setting within which agents exist.

5.3.2 The struggle for social position – Bourdieu’s concepts of field, doxa and illusio
This section discusses Bourdieu’s concepts of field, doxa and illusio, elaborating on their nature, and providing an example of how these concepts have been applied in educational research.

5.3.2.1 The social field of practice
Bourdieu regards society as essentially a multidimensional social space (a ‘meta-field’) consisting of a number of interrelated social fields of practice (e.g. scientific, religious, academic/education, political, economic) within which society’s members exist (Bourdieu, 1985b). The concept of field shares a common epistemology with other disciplines such as physics, maths and psychology and, in fact, was in common use in these disciplines during the period when Bourdieu was developing his sociological perspectives on the notion of field (Hilgers & Mangez, 2015).

Bourdieu developed his notion of a social field at an early stage of his career. For example, he presages the central tenets of fields in 1969 in noting that each agent in an intellectual field is defined by their social position in that field, and that agent’s “power (or better, its authority) in the field cannot be defined independently of its position within it” (Bourdieu, 1969, p. 89). Bourdieu notes in the same article that a field is governed by its own laws, and over time begins to assume an increasing cultural legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1969). In later work, Bourdieu (1985b) reinforces these notions of field, and introduces the concept of power as being responsible for the construction of a given social field, and, further, equates that power with different types of
capital, these being “powers which define the chances of profit in a given field” (Bourdieu, 1985b, p. 196).

Loic Wacquant, currently a professor of sociology at the University of California, was a student and colleague of Pierre Bourdieu. In the latter capacity, he conducted a workshop with Bourdieu in 1989 (Towards a reflexive sociology: A workshop with Pierre Bourdieu) during which Bourdieu discussed various aspects of his work. During the workshop in 1989, Bourdieu stated the following about his concept of field:

I define a field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between [social] positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination … etc) (Wacquant, 1989, p. 39).

Referring to this definition, a field is configured and structured in a certain way (e.g. the field of education, the field of politics), containing a variety of defined social positions. Each field is organized around a particular set of social rules and logic of practice that defines (‘imposes’) the relative social position and consequent behaviours of the agents in that field. Relative social position, in turn, is a function of the degree of power/capital the agent holds within the field being considered, and can thus influence who is dominant or subordinate in that field. Bourdieu further elaborated on the position of an agent in the field, and the field as a tool of research:

We could say … that the individual, like the electron … is in a sense an emanation of the field … The notion of the field reminds us that the true object of social science is not individual, even though one cannot construct a field if not through individuals … It is the field which is primary and must be the focus of research operations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 107)

Bourdieu also argues that agents within a given field have varying degrees of economic and cultural capital available to them within, and due to, their relative social positions: “agents are distributed in the overall social space … in accordance with the overall volume … and structure of their capital [power]” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 128). Fields can thus be spaces of competition, conflict and struggle as individuals compete to improve their relative social position and capital/power. As Bourdieu (1993) notes:
We know that in every field we shall find a struggle, the specific forms of which have to be looked for each time, between the newcomer who tries to break through the entry barrier and the dominant agent who will try to defend the monopoly and keep out competition (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72).

These capitals are very unequal, and affect the motivations and expectations of agents in a social field:

As for the expectations and aspirations [of social agents], they are also very unequally distributed … by virtue of the law that, through the dispositions of habitus … expectations tend universally to be roughly adapted to the objective chances … This tendential law of human behaviours, whereby the subjective hope of profit tends to be adjusted to the objective probability of profit, governs the propensity to invest (money, work, time, emotion, etc.) in the various fields (Bourdieu, 2000a, p. 216).

This ‘tendential law of human behaviours’ suggests a deterministic stance to Bourdieu’s conception of a social field, a tacit acceptance that life and social position never really change, regardless of one’s efforts to do so. This can be likened to the ‘subjective hope’ many people have of winning the lottery, but which is realistically accepted as a highly unlikely ‘objective probability’. Bourdieu introduces the notions of doxa and illusio as a way to understand and mitigate this possible charge of determinism.

5.3.2.2 The yin and yang of field – doxa and illusio

One might ask how agents might ‘feel’ about their social positioning in a given field of practice. In this respect, Bourdieu’s notion of doxa comes into play. Bourdieu has on many occasions used the metaphor of a game to better explain his conceptual perspectives. Thus, considering the field as a social game, that game has tacit rules of play, and an unconscious acceptance of the status quo. This represents what Bourdieu has termed ‘doxa’, where agents in a field of practice have an “uncontested acceptance of … [their] daily lifeworld” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 73), and an “acceptance of the usual [social] order which goes without saying and therefore usually goes unsaid” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 424). Any field of practice is thus imbued with a doxa, the unconscious, taken for granted and unquestionable social suppositions that dominate and allow that field to function. Doxa defines what an agent or group of agents unconsciously feels might be possible or not possible in a social field based on the accepted social order in that field (Bourdieu, 2000a).

Bourdieu’s notion of doxa also influences, and is influenced by, the level of commitment or investment that an agent or group of agents is prepared to expend in attempting to improve their
position in a social field, a concept Bourdieu terms as ‘illusio’. To better explain this, he returns to the analogy of social field as a game. The object of a game is to win, thus agents in a social field generally tend towards trying to improve their positioning in that field. Their success or otherwise depends on their existing social position, the volume and type of capital they bring to the field (economic, cultural, social and symbolic), and how well their habitus fits with the social field concerned (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The degree of fit between the field and habitus of an agent determines ‘illusio’, defined as their degree of “investment … [and] belief in the game” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 86).

Relevant to this issue, Colley (2012) argues that, “illusio is therefore more explicit, conscious, and agentic than the underlying doxa” (p. 324) of a field of practice. It allows for a greater degree of agency. Doxa tends to define and reproduce the social status quo, whereas illusio at least allows for the prospect of change. At this point, the last of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools needs to be introduced – habitus. If the habitus of an agent fits comfortably into the field, then their illusio, their belief and investment in the field, will be high, and they can use the strategies of their habitus to ‘play the game’. The degree of desire to play the game depends on the interest they have in the game, their illusio (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In turn, their illusio will depend on the stakes in the game. As Bourdieu argues:

> Each field calls forth and gives life to a specific form of interest, a specific illusio, as tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game and as practical mastery of its rules. Furthermore, this specific interest implied by one’s participation in the game differentiates itself according to the [social] position occupied in the game (dominant vs dominated or orthodox vs heretic) and with the trajectory that leads each participant to this position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, P. 117).

The investment of illusio may be economic or affective (emotional), and the degree of illusio or investment by an agent/s in a given field depends on the stakes and what the agent may or may not get out of playing the game (Bourdieu, 1984). The stakes of a game must be learnt through participation in the game. Agents must have the inclination and ability to play the game, both of which depend on social and historical positioning. Furthermore, if agents do not have a stake or interest in the game, an illusio, they will be disinterested in playing the game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In reference to this, Bourdieu notes there is a circular relationship between capital and field:

> People are at once founded and legitimized to enter the field by their possessing a definite configuration of properties. One of the goals of research is to identify these active properties, these efficient characteristics, that is, these forms of specific capital
… in order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of specific capital that operate within it, and to construct the forms of specific capital one must know the specific logic of the field (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992, p. 107-108).

To know the ‘logic of the field’ assumes that the social agents in that field are familiar with the capitals required to function successfully in that field. If they are not familiar with the logic of the field or its required capitals, then the social agents have no stake in the field, no interest or investment in the field, no illusio. If there is no illusio, there is likely a higher degree of acceptance that nothing will ever change, manifest by low levels of doxa for that delegitimized group in the social field concerned.

5.3.2.3 Field, doxa and illusio as applied in educational research

A study by Colley (2012) illustrates the application of Bourdieu’s concepts of doxa, illusio and habitus in the field of workplace learning. The aim of this research was to identify the impact of the UK government’s austerity policies on workplace learning. The author studied the field of youth support work in a public service context in the north of England. A total of 26 present and past youth support workers were interviewed, as well as two senior managers and other stakeholders in the youth service. Bourdieu’s theory of practice was used as an interpretive framework. From this perspective, the austerity ideology of the UK government shifted the ‘stakes’ of the youth support field from a client-centred ethos to one that demanded the meeting of economically driven targets (Colley, 2012).

In Bourdieusian terms, these austerity measures pushed the agents in the field to modify or transpose their vocational habitus to meet these new rules of the game. However, the youth workers had invested heavily in the stakes of the field in terms of their personal values, professional education, and caring ethos. Confronted by an audit culture, the dismissal of their professional values, and a change in the economic stakes of the field, several of the youth workers reported emotional suffering as a result of a disarticulation of habitus and field, with their illusio (investment) in their field being shattered. This was also evident in a bodily toll in their reports of workplace stress and exhaustion. The accounts given by the youth workers made it clear that they could be no doxic acceptance of the new status quo or the new austerity stakes of the game, nor were they able or willing to modify their vocational habitus to meet these new demands. The effects on workplace learning were thus negative, manifest as difficulty in learning to cope with the new demands of their workplace (Colley, 2012).

When applied to the participants in this thesis, the concepts of field, doxa and illusio promote a closer consideration of the educational field in which the MMRs must participate, and to what
degree the logic of practice in that field promotes doxa and illusio in this group of people. The degree of their doxic acceptance of their social position and their consequent illusio will influence and be influenced by their perspectives on their ELTPs. However, these concepts require an understanding of the last of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools, namely habitus.

5.3.3 Habitus as the arbiter of social practice

Bourdieu published *Le Sens Practique* in French in 1980, but this was not available in English translation until 1990 when it was published as *The Logic of Practice*. In that book, Bourdieu makes reference to the fact that his theory of social practice equates to the product of a ‘practical sense’, or, put another way, a socially constituted ‘feel for the game’, an ability to unconsciously anticipate expected actions in a field of practice. This practical sense “imposes … things to be done or said, which directly govern speech and action. It orients ‘choices’ which, though not deliberate, are no less systematic, and … charged with a retrospective finality” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 66). This practical sense thus equates to the logic of practice expected in a given field as demanded by the rules of the game in that field. The logic of practice itself results from the interaction of habitus, field and capital (Bourdieu, 1990b). The notion of habitus is considered in the following paragraphs.

As an analogy, social agents are familiar with the areas in which they live and should they be driving a car in the area, this is without great effort. However, when driving in an unfamiliar place, their level of consciousness of the world around them increases. They are more careful and more explicitly aware of the potential hazards in the area, but as familiarity with that area increases, the agent’s explicit awareness of driving decreases as they again begin to drive with less effort. This is similar to Bourdieu’s conceptual tool of habitus as it restructures in response to the changing demands of the social world or field/s with which it interacts.

Habitus is a Latin word (hexis in Greek) that literally means habit or disposition. The concept of habitus has been used since the time of Aristotle in one form or another to explain various philosophical positions. However, it was a notion that was to be completely rethought by Bourdieu, who proposes that habitus “can be understood as a way of escaping from the choice between a structuralism without subject and the philosophy of the subject” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 10). In other words, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, Bourdieu uses habitus as one of his tools that try and reconcile the oppositional dualisms of objectivism and subjectivism.
Bourdieu offered many definitions in his writings of ‘habitus’ over the years, each similar but rephrased slightly in each iteration, though carrying the same basic meaning. The following definition is from *The Logic of Practice* in 1990:

[Habitus consists of] systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53).

These ‘dispositions’ refer to the ways in which agents think, feel, act and understand as a consequence of which these dispositions are embodied and internalized as non-conscious principles. These affect the unconscious way in which agents act/respond in a given social situation, even to the point that their bodily mannerisms reflect their social position and feelings. Put another way, these principles affect the agent’s logic of practice in a given social situation. These dispositions are long-lasting (‘durable’) and applicable across different social fields (‘transposable’) (Bourdieu, 1990b).

Structured structures provide learnt or internalised principles/dispositions that predispose to certain types of thought and action in any social field (Bourdieu, 1990b). Examples of structured structures are language and culture (Bourdieu, 1991). However, these structured dispositions of habitus can, once acquired, also function as ‘structuring structures’, in that the dispositions are generative and organisational, and not necessarily simply reproductive of the existing social structures (Bourdieu, 1990b). Structuring structures are thus defined by Bourdieu as “instruments for knowing and constructing the objective [social] world” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 165). Habitus is thus considered by Bourdieu to structure the social world of an individual, but also to be itself structured by that world – a reciprocal arrangement.

In Bourdieu’s conception, habitus ‘suggests’ how a person should think or act, but the final decision they make will depend on their ‘practical sense’, their feel for the social game in question. Habitus thus constrains but does not determine thought and action. Bourdieu thus does not regard habitus as a mechanistic process as he maintains people will act in ways they regard to be reasonable in given situations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). However, the question may be asked as to what defines ‘reasonable’. Habitus follows the logic of practice, the rules, of a given field as long as it is not in conflict with practical sense. However, as Bourdieu notes, “the logic of practice is logical up to the point where to be logical would cease being practical” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, p. 22-23). In other words, field behaviours normally unconsciously
People’s history, culture and past experiences influence their thinking and behaviour (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this respect, Bourdieu places schooling and education as a central influence on habitus:

The [primary] habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences … the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences … and so on, from restructuring to restructuring (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 134).

This highlights the dynamic and changing nature of habitus (‘from restructuring to restructuring’), and leads to the notion of what has been termed as primary and secondary habitus. Bourdieu argues that the dispositions acquired during exposure to the social environment of the family produce the ‘primary habitus’, an ‘irreversible disposition’, but “which is the basis for the subsequent formation of any other [secondary/specific/acquired] habitus” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 43). The secondary or specific habitus is acquired as the result of education, employment or other experiences as one travels through the fields of life. For example, the forced migration and integration into another culture and language such as that experienced by the MMRs in this study will influence a restructuring of their first cultural habitus.

It is interesting that Bourdieu himself (or his translators) do not appear to have ever used the term ‘secondary habitus’ in his published work, rather it seems to have been appropriated by those applying his conceptual tools in their research and writings. Other than primary habitus, in Bourdieu’s writings there has been reference to a ‘cultivated habitus’ which refers to the acquired habitus inculcated by formal schooling (Bourdieu, 1977b). This cultivated habitus from schooling is an example of group or ‘class habitus’ (i.e. social class) which tends to reproduce the societal status quo because “the dispositions and predispositions which, in generating practices adapted to these [social] structures, enable the structures to function and be perpetuated’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 204).

Bourdieu argues that such (pre)dispositions are an important factor in determining and reproducing educational chances by making legitimate the expectations of certain social groups disadvantaged in mainstream society. He proposes that the class habitus resulting from
traditional education has persuaded those who fail in the system that the fault is theirs, and not the result of the educational system itself (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Additionally, the idea of a class habitus also affects interpersonal interactions. They are never equal person to person relationships because “the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction … in fact it is their … positions in the social structure … in the form of dispositions [habitus]” that defines the interpersonal social conduct of agents in a given social interaction – “in short, knowing one’s [social] place and staying there” (Bourdieu, 1977b, pp. 81-82). Habitus thus defines the social distance (and thus the power relationships) between those agents in any interaction in a given field of practice. This sets the scene for symbolic domination and violence which are considered in Section 5.4 of this chapter.

Habitus, in summary, has a number of essential features. First, habitus is ‘embodied’ (in bodily hexis according to Bourdieu) because, as well as mental attitudes and perceptions, habitus is also expressed in ways of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 70). Second, while habitus makes allowance for individual agency and some unexpected behaviours, it nevertheless still influences actors to behave in expected ways within the social field concerned: this is because habitus represents “a system of dispositions … an objective basis for regular modes of behaviour … [thus] agents … will behave in a certain way in certain circumstances” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 77). Third, habitus exists not only for individuals but also the “entire collective history” of the social group/s to which that individual belongs (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 91). Finally, habitus depends on the past history and experiences of an individual or group, being transformable and diversifying with broadening of social experience (Bourdieu, 1990a).

Habitus is perhaps the most contested area within the notions of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly as critics have argued it is overly reductionistic and deterministic: in that the dispositional nature of habitus reduces a complex phenomenon to an explanation based on concepts which are too simplistic (reductionistic), and that habitus does not adequately allow for the individual choice of an agent (deterministic). For example, Alexander (1995) argues that Bourdieu’s theory is reductionist as it conceives socialisation as materially reflective rather than mediated by culture, and lacks logic and internal complexity. He further calls Bourdieu’s notion of habitus a “Trojan horse for determinism … Far from an alternative to social structural explanation, habitus merely operationalizes it” (Alexander, 1995, p. 136). He finally concludes Bourdieu’s theoretical perspectives as contradictory and inconsistent in their attempt to combine aspects of both subjectivism and objectivism (Alexander, 1995).
In fact, based on the foregoing discussion, Bourdieu’s notions about habitus actually imply a ‘flexible’ determinism. Habitus is structured but also structuring. It is the product of the whole individual’s background and upbringing, determining some social behaviours, but allowing latitude for some unpredictability, and for ongoing restructuring depending on experience, and social mobility if social context allows. For example, McClelland (1990), equates habitus with ‘worldview’ and believes that Bourdieu uses the notion of habitus “to explain how individuals come to formulate and change their aspirations and expectations” (McClelland, 1990, p. 103).

Bourdieu’s viewpoint on habitus thus makes some allowance for individual agency and some unexpected behaviours. He regards habitus as the product of an agent’s family, socio-economic class, education and ideology (being also the product of the entire collective history of the person’s social group). It thus predisposes a person to act in particular ways in particular circumstances, but at the same time it is transformable and flexible depending on social context (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). However, there are objections to Bourdieu’s perspectives on habitus as too deterministic, particularly in the area of structure and agency. These viewpoints are further considered in Section 5.6 of this chapter.

5.3.3.1 Habitus as applied in educational research

Regardless of their problematic nature in the eyes of some reviewers, Bourdieu’s conceptual tools of field and habitus have sometimes been used in educational research without invoking the third major tool in his array, namely capital. Rachael Jacobs (2008), for example, at the Australian Catholic University School of Education notes that arts studies are likely to be a compulsory part of the Australian curriculum in the near future. On this basis, in her qualitative study she interviewed a convenience sample of five arts lecturers “to explore the extent to which the societal habitus affects pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the arts” (Jacobs, 2008, p. 59). This study suggests that community habitus (disposition) towards the arts is at best ambivalent in that they see little value in arts education, regarding it as lacking purpose, lacking educational rigour, and lacking work outcomes. This negative community habitus was found to have been inculcated into the acquired habitus of pre-service teachers. This stands in contrast to the alternative acquired habitus of the arts lecturers formed over years of arts teaching and advocacy. “The question is, how does this impact upon their pedagogy and instruction of pre-service teachers?” (Jacobs, 2008, p. 69). The answer was that this impact was strong: in that the lecturers went to considerable effort to prepare student teachers as well as possible prior to their career in teaching arts education, this being with a view to stimulating change in the negative community dispositions towards the arts (Jacobs, 2008).
This study thus demonstrates the interplay of habitus and its generation. The generally ambivalent community habitus towards the arts was found to be inculcated into the dispositions of a group of its members (pre-service teachers). However, there is the possibility of change produced by the alternative positive habitus of the arts teachers. This illustrates the potential for reflexive change in the nature of acquired habitus in response to education, though the final comment made indicates that “much of the action tends to be reproductive, rather than transformative”, this being due to lack of available teaching time and other logistical issues. However, change in any individual habitus has the potential to influence change elsewhere (Jacobs, 2008, p. 71).

In another example, Johnson (2009) uses Bourdieu’s notions of habitus and field to explore how computer and internet expertise in teenagers is developed within the field described as “out-of-school leisure” (Johnson, 2009, p. 31). Using snowball, purposeful sampling, this qualitative study used in-depth interviews and observations for data collection in order to study the research question stated as: “How does the habitus of this group of New Zealand teenagers challenge and/or agree with traditional/adult notions of expertise?” (Johnson, 2009, p. 33). The eight teenage participants ranged in age from 13 to 17, with five males and three females who were all still attending school. For the purposes of this article, Johnson (2009) describes those who have used digital technologies from birth (including the teenagers in this study) as ‘digital insiders’, as opposed to those ‘digital newcomers’ who have only recently been introduced to digital media (e.g. the parents of the participants).

Johnson (2009) identified three key dispositions which constituted the habitus of each of the teenage participants: time, experimentation and flow. The cumulative effect of time spent on experimenting with and using a computer was identified by all participants as critical to becoming an expert in computer use. Along with time, the second key disposition in the habitus of the participants was their willingness to engage in experimentation with computers in order to learn and gain expertise in their use. The third and final key disposition identified was that of flow, characterised by total absorption and a feeling of being in control in the use of a computer, with a consequent loss of the sense of time, loss of any self-consciousness about use of the computer, and a feeling of sustained interest and pleasure. These dispositions are considered as influencing the teenage participants’ doxic (accepted) ways of thinking and acting, and thus their practice in the field of out-of-school leisure as they moved towards becoming technological experts in home computer and internet use.
Comments from the teenage participants (digital insiders) about the attitudes of their parents to their computer use generally indicated the contrary perspectives of their parents (digital newcomers). Johnson (2009) thus argues that there is “a tension regarding how practice in the field is conceptualised differently by digital insiders and digital newcomers” (Johnson, 2008, p. 31). The teenagers see the use of computers as leisure and a means to improve their computer expertise. In contrast, they report their parental perspectives as generally negative and indicative of possible addiction to the use of computers. The final conclusion made by the author is that:

Addiction is seen as negative, or bad, but really the practice of these teenagers is not understood according to the conventions of the field that they have been placed in. The habitus of the adults, who may see the practice as addiction or addictive, is different to the habitus of the participants (Johnson, 2009, p. 42).

Johnson’s (2009) study informs this thesis in that it demonstrates both how Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts of habitus and field can be applied within educational research, and also to the analysis of the findings from a small qualitative study as represented by this present research.

Research by Stockfelt (2015) provides a final example demonstrating how Bourdieu’s concepts of field, capital and habitus can be applied in the social field of education. This research reports on the qualitative phase of a twelve month, mixed-methods study focusing on the social, cultural and economic factors impacting on the educational aspirations of students in two Jamaican schools. School A serviced a mid-upper class neighbourhood and students with realistic academic aspirations; in contrast, school B serviced a deprived neighbourhood and lower achieving students. There were 64 participants consisting of 37 boys aged 10-17, 12 teaching staff and 15 parents/community members associated with these schools. Data collected using interviews and participant observation was analysed using Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts of habitus and capital.

The main findings were that educational aspirations were significantly influenced by four specific factors: socio-economic status (SES), type of community (‘garrison’ [i.e. high crime and violence] or suburban), type of school (traditional grammar or ‘newly upgraded’ [i.e. lower achieving]), and class performance streams (based on academic testing). The author reconceptualised these factors in terms of capital: economic capital consisted of SES and type of community, and social capital consisted of type of school and performance streams.

Economic capital had a particularly strong impact on the participants’ educational aspirations, with boys in school B (lower SES and garrison community) generally having lower aspirations.
than school A (higher SES and suburban community). Boys in school B were disadvantaged by limited finances, limited access to higher education, and maintaining participation at school, characterised in this study as limited economic capital reducing their educational aspirations. The entirely opposite scenario applied to the higher SES school A (Stockfelt, 2015).

Type of school and performance streams were regarded as sources of social capital in that affiliation with these groups had negative or positive effects on student aspirations. School A and the high performing streams generally had a higher degree of social capital than those students not included in these groups. However, economic capital was of greater significance than social capital, in that some students with lower social capital still had higher educational aspirations, but lacked the economic means to achieve them (Stockfelt, 2015).

Participant responses from those in the lower SES garrison areas indicated that the endemic violence and crime in these locations, as well as the poverty and generally lower educational achievement, were often accepted as normal for this type of community. In Bourdieusian terms, this was interpreted by Stockfelt (2015) as a collective class habitus generally accepting a disadvantaged social position as normal. In fact, (though not called this by Stockfelt, 2015), this represents a form of symbolic violence (further considered in Section 5.4).

Not all members of this SES garrison group accepted their disadvantaged social position, in that they exercised agency through higher educational aspirations or by joining the ‘Jamaican Diaspora’ to the UK and other Western countries in order to improve their economic capital (Stockfelt, 2015). However, as Bourdieu (1977) notes, the exercise of agency is limited, based on the actual social reality and economic position of these students in their educational and larger societal field. This is reflected in Stockfelt’s (2015) final conclusion that:

Overall, what remains is high or low EA [educational achievement] in relation to their categorisation by the education system, dispositional beliefs inculcated by their primary/secondary experiences within the social structures, and personal agency as limited by these structures/experiences within their educational field (Stockfelt, 2015, p. 22).

This study by Stockfelt (2015) informs the present research in that it demonstrates a nuanced application of Bourdieu’s theoretical notions of field, habitus and capital to analyse and describe the social realities of disadvantage in Jamaica. The male Muslim refugee participants in the research conducted for this thesis are similarly disadvantaged, and their perspectives on (and outcomes of) their English language training programmes are similarly affected by the dispositions of their first cultural habitus, and also their prior experiences as refugees. The
Stockfelt (2015) study suggests that Bourdieu’s conceptual tools can be an effective way to analyse and describe their social realities, and address the research question about the perspectives of the participants on the effectiveness of their English language training in respect to settlement and gaining employment in Australia.

When considered relative to the participants in this thesis, the concept of habitus encourages close exploration of how the dispositions and perspectives of the MMRs formed from their own culture and society – an acquired group habitus – change with exposure to the Australian culture and way of life, and also in response to their attendance at the federal ELTPs. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, the changes are problematic at the collective level, but transformative for some at the individual level. However, this change is not always smooth as agents enter a new field of practice. It is possible here to return to the earlier analogy of habitus as the driver in a social field: a driver may become familiar with a new area in which they must drive, their new field. However, on occasion, the traffic may prove to be too much, overwhelming to the new driver. This is analogous to Bourdieu’s notion of hysteresis of the habitus, discussed in the next section.

5.3.3.2 Hysteresis of the habitus – the nemesis of doxa

On occasion, agents in a field of practice find a ‘quasi-perfect fit’ between their habitus and the social world around them. The logic of practice in that field is “taken for granted … a self-evident and natural [social] order that goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned” (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 166). This is the experience of ‘doxa’ (referred to earlier in Section 5.3.2.2 of this chapter) where field and habitus are congruent and aligned. In elaborating on this doxic link between field, habitus and social reality, Bourdieu made the following comment during a workshop with Loic Wacquant in 1989:

Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents. And when this habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself “as fish in water,” it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted (Wacquant, 1989, p. 43).

Bourdieu also commented that, “Innocence is the privilege of those who move in their field of activity like fish in water” (Bourdieu 1986, 257). This innocent doxic acceptance of the status quo may limit the aspirations of agents in the field/s concerned, in the words of Bourdieu, “the agents’ aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 166). We begin here to see how, in this ‘doxic mode’, agents become resigned to their social position through social reproduction and the misrecognition of
the real power relationships in a society by those in a disadvantaged social position (Bourdieu, 1977). This, of course, relates back to the Bourdieu’s ‘tendential law of human behaviours’, referred to earlier in this chapter (see Section 5.3.2.1) and also relates to the concept of symbolic violence (see Section 5.4).

Bourdieu also accounted for the opposite situation where there is a misalignment between habitus and field, calling this a ‘hysteresis of habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990b, 2000a). This occurs where there is a “discrepancy between habitus and field in which conduct remains unintelligible unless you bring into the picture habitus and its specific inertia, its hysteresis” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 130). Thus, where the social behaviours inherent in a person’s primary or secondary/specific habitus are misaligned relative to a new field of practice in which they find themselves, then that person becomes like a fish out of water (though this specific analogy was never used by Bourdieu, only the fish in water notion). Bourdieu regards this as “one of the foundations of the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities” (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 83). In this view, hysteresis is due to the persistence of “durable dispositions” that have outlived the economic and social conditions in which they were originally produced, and have failed to adapt to the new social conditions in which the agent is now located (Bourdieu, 1990b p. 62).

5.3.3.3 Hysteresis of the habitus as applied in educational research

This hysteresis effect on habitus has been used in the past several researchers to analyse and explain the behaviours of their subjects: for example, in medicine (e.g. Kirschner & Lachicotte 2001), in social work (e.g. Houston, 2002), and in migrant resettlement (e.g. Dumenden & English, 2013; Noble, 2013). The work of Dumenden and English (2013) will be reviewed here as an example of how this notion of hysteresis can be applied to the field of education.

In their qualitative study, Dumenden and English (2013) used the concept of the hysteresis of the habitus as a theoretical framework to examine the experiences of two non-English speaking background students as they coped with the Australian education system. Interviews were conducted with a refugee student in Melbourne (a Burmese male in year 12) and an international student in Brisbane (a Chinese male in year 10), both enrolled in post-compulsory education in an Australian secondary school. Both students sought help from their teachers on more than one occasion, but that help was not given. The students saw this as prejudice by the

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8 According to the online Oxford English Dictionary, the term hysteresis comes from physics where it represents “the phenomenon in which the value of a physical property lags behind changes in the effect causing it” (Oxford University Press, 2015). Bourdieu (or rather his translator/s) has appropriated this term to describe how an agent’s habitus sometimes lags behind in a new field of practice in which it must now exist.
teachers against them for not helping to meet their special needs. However, the alternative reading is that teachers at these year levels in Australia expect students to be more independent, whereas in Burma and China this is not the case. The student interviews indicated that both boys had suffered frustration and alienation in their mainstream Australian schools. The findings suggested to the researchers that their habitus had encountered the literally foreign environment of the Australian school system, resulting in conflict with their habitus formed from their own education and cultural systems. The result was a hysteresis or inertia of the habitus, feeling as a fish out of water – they could no longer take their social world for granted, until and if such time as their dispositions changed, and their habitus reshaped to cope with their new Australian social world.

When applied to the participants in this thesis, the concept of hysteresis encourages careful examination of how the dispositions of the MMRs change as they cope with their new social world in Australia, particularly in the field of education, whether their habitus became aligned to their new field of practice or whether they suffered a hysteresis of their habitus.

In their study of the Australian field of education, Dumenden and English (2013) also suggest that fault lies in the education system itself: in Bourdieusian terms, that there was an equal inertia in the habitus of the teachers and schools, a lag in their adaptation to the multicultural student body which they must now educate (Dumenden & English, 2013). Interestingly, it seems that this educational situation has not changed much since 1977 when Bourdieu and Passeron wrote the following:

An educational system based on a traditional type of pedagogy can fulfill its function of inculcation only so long as it addresses itself to students equipped with the linguistic and cultural capital – and the capacity to invest it profitably – which the system presupposes and consecrates without ever expressly demanding it and without methodically transmitting it (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 99).

It appears that the two students in the Dumenden and English (2013) study were not provided with the linguistic and cultural capital necessary to function in the Australian school system. This equates to symbolic violence, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, p. 5) state: “All pedagogic action … is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary [linguistic and cultural capital] by an arbitrary power [the Australian education system]”. This concept of symbolic violence is considered in the next section of this chapter.
5.4 THE GENTLE ART OF SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

To understand symbolic violence, it is necessary to return to Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital. This is any form of capital (economic, social or cultural) that is represented symbolically, in fact unrecognised as capital or a form of power by those in the field of practice concerned (Bourdieu, 1986). In this respect, Bourdieu further argues that: “Symbolic power … [is] based on the possession of symbolic capital … the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition … [for example] a power of making a new [social] group” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23).

Agents in a given or new social group thus do not recognise the phenomenon being considered as a form of capital, rather they see it as what Bourdieu terms a ‘legitimate competence’ necessary to function in the social field concerned. In fact, in Bourdieu’s view, this legitimate competence is an “authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 49): in that the agents in the field of practice concerned do not appreciate that without this legitimate competence they remain in a disadvantaged social position. Such misrecognition sets the stage for that agent or their collective group to experience symbolic violence. This represents forms of coercion which do not rely on physical force but which represent “gentle, invisible violence, unrecognised as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, debts, piety” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 127). All these examples incur a social expectation of certain social behaviours and positioning which require the cooperation or active complicity of all those in the social field concerned. As Bourdieu argues:

Symbolic violence is that particular form of constraint that can only be implemented with the active complicity – which does not mean that it is conscious and voluntary – of those who submit to it and … they deprive themselves of the possibility of a freedom founded on the awakening of consciousness. This tacitly accepted constraint is necessarily implemented whenever objective [social] structures encounter the mental structures that are in agreement with them (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 4).

Symbolic violence can thus be seen to assume three elements in the habitus of those subject to it: consent, complicity and misrecognition. The consent and complicity are implicit in the actions of those subject to the symbolic violence: in that the collective or class habitus of that group unconsciously accepts their social disadvantage as normal, as do the group imposing that disadvantage. The misrecognition is in the fact that the interacting social agents see their social positioning as normal, misrecognising the underlying power (capital) relationships as normal and legitimate in that social field. This is the basis of symbolic violence which reinforces social inequality and is also the basis of social reproduction. As Wacquant proposes, symbolic violence imposes “principles of vision of the world that legitimize inequality by making the
divisions of social space appear rooted in the inclinations [habitus] of individuals rather than the underlying distribution of capital [power]” (Wacquant, 2008, p. 272).

Bourdieu’s thinking on symbolic violence recalls his concepts of doxa, this being represented in a tacit group acceptance of what will be, will be. In a pensive frame of mind, Bourdieu also writes: “Think for instance of the expression 'This is not for us' by which the most deprived exclude themselves from possibilities from which they would be excluded anyway” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 112). In this respect, Bourdieu (2000) notes that those in a disadvantaged group accept, in advance, social limits that will be placed on them, seeing them as natural, unavoidable, even as just; and that “the practical recognition [of this domination] … often takes the form of bodily emotion (shame, timidity, anxiety, guilt)” (Bourdieu, 2000, p.169, original author emphasis). Additionally, as Blackledge (2001) notes, there may also be self-censorship in the dominated group, and they may be reduced to near silence in the dominant language due to lack of confidence and lack of proficiency in, for example, English. Their first language thus becomes a symbolic boundary of constraint.

5.4.1 Symbolic violence as applied in educational research

From a Bourdieusian perspective, education perpetuates the viewpoints of the dominant group within a society. This is on the grounds that Bourdieu regards education as a key mechanism by which people are sorted and classified according to the kinds of capital they bring (or do not bring) to the educational field. Education thus fulfils a reproductive function: reproducing the social structures and values of the dominant society and culture, and reproducing class positions and social inequity (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Bourdieu proposed, in fact, that traditional education systems have a ‘functional duplicity’ in that education has the “social function of reproducing the class relations, by ensuring the hereditary transmission of cultural capital … [and the] ideological function of legitimating the established order” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p.199). Cultural capital in this view includes the credentials of successful education, namely the certificates and degrees awarded by its institutions. Bourdieu sees any form of institutional qualification as an act of institutionalised symbolic violence:

A socially recognised qualification is one of the most typical demonstrations of that monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence … A diploma such as a school diploma is a piece of universally recognized and guaranteed symbolic capital, valid on all markets (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21).
As will be seen in the two examples that follow, symbolic violence can take many forms: for example, in being denied resources, treated as inferior, or being limited in terms of realistic aspirations (Webb et al, 2002).

Johnson, Macdonald and Brabazon (2008) use Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic violence in the research field of education. They note the increasing shift of tertiary education onto a digital platform: for example, in online learning, in subject resource materials, and in the increasing expectation that students interact electronically with their lecturers and peers. The authors report that many students struggle with electronic access to their course resources, but requests for help from the university staff are turned back on them: for example, that the student does not have the appropriate software, or their internet speed is too slow. The assumption is that all students should be technologically literate, and have access to the latest technology and high speed internet. Additionally, universities propose e-learning as available to all on an equal basis, with no discrimination in respect to gender, race, age or disability, but they still have to pay the fees. This results in a demographic that lacks economic capital to buy the appropriate technology, and/or lacks the cultural capital of technological literacy. This group become disenfranchised, and are often from a disadvantaged social position to start with. This means they are denied access to this digital learning, and are consequently treated as inferior and become limited in their aspirations. This constitutes a form of symbolic violence.

A study by Watson and Widin (2014) provides a second example using Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic violence in educational research. These authors present two case studies, one in the UK and one in Australia. The UK university context concerned a higher education institution encouraging greater socio-economic diversity of its student cohort. The educational experiences of two mature-aged student participants at this UK university were highlighted. ‘George’ came from a family with a professional and academic background which provided her with the academic and linguistic capital to easily enter the academic field, and where her habitus was congruent with the logic of practice of that field. She exited with a first class honours degree and was considering further tertiary study. In contrast, ‘Tracey’ was from a working class background. She lacked the academic and linguistic capital required in the academic field, with a secondary habitus unsuited to this field. The final outcomes for Tracey were failed units and unresolved debts which led to her exit from her university course. In this study both George and Tracey were seen as the victims of the symbolic violence of the academic field, though in two opposite ways, but each reproducing the status quo of social groupings (Watson and Widin, 2014).
The Australian university context concerned a higher education institution seeking cultural and linguistic diversity in its student cohort. The experiences of Asian participants attending an international education programme for English language teachers are reported. Despite being qualified English teachers in their own countries, the university demanded they complete a local pre-service teaching programme. This was accepted by participants as valuable to them in their own countries. The university programme also failed to provide what these overseas English teachers thought they were to get from their course: development of a culturally-appropriate English language training curriculum designed for their own country and culture. They got instead an English language training programme centred on Australian interests. This provides an example of symbolic violence as the university delegitimised these overseas teachers’ existing qualifications and capital (cultural and linguistic), and this was misrecognised as appropriate by these qualified English teachers. Additionally, the university programme privileged Australian social values and delegitimised those of the overseas teachers by providing them with a culturally inappropriate teaching curriculum based on Australian interests (Watson & Widin, 2014).

In the final example of research in this section, Naidoo (2009) uses Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital and symbolic violence to analyse and understand the findings from a qualitative research study that aimed “to explore the role of schooling, in particular after-school homework tutoring, in facilitating the inclusion of African refugee students in Australian society” (Naidoo, 2009, p. 261). The young African refugees attending this after-school programme generally had past life experiences that not only included disrupted schooling, but also trauma, displacement and the experience of living in refugee camps. The result was that they rarely possessed the academic dispositions or schooling habitus necessary for success in mainstream Australian secondary school classrooms. The aim of the after-school tutoring programme was to change this.

The participants in this study were tutors within the after-school programme who were drawn from students attending the secondary teacher education course at the University of Western Sydney. Data was collected using two focus group interviews with tutors at the beginning and end of each tutoring programme which extended over a school term. Over three terms, a random sample of thirty tutors were involved in these focus group interviews in each of the homework centres. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with tutors and coordinating teachers “to document the change and the nature of the change in refugee students” (Naidoo, 2009, p. 266). The author goes on to argue that:
School has functions in Australian society that extend well beyond academic achievement in that they teach students within the hidden curriculum how to interact with peers, how to negotiate their places in Australian society, and how to construct their identities within their social realm (Naidoo, 2009, p. 266).

The unfortunate consequence of this is that schools tend to reproduce the social status quo (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1977) due to an acquired habitus inculcated by formal schooling (Bourdieu, 1977b). Given this, Naidoo (2009, p. 266-267) suggests that: “African refugees may, in view of the circumstances under which they arrived in Australia, receive lower returns for education, work experience, and other social capital-building investments”. This is representative of a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This interpretation was supported in the responses of some of the tutors, and representative “not only [of] symbolic violence, but also a lack of social and cultural capital” (Naidoo, 2009, p. 267). However, the research found that to some degree this lack of capital was offset by the cultural and historical heritage of the students provided through their families and community members. Strong family and community connections provided the refugee students with cultural and social capital that allowed some of them to achieve rather than fail in their schooling.

A final theme that emerged from the data was the negative effects of racism on learning, this being a reason cited by several tutors for joining this tutoring project in order to gain professional experience as well as assist potentially disadvantaged refugee students. The nonthreatening setting of the homework centres allowed refugee students the opportunity for interaction and friendship with tutors and other students, many of whom came from similar backgrounds. It is argued by Naidoo (2009) that this exemplifies the ability of an individual’s habitus to change and be reshaped within a new social field, here that of the after-school homework centres. The parental and student choice of education as a means to progress their social position assisted the students to acquire not only social capital by attendance at the homework centres, but also cultural capital as they were able to improve their English proficiency and thus learn the “language of power” (Naidoo, 2009, p. 270) so necessary for education and social advancement in Australian society. In such cases, rather than education being reproductive, it becomes transformative.

This research by Naidoo (2009) informs this thesis in that it again demonstrates how Bourdieu’s theory of practice can be applied in the field of education. Additionally, the refugee students whose habitus changed in response to the new social field of the homework centres echoes the findings of this thesis, as the habitus of the male Muslim participants was also found to be reshaped in response to the demands placed upon them by the new social fields in which they
must interact. These themes are explored in the analysis Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine of this thesis.

In later work, Naidoo et al. (2015) studied the barriers and challenges that refugee background students may encounter as they transition from secondary school to university in Australia. It is not the intention to review this research in detail here, but only to note that some of the assumptions made by teachers and lecturers about refugee background students see them as deficient learners with few skills that would allow them to succeed in Australian society. Similarly, they are often seen “as a homogeneous cohort, whose learning style, inexperience with tertiary education, language and past experiences were inhibiting rather than enabling” (Naidoo et al, 2015, p. 9). As will be seen, this is not the case for the male Muslim refugee participants in this present research. Further reference to Naidoo et al. (2015) is made in the final Chapter Ten of this thesis.

When brought to bear on the MMRs as participants in this research, the notion of symbolic violence promotes closer examination of how this group tend to remain in a disadvantaged social position through the reproductive nature of their federal ELTPs, but also by the dispositions of their acquired Australian habitus. The effects of symbolic violence on the male Muslim refugee participants in this present research are considered in Chapter Nine.

5.5 INTERPLAY OF HABITUS, CAPITAL AND FIELD IN RECONCILIATION OF STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

Interplay between habitus and capital within a given social field leads to the logic of practice (the rules of the game) associated with the field concerned. The logic of practice in any given field depends on the collective habitus of the agents in the field, and the social rules that flow on from this. An agent’s specific habitus determines their degree of belief and investment in the rules of the game (illusio) which in turn is influenced by their social position in the field (doxa), and that position relates to the degree of capital they bring to the field (Walther, 2014).

Bourdieu stated his rationale for developing his theory of practice centred on habitus: “I developed the concept of habitus to incorporate the objective structures of society and the subjective role of agents within it” (Bourdieu, 2000b, online). Additionally, he notes that the linkage between field and habitus is one of opposites, a dialectical relationship between objective structures (field) and subjective dispositions (habitus) operating in a given field. This interplay tends towards reproduction of the objective social structures, the status quo (Bourdieu, 1977b).
In his theory of practice, Bourdieu thus positions the agent between these two opposite and opposing positions, representing the epistemological perspectives of objectivism and subjectivism. For Bourdieu, the interaction of field, capital and habitus produce a particular logic of practice for a given field: an unconscious set of strategic behaviours that depend on the capital possessed by an agent in the social field concerned (Bourdieu, 1990a). He defines the relationships producing a logic of practice in a formula (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101).

\[(\text{habitus}) \times (\text{capital}) + \text{field} = \text{practice}\]

This formula’s relationships appear to regard field as separate from habitus and capital, and also habitus and capital working together inside a given field to produce a particular logic of practice for the field concerned. This logic of practice combines the effects of structured and structuring structures, the objective field and the subjective habitus, that together define and describe the social reality of the agent/s concerned (Wacquant, 1989). In this way, Bourdieu claims to reconcile structure and agency, by adopting a position where both objective and subjective influences on an agent are given a relative value as they form perspectives on their social reality. Some academics, however, remain unconvinced by Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and these concerns are considered in the next section of this chapter.

5.6 **CRITIQUE OF BOURDIEU’S THEORY OF PRACTICE**

In the view of some commentators, there is a problem with a number of Bourdieu’s most commonly deployed theoretical concepts. For example, Jenkins (2002) argues that Bourdieu’s models of social process are (or can appear to be) exceedingly deterministic, providing no real choice for the social actor/s in a given field of practice:

He [Bourdieu] seeks … to transcend the objectivist-subjectivist dualism while remaining firmly rooted in objectivism. He vociferously rejects determinism while persistently producing deterministic models of social process. He perpetually reminds his readers that his accounts of social life should only be read as models of that social reality - 'it all happens as if' - but is equally consistent in his use of the language of positivist empiricism, which presents his analysis as based in a 'real' material world (Jenkins, 2002, p. 175-176).

Heller (1992) similarly regards Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic domination and violence as deterministic in that they may explain how social relations of power can be sustained, but fail to offer any method to explore how resistance and transformation might be accomplished in relations of power and hegemony. This returns to the dichotomy between ‘structure’ and
‘agency’ in respect to shaping human behaviour. In any theory of power (including that of Bourdieu), power within a given social space is assigned either to agents (individual, groups or organisations), or power is seen as inherent within the structures of society (rules, social constraints and so on) outside the control of agents. Theories of power differ in how much importance they place on either agency or structure in determining human behaviours. Where there is little choice available to the actors, this may lead to symbolic domination and violence (Dowding, 2011).

In his theory of practice, Bourdieu tried to overcome the dualism of structure and agency by positing ‘mental structures’ and ‘social structures’ in his notions of habitus and field respectively. Habitus (mental structures) drives norms of behaviour in fields of practice (social structures) anchored in various forms of capital (power). Bourdieu has been criticised for an overemphasis on structure, with too much attention paid to people’s unconscious ‘practical sense’ (logic of practice) rather than their conscious awareness, and tending towards reproduction of social structures (fields of practice) (Loyal, 2012).

In reference to this, McRobbie (2004) notes that “field and habitus seem to suggest a set of binaries, one crudely of structure, the other of agency … [and] the field invariably procures the submission of the habitus” (p. 104). In this view, Bourdieu again favours structure (field) over habitus (agency). Habitus thus adjusts to the demands of a field of practice, and agency/habitus is subordinated to structure/field which tends to reproduce existing social structures of power. In respect to this, McNay (2004) notes that “By producing an account of power that is structurally committed to the status quo, Bourdieu forecloses the possibility of agency emerging from the margins” (pp. 180-181). However, research suggests this may not be correct.

Research has shown that the dominated are not necessarily passive in their acceptance of the status quo. They may experience symbolic domination, but they are not necessarily symbolically violated, in that they are not ‘active participants’ in their domination. This can be seen in several studies where agents in a social field of practice are in dominated class positions, but nevertheless still exercise some form of agency and/or resistance to the status quo (‘agency’ here is understood to be “the idea that individuals are equipped with the ability to understand and control their own actions, regardless of the circumstances of their lives”, and their actions may thus show an intentionality and direction – Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. ix).

Skeggs (2004), for example, notes that in her previous ethnographic work in 1997, white working-class women would ‘perform femininity’ within their social space because any other behaviours would be perceived as unacceptable according to the viewpoint of the dominant
society. However, this is not to say that they accepted this category of femininity with its connotations of docility and fragility because, in fact, their working-class background was more associated with robust behaviours traditionally associated with forms of masculinity. They exercised agency against it by making fun of their own behaviours in a collective group-based way. Their experience was not an unconscious one of misrecognition, but rather a class-based and gendered experience of which they were both quite aware of, and highly critical about. “They strongly refused the perspectives of the powerful” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 25).

Other studies also indicate the role of agency and resistance to the status quo. Zine (2001) details a study of Muslim youth in mainstream secular Canadian schools using existing theories of identity maintenance and construction for analysis. These students were under pressure to conform to the values of the dominant white culture, with its negative social influences of peer pressure, dating, drugs and alcohol, also the burden of racism, discrimination and Islamophobia in the schools. Their resistance took the form of establishing social networks within the Muslim community, and also joining Muslim Student Associations within high schools which provided peer support and guidance to Muslim students in line with Muslim values. This allowed these Islamic students to establish mechanisms of solidarity and resistance to the pressures of a secular school system, and to negotiate and maintain their religious identity and Islamic lifestyle.

Another study by Fangan and Paasche (2012) describes the negative experiences of young adults of ethnic minorities in dealing with employers and customers within the dominant Norwegian white culture. Instead of passively accepting exclusionary practices as might be expected given their subordinated position in Norwegian society, these young people identified and used positive strategies to cope with and counter these negative experiences. In respect to employers, these strategies included engaging with social support networks from their own cultural community through which these young adults were often able to gain and maintain employment. Other interviewees used ‘impression management’, conceptualizing discrimination more as ‘information processing’ by others rather than a racist phenomenon, and consequently proactively communicating a positive image of cultural identity in jobs applications and interviews, though with emphasis on being born and raised in Norway. Other interviewees within customer service roles experienced racism from customers, but coped by taking an understanding and deliberately-conceived empathic approach rather than a negative stance towards such customers, thereby reclaiming the moral high ground. There were also reported instances of taking a confrontational stance, but remaining within the limits imposed by their employers.
Such studies as these indicate that agents are not necessarily passive in their acceptance of an inferior social position in a dominant society, and that there are real choices for the social actor/s in a given field of practice. This is applicable to the MMR participants in the research, some of whom demonstrated a degree of agency in dealing with their new Australian country and culture of settlement. These are detailed in Chapter Seven.

5.7 Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice as the Theoretical Framework for this Research

The previous sections of this chapter have outlined the major components of Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and provided various examples of how his conceptual tools have been applied in the field of education in Australia and elsewhere. Reference has also been made to how each of Bourdieu’s tools can be used to evaluate the perspectives of the MMRs as participants in this research. This section of the chapter details how the lived experiences and perspectives of male Muslim refugees can be mapped onto this theoretical framework. This allows for better understanding and analysis of the social reality of the MMRs in their new culture and country of Australia, and thus their perspectives on the effectiveness of their ELTPs in assisting them in settlement and gaining employment in the Australian social space.

It is proposed by Bourdieu that an agent’s habitus may be reshaped several times over the course of their lives, influenced by their education, employment and other social fields in which they interact. Thus in the case of the MMRs their primary habitus is formed from the social field of their family. The next reshaping of their habitus, built on the scaffold of the primary habitus, results from exposure to education, employment and other influences from their first language and Islamic culture. This is expressed in the collective habitus of their particular social group (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This is the acquired group habitus which they bring to the multidimensional Australian social meta-field and which influences the formation of their acquired Australian habitus as shown in Figure 5.1.

Another factor that influences the Australian habitus of the MMRs is ‘structured structures’ (see Figure 5.1). These are the objective social structures of Australian society, particularly realised by and through the dominant English language, and the educational and other social institutions of Australian culture. These structured structures are proposed by Bourdieu as representing internalised dispositions of culture and language that predispose towards certain types of thought and action in any given social field (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1991). The dispositions of the MMRs from their first culture and language thus become pitted against those from Australian culture towards restructuring a new Australian habitus.
The third influence on the MMRs’ Australian habitus is Bourdieu’s ‘structuring structures’; the subjective cognitive influences that provide a set of principles that guide understandings of an agent’s social reality. These are essentially principles formed within the first language and culture of the MMRs including Islamic religious observances, and they are equated with the subjective pre-existing habitus of an agent (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1991). They are treated as separate from the group habitus in Figure 5.1 as no one is quite the same. In the case of the MMRs, the different participants have all had different social experiences both in their first culture and also as the result of being displaced from their own countries by war and violence. Each MMR thus has a different final realisation of the dispositions within their personal habitus.

![Figure 5.1 Influences on the acquired Australian habitus of the male Muslim refugees (author’s own diagram)](image)

The English language training programmes provided by the Federal Government are also listed as a structuring structure in Figure 5.1. This is because these ELTPs are implicitly conveying to the MMRs the rules of the game, the expected logic of practice, expected in Australian culture and society. Thus the ELTPs are considered as a structuring structure that influence the developing Australian habitus of the MMRs. However, the ELTPs also become intertwined with the structured structures in Figure 5.1. This is because they represent the tangible manifestation of the educational institution of Australian society. ELTPs thus influence the structure of the Australian social world of the male Muslim refugees, but are also themselves structured by the Australian educational institution, a reciprocal arrangement. In this respect, the ELTPs are teaching the MMRs English in the context of Australian culture, and thus by their very nature the ELTPs are reproductive of Australian culture and society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).
The final major influence on the MMRs’ developing Australian habitus is their experience of doxa and illusio in the Australian social field. In this respect, the English proficiency of the MMRs is low, and thus their social position is disadvantaged as they lack linguistic capital. Bourdieu contends that an agent’s “expectations tend universally to be roughly adapted to the objective chances” in a field of practice (Bourdieu, 2000a, p. 216). The MMRs thus assume a doxa which increasingly accepts their low social status as normal. This is turn affects the degree of commitment the MMRs have toward their education, their illusio. This counterpoint of doxa and illusio also feeds back to influence their developing Australian habitus as it affects their perspectives on their ELTPs as well as the larger field of Australian social practice. The corollary of this argument is that the MMRs are also exposed to symbolic violence due to their increasing acceptance of a disadvantaged social position related to a misrecognition of the underlying power relationships in their social reality.

The final realisation of the acquired Australian habitus of a male Muslim refugee is thus due to a complex interplay between the subjective and objective influences discussed above. Once acquired, their Australian habitus will impact on how the logic of practice, the rules of the game, are realised for each MMR in a given social field. This also depends on the degree and types of capital a given male Muslim refugee brings to that field. This is the background against which each male Muslim refugee forms their unique opinions and perspectives about the English training programmes which they attend in Australia.

The interplay of capital, habitus and field for the male Muslim refugee participants in this research are explored further in the analysis Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine. These chapters use the conceptual tools of Bourdieu’s theory of practice to analyse the social positioning of the MMRs within Australian society, and to frame their perspectives on the English language training programmes offered to assist them to settle into Australian society and find employment.

5.8 SUMMARY
This chapter has presented the major components of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice as realised in his tools of capital, field and habitus, and also the related phenomena of doxa, illusio and symbolic violence. The interplay between these tools in Bourdieu’s reconciliation of structure and agency is discussed, as are the critiques of several academics about his theory of practice as too deterministic. However, the various examples of Bourdieu’s theory of practice as applied in the field of education attest to its usefulness as a flexible theoretical framework to
underpin such research projects. Finally, the various theoretical perspectives of Bourdieu are briefly mapped onto the lived experiences of the MMRs in this research to set the scene for the more detailed analysis presented in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

Bourdieu’s theoretical framework is also considered as appropriate for this research from a sociological perspective in view of the background social factors that drove him to develop his theory. This reasoning is summarised in a quote from Wacquant (2008) about Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice:

Contrary to a common (mis)reading of his work, his is not a utilitarian theory of social action in which individuals consciously strategize to accumulate wealth, status or power … [In fact] Bourdieu holds that the ultimate spring of conduct is the thirst for dignity, which society alone can quench. For only by being granted a name, a place, a function within a group or institution can the individual hope to escape the contingency, finitude and ultimate absurdity of existence (Wacquant, 2008, p. 265).

From this perspective, the male Muslim refugees as participants in this research are given voice to their desire for a ‘fair go’ in Australian society. This also provides a link to the next chapter on research design where there is justification of the socio-critical research paradigm as appropriate for this research, both due to its intention to transform the status quo and also because Bourdieu’s position as a critical social theorist supports this paradigm.
CHAPTER SIX
SETTING THE SCENE – RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1 OVERVIEW
The previous chapter presented Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice as the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the specific qualitative research design and methodology used to conduct this study. This research aims to describe the suitability of the current English language training programmes in meeting the settlement and employment needs of male Muslim refugees. This topic is explored with reference to a specific research question, namely: What are the perspectives of male Muslim refugees (MMRs) on the effectiveness of their English language training programmes (ELTPs) in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia?

Section 6.1 introduces this chapter. Section 6.2 presents the research paradigms available to underpin a research project, and identifies that most suitable for the present research. Section 6.3 discusses factors that provide for the credibility of this research including from a Bourdieusian perspective. Section 6.4 presents the research methodology for this project including consideration of sampling criteria, research context and participants, and data collection and data analysis. Section 6.5 describes the ethical conduct of this research. The final Section 6.6. summarises the content of this chapter and provides a link to the next chapter.

6.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM SUPPORTING THIS RESEARCH

6.2.1 Research paradigms
A research paradigm may be defined as “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs … [a] research [project]” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39). This describes how the researcher understands the social reality of the context in which the research is being conducted, “what reality is like and the basic elements it contains (‘ontology’) and what is the nature and status of knowledge (‘epistemology’) [in that reality]” (Silverman, 2006, p. 13). More simply, a research paradigm can be considered as a lens through which researchers perceive their world, their worldview (Collins, 2010).

It is important to understand the basic ontological and epistemological assumptions and beliefs which underpin any research paradigm. This allows the researcher to defend not only their own research position, but also to understand the perspectives of those from other research traditions that may not be compatible with their own worldview (Grix, 2002). Three specific research paradigms will be briefly considered here: positivism, interpretivism and socio-critical research,
both as examples, and in the case of socio-critical research, as the paradigm underpinning this present study. The main features of these paradigms are summarised in Table 6.1.

Positivism is an epistemology which reflects an objective ontology. Knowledge in this paradigm comes from human experience within an objective world where scientific method can predict and explain phenomena, and causal relationships can be identified. Methodology is typically quantitative and statistical, and aimed towards proving or disproving relationships among key variables (Gephart, 1999). According to social science researchers, positivism is flawed (particularly in regards to analysis of social experiences) as it does not take into account the meanings and interpretations (worldviews) that individuals place on interactions and phenomena within their social world. A major alternative paradigm has thus evolved for social science research, namely interpretivism (Collins, 2010).

Interpretivism reflects a subjective ontology. It is an epistemology that requires the researcher to understand the different roles humans adopt as social actors within their social context (Saunders et al., 2007). Interpretivism views knowledge as constructed directly from this subjective human experience of the world, and is made meaningful through their interpretation (Collins, 2010). However, while interpretivism rejects objectivism, it is not an entirely subjectivist philosophy. This is because meaning is not wholly at the subjective level of the participant, but also includes the institutions of culture and society as part of the meaning-making process (Collins, 2010).

The final research paradigm to be considered here is that adopted for this research, the socio-critical or transformative research paradigm. While this paradigm considers reality as subjective in a similar manner to interpretivism, the socio-critical paradigm “is [also] concerned with the analysis of prevailing social conditions that prevent the achievement of certain values” (Klein, 2009, p. 252). Positivism and interpretivism are essentially concerned only with ‘what is’. However, the socio-critical paradigm moves beyond this to also consider the questions of ‘what could be’ and ‘what should be’ (Klein, 2009). This form of critical qualitative perspective is interested in how social institutions are structured in such a way that the interests of some groups in society are perpetuated at the expense of others. The aim of such understanding is to transform the status quo and provide for the needs of marginalised groups. This is in contrast to the positivist and interpretivist research paradigms which only predict or explain the status quo (Basden, 2011; Merriam, 2002). Methodology in this paradigm may be qualitative, quantitative or mixed depending on the context and aims of the research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This is the paradigm chosen to underpin the present research as discussed in the next section.
Table 6.1 Research paradigms and their main features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POSITIVISM</th>
<th>INTERPRETIVISM</th>
<th>SOCIO-CRITICAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ONTOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>Objective social world</td>
<td>Subjective social world</td>
<td>Subjective social world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(SOCIAL REALITY)</strong></td>
<td>Reality is objective, observable and measurable (objectivism)</td>
<td>Reality is multiple, subjective and socially constructed (subjectivism)</td>
<td>Reality is multiple, subjective and socially constructed (subjectivism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also critiques the social structures of domination and power that reproduce the status quo in the context concerned</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EPISTEMOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>Positivist</td>
<td>Interpretivist</td>
<td>Transformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(KNOWLEDGE)</strong></td>
<td>Truth is one</td>
<td>Constructivist</td>
<td>Truth is many and relative to social context and perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meaning/knowledge is gained through empirical testability of theories</td>
<td>Truth is many and relative to social context and perspective</td>
<td>Also critiques the knowledge and beliefs legitimating social practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL OF PARADIGM</strong></td>
<td>Uncover truth and facts as quantitatively specified relations among variables</td>
<td>Describe meanings, understand participant definitions of the situation, examine how realities are produced</td>
<td>To critique and change social reality and the status quo for disadvantaged social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPICAL METHODOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Qualitative and/or quantitative</td>
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*Derived from: Collins (2010); Gephart (1999); Lather (2006) and Mackenzie & Knipe (2006)*

6.2.2 The socio-critical research paradigm as appropriate for this research

Merriam (2002) argues that critical qualitative research is more concerned with context than individuals. For example, in reference to educational research such as the present study:

Critical educational research ... queries the context where learning takes place, including the larger systems of society, the culture and institutions that shape educational practice, the structural and historical conditions framing practice. Questions are asked regarding whose interests are being served by the way the educational system is organized, who really has access to particular programs, who has the power to make changes, and what are the outcomes of the way in which education is structured (Merriam, 2002, pp. 9-10)

This present research critically examines the socio-cultural context of the English language training programmes offered to the male Muslim refugees, and indicates that social change is necessary. The collected data is analysed using Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice which allows for analysis of the operations of power, social structures, and socio-cultural beliefs that
legitimate and reproduce the current social order. Bourdieu is regarded as a critical social theorist whose work sits within the socio-critical paradigm (Basden, 2011; Howcroft & Trauth, 2004; Klein, 2009; Myers & Klein, 2011). His conceptual ‘thinking tools’ (Bourdieu, 1985a) provide a helpful theoretical lens for understanding issues of power, domination and subordination in the current study. Additionally, the research design also aligns with the paradigm, and validates the qualitative research methods chosen to answer the research question. These are described in the following sections of this chapter.

6.3 CREDIBILITY OF THIS RESEARCH
The credibility or trustworthiness of any qualitative research project is the subject of much debate within various paradigms, and different perspectives define credibility in different ways. Researchers within the socio-critical paradigm advocate for a detailed and clear presentation of the research process which allows the reader to draw conclusions about the relevance of the research, and the nature of the findings (Morrow, 2005). Accordingly, this chapter provides a detailed description of the values and assumptions that underlie this project (the research paradigm), the context of the study and the basis for selection of participants. There is also a systematic description of the data collection and analysis in this chapter that provides the basis for the findings outlined in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine. This allows the reader to reflect upon the extent to which the research process and its results can be considered as both valid and credible (Merriam, 2002).

Within the socio-critical paradigm, it is also argued that the credibility of a research project is enhanced when the researcher indicates their own world view has been considered through the process of reflexivity (Berger, 2015; Morrow, 2005; Ryan, 2005). Reflexivity is defined as a process of critical self-evaluation and monitoring that a researcher undertakes in order to identify their own theoretical and methodological presuppositions, the aim being to make explicit how these beliefs might influence the research process and its outcomes. This has the potential to not only enhance the credibility of the research in question, but also its ethical conduct, in that it encourages reflection on the role of the researcher, and endorses careful consideration of issues relating to power, exploitation and beneficence, thus reducing the unequal power relationship between the researcher and their subjects (Berger, 2015). Emphasis is on the importance of ensuring that the researcher avoids imposing their interpretation on the social reality and perspectives of the participants (Grenfell & James, 1998).

In respect to reflexivity and sociological research, Bourdieu identifies three potential sources of bias which may influence the perspectives of the researcher: their own social and cultural origins (e.g. class, gender, ethnicity), their social position within their particular academic field,
and finally a possible “intellectualist bias which entices us to construe the world as a spectacle, as a set of significations to be interpreted rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 39). In order to minimise the effects of such bias within the research process (for bias in this sense can never be eliminated), Bourdieu thus advocates a systematic and objective reflexivity that must be applied at all stages in the research process, otherwise the research concerned may become only a theoretical exercise of little practical value to the participants (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In respect to the first two potential sources of bias, I offer the following in respect to my socio-cultural origins and position within my academic field. I bring to this thesis my own non-English speaking (Taiwanese) background, my personal experiences of being a migrant (though not a poorly-literate refugee), and also my teaching and other experiences within the context of this research. In respect to these aspects of potential bias, I take the perspective of Maxwell (2013) on this matter – that my background identity and experience provide me with a greater understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants about their ELTPs. For example, I once had to learn English as a second language in Australia as a young teenager, having arrived as a migrant with few English skills. Additionally, I struggle to find ongoing employment in Australia in the academic field. These are some of the same problems faced by the participants in this research, though to a much greater degree than myself. Given this, I have worked carefully and reflexively to minimise the chance that any of my assumptions and values are imposed on this research. Rather, I have tried to use my experiences as a lens on the process of enquiry in this project to better understand and present the perspectives of the male Muslim refugee participants (Maxwell, 2013).

In respect to Bourdieu’s final concern about potential intellectual bias, the aim of this research is to examine the perceptions held by the male Muslim refugees about the effectiveness or otherwise of the English language training programmes offered to them. The socio-critical research paradigm that underpins this research prioritises ways of reading social reality to identify operations of power and sees social change for disadvantaged groups as a priority (Klein, 2009). This research thus not only interprets the findings, but also identifies concrete problems to be solved practically, thereby avoiding the concerns about intellectual bias raised by Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

6.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
A distinction needs to be drawn between the terms research paradigm, methods and methodology. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) review the literature around definitions of these terms and finally note that:
The most common definitions suggest that *methodology* is the overall approach to research linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework while the *method* refers to systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data [i.e. quantitative or qualitative] (original author emphasis; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006, para. 14).

Daly (2003) provides a definition of research methodology that clearly relates it to overall research design:

[A] set of rules and procedures to guide research and against which its claims can be evaluated … emphasis is on the broad approach rather than … just techniques for data gathering and analysis. One is normally speaking of the design of the research (Daly, 2003, p. 192).

This study represents a descriptive type of qualitative research, with the aim of understanding the perspectives of the male Muslim refugees about the effectiveness of their English language training programmes. The research design links the research paradigm with the research methods in order to answer the research question. The following sections describe the research methodology in detail.

### 6.4.1 Sampling criteria

As Rudestam and Newton (2007, p. 107) note, “The participants … are the experiential experts on the phenomenon being studied”. The participants in this research thus represent a purposive sample in that they were selected from male Muslim refugees who were attending English language training programmes at a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) where I had been employed in the past. Criterion sampling was also used to select participants who met predetermined criteria necessary to provide appropriate and information-rich data for the study and also to provide quality assurance (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

There were three sampling criteria to be met for inclusion in this study: first, that participants were male Muslim refugees who had entered Australia on a Humanitarian Refugee visa; second, that participants had attended both the federal English language training programmes offered to migrants in Australia (i.e. the Adult Migrant English Programme [AMEP] and the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme [LLNP] and/or its successor after 1 July 2013, the Skills for Education and Employment [SEE] programme); and third, that they possessed enough oral English proficiency to take part in an interview conducted in English with the researcher.
Prior to commencing this thesis, I worked for a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) which has several teaching centres in the metropolitan and regional areas of Queensland delivering the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) programme (previously the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme, LLNP, prior to 1 July 2013). The participants in this research were all past or present students within these teaching centres. I first sought and was granted permission by the management of the RTO to approach their students as possible participants in this research. I then contacted the teachers at a regional centre just outside Brisbane, and arranged to conduct the pilot study described in Section 6.4.3. After this, when the research question and methodology had been revised as a result of the pilot study, I again contacted several of the RTO’s teachers at various centres, and asked them if they could refer to me any male Muslim humanitarian migrants who might be interested in being interviewed for this project, and who met the three sampling criteria for inclusion in this study.

It became clear from discussion with various LLN/SEE teachers that I was going to struggle to find male Muslim refugees willing to take part in this project. It seemed that many potential participants were concerned that if they voiced their negative opinions about their English training programmes, this might lead to later repercussions from the Australian authorities. This was despite assurances from the teachers that this would not happen as their identities would be kept anonymous. In the end, eight voluntary participants from three of the teaching centres of the RTO in the south Brisbane area were eventually interviewed.

This number, in fact, proved enough to reach data saturation – that is, the point where the same themes are being identified by the researcher, and further data collection will produce only redundant results (Josselson and Lieblich, 2003). In reference to this issue, where a group of homogeneous participants share common experiences, then a relatively small sample size may provide enough data to answer the research question concerned. This is particularly true where the content of an interview is guided by open-ended questions asked of all participants about a research question with narrow objectives (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006).

Relative to this issue of data saturation, in the present research all participants were from a relatively homogeneous population (male Muslim refugees), and the research question had fairly narrow objectives (to determine the perspectives of the MMRs on the effectiveness of

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9 The actual location of teaching centres where individual interviews were conducted are not named as several of the participants were concerned about being identified from this data, and suffering possible recrimination from their job service agencies or elsewhere for commenting negatively on their ELTPs. While this latter possibility is highly unlikely, the wishes of the participants are respected in this regard.
their English training programmes). The interviews were also conducted by an expert in the area of English language training (myself) using a semi-structured technique with similar questions asked of all participants. The relatively small sample size of eight participants was thus enough to provide information-rich data to answer the research question. I also note the following wise remark made in respect to sample numbers: “In the battle of the desirable and the possible, the possible always wins. But luckily the possible sometimes turns out to be more desirable than you thought” (Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 37).

Eight male Muslim refugee participants finally took part in this research project. They ranged in age from 30 to 62 years, and were from several countries of origin: Afghanistan (x2), Burma (x2), Ethiopia (x1), Somalia (x2) and Sudan (x1). They had a varied array of educational and employment backgrounds prior to and after arrival in Australia, with several being illiterate in their first language. All had attended both English language training programmes provided by the Federal Government, some several times. All participants also possessed enough oral proficiency in English to be able to understand and answer the semi-structured interview questions. Detailed demographic and other characteristics of the participants are presented in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 in Chapter Seven.

6.4.3 Pilot study
A small exploratory pilot study is a useful way to clarify whether an intended part of the research design is going to be effective or not (Maxwell, 2013). The original intention of this research was to use a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data was to be gathered from a survey questionnaire applied to around fifty voluntary male Muslim refugee participants, and then qualitative data was to be gathered from in-depth interviews with up to ten people who had completed the questionnaire and met the sampling criteria detailed in Section 6.4.1.

The pilot study was performed at an LLN/SEE programme teaching centre in the south Brisbane area in January 2013. Five male Muslim students volunteered to complete the survey questionnaire. An information sheet and consent form was provided to each participant. The content was explained and discussed with each person, they indicated understanding, and then they signed the consent form. The questionnaires were then completed in a quiet room adjacent to the classroom during normal attendance hours by arrangement with the local teacher and in agreement with the participants concerned. I also conducted interviews with two of the participants who completed the questionnaires in order to trial the questions intended for use in the interviews, and to confirm that the quality of the digital voice recorder being used was sufficient for later transcription.
From the results of the pilot study, it was clear that the five MMRs who completed the questionnaire struggled to understand all but the simplest of the questions asked because they did not possess the required proficiency in English literacy. An extract from the survey questionnaire used in the pilot study is provided in Figure 6.1. It was also clear that some of the prompt questions guiding the semi-structured interview needed simplifying for better understanding by those being interviewed.

As a result of the pilot study, the questionnaire and intention to conduct a mixed methods study was discontinued, and the decision to conduct a qualitative study using only in-depth interviews was taken. The question prompts for the in-depth interview were also revised and focused into three areas (Appendix B).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART ONE – ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAMME (AMEP)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you ever attended an AMEP course? <em>Please ✓</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes [ ] please specify the year ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No [ ] If ‘NO’ please move onto <strong>PART TWO – LLN/SEE PROGRAMME</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If YES, how much did you learn in the following skills during the AMEP course? *Please circle*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job searching skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Are you happy with what you learned / are learning in the AMEP? *Please ✓*
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please say why you have this opinion

________________________________________________________________________

3. In general, did / do you understand your teachers in the AMEP? *Please ✓*
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please say why you have this opinion

________________________________________________________________________

4. Do you think your English would improve more if your teacher/s could use your own language to deliver parts of the lessons?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please say why you have this opinion

________________________________________________________________________

Figure 6.1 Extract from the survey questionnaire used in the study

6.4.4 Data collection process
An in-depth, semi-structured interview was finally chosen as the single data collection instrument for this study. This is appropriate for research based on the transformative paradigm (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Mertens, 2007, 2010, 2012; Myers & Kline, 2011). The semi-structured interview was also chosen as appropriate for this research as interviewees were able to express their own views in their own words at their own pace. Additionally, as the question prompts were common to each participant, this allowed for increased reliability and scope for comparability across interviews (Curran, Lochrie & O’Gorman, 2014).

It should be noted that a deliberate decision was taken to conduct the interviews in English. This was done for two main reasons. First, I wanted to assess the perspectives of the participants in their own words instead of through a third party in the form of an interpreter. Second, the focus of this research is on the impact of the ELTPs for the participants, which made it logical for the data collection process to be conducted in English to better assess this. Although this is an issue discussed later in the thesis, it is useful to foreshadow here that while the oral English of the participants was effective for the purposes of the research, it was neither fluent nor accurate, and certainly not at the functional English level of ISLPR 2 at the time of interview\(^\text{10}\). This level is described in the ISLPR scale as indicating ‘Basic Social Proficiency’ in English, and is below the level required in all macroskills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) for entry to many Australian vocational training courses – this level being ISLPR 2+ or above (ISLPR, 2015). This ISLPR 2 level is also the preferred outcome after attendance at the AMEP’s 510 hours of training (DIAC, 2009d). In respect to this, the participants in this thesis had already attended from several hundred up to, in some cases, several thousand hours of English language training. The implications of this are considered further in the analysis Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

The formal phase of data collection took place between March and August 2014 as suitable participants became available. Several teachers in the south Brisbane area recommended potential participants who met the sampling criteria and were willing to be interviewed. I went to the three teaching centres concerned to meet the students and arrange a suitable time to conduct their interview. As previously, these interviews were conducted in a private room adjacent to the normal classroom during normal training hours by arrangement with the local teacher and the participant concerned.

Before beginning each interview, I introduced myself to each participant and provided them with an information sheet and consent form relating to the interview (Appendix A). Given the basic oral English and low level literacy skills of the participants in this study, I then spent as much time as necessary for each participant explaining the material on the written sheets in

\(^{10}\) I am qualified to make this judgment given that at time of writing this thesis I currently conduct formal ISLPR assessments in a professional context.
simple English, and encouraging them to ask questions about any area of concern. The aim of the research was explained, and the nature of the questions that would be asked during the interview. I reassured them that their confidentiality would be respected at all times, and that their real name would not be included in any publication.

The permission of the participant was also gained to digitally record the interview that they were informed would take 30 to 60 minutes. It was also made clear that they could decline to answer any question that made them feel uncomfortable, and/or withdraw from the interview or research process at any stage without explanation or repercussions. All participants chose to continue with this research and signed the consent form prior to being interviewed. The interviews were conducted in what I believed to be a conversational, supportive fashion, reflecting my previous experience working with similar participants. At the end of each interview, I thanked the participants and gave them opportunity to ask any questions they had or discuss any areas of concern. I then asked if I might contact them again for a further interview if necessary, to which all participants agreed.

The first set of eight interviews took between 45 and 60 minutes depending on the detail in the responses of the participants. These interviews were digitally recorded, and then transcribed. This transcription was a very time-consuming task, with at least a second and possibly a third or more listening required to ensure the accuracy of transcription. Multiple interviews are often required in qualitative research in order to clarify any areas of doubt following preliminary analysis, and also to gain full and information-rich descriptions of the experiences and perspectives of research participants. This is turn allows for greater credibility of the research findings (Kvale, 2007; Polkinghorne, 2005). This was the case for this research, as in five cases a second interview was necessary in order to gain further information from the participants concerned and/or clarify comments from the first interview. Where second interviews were conducted, this was within two to three weeks of the first interview at a time suitable to the participant and the researcher. Again, interviews were conducted in English.

Following initial analysis of the interview data and after discussion with my supervisors, two issues were raised in relation to the conduct of the interviews in English. First, that this might not have allowed the participants to fully express their perspectives about their English training as they were not interacting in their first language. Second, that mandating that they answer questions in English could be seen as a form of symbolic violence (Chapter Five, Section 5.4) by privileging English and failing to recognise the cultural capital of the participants’ first language skills. Given this, participants were contacted and offered the chance to be interviewed in their first language. Two participants decided not to take part in further interviews as they felt
that they could offer no further information. However, six participants were happy to undertake further interviews using an interpreter. These were conducted in October 2014 in the training locations concerned. In two cases the interpreter was present with the participant and the researcher; in four cases the interpreter was on a phone link from their office location. These interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the participant and the interpreter and later transcribed.

Each interview in the participant’s first language took around 20 minutes, again being guided by the interview prompts. Interestingly, the final outcome was that these interviews in the participant’s first language added little detail to the data already collected in the first two interviews. In respect to this, it may be noted that these interpreters were obtained through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) offered through the Federal Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection for any person or organisation in Australia who needs an interpreter. However, the interpreters available for the community languages of the research participants were either ‘not accredited’ or ‘para-professional’ (i.e. speakers of the language, but not formally qualified as interpreters), and their English in some cases was at a similar level to that of the participants.

6.4.5 Data analysis

A systematic analysis of data was conducted using the technique which Kvale (2007, p. 117) terms “interview analysis as theoretical reading”; this has also been termed more loosely as a “generic approach” to interview analysis by Lichtman (2013, p. 258). This is where multiple readings of the transcribed interviews are performed by the researcher with the aim of identifying and noting how specific theoretical themes of interest play out in the collected data (Kvale, 2007).

In the analysis of the present research, the interview transcripts were read and re-read several times to establish close familiarity with the data. The analysis was shaped by the specific theoretical themes within Bourdieu’s theory of practice (i.e. field, capital and habitus) and how these conceptual notions emerged within the collected data. Notes on the particular theoretical themes were made as comments in relevant areas of the transcripts using Microsoft Word, and the quote/s highlighted in red for later reference. As responses on specific themes were compared and contrasted across interviews, an increasingly coherent understanding of the data emerged relative to the conceptual tools of Bourdieu. In the analysis Chapters Seven and Eight, quotations from the interviews are integrated into a theoretically-informed commentary which informs the research question. In Chapter Nine, the English language training programmes are framed within Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic violence, drawing on and deepening the analysis
from the previous two chapters, and demonstrating how inequitable operations of power function within the English language training programmes offered to male Muslim refugees.

6.5 Ethical Conduct of this Research

An application for ethical clearance to perform this project (Protocol Number EDN/B4/12/HREC) was submitted to, and approved by, the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee. The ethical practice of this study was guided by the National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, NHMRC, 2007). Given the qualitative nature of this study and the nature of the research participants, particular considerations were informed consent, confidentiality, respect, beneficence and unequal relationships of power (NHMRC, 2007).

First, I must acknowledge that I am a female, Taiwanese-born English teacher interviewing male Muslim refugees. This may be perceived as a barrier given the different cultural roles ascribed to women in some Muslim communities, and the unequal power relations between the participants and myself as a teacher. Given this, several measures were taken to recognise and reduce these unequal power relations. Thus none of the participants were my students at the time of this research; in fact, they were referred to me as possible participants for this project by the teachers at the LLN/SEE locations where they were students. They were also all volunteers for the project, and were quite aware before their initial meeting with me that I was to be the sole (female) person doing the interviews and research for this thesis, having been informed of this by the teachers who provided their referral.

Additionally, I was careful to ensure that my conduct during all interviews was always respectful to the culture and religion of the participants, for example in my wearing of conservative but western clothing and in careful observation of personal space. The participants were interviewed during normal training hours in a private room adjacent to the normal classroom, but in partial view of the teachers and students onsite at the campus location concerned. This was done for protection of the reputation of both the participants and myself. The interviews were also conducted in the manner of a conversation rather than an interrogation, indicating that the interviewer-interviewee relationship was one of equality rather than of asymmetrical power relations on either side. The end result was that my relationship with the MMRs in this research was always cordial, and the responses to my questions given by the participants appeared honest and truthful across all interviews conducted.
In respect to beneficence, the participants were made aware of the potential benefits of the research to them in that their opinions could lead to structural change in their English language training programmes that might improve their English learning and employment skills.

For the participants, there was also the potential risk that they might become distressed during the course of the interview, and/or possibly begin to feel inadequate due to the interview questions which asked them to identify their perspectives on aspects of their English language training that might sometimes be problematic. In order to minimise these risks, informed consent was gained through the process described; furthermore, as already noted, the participants were made aware they could decline to answer any question that made them feel uncomfortable and could terminate the interview at any time without explanation or repercussions. Their participation remained voluntary, with confidentiality and anonymity assured. These measures ensured that the principles of ethical research required by Griffith University have been met.

6.6 SUMMARY
This chapter has described the socio-critical research paradigm adopted for this study and the consequent research design and methodology adopted to answer the research question. The research approach is qualitative, with the ontology of this research being subjective, and the epistemology being transformative. Links to the theoretical framework underpinning this research are identified, and the issues of credibility and ethical conduct of this research are also discussed. The next chapter begins the analysis of the collected data using the conceptual tools of Pierre Bourdieu.
CHAPTER SEVEN
“SOCIAL GAMES … ARE NOT FAIR GAMES”

Those who talk of equality of opportunity forget that social games ... are not ‘fair games’.
Without being, strictly speaking, rigged, the competition resembles a handicap race that has lasted for generations (Bourdieu, 2000a, pp. 214–15).

7.1 OVERVIEW
This study is driven by a single research question concerning the perspectives of male Muslim refugees about the effectiveness of the federal ELTPs in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia. In this respect, the MMRs’ perspectives are regarded as the product of all their prior experiences to date, within both their own language and culture, then as refugees, and subsequently in Australian society. This chapter thus uses Bourdieu’s conceptual tools of field, capital and habitus to describe and explain the findings from this research about the culturally-influenced perspectives of the MMR participants about their ELTPs.

As can be seen from the demographic data given in Table 7.1, the MMRs considered in this study represent a diverse group of people and communities. They come from different countries and cultures: Afghanistan (x2), Burma (x2), Ethiopia (x1), Somalia (x2) and Sudan (x1). They range in age from 30 to 62 years old and have a varied array of educational and employment backgrounds prior to and after arrival in Australia. There is thus great diversity in the cultural, linguistic and other types of capital they bring to their new life in Australia (see Table 7.2). While each of these male Muslim refugees has the dispositions and beliefs informed by their common religious identification as ‘Muslims’, their secondary habitus prior to arriving in Australia is the product of all their past experiences (Bourdieu, 1990b). This habitus has further developed as a result of the MMRs’ interactions within the social fields of Australian life (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The developing habitus of each MMR will both shape and be shaped by their individual experiences within the diverse fields of practice they encounter in Australian culture, and this developing habitus will influence their individual perspectives on their ELTPs. Therefore, to best answer the research question, it is necessary to trace their individual experiences and reactions as this will allow better understanding of each participant’s response to the rules of the game and the logic of practice that they encounter in these varied social fields.

11 All names used throughout this thesis are pseudonyms.
Table 7.1 Demographic data for the male Muslim refugees in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</th>
<th>LOCATION BEFORE AUSTRALIA</th>
<th>ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA</th>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL ACHIEVED</th>
<th>OCCUPATION BEFORE AUSTRALIA</th>
<th>OCCUPATION IN AUSTRALIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSA</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Kenya (17 years)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>School never attended</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Cook (2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>In Australia:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Halal meat factory (2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate in meat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chicken processing (1 year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HASSEN</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Nauru island detention centre (2 years)</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Four years primary school</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Fruit picker (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>In Australia:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tiler (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARIF</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Iran (16 years)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Finished high school</td>
<td>Architectural design</td>
<td>Self-employed (9 months – own restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Architectural design qualification (Iran)</td>
<td></td>
<td>No other employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOSSANI</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Bangladesh (18 years)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Finished primary school</td>
<td>Electrical trade work</td>
<td>Interpreter (six months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical Trade certificate (Bangladesh)</td>
<td></td>
<td>No other employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMIR</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Eritrea (13 years)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>School never attended</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>No employment in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUSSEF</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Egypt (4 years)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Finished high school</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>No employment in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABDI</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Eritrea (14 years)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>High school to grade 9</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>No employment in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABDULLAH</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Bangladesh (19 years)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>School never attended</td>
<td>Never had a job</td>
<td>No employment in Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7.2 Types of capital brought to Australia by the MMR participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPITALS</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>CULTURAL CAPITAL</th>
<th>SYMBOLIC CAPITAL</th>
<th>ECONOMIC CAPITAL</th>
<th>SOCIAL CAPITAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EMBODIED</td>
<td>INSTITUTIONALISED</td>
<td>OBJECTIFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. knowledge and skills, languages acquired)</td>
<td>(e.g. educational and technical qualifications)</td>
<td>(e.g. writings, paintings)</td>
<td>(Legitimate competence/s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSA</td>
<td>Culinary skills (chef) Farming skills Oral languages (Oromo, Tigrinya, Amharic)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Culinary skills Farming skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HASSEN</td>
<td>Farming skills Oral language (Dari Persian) L1 literacy (Dari Persian)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Farming skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SHARIF</td>
<td>Architectural skills Oral language (Dari Persian) L1 literacy (Dari Persian)</td>
<td>Architectural design qualification</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Architectural design skills and qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOSSANI</td>
<td>Electrical trade skills Oral languages (Rohingya, Urdu and Bengali) L1 literacy (Urdu)</td>
<td>Electrical trade certificate</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Electrical trade skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AMIR</td>
<td>Farming skills Oral language (Somali)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YOUSSEF</td>
<td>Farming skills Oral languages (Sudanese Arabic, Dinka) L1 literacy (Arabic)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Farming skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ABDI</td>
<td>Farming skills Oral language (Somali) L1 literacy (Somali)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Farming skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ABDULLAH</td>
<td>Oral language (Rohingya)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite their commonalities of gender, religion and refugee status, each participant brings his own unique set of characteristics to this study. The purpose of this chapter is thus to describe not only the commonalities which unite them as a group, but also the distinctiveness of each MMR as an individual. By the end of this chapter, the reader will thus better appreciate the diversity which each male Muslim refugee brings to this research, a diversity which has important educational implications for their learning of English. It is a diversity that is not recognised by the English language training programmes, as they tend towards a pedagogical approach best characterised as homogenising and based on a policy of ‘one size fits all’.

The themes of hardship and (Australian) skills deficit which emerge from the diversity of experiences of the MMRs – particularly in Australia – represent the challenges that the federal ELTPs must meet if they are to be successful in catering for the range of needs of their learners. Hence the contribution of this thesis is twofold: first, in highlighting the experiences of this under-researched group within their English language training programmes; and, second, in capturing the sheer diversity of these participants as learners, and in respect to the prior experiences, capitals and needs they bring to these training programmes. This chapter reveals that there is no ‘ideal’ student, a reality which the ELTPs fail to acknowledge in their curriculum, pedagogy and overall structure.

Chapter Seven represents the first of three analysis chapters. It analyses the diverse but overlapping stories of the MMR participants. This identifies their experiences of hardship and symbolic violence in Australian society, and allows the major factors that influence their individual perspectives on the English training programmes to emerge. Chapter Eight identifies and analyses the common themes that emerge from the experiences of the participants within their ELTPs, thereby answering the question at the heart of this research – What are the perspectives of male Muslim refugees on the effectiveness of their English language training programmes in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia? Finally, Chapter Nine specifically considers how the English training programmes enact a form of symbolic violence upon the MMRs.

There is some overlap in the materials presented in the analysis chapters, but this merely serves to make more explicit the problems of the ELTPs as they pertain to these male Muslim refugees. Additionally, at some points in the analysis there is discussion of the degree of satisfaction of the MMRs with life in Australia, and also their views on the place of their own culture and Muslim religion in Australia. These experiences and perspectives are described as they provide further insight into the intangible factors that the MMRs may bring to bear on their logic of practice in a given social field, and which may influence the degree of illusio or investment that
the participants may make into their English language learning and their search for employment in Australia. These experiences also shape how they evaluate what they experience.

It should also be noted that the interviews were conducted primarily in English, a language which did not always allow the participants clear expression of their experiences and perspectives. This was done to make the point that their English skills are at only a basic level of proficiency despite sometimes thousands of hours of English training. However, as is described in Chapter Six on research design, six secondary interviews were conducted using an interpreter. Interestingly, these generally provided corroborating rather than new information. Finally, it may seem self-evident that the participants will lack linguistic, economic and cultural capital within the Australian context, and this obviously has the potential to impact upon their lives. This chapter and the next, however, spell out the dramatic nature of the MMRs general lack of success in the fields of education and employment and, perhaps even more significantly, the stark failure of the federal English language training programmes to address the needs of these male Muslim refugees within their new culture and society of Australia. The analysis will show that there are major gaps between what they need and what they are actually getting in these English training programmes. This provides the focus of the original research in this thesis, and the use of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools within his theoretical framework allows these gaps to be made explicit as the analysis unfolds in this chapter and the next.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The present Section 7.1 provides the context for this chapter through emphasis on the diversity of the MMRs in this research. Section 7.2 describes the cultural dispositions and capitals of the four male Muslim participants who have succeeded in gaining employment in Australia, namely Musa, Hassen, Sharif and Hossani. Section 7.3 describes the cultural dispositions and capitals of the four participants who as yet have had no success in finding employment, namely Amir, Youssef, Abdi and Abdullah. The final Section 7.4 draws together the main themes from this chapter and provides a link to the next.

Finally, it may be noted here that the descriptive grouping of MMRs into those who have had and those who have not had employment in Australia (in Sections 7.2 and 7.3 respectively) may seem to be an arbitrary distinction, in that their gaining employment or not seems like a random roll of the dice. However, analysis of the diverse experiences of these men within the two groups allows for better identification of some of the factors that allowed the employed group to gain their employment as compared to the group that were unsuccessful in this goal, and also the role that the ELTPs did or did not play in this ‘luck’. Additionally, the MMRs’ experiences of employment and unemployment also colours their responses to the research question about the effectiveness of their ELTPs, and whether or not those English training programmes are
successful or otherwise in their primary goal of assisting these refugees to gain employment (DIAC, 2008; DIICCSRTE, 2013a; Liebig, 2007). The overarching theme that emerges from and runs through this entire analysis is that what the MMRs get from their ELTPs is not necessarily what they need.

7.2 SOCIAL GAMES IN AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT

This section discusses the individual experiences of Musa, Hassen, Sharif and Hossani as the four MMRs who gained employment in Australia. As will be seen, their limited success in the Australian workplace was compromised by a range of factors which will become evident as this section progresses, as will some of the factors that helped them gain (temporary) employment in Australia.

7.2.1 Musa

Despite his relatively poor English, Musa was the most articulate of the interviewees. He is a 42-year-old Ethiopian Muslim refugee who had no schooling prior to his arrival in Australia, working as a farmer before fleeing from his own country. He lived in a UNHCR refugee camp in Kenya from 1992 until 2009 when he was allowed entry to Australia with his father and brother:

*I come from Ethiopia … long time my life I was in lost in refugee … I was been refugee 1992 in Kenya … where I was live was very hot and also not enough food … We get like three kilograms of rice, wheat flour … no oil flour, no sugar for that … no water over there … Some agency, they make some small work for refugee … I was doing like chef work … this was chefing … then I was enjoy.*

In terms of pre-Australian capital, Musa thus brought his work skills as a farmer and chef to Australia which represent a form of embodied cultural capital. These skills also function as a form of symbolic capital in Australia as they represent a ‘legitimate competence’ within the rules of the employment ‘game’ in Australia (Bourdieu, 1986). After his arrival in Australia, Musa attended only three months of the AMEP programme in Brisbane before deciding that a job was more important than the need for English, that his need for economic capital was greater than his need for linguistic capital. However, he struggled to come to terms with the varying logics of practice within the diverse social fields of Australia:

*I try to look for job … this was very hard for me … for how to catch the bus, or train … how to talk, is not easy for me … if I’m going to look for job but I don’t know where I am*
going ... When I said 'excuse me', you know, a lot of people, maybe they busy ... maybe scary, maybe they don’t want Muslim people talk with them.

Like some days I look for job, I go like city ... then I lost, then when I catch to the train, really I don’t catch this way, I catch Cleveland Line ... wrong way and then whole day, maybe after I go ... maybe 10 hours ... just I was on train ... but I’m there then I back home.

Musa’s description indicates a struggle with the transport system as he looks for a job (‘this was very hard for me’), and also possible covert racism from some of the Australian populace (‘When I said ‘excuse me’, you know, a lot of people, maybe they busy, maybe scary, maybe they don’t want Muslim people talk with them’). Regardless of the intentions or beliefs of those he encountered, Musa experienced a sense of being a ‘fish out of water’ (Bourdieu, 1977b), demonstrated, for example, by the fact that he spent ten hours wandering around Brisbane on the public transport system with no-one offering him assistance. These experiences illustrate the Bourdieusian notion of hysteresis of the habitus, where Musa’s developing Australian habitus is not yet entirely congruent with the social world in which it finds itself, and the required logic of practice cannot yet be taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1977b). In respect to the issue of racism, particularly against this visibly-different migrant, this has been reported both in the workplace (e.g. Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Colic-Peisker, 2011; Lovat et al., 2013), and also among the general Australian population (e.g. Dunn et al., 2004; Markus, 2011, 2014).

Despite this, Musa demonstrated a determined persistence in his quest for employment. He was assisted here by his Job Service Agency who arranged for Musa to train as a chef at a location in the Brisbane city area. Musa was thus able to build on the embodied cultural capital he had gained from his previous work as a chef in the UNHCR camp in Kenya. He describes this in his own words:

... that place I did a course about six months ... really I am no good at English, but I was good at what the work I do ... then one of the chef, he was from China ... I said let me leave, and he told me not language ... we look for people doing the job ... I was work that hotel for one year.

Thus Musa transforms his embodied first cultural capital into Australian economic capital, and this despite his own observation that, ‘really I am no good at English’. This makes the point that sufficient vocational skills in a field of employment can overcome the need for linguistic capital in the form of English proficiency, at least in the context where Musa’s culinary skills were
recognised as legitimate in that Australian field of practice. However, there was a clash with the Islamic beliefs embodied within his primary habitus and this began to trouble him:

... that hotel, I like the chef ... he change me from that site because I am Muslim, they doing the bacon more in there ... always the hotel, they always use the bacon ... I cannot say stop this thing ... with my religion, I am not allowed to do that job ... my opinion, I didn't say ... if I say maybe to the business people, they might not be happy with me ... and I say just let me stop this job and really like seven days they give me call, say come back the job ... I didn't back, I didn't say anything. I was talk about that maybe today, I think ... and then I leave.

Musa feels here that he cannot deal with bacon in his work as a chef. In Bourdieusian terms, there was dissonance and hysteresis between his habitus shaped by his first culture and religious background, and his new field of practice in the Anglo-Saxon Christian culture of the Australian workplace where he was expected to deal with non-Halal meat from pigs. This dissonance was so great that Musa chose to remove himself from the field of practice concerned (i.e. from his work as a chef) without further discussion about the problem with his employer.

It is of interest that Musa chose not to discuss his religious needs with his supervisor at that time, preferring to leave his employment, though noting that perhaps it would be different now, after five years in Australia – ‘I was talk about that maybe today, I think’. This simple remark is significant in that it shows development of an acquired Australian habitus shaped by encounters with the different cultural values of the Australian workplace and the failure of ELTPs to support this development. From this, Musa can be regarded as engaging in agency and reflexivity, and a conscious modification of social behaviour dependent on circumstances (as opposed to the largely unconscious logic of practice, the practical sense, determining behaviour in a given field of practice, dependent on habitus) (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002).

The remark by Musa that he might talk with his employer today is also significant in that it relates back to Bourdieu’s perspective that “language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power” (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 648). Five years on from when he left his job as a chef, it may be that Musa has improved his linguistic capital to the point where he feels he now has enough oral English proficiency, enough power/capital, to discuss the problem with his employer and potentially argue his case. Musa improved his English proficiency, his linguistic capital, through learning English in the social context of his further employment which he gained after leaving his job as a chef. He describes his next job at a meat processing works in Warwick:
I get in Warwick ... about 160 kilometres from here ... I get the job, meat, Halal meat in there ... and then after three months ... then they put me apprenticeship ... I was still two years there, then I get successfully, I get certificate and then permanent I was doing that job. I was like that job, I like it and then I was sponsor, one of my son ... I left in refugee camp, 15-year-old ... now he already come here.

So we see that Musa found employment which allowed him to further improve not only his economic capital, but also his cultural capital in the Australian vocational field as he gained an apprenticeship and certification, important cultural milestones in respect to settling into Australian society, with the certification as representative of both symbolic capital and institutionalised cultural capital. In Warwick, there was no dissonance between his religious beliefs and the workplace with its ‘Halal meat in there’. However, despite his satisfaction with working in Warwick, pressure from his father caused him to resign and go back to Brisbane to live with his family:

My old father also always call me, why you didn’t back in here, I wanna see you, always he say ... and then I decided to back in Brisbane ... and then I left that job.

This return to Brisbane may also have been driven by the fact that Musa’s 15-year-old son had also now arrived in Australia (‘I was sponsor, one of my son ... I left in refugee camp, 15-year-old ... now he already come here’) and thus he wants to be home in Brisbane to be with his son.

At this point, three years after his arrival in Australia, Musa begins to realise that his relative lack of English proficiency, linguistic capital, is holding him back. However, this conflicted with his need for employment and economic capital, so Musa found himself a well-paid job in processing chickens. This was in a halal context, thus there was no dissonance with his acquired Australian habitus:

With my English, I can’t look for other job, always I have to go to factory ... I feel like the chef, because of the things I tell you, I can’t do ... but then I get in Golden Cockerel ... the chicken factory here ... I was got halal slaughter ... this job then I was doing one year ... really was the good, also good money like $1000 per week ... but I get allergy ... there was chemical I get allergy ... then always I get sick, my eyes get itchy ... I go to doctor, always I ask what’s going wrong ... then he told me I have allergy, maybe that chemical doing the chicken ... maybe it’s no good to you ... and then I decided to stop that job ... then I decided let me say ‘back to English classes’.

Four years have now passed since Musa left the AMEP. During this time, his Australian secondary habitus has developed to the point where he is comfortable with the logic of practice,
the social rules, required in the field of Australian employment. At this point Musa makes a deliberate decision to return to the English language training programme offered by the Federal Government, the LLN/SEE programme, in order to improve his English proficiency, his linguistic capital, to the point where he is able to complete some form of vocational training certificate:

*If I try to do like course for good job … I can’t do with my English … I can’t read good … for that I decided let me back to do the English classes … and then I am back here, that’s why I enjoy this … and really the life this country … English language, that is hard for me … But other thing really … when I look in Australia, Australia is good because we have good peace and no one kill you … and also if you like to study, you can always have the time to be study … that way Australia is very good … Even people ask you how you are doing, that way government is very good … [but] it’s very hard for the people like me to get the job.*

In respect to these remarks by Musa, there are several observations that can be made from a Bourdieusian perspective that illustrate the interplay of his capital and habitus in the field of Australian employment. Musa is exercising agency in his decisions, as he is acting independently and not being controlled by the perceived constraints of the social fields in which he participates. In this respect, the dispositions of Musa’s Australian habitus appear to be increasingly aligned with the logic of practice of the Australian workplace. He thus finds himself as a ‘fish in water’ (Bourdieu, 1986), with his doxa or expected social position aligned to the field and with a high level of investment in the stakes of that field in the form of illusio (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Musa now has Australian cultural capital in the form of work skills and work certification invested in his employment, but realises he needs to improve his linguistic capital before he can attempt a vocational qualification (*If I try to do like course for good job … I can’t do with my English … I can’t read good … for that I decided let me back to do the English classes*). However, returning to the LLN/SEE programme will reduce his immediate access to economic capital as he will be on Centrelink payments rather than the higher rewards of a job. He is thus gambling that gaining a vocational certificate, a form of institutionalised cultural capital, will provide him with a legitimate competency or symbolic capital that in turn will allow him access to greater economic capital.

Musa also comments that ‘*Australia is good because we have good peace and no one kill you*’. This is shocking in its simplicity. It identifies a key issue facing Muslim refugees: namely the benchmark against which their ‘satisfaction’ with their current social position and place in
Australian society will always be measured, and in fact which exposes them to the misrecognition inherent in symbolic violence and a disadvantaged position in Australian society which is a theme that is the focus of the next chapter.

As shown by the case of Musa, it is possible to find relatively low status employment with a relatively low level of linguistic capital in English. Musa has, in fact, taught himself how to cope with the fields of Australian life and the expected rules of the game they require for success. This was a difficult path as shown in the hysteresis he describes. However, he persisted and gradually gained the cultural, social and symbolic capitals he needed for success.

Musa’s story also highlights a significant lack in what the MMRs need, but which they fail to get in the ELTPs. As Musa notes when asked what he might teach if he were working within the ELTPs:

*The people like me ... come from overseas ... they different behaviour, different culture, even to be share together is very hard ...The first I say to my class ... [is] they need talk ...
What else? ... [teach them] the way the people doing the workplace or like the university ... what the different people they doing.*

Musa seems to have a habitus that is attuned to the nuances of the Australian workplace and other social contexts. These are the implicit and subtle ‘logics of practice’ that, in my experience of working within the AMEP and LLN/SEE programmes, are not taught in these English language training programmes. This is demonstrated in the quote above from Musa which indicates that the ELTPs he has attended have not taught him about ‘the way the [Australian] people [are] doing the workplace’.

7.2.2 Hassen

Hassen is a 55-year-old male Muslim refugee from Afghanistan who has been in Australia since 2003. He left his native country around 2000 ‘because different religion, different nation then they start fighting together ... It was really dangerous for us’. He arrived in Australia as an asylum seeker and spent two years in the detention centre on Nauru. He was finally granted a humanitarian refugee visa, arriving in Brisbane in 2003. He was subsequently able to sponsor his family in 2007, and now his wife and children are also in Australia. After his experiences of war, displacement and hardship, Hassen set about trying to make a life for himself and his family, though as will be seen in the following paragraphs, his pre-migration experiences were to affect the development of his acquired habitus in Australia.
Hassen’s cultural capital included a basic level of L1 literacy and work experience as a farmer – ‘In Afghanistan, not very special job ... there just farming for family, wheat farm and corn and some vegetable. Not any special job, just help with my father’. Nevertheless, Hassen, like Musa, was able to transform this symbolic and embodied cultural capital of work skills into economic capital within employment in Australia. He first built up his linguistic capital in English through attending 510 hours of the AMEP in Brisbane and gained a level 1 Certificate in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). He then attended his first LLN/SEE programme for 800 hours in Adelaide, gaining a CSWE level 2 certificate. This institutionalised form of cultural capital marks Hassen as having gained linguistic capital and a basic proficiency in English language. This may also be considered as a symbolic legitimate competence, providing the potential of conversion to economic capital in the social fields of Australia. Hassen, in fact, then moved into the employment field using both his newly-gained linguistic capital and also his previous first cultural farming capital to secure employment. He did note, however, that he often spoke his first language rather than English in some of these jobs:

*It was two years maybe three years at the farm ... I work in Orange farm one year. There was Australian people and I use English every day, every lunch time or free time ... When I came in Adelaide, I work with Afghanistan people. They speak my language so I didn’t use much English at work, or little.*

*It is friends found me this job ... When my friend came to Adelaide and ... they pick up me on the farm ... I work three years and a half maybe ... Then other job I work at orange farm ... It was my landlord ... I work with them one year ... he was Australian, the orange farm belong to them.*

*In Adelaide, I started with my friend tiling job ... It was maybe 2007, 8 and 9 ... three years, maybe three years ... I work tiling job ... sometimes I put the tile and other time ... I done cleaning and grouting and water proofing.*

Rather than through his Job Service Agency, Hassen sourced these jobs through his landlord, and then through his network of Afghan friends, in fact using social capital acquired in Australia. In his final job, only a basic level of English proficiency was required, and Hassen learnt his tiling skills on the job. Research shows that refugee groups often cluster into low status occupational niches (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Ibrahimi et al. 2010; Lovat et al., 2011; Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2006; Torezani et al., 2008), and speak their own language (Trajkovski & Loosemore, 2006). In reference to this thesis, it highlights the fact that low status occupational niches are often the only fields of employment to which most MMRs can aspire to reach given their low levels of linguistic capital in English and their lack of cultural capital in
the form of vocational skills or qualifications. The issue of racism as a barrier to employment has also been referred to above in Section 7.2.1.

From his story, we can see that Hassen had little capital considered as legitimate in the Australian context. However, he was able to build on the small amount of capital he brought from his previous culture to increase his Australian linguistic and cultural capital, gaining employment and increasing his economic capital. Like Musa, Hassen’s developing habitus in Australia became aligned with the rules of play in the Australian workplace as evidenced by his continued and successful employment. However, it was at this point in 2009 that Hassen injured his back while working in tiling. His Job Service Agency thus sent him back to the LLN/SEE programme for his second time as he was unable to work. Unfortunately, after attending another 800 hours, Hassen notes that ‘When they ask me you write 200 words or more, I didn’t finish because my memory no good, my writing was no good, literacy ... it was no good, so they didn’t accept to give me a certificate III’. His Job Service Agent at this time then sent him to do a vocational course to improve his prospects of employment:

That was maybe 2009 and 2010 ... then job network, when I finish the hours, study 800 hours, then they send me to ... to TAFE to study about special job ... which kind of job I need to get certificate ... Unfortunately, that was very bad time for us to study because I start headache ... and then very, very bad situation for my headaches ... and stomach no good and then my stress was no good ... then I went back there, TAFE, but was not able continue. I try to learn like building structure ... but not able to study because my health was no good so I didn’t study.

Hassen’s deteriorating health and mental state became an issue from around 2009 onward and this was to have an impact on his life in Australia. He actually traces his mental and physical health problems back to his traumatic experiences before he arrived in Australia and then subsequently in the detention camp on Nauru Island during 2001-2003. Headaches had always been an issue for him, even while attending evening TAFE classes while working:

When ... I was in Nauru, I had mental doctor. A lot of people using tablets for the sleeping, for the stressed ... I came to Brisbane [in 2003]. I was went to have doctor always ... then I came Adelaide, still I using the tablets because, I don’t know, it’s very hard.

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Hassen was one of the refugees involved in the Tampa incident in 2001 when the Australian government refused the Tampa ship entry to Australian waters as they hoped to prevent the refugees from applying for asylum in Australia. However, the Tampa did enter Australian waters and so it was boarded by Australian troops. The refugees were eventually taken to Nauru. This event led to the ‘Pacific solution’ devised by the then Australian government that allowed transport of asylum seekers to detention centres on Pacific islands rather than allowing them to land in Australia (Flynn & LaForgia, 2002).
When I was at work at the farm, maybe 2005 … I went to TAFE night time with welding … I get certificate I, but it was not enough to continue to get the job … so … I try to make a job and then I continue study, but no good for my health, headaches.

After when I get permanent visa in 2007 … then I sponsor my family and then I get 800 hour more [in the LLN/SEE programme] … in 2009 my family came and I stop the job because my back pain.

Not [study] now because I have very poor memory so I forgot … I take medicine from the mental doctor. This is psychology doctor give me tablets … stress so I can’t study now … [And] since 2009 I not working because I get the back pain.

Hassen’s increasing mental and physical problems finally resulted in him being placed on a permanent disability pension. In respect to this, Bourdieu regards the habitus as embodied, transformable and dependent on past experience, “the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 56), and that “the body … does not memorize the past, it *enacts* the past, bringing it back to life (1990b, p. 73, original author emphasis). Bourdieu thus essentially regards people as the product of everything they have been through. In this view, the mental and physical effects of post-traumatic stress may be regarded as the embodied expression of past trauma.

As argued in Chapter Five (Section 5.3.3), in Bourdieu’s view, the development of an acquired habitus is unique for each agent in a social field, as is their interpretation of the logic of practice in that field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Each person thus reacts differently to the same set of circumstances in the field or context within which they are set. This is of consequence here as these different interpretations of the rules of the game in a social field will in turn impact on the perspectives of the MMRs on their ELTPs, the research question being investigated in this project.

Hassen found employment through his own social links, social capital, rather than through assistance from the English language training programmes he attended. Despite his health problems, Hassen showed great persistence in his attempts to increase his economic and cultural capital (e.g. by working during the day and attending TAFE to gain a welding qualification in the evening) – a persistence which demonstrates the point made powerfully by authors such as Skeggs (2004), that people are not the passive victims of structure and can exercise agency and thus refuse “the perspectives of the powerful” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 25). Hassen, like other MMRs
described, gambled for more capital to transform his position in his field/s of practice (Webb, Shirato & Danaher, 2002), but in this he ultimately failed.

Research confirms pre-migration trauma and post-migration stress disorder as a cause for mental health and/or physical problems (e.g. Mikal & Woolfield, 2015; Slewa-Younan et al., 2015; Song et al., 2015; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). In reference to this thesis, this emphasises the necessity to consider the pre-migration experiences of MMRs when planning support programmes to meet their needs. In Hassen’s view, it is the Australian government who bear responsibility for managing the mental health of newly-arrived Australians:

[With interpreter] According to my understanding, the government should help them [refugees] and make things easy for them. Like people who are coming here, they have too much in their mind and they have mental health problem. There are so many things happening that they can’t even concentrate on the things they are learning. If have a little bit of ease on their, like from immigration things, they will be able to concentrate on whatever they are learning, so that will be a bit easier for them.

The contractual obligations of both the AMEP and the LLN/SEE programmes mandate that counsellors are available to students attending these programmes. In the case of the AMEP, these counsellors must be “suitably qualified (in educational, vocational, social work, counselling or related fields) and eligible to apply for professional registration/accreditation” (Department of Industry, 2014b, p. 25), though the exact nature of that professional registration or accreditation is not specified; and in the case of the LLN/SEE programme, “providers may use administrative or teaching staff or specialist counsellors in this guidance/welfare role” (DEEWR, 2010a, p. 118). In other words, they do not need to be specialist counsellors. In fact, neither of these ELTPs are funded for one-to-one and continuing social support of refugees, particularly for those with mental health problems. In my experience, the role of counsellor is to (briefly) listen to the student’s concerns, and then liaise with and refer them back to Centrelink or their Job Service Agent for appropriate support, as the ELTPs cannot provide direct referral to mental health or other support services.

Certainly, those refugees suffering from the post-traumatic stress due to their pre-migration experiences cannot be expected to make the same linguistic and other capital gains as those refugees without such problems. From a Bourdieusian perspective, their mental health and physical issues will impact negatively on the further development of their acquired habitus in ways “of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 70). Their illusio, their commitment to the field of language or other learning within their
ELTPs, is going to be suboptimal given such circumstances. In this case, more time for learning is needed for such individuals, as Hassen identifies:

[To learn English properly] Probably, I think ... four years ... if some people, for example from China or some Australian or other people came study together ... because they live country no war ... no problem for the family ... so is healthy people, so study good ... Myself or some other my friends, we just not good because our mind is not in the class. Our mind is thinking about outside, family is not well. Four years is good, but not for us.

In fact, the LLN/SEE programme is outcomes-driven, and those clients who fail to reach the mandated outcomes are likely to be exited from the programme (DIICCSRTE, 2013b). This highlights a failure of the ELTPs to meet the needs of male Muslim and other refugees, particularly those suffering the consequences of pre-migration trauma.

7.2.3 Sharif

Sharif is a 42-year-old male Muslim refugee from Afghanistan. He left Afghanistan as a refugee in his early 20s to take up residence in Iran where he remained for 16 years until he was ordered to leave the country. He is the only MMR in this research who appeared to have had a relatively stable life and employment before coming to Australia. In his own words:

I emigrate from Afghanistan, refugee ... I went to Iran ... In Iran, we have refugee cards ... but we allow to work, we allow for job, we allow for living in Iran. The moment, when I come from Iran in Australia, I giving back my older document and government Iran because I went to Australia ... because my refugee was finish in Iran, I leave Iran ... I can’t go back.

I was 16 years in Iran, I starting architect from the 14 years ago. I had job, money, I had everything. But when I come in Australia, I didn’t have everything, I don’t have a job, I don’t have money, just my payment ... I not sure, $400 per two weeks or $500 for the two weeks for Centrelink ... When I pay my bills, something rent the house, just me $70 for two weeks ... I can’t manage my life ... weekly $70, every day $5 just for ticket, train or bus ... mean to me lot of pressure ... but if I don’t have before job, doesn’t matter. I tell myself, before I don’t have money, now I don’t have money. I don’t care.

Sharif thus had a qualification in architectural design and a relatively high-status job prior to arrival in Australia. In Bourdieusian terms, this represents both symbolic and embodied cultural capital. Sharif might thus have expected to live a comfortable life in Australia as he did in Iran, using this capital to move easily into the field of Australian employment. However, the cultural capital that Sharif brought to Australia is gone as his Iranian qualifications and work experience
are not recognised as legitimate in the Australian field of architectural practice. He has thus lost power/capital and social status. His remarks above suggest not a hysteresis of the habitus but rather the beginnings of a doxic acceptance of his new social reality: as Bourdieu notes, “[an] agents’ aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product” (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 166). In other words, Sharif has little choice but to accept the reality of his current social situation (‘if I don’t have before job, doesn’t matter. I tell myself, before I don’t have money, now I don’t have money. I don’t care’).

Sharif attended the AMEP and then 800 hours of the LLN/SEE programme. At this point, he had an enforced six-month layoff period before he would become eligible to return to the LLN/SEE programme. The MMRs in this research are typically unemployed during these times, but Sharif exercised agency in attempting to set up a business:

*I worked for about nine months ... Because that person I know him, we share together. He tell me the restaurant, Afghani restaurant, is good, better ... we can work, we can job ... We share together that restaurant, but after nine months, we looking lose a lot of money ... don’t have any customer or something ... I just lose many money ... Closed, finished, just lose money ... At the moment, lots of pressure, maybe I’m not sure about the future and my place here.*

It is difficult to establish here exactly why Sharif’s business venture failed. There may have been contributing economic factors. Certainly, small businesses fail for many people in Australia. For example, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggests that around half of all new businesses fail within four years (ABS, 2015). There was also likely to be extra risk for a person such as Sharif without reserves of cultural or economic capital, especially as he perhaps had yet to acquire the dispositions of habitus necessary to survive in the Australian field of business. Sharif gambled against the stakes in the game, but lost. His lack of success in the Australian cultural space left him uncertain about his social position in Australian society: ‘At the moment, lots of pressure, maybe I’m not sure about the future and my place here’.

Sharif also made the comment that, ‘All the people coming Australia ... they don’t understand about life in Australia’. This comment and Sharif’s own experiences highlights and reinforces the point made earlier in the case of Musa: that MMRs and other new arrivals in Australia need to be explicitly taught about the expectations of life and culture in Australia: in Bourdieusian terms, about the logics of practice necessary for entry and success in employment and other contexts of Australian life.
Sharif’s case also highlights the failure of the ELTPs to recognise as legitimate or build on the capitals brought to Australia by refugees. Research shows that pre-migration qualifications and previous work experience of refugees are rarely recognised by their host country (e.g. Fozdar, 2011; Pasca & Wagna, 2011; Torezani et al., 2008) which is the case for Sharif in Australia. The result is that even highly skilled refugees end up in low status occupations (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Ibrahimi et al. 2010; Lovat et al., 2011; Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2006; Torezani et al., 2008). This appears to be the pathway being adopted by Sharif as he states. ‘First thing, I try to find that job I like. I have experience. If I can’t that job, doesn’t matter which job, any’. This represents a failing by the ELTPs as Sharif has reached only a basic level of English proficiency, and he remains without employment. His skills will also be lost to the Australian economy. This represents a form of symbolic violence which is further considered in Chapter Nine.

7.2.4  Hossani

Hossani is a 30-year-old male Muslim refugee from Burma who arrived in Australia in 2011 with his family of four. Before arriving in Australia, he lived for eighteen years in Bangladesh in a refugee camp. Despite the harsh life of a refugee camp, Hossani still succeeded in gaining an electrical trade certificate from Bangladesh and work skills in this field of employment. Like Sharif, this first cultural capital is not recognised as legitimate in Australia. However, Hossani also speaks several languages (Rohingya, Urdu and Bengali) and is literate in Urdu. He was able to transform this linguistic capital into economic capital as an interpreter, translating between these languages and English for people from these linguistic communities and their Australian Job Service Agents. He obtained this work through a referral to a Job Service Agency (JSA) from within his own social network:

\[ I \text{ work there sometimes maybe six month ... that's because my friend in the class, her refers me the JSA office and we getting job ... it's like interpretation, translating ... casual job. When they are need me, they call me. When need to go there, I go there ... in one week 20 hours, sometimes 15 hours a week, like this or ten hours a week ... mostly two hour when they are call me. } \]

From a Bourdieusian perspective, any languages acquired represent a linguistic competence (Bourdieu, 1977a), as well as an embodied form of cultural capital and a disposition of one’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). From this perspective, all the MMRs have a considerable degree of linguistic capital in terms of the (sometimes several) languages they speak. However, in Australian society, the language/s they speak are not generally seen as legitimate or having any value in the various Australian social fields. The only reason that Hossani’s linguistic capital
had any legitimacy in the field described was because the Job Service Agent/s was unable to speak those languages, so they called on Hossani for oral interpretation.

Hossani’s case is the only example identified during this research where the linguistic capital from an MMR’s own culture was perceived as having any intrinsic value or legitimacy in the social fields of Australia, or within the design and structure of the ELTPs. All the MMRs and all other NESB Australians are expected to speak English when interacting in any of the Australian social fields of power – including in education, employment, Centrelink, and other fields which constitute the objective ‘structured structures’ (Bourdieu, 1990b) of Australian society and culture. Even in the AMEP and LLN/SEE classrooms, in my experience there has never been any first language support for MMRs or any other NESB community as they learn English. The ELTPs in this respect are reproductive of the status quo of Australian society, and this unfair social ‘game’ constitutes a form of symbolic violence, as further explored in Chapter Nine.

After six months, Hossani’s pre-Australian linguistic capital ceased to have any further value for the JSAs as he noted, ‘They no need me any more’. This indicates the sometimes fleeting nature of capital which has value only in the field to which it applies, and then only when perceived as necessary and legitimate by those in the positions of power in that field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). At this point, Hossani entered a cycle of repeated attendance at the ELTPs interspersed with the mandated six monthly periods of unemployment before referral back to the LLN/SEE programme:

*Actually, we come here four years nearly … AMEP around 9 months, LLNP one year or something … we finish last year 2013 … [then] we have to wait six month … and after that we are getting another time.*

Hossani succinctly identifies the reason for this recurring cycle clearly as ‘Because I don’t have a job’. He then indicates his frustration with this aspect of life in Australia, asking a question as to what is expected of him during the mandated six-month period after each 800-hour training block during which he cannot attend the LLN/SEE programme:

*I have one question … If I don’t have a job, and not doing this course, how we finding job? … If I’m not finding job, what I am doing? … We have to go back our country? What do I do?*

Hossani wishes to improve his economic capital in Australia noting, ‘Centrelink [money] just enough … we spend little bit, cannot too much’. However, he is frustrated by not only his lack of linguistic capital, but also the lack of recognition given to the cultural capital he brought with
him to Australia, namely his previous work skills and an electrical trade certificate he gained in Bangladesh. Hossani clearly notes that Australian employers want Australian qualifications and work experience:

*I was thinking electricity course ... I done electricity course in our country ... was too difficult in Australia ... in Australia, it’s too hard electricity than our country in Bangladesh ... I told my teacher in this programme last year ... She say you have to do ... level three certificate ... but my qualification no good ... perhaps my brain is no good, my memory no good?*

*Because in Australia, they are want ... they are need experience job before ... that’s why we don’t have a job ... we two interview done to fit this, one in the cleaner, one the supermarket ... they are said do you have experience before this work ... I said I do not have experience because I was refugee, I didn’t work before ... that’s why they don’t need me.*

Hossani’s remarks here indicate that not only are his first cultural capitals not valued, but also that he is being advised to study English for the sake of English rather than in the context of a vocational qualification or employment: ‘*She say you have to do ... level three certificate*’. This refers to the Certificate III in Spoken and Written English (CSWE) which is a general English certificate. In my experience, this generally has no intrinsic value in the Australian workplace as it teaches the structures of English language only, and not the logics of practice necessary in the Australian workplace. It also carries no specific vocational appellation (e.g. retail, electrical) which specifically indicates a symbolic competence or capital that designates the holder of that certificate as legitimate in that field of practice, somewhat like a rite of passage into that new field, and without which employers will often refuse even consideration of employment.

Hossani is thus not getting the English language support he needs and perhaps, instead, is receiving the take-home message that he is stupid (‘*my qualification no good ... perhaps my brain is no good, my memory no good?*’). This reflects a form of symbolic violence. Hossani’s previous skills and experience are delegitimized, and the ELTPs are reproductive only of Australian language and culture. This impacts on Hossani’s doxa and illusion – his social position is disadvantaged and he is receiving little incentive to try and improve it, though he does try through the exercise of agency, but only to find further disadvantage:

*[With interpreter] I apply for a cleaning job ... but I mention I need off on Friday to go Mosque for pray ... and I do not hear from him again ... I have no other job interview there.*
In respect to his Muslim religion, Hossani notes that, ‘I could not take this job for this Friday ... my religion, my culture, is me, and I must be me’. In this respect, his Muslim religious beliefs from his own culture persist in his developing Australian habitus, and these are at variance with the expected rules of the game and logic of practice in many fields of work, including a cleaning job where one must often work on demand, Fridays or otherwise. However, the fact that Hossani did not hear again about his cleaning job application raises the possibility of a covert racism at play. This concurs with the research referred to earlier in this chapter in Section 7.2.1.

In reference to this thesis, this makes the point that there are other factors at play that militate against the MMRs in the Australian workplace.

Hossani’s case again highlights the failings of the ELTPs to explicitly teach the MMRs the rules of play and expected logics of practice in the Australian workplace. Only then can MMRs make an informed choice about whether their habitus can accommodate the rules of the game in a particular field of employment. If not, they must look elsewhere for employment. Such teaching would also tip the stakes in the field towards favouring the MMRs, as with such capitals as they would possess the required knowledge and skills, the rules of the game and the logic of practice, and might at least increase their chances of employment. As noted, Hossani’s developing habitus within Australian culture cannot accept working on the Muslim holy day of Friday. This is in contrast to some of the unemployed MMRs in this research whose habitus appears more flexible than that of Hossani as detailed in the following Section 7.3 of this chapter.

In summary, it was the social capital networks of the MMRs that assisted these four MMRs to gain employment: from Australian Job Service Agencies in the case of Musa and Hossani, and from social networks within their own ethnic communities in the case of Hassen and Sharif. However, this employment was casual and often compromised by a range of factors: including dissonance between Muslim religious beliefs and workplace requirements in the case of Musa; by the effects of trauma suffered as a refugee in the case of Hassen; by the failure of the ELTPs to recognise as legitimate and build on the capitals brought to Australia by Sharif and Hossani; and by the failure of the ELTPs to respond to the specific needs of Hassen and Sharif. In the next Section 7.3, there is consideration of the remaining four MMR participants in this research who have not yet succeeded in gaining employment in Australia.

7.3 SOCIAL GAMES IN AUSTRALIAN UNEMPLOYMENT
The social reality for many Australians, including some of the MMR participants in this research, is that they are part of a long-term cycle of unemployment. The male Muslim individuals described in this section of the chapter (Amir, Youssef, Abdi and Abdullah) have
never succeeded in finding a job in Australia. As Musa aptly remarked at one point, ‘It’s very hard for the people like me [us] to get the job’.

7.3.1 Amir

Amir is a 62-year-old male Muslim refugee from Somalia. He left his home county in 1996 and lived in a refugee camp in Eritrea until allowed entry to Australia in 2009. As with other MMRs, life was not kind prior to Australia: ‘I am very happy live with my wife, with my children [in Australia] ... here is four, three was died in Africa’. Amir is illiterate as he never had the opportunity to attend school in his own country, and brought only work experience as a farmer and building labourer in the way of cultural capital to his new country and culture. Amir has attended the ELTPs in Australia, and believes he has begun to improve his linguistic capital in English:

> When I come, I study English ... that time 2010, 2011, I need interpreter for that place ... now I don’t need interpreter ... but I hope to learn more, to look job, to get course, job ...
> In Somalia, in Africa before ... I work building, farmer, Somalia farmer, Eritrea building ... so in Australia must find job ... Sometimes I stop learning and look job, but I didn’t get because Australia and Africa is different work things ... so I need to get course ... usually I study.

Amir is thus seeking employment, but so far has not been successful. He refers to his enforced six-month break between cycles of the LLN/SEE programme (‘Sometimes I stop learning and look job’). He also obliquely refers to the fact that he has not been successful in gaining employment due to the different logics of practice between his own country and Australia in the fields of employment (‘but I didn’t get because Australia and Africa is different work things’). He consequently ‘need to get course’ to learn the rules of the game in the Australian workplace. In fact, Amir is about to finish his third round of the LLN/SEE programme, and then leave for six months during which he will again try to find employment:

> When I finish two times, 800, 800, and one 510 ... when I finish it, I look job ... that before is no language ... usually I waiting ... when I finish 510 then I stay, I at home ... I try read, it very hard, no write ... and when I finish 800 again, I stay eight months at home with children ... and again I get 800, now I will finish now.

These remarks again highlight problems in the ELTPs in that what the MMRs get is not necessarily what they need. In Amir’s case, despite over 2400 hours of English language training (three rounds of the LLN/SEE programme), he has achieved gains only in his oral communication to a basic level, with minimal gains in literacy (reading and writing). This aligns
with the research referred to in Chapter Four indicating that adults from a background of low level education in their first language struggle to learn a second or additional language (e.g. Juffs & Rodrigues, 2008; Tarone et al., 2007; Young-Scholten, 2013; Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006), this being despite hundreds of hours of training in that additional language (e.g. Kurvers et al., 2010; Watt & Lake, 2004).

In respect to the ELTPs offered to refugee migrants in Australia, it appears that Amir’s needs in terms of the linguistic capital he desires are not being diagnosed or met:

*We come to learn English language, numbers and letters … but English class, when I come, teacher has to find me a job … I would like to see this … I am 61 … I would like to work now and find job … I am not driver, I am not engineer, I am not doctor … not educated, I don’t know how to type, still have learn computer … but what can I do job … only man power job … if I will get that, I will happy … but I am old.*

Amir is well aware of his lack of cultural capital in Australia and how this impacts upon employment opportunities (‘I am not driver, I am not engineer, I am not doctor … not educated’), and aspires only to finding any unskilled, low status ‘man power’ job. In fact, the stakes of the game are against him for a reason he identifies himself – ‘I am old’. Many unemployed people over 55, born in Australia and with native English skills, are currently struggling to find employment for reasons of being considered as too old by employers (ABS, 2010). Thus, Amir as a 62-year-old NESB refugee is going to struggle to find employment. Despite his problems, he retains a philosophical attitude, perhaps reflecting a realistic acceptance of his current social reality. In Bourdieusian terms, his acquired Australian habitus appears resigned to his daily lifeworld, representing a doxic acceptance of his consequent social position as disadvantaged. However, he can still aspire to a job through illusio (‘only man power job … if I will get that, I will happy’) (Bourdieu, 2000a).

The case of Amir further highlights the failure of the ELTPs to meet the specific needs of individual students. He has attended over 2400 hours of ELTPs and made basic gains only in oral English with no significant improvements in literacy, and no acquisition of job skills which were never offered in the ELTPs. This is congruent with my own experience in working within the ELTPs, where time and again the same students return for another round of 800 hours, which they attend then disappear back into unemployment until they become eligible for another round of English language training six months later. As a teacher, it is always a pleasure to re-establish contact with these usually dedicated and well-mannered students. However, it is also depressing when one considers their lack of any real prospects to improve their doxa and
illusio, represented by a disadvantaged social position and a general acceptance of that position, setting them up for the experience of symbolic violence.

7.3.2 Youssef

Youssef is a 30-year-old Sudanese male Muslim refugee who finished high school in Sudan. He spent four years in Egypt as a refugee before arriving in Australia as an asylum seeker. He arrived in Brisbane with his wife and son in 2014, after spending one year in a Tasmanian detention centre. Youssef brings only the cultural capital of his work skills as a farmer to Australia and as yet he has not found employment in his new country, so he wishes to retrain himself:

I want to do job so I looking for course … learn English is very important in Australia … I don’t have job [in Australia] … In Sudan I have job farming … in Australia I want to change because I need the job, like electrician … I want to do this … If you have courses like engineering … I can start this course, because I need [this] … I want the job here.

We thus see an individual anxious to improve his economic capital in Australia and, like several of the MMRs, correctly links chances of employment to the need for linguistic capital in English and a vocational qualification. However, Youssef then goes on to identify a problem with the ELTPs he has attended:

The thing is just English course ... maybe after this, if you finish this English hours is good ... I can go maybe like job network ... I can ask him this [vocational] course to work ... But here [ELTP] I don’t know if has course or not ... programme is many problem because now I want to study and decide, I want a job and decide, so it’s confuse for me ... Maybe is language is big problem for me ... because I don’t talking much, but if you can start this course maybe my language is going very good ... Maybe six more months is enough for me [in ELTPs].

Youssef here identifies a problem between what the ELTPs offer (‘the thing is just English course’) and what he perceives as his need (‘this [vocational] course to work’) – reference has been made previously in this chapter (in Section 7.2.4) as to the necessity to have a vocational qualification if one is to gain a meaningful job. Youssef also appears to be conflicted between a desire to find a job and his perceived need for a reasonable English proficiency (linguistic capital) to achieve this (‘programme is many problem because now I want to study and decide, I want a job and decide, so it’s confuse for me ... Maybe is language is big problem for me’).

In Youssef, we thus see an individual who is quite aware of both the importance of gaining linguistic capital in English and also the importance of gaining institutionalised cultural capital
in the form of a trade qualification, if he is to improve his employment prospects and economic capital in Australia. In this respect, Youssef appears to have at least some ‘feel for the game’, the logic of practice necessary for improvement in his new educational and employment spaces in Australia. This cultural knowledge may have been gained from his first cultural habitus which was influenced by his high school education and work experiences in Sudan.

With some insight, Youssef also notes that perhaps English training while completing a vocational course would be more effective and motivational (‘but if you can start this course maybe my language is going very good’). However, his estimation of the time it would take to gain enough linguistic capital in English to complete a vocational certificate is problematic (‘maybe six more months is enough for me’). These themes of learning an additional language in a meaningful context, and the time required for language acquisition, will be further considered in Chapter Eight. Youssef made a final comment that has relevance to this discussion about his employment prospects:

Culture and religion is no changing never … I cannot change religion or culture ... [but] some time I have is pray time, Friday only. But it is not important ... if I’m working is not problem, easy ... any work is going, if Friday working, no problem ... if you have a job in pork, okay. I can do. Yes, no problem.

Recall here that Musa suffered a dissonance between his first cultural habitus and his acquired Australian habitus that caused him to leave his work as a chef when forced to deal with non-halal meat from pigs. Recall also that Hossani has declined to work on Fridays due to a need to pray and observe the dictates of his Muslim religion learnt from his first cultural habitus. This contrasts with the dispositions of Youssef’s Australian habitus as ‘any work is going, if Friday working, no problem ... if you have a job in pork, okay. I can do. Yes, no problem’. This recalls Bourdieu’s “tendential law of human behaviours, whereby the subjective hope of profit tends to be adjusted to the objective probability of profit, [and] governs the propensity to invest (money, work, time, emotion, etc.) in the various fields” (Bourdieu, 2000a, p. 216).

In Youssef, we see a person willing to modify his normal social behaviours to meet his need for employment: someone willing to raise the stakes in the game by gambling that the dispositions of his habitus will not be overcome by the logic of practice in any particular field of employment on offer (here that Youssef must work on Friday and/or deal with non-halal meats). Should the gamble succeed, Youssef would increase both his social position and investment in the field of practice concerned, the doxa and illusio of that field. All Youssef
needs now is an opportunity, but such opportunities are hard to come by. This again highlights the failure of the ELTPs to provide these skills and social links/capital to such opportunities.

7.3.3 Abdi

Abdi is a 50-year-old man from Somalia who arrived in Australia in 2010 with his wife and six children following 10 years in an Eritrean refugee camp. He brings cultural capital in his previous work skills as a farmer and road worker, and also in his first cultural literacy. Like all MMRs in this research, Abdi was anxious to increase his linguistic capital in English and find a job as soon as practical. However, when he first arrived, he recalls being disoriented in the social fields of Australian life:

*This is Australia. A lot different to before ... When I come here, I cannot find anything, it difficult ... it like helicopter, you know helicopter ... going round and round, nowhere.*

Abdi’s comparison of his initial difficulties with life in Australia to a helicopter hovering and going nowhere illustrates Bourdieu’s notion of an inertia or hysteresis of the habitus, where “dispositions are out of line with the field and with the ‘collective expectations’ which are constitutive of its normality” (Bourdieu, 2000a, p. 160). In other words, Abdi’s developing Australian habitus is unfamiliar with the rules of the game (“collective expectations”) and the logic of practice (“normality”) in the field/s concerned, and this causes him to become like a fish out of water. This can be contrasted with his perspectives four years later:

*Now I have address. I have car. Government send me class. We are safe. My family have safe. Wow! ... So I cannot find anything once, so what, now I can. My helicopter is landed!*

Abdi and his family are now safe, which is a matter of some importance to him (‘Wow!’). His sense of the game has improved: his acquired Australian habitus has now adapted to the expected logic of practice that allows his habitus to fit into the expectations of Australian society (‘So I cannot find anything once, so what, now I can. My helicopter is landed!’). Part of this process has been through increasing his linguistic capital by attending the ELTPs. However, there is also another factor driving Abdi:

*My child [six children] now little bit lost my language. Because from 7am to 3pm, talk English [in school], my language is lost ... English is very important.*

For Abdi, this is a critical motivator that drives him to increase his investment or illusio in the field of education in the form of ELTPs, as this will increase his linguistic capital in English and thus his ability to communicate with his children. Abdi also wants a job, but has had no success in this respect. One reason he identifies echoes that of Amir and his age:
I try here to get job in meat works … but I not get … I am 50 and he say he no can accept me my age … so no job here.

Of course I like [want] work [in Australia] … maybe cleaner … I need to try because in Africa, in Australia different cleaner … but if you do, we need some information for job, for training … you need some practice and information because to help … I don’t understand all … because I’m human, sometimes I make wrong.

Abdi thus wishes to improve his economic capital in Australia, but is struggling as potential employers are already concerned about his age (‘I am 50 and he say he no can accept me my age’). He also implicitly identifies the problem with the ELTPs that was highlighted earlier, namely that the logic of practice for success in employment is not being taught in these programmes: ‘we need some information for job, for training … you need some practice and information’ – which Abdi is not getting from the ELTPs. Abdi thus remains unskilled and unemployed, and thus consigned to a repetitive attendance at ELTPs, and even here he is beginning to struggle:

I try I practice, but … because I’m old, my mind is old … my memory sometimes no good … I feel civil war in Somali … when I was in my country, I work hard, sometimes I have been fighting … memory now old.

This provides an interesting contrast to Australia where today the age of 50 is seen as only middle aged, but in the world of refugees, 50 is old in mind and perhaps body (‘I feel civil war in Somali’). As Bourdieu notes, habitus is embodied in bodily hexis or dispositions, as well as mental attitudes and perceptions (Bourdieu, 1990b). Nevertheless, in respect to his emerging Australian habitus, Abdi, like Musa and Youssef, is now willing to work on Friday if that will find him a job:

Once I will no work on Friday, because of mosque and religion … now if job, I take on Friday, any day … I can pray later. Allah would be happy.

As Abdi does not have a job, he cannot exercise ‘physical’ agency: that is, he cannot choose to work on a Friday, only indicate his willingness to do so. However, the remark that ‘Allah would be happy’ suggests a mental rationalisation in Abdi’s habitus to account for his now more flexible attitude to working on Fridays. In some ways this is like exercising ‘mental agency’: a conscious and independent psychological action aimed at acquiring greater economic capital through employment, should the actual opportunity ever arise. However, to this time, Abdi has not found employment, and continues to attend the 800-hour cycles of the ELTPs in the hope
that at least this will give him the linguistic capital in English necessary to communicate with his children.

7.3.4  **Abdullah**

Abdullah is a 34-year-old Muslim refugee who fled from Burma with his parents when he was 11 years old. He spent the next 19 years in a refugee camp in Bangladesh where he gained a family and five children, but little else in the way of capital before arriving in Australia in 2010:

\[I\text{ never study Burma} \cdots I\text{ live in refugee camp from Bangladesh} \cdots 19\text{ years} \cdots \text{very hard life} \cdots I\text{ am very, very unhappy from Bangladesh refugee camp, no food, no medicine, no money, no houses, nothing do.}\]

Because of his displacement from his own country and culture, he has never had any formal employment at any point in his life, and has only attended continuous cycles of the English language training programmes with the mandated six month breaks:

\[I\text{ now finish four years’ study} \cdots I\text{ no job} \cdots I\text{ try before is job vacant} \cdots \text{because I don’t have licence} \cdots \text{maybe I am English bad} \cdots \text{no too much, little bit, very little English.}\]

\[My\text{ hour [800 in LLN/SEE programme] finish last year} \cdots I\text{ looking months in job} \cdots I\text{ can’t find job.} \cdots I\text{ requested government, government give another hours. I am study now.}\]

To add to his settlement difficulties in Australia, Abdullah and his family suffered a robbery and violence in their own home:

\[Before\text{ I sometimes am crying before last year. Because one day my house door broken [in December, 2012]. One people came} \cdots \text{night time} \cdots \text{door broken. My wife walking my house} \cdots \text{He hit me, my children hit. My wife cut is too much blood} \cdots I’m\text{ very unhappy last years.}\]

As a result of this event, Abdullah and his family were moved to another suburb in Brisbane by migrant support services, and he is now, once again, attending the LLN/SEE programme:

\[Now\text{ happy because I little bit driving, I have little learner licence} \cdots I\text{ family citizenship done. I am very happy because I get some house, some children study. Everything happy.}\]

Abdullah is thus working actively within the field of education to improve his linguistic capital. By taking Australian citizenship, he also has acquired a degree of symbolic capital that holds at least some value in Australian culture and society. He has also begun to learn to drive as a
means to acquire what may be symbolic capital in the form of a driving licence, a legitimate competence necessary to improve job opportunities and mobility within the social fields of Australian life. Abdullah himself is content with his progress:

I am happy because I something help my children, someone homework ... some time I going to by bus, train. I other people I try, other people talk ... other people I ask, maybe not have time ... [But] maybe I’m not too much study ... Maybe I need to [do] course ... maybe planting, painting, some make house ... Maybe I need to some courses [for] employment.

Abdullah is thus learning to cope with the logics of practice in the various social fields of Australia. He is helping his children with homework, using public transport, and appears to be practising his English on other Australians (‘I other people I try’). He also appears to have met the negative side of some Australians, possibly representing an element of racism (‘other people I ask, maybe not have time’). He is also beginning to look beyond the repetitive cycle of the ELTPs toward ‘Maybe I need to some courses [for] employment’. In these aspects, Abdullah’s Australian habitus is evolving to accommodate his Australian fields of practice. Unfortunately, the fact remains that Abdullah brings no legitimate cultural capital to his new country as he is illiterate and has no previous work experience. English language training programmes in such cases thus become extremely important, and there should be a systematic process for teaching English language and literacy to such clients. However, despite four years of English study, Abdullah remains with minimal gains in English literacy and fragmented conversational English which is sometimes hard to understand. This again concurs with the research findings referred to earlier in Section 7.3.1 that adults from a background of minimal L1 education struggle to learn an additional language.

Abdullah’s experiences also highlight another failing in the ELTPs in that his progress in gaining linguistic capital in English is disjointed and unplanned. This is confirmed from my own experience in working within the ELTPs. Refugee migrants entering the ELTPs do have an initial assessment of their English proficiency levels in speaking, listening, reading and writing. However, they are then simply placed in a general English class, often of mixed proficiency levels, and there is a ‘hope for the best cookie cutter’ attitude rather than a focus on individual needs and/or systematic teaching towards improvement of English oral and literacy skills. This is related to the logic of practice in the ELTPs which is considered in Chapter Eight. The reality for the unemployed MMRs, as highlighted in this section, is a repetitive cycle of attendance at ELTPs interspersed with periods of unemployment. This represents a form of symbolic violence, a topic further considered in Chapter Nine.
7.4 SUMMARY

This chapter reveals that, despite the commonalities of religion, gender and refugee status, the individual life experiences of each MMR as both people and refugees are diverse, though typically set against a background of war, displacement and trauma which affects the degree of assistance they might require to settle into Australian society. The transition from male Muslim refugee to English-speaking and successfully-settled, permanent resident of Australia is never going to be easy. However, the current standardised ELTPs offered by the Federal Australian Government do little to assist this process as they fail to take into account either the commonalities or the diversity of the MMRs, and thus do not provide the individualised support that the male Muslim and other refugees require. Furthermore, each of the participants brings a set of unique abilities and experiences to Australian society, and these do not appear to be recognised within the ELTPs.

Even if this lack of individual support is set aside, what the MMRs get within their ELTPs is still not what they need from the point of view of successful settlement and employment in Australia. This is emphasised in the dominant themes emerging from this chapter. First, gaining employment in Australia often requires social capital networks: connections within the ‘hidden’ jobs market where employment is gained through who you know and your links with appropriately knowledgeable people within or outside your immediate social networks. This is evidenced in the experience of Musa, Hassen, Hossani and Sharif. Second, some of the MMRs who have been employed found themselves challenged in one way or another by the logic of practice required in the various workplaces in which they were employed. Sometimes the requirements of the workplace conflicted with their evolving Australian habitus (e.g. Musa in respect to working with bacon, and Hossani in respect to having to work on Fridays); and sometimes there was failure to recognise previous non-Australian cultural capital as legitimate in Australia (e.g. Sharif, Hossani). Third, employment in Australia increasingly requires knowledge not only of English language, but also of cultural and workplace literacies in the form of cultural capital such as work experience and vocational qualifications, as well as knowledge of the logic of practice in those workplaces.

These key findings highlight what the MMRs need to gain employment other than occasional and within low status occupational areas. By extension, these findings also highlight what the ELTPs are generally failing to provide – what Musa succinctly noted as ‘the way the people doing the workplace’. As evidenced in the remarks and experiences of Amir, Youssef, Abdi and
Abdullah who have never had employment in Australia, what the ELTPs do offer are repetitive cycles of decontextualized English language learning with little chance of employment.

The data suggests that, as well as individualised support, the ELTPs need to offer a range of opportunities to meet the needs of refugee migrants. For example, opportunity to learn English in the context of employment, building on pre-Australian cultural capital; opportunity to gain social and cultural capital in the form of work experience and vocational qualifications; and opportunity to gain knowledge of the specific logics of practice required in the workplaces of Australia. These themes are further considered in the next chapter, together with factors that militate against their implementation in the ELTPs offered to the male Muslim and other refugees.
CHAPTER EIGHT
THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE MALE MUSLIM REFUGEES ON THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

8.1 OVERVIEW

Both the Federal Australian Government and the male Muslim refugees (MMRs) equate successful settlement in Australia with gaining successful employment. Unfortunately, apart from this common objective, there is little common ground between the two parties as to how this might be achieved. This chapter makes explicit the gaps between what is actually offered in the English language training programmes (ELTPs) and what should be offered if the MMRs are to achieve their ultimate goal of employment. I will argue that the gaps are due to the flawed logic of practice under which these programs operate, driven as they are by contractual demands for economy and efficiency rather than the broader educative needs of the clients they are serving.

The previous chapter identified the diversity of the MMRs involved in this study: in doing so, several problematic areas within the English language training programmes also emerged. The purpose of this chapter is to present a more detailed and thematic analysis of these issues as judged from the collective perspectives of the MMRs on the effectiveness of the ELTPs in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia. There is some overlap in the data presented with that from the previous chapter, but I have deliberately not excluded this overlap as it renders explicit the problems the MMRs face in their day-to-day attendance in these programs and, more broadly, when it comes to life in Australia. The aim of this chapter is thus for readers to appreciate how the participants in this research perceived issues arising from their immersion in the English language training programmes. From a Bourdieusian perspective, as will be seen, the ELTPs function as reproductive of the social status quo: that is, reproducing the dominance of Anglo-white culture, and the consequent disadvantaged social position of the male Muslim refugees within that culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1996).

The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 8.1 provides the background to, and identifies the purpose of, this chapter. Section 8.2 illustrates the current logic of practice of the ELTPs as realised, first, in the positive viewpoints on the programmes of some of the MMRs, but then in five problematic areas identified within the ELTPs – concerns about first, the training hours offered within the ELTPs; second, about the suboptimal learning environment of the ELTPs; third, about the content and pedagogy within the ELTPs; fourth, about their lack of focus on job skills and work experience; and finally about their failure to recognise the existing skills and experience of the MMRs as legitimate in the Australian social context. The final
Section 8.3 draws the chapter to a close and provides a bridge to the final analysis chapter on symbolic violence.

8.2 THE LOGIC OF PRACTICE WITHIN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The collective logic of practice as realised in the field of English language training for refugees is heavily influenced by the policy framework that surrounds the ELTPs. First, there are the mandates of the Federal Government which demand so-called efficiency and accountability delivered at a minimum price per student. Second, while the intention of the Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) contracted to deliver the ELTPs may be to deliver excellence\(^\text{13}\), they are constrained in this aim by the minimum investment per student, as well as the administrative costs of maintaining the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of their contracts. Third, teachers within the ELTPs have to work within the financial constraints of their RTOs which can leave them frustrated and disillusioned. All these factors mesh together to produce a logic of practice in the ELTPs which is not always favourable to the English language learning and job prospects of the MMRs and other refugees within these programmes. This is evident in the responses of the MMRs to the research question which are considered in this section of the chapter – first the positive responses of the MMRs to their English language training, but then a series of more negative viewpoints.

8.2.1 Positive viewpoints of the male Muslim refugees on their English training programmes

This section details the few positive perspectives on the ELTPs reported by the MMRs. As can be seen from the case of Musa in Section 7.2.1, he regards the ELTPs as a means to an end – that end being the implied cultural and symbolic capital in the form of a vocational certificate (‘If I try to do like course for good job ... I can’t do with my English ... I can’t read good ... for that I decided let me back to do the English classes’). He made this comment on his last attendance at the LLN/SEE programme:

\[\text{Really this programme, the one now we are doing [LLN/SEE] ... I think will helping me ... because I am doing now about four months ... if I get the opportunity ... maybe I not go to do the job ... the job you know that you lost from the study ... this [LLN/SEE] programme little bit different from the TAFE [AMEP] ... the teachers in our classes ... they try to do reading, writing, understanding ... I think will be helping me ... maybe. (Musa)}\]

\(^{13}\) This is seen within the rhetoric of the publications by English language training providers – for example, TAFE Queensland frequently refer to their high-quality education and training in their most recent Annual Report (TAFE Queensland, 2015); and similarly Navitas English note that they “are committed to providing quality English language education ... for clients” (Navitas English, 2015).
This exercise of agency required Musa to make a value judgement as to whether the linguistic and cultural capital on offer from the ELTPs is worth the gamble of lost economic capital he would have gained by working. His support for the ELTP was qualified by ‘I think will be helping me’. In fact, at a follow-up interview two months later, Musa had changed his mind:

I’m not finish [ELTPs] … before I finish, I get the job, family day care and because of that I can’t, you know, continue … I go for course with them. After that I … get the first aid and Blue Card … And then after that I go … to help the kids to pick up to school … those who is study [in ELTPs], you know, they need some people, the people look after the kids ...

That very slowly [LLN/SEE] course not for me. I need the job. I am doing this good job.

Musa left because the lure of employment and economic capital was greater than the ‘very slowly’ progress he was making in the gain of linguistic capital though the ELTPs. He, in fact, is the only MMR participant in this research who was able to return to the ELTPs on his terms (remembering here that Hassen returned only because injury forced him to stop working). Other MMRs are generally less fortunate as their developing Australian dispositions realised in their habitus do not appear as attuned to the Australian workplace as that of Musa. They were forced to attend the ELTPs or face the threat of loss of Centrelink economic payments. The reason for the ‘very slowly’ progress of Musa in acquisition of his linguistic capital in English is further discussed in Section 8.2.2 below.

Apart from the ‘My helicopter is landed’ analogy used by Abdi (Section 7.3.3) to describe his successful settlement into Australia, enhanced at least to some degree by attending the ELTPs, there are only two other instances of direct positive comment on the ELTPs from the MMRs in this research: from Hossani and Abdullah. Hossani, despite his problems finding employment, acknowledges that the ELTPs did help him learn the logics of practice required to settle into the general social fields of life in Australia:

With interpreter] Previously I didn’t speak English very well. I didn’t know how to get somewhere, from a place to a place. Nowadays, I can manage myself. If I get a job, I think that my English will help me. So, I think my English has a bit enhanced.

As will be seen in subsequent paragraphs, Hossani still goes on to criticise the content and focus of the ELTPs. However, Abdullah – illiterate in his own language and English – regards his ELTPs as necessary to his life in Australia:

English course very important because … I can’t English before, now little bit. Now 20 per cent, before I am zero per cent [oral English] … Because is study English class, improve speak, [but] reading and writing no good.
The ELTPs gave Abdullah enough gains in English linguistic capital to function in the Australian social world. However, the gains only represented a basic oral proficiency in English with no literacy, and this being despite over 2400 hours of English language training.

Some of the participants in this research thus acknowledge the value of their ELTPs, though for Musa the lure of a job and money was greater than the (potential) longer term value of improvement in his English proficiency. Abdi, Hossani and Abdullah reported finding the ELTPs useful for their settlement into Australia, though not for gaining employment. The remaining commentaries provided on the ELTPs by the MMRs are those of concern about various aspects of the programmes as detailed in the following sections of this chapter.

8.2.2 **Concerns about the time available for English language learning**

The focus of this section concerns the lack of hours available for effective learning of English within the ELTPs. Consider Amir: like Abdullah, Amir is another MMR who has attended over 2400 hours of ELTPs and remains only with basic oral proficiency. He is unhappy with his progress in acquiring linguistic capital through the ELTPs:

> We talk English ... so important to someone in Australia to learn English, speak and write ... [My English proficiency], it is still no good ... still is not better ... [I] need more time ... not sure how long ... I am old.

Amir knows he ‘need more time’ but has no idea of how long it takes to learn an additional language, particularly as an (‘I am old’) adult of 62 years. However, Musa, himself illiterate in his first language, nevertheless makes the following astute observation in respect to the time for necessary English acquisition:

> The people from the refugees background, never go to the job place and never go to schools ... when they come here, like the baby, is very hard for them ... you can see in the class too ... like had 800 or 500, maybe twice, when he doing, he can understand a little bit ... They need two years or something ... but if they look for the job, they can look ... but some people really need a little bit more I think ... that’s my idea.

Those with no linguistic capital in first language literacy and no cultural capital in work experience are indeed ‘like the baby’, and learning a new language and culture ‘is very hard for them’, thus, as Musa puts it, they ‘really need a little bit more’ time to acquire linguistic capital in English, and learn the rules of the game of the Australian workplace. This observation is
supported by the cases of Amir and Abdullah with over 2400 hours of English language training, but only basic gains in oral linguistic capital in English.

In Bourdieusian terms, learning is embodied within the habitus and hexis of agents, and is the result of an accumulation of past experiences over time (Bourdieu, 1990b). The primary cultural habitus is acquired from interaction in the family, and this is the basis for development of any further acquired/secondary habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Sharif – from a professional background – has more insight into the actual duration required for acquisition of linguistic and cultural capital in Australian culture:

\[
\textit{At the moment, I just study English ... When my English is better, I should go to some courses about my experiences ... that job I had before in Iran, in Australia, I study and I experience ... after 10 years, maybe I can same that job in Australia ... maybe no ... after hard study, hard work something, I come back to my first place.}
\]

Sharif thus believes that ‘after 10 years, maybe I can same that job in Australia’. This estimate is presumably based on his own experience in the fields of education and employment in Iran where he held significant cultural and symbolic capital in a professional field of practice (architectural design). Sharif’s estimate is accurate, as research shows that it may take up to ten years of effective teaching in an appropriate academic context to become fully proficient in academic English which would be necessary for Sharif were he to reach his previous status as architect (Garcia, 2000; Hakuta et al., 2000). Time as a determining factor in the learning of an additional language is also influenced by the sociocultural context within which the training hours are offered. This is further considered in the next section of this chapter.

### 8.2.3 Concerns about the sociocultural environment of the English training programmes

Learning of an additional language is intimately related to the environment within which it takes place. Research argues that optimum language learning takes place when there is a specific and motivating sociocultural context (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Larsen-Freeman, 2007), in which the learner is willing to invest their time and energy in learning English (Norton-Peirce, 1995), and which provides regular opportunities for the language learner to interact with native speakers of that language (here English) on a relatively equal basis (Young-Scholten, 2013). In Bourdieusian terms, for optimum learning of an additional language to occur, the evolving habitus of the language learner, once they have settled in Australia, needs to be aligned with the rules of the game and logic of practice in the social field concerned. Students need to have the opportunity to frequently use English in a field of practice where the power or capital relationships between the participants are more or less equal. Only then would the doxa and
illusio – the social positioning and motivation – of the language learner/s be favourable towards English acquisition.

In reference to this thesis, the current logic of practice of the ELTPs – driven as they are by mandated outcomes and economic efficiency – makes it very difficult to achieve the above motivating sociocultural context and frequent opportunities to use English in the ELTP classroom. Nevertheless, some teachers do try and provide such a context despite the privations and difficulties in the delivery of the ELTPs. However, the MMRs and other refugees often have little opportunity to practise their English in the general community. This is evidenced from my own experience as there is often noticeable deterioration in the already fragmented English proficiency of the MMRs during their mandated six-month absence from the ELTPs following each 800-hour training block. In respect to this, remarks made by Musa, Hossani and Abdullah may be recalled:

*When I said ‘excuse me’, you know, a lot of people, maybe they busy, not understand me, maybe scary, maybe they don’t want Muslim people talk with them. (Musa)*

*With interpreter* I apply for a cleaning job … but I mention I need off on Friday to go Mosque for pray … and I do not hear from him again … I have no other job interview there. (Hossani)

*I other people I try, other people talk … other people I ask, maybe not have time. (Abdullah)*

These experiences may represent a veiled racism among the general Australian community. Also relevant to this argument, as noted in Chapter Four (Section 4.5.2.2), is that non-Australian qualifications and work experience gained outside Anglophone countries appear to have little capital value in Australia or in the ELTPs (as shown in the experience of Sharif and Hossani). This may be regarded as a form of institutional/structural racism (Colic-Peisker, 2011).

In respect to this issue of racism in Australia, the often-negative attitudes of the non-Muslim Australian community have been noted in Chapter Four (Section 4.5.1.1). This belies the notion of multiculturalism in Australia, and, in fact, some authors see multiculturalism as a postcolonial discourse that positions immigrants as ‘other’ (e.g. Docker, 1995; Stratton, 2009), and a national policy of multiculturalism “is not the same thing as the actual capacity of individuals to accept this or that culture” (Cesari, 2004, p. 103). In reference to this thesis, this is especially true for the ‘visibly different’ such as Muslims from non-Anglo Australian backgrounds (Markus, 2014). A salient observation is made by Manne (2011, p.59) concerning
this issue: “I have often sensed, just beneath the surface, a particular kind of brittleness about multi-culturalism in Australia, as if very little evidence is required to convince large swathes of people that one or another ethnic group will never fit in”. In other words, the MMRs are often positioned as other, both at the community and governmental level.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, being positioned as ‘other’ negatively influences the developing habitus of a refugee, Muslim or otherwise, with the result that they frequently assume a doxic acceptance of their social positioning: that is, an acceptance of “a self-evident and natural order that goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned” (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 166). From this perspective, the MMRs thus appear to see little point in trying to improve their disadvantaged social position which they must pragmatically accept as ‘normal’, and thus any investment in their language learning, or effort towards making other improvements in their capital, reduces as expressed in a reduced illusio in that field (Bourdieu, 1984). This is neatly encapsulated again by Bourdieu when he writes: “Think for instance of the expression 'This is not for us' by which the most deprived exclude themselves from possibilities from which they would be excluded anyway” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 112). This sets the scene for symbolic violence which is considered in the next chapter.

Research referred to in Chapter Four (Section 4.3 and Section 4.5.2) shows that negative experiences of racism and/or being positioned as belonging to a disadvantaged social group (‘other’) can adversely affect both the English language learning of refugees (Norton-Peirce 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2011); and also their employment outcomes (Chiswick & Miller, 2010; Hugo, 2011; OECD, 2007, 2008, 2012). In respect to this thesis, all the MMRs in this study remain with relatively low levels of linguistic capital in oral English despite most having completed several hundred hours of the ELTPs and in the case of Abdullah and Amir over 2400 hours. From the foregoing discussion of the conditions for optimal language learning, it is reasonable to conclude that this failure of the MMRs to progress beyond fragmented oral English may be at least in some part due to the failure of the ELTPs to provide a suitable sociocultural English learning environment for the MMRs. However, the intangible effects of racism might also contribute to the MMRs low proficiency in oral English and failure to find employment.

Research (see Chapter Four, Section 4.4) also shows that up to three years is required to learn just conversational English (e.g. Cummins, 1981a, 1981b, 1996), and up to ten years to acquire academic literacy for students of refugee origin who come from interrupted educational backgrounds – and this in a suitable sociocultural context with appropriate teaching (Collier, 1989; Garcia & DiCerbo, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2001). In reference to this thesis, all
the MMRs except for Sharif come from interrupted educational backgrounds. They all have low proficiency in both oral and literate English. This even applies to Musa and Hassen who have had opportunity to speak/practise English in the Australian employment context. However, while there is opportunity to practise English in the Australian workplace, there would generally be no appropriate ‘teaching’, thus communicative English is possible but not great accuracy, as in the cases of Musa and Hassen. This again highlights a relative failing in the ELTPs, that would be more effective if English language training was to be provided in the context of a motivating work environment inclusive of focused English teaching contextualised to the workplace concerned.

Such contextualised English language training in fact once existed in Australia in the form of the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) programme. This was a federally-funded programme that commenced in 1991 and offered vocational training with LLN support delivered in the workplace. It appeared to be a successful programme with positive outcomes for employees and employers. For example, a survey in 2012 indicated that 78 per cent of employers rated the WELL programme as effective in meeting their business needs: including demonstrated improvements in employee literacy and workplace communication, and 79 per cent of employers agreed that employee job performance had improved due to the WELL programme (DIISRTE, 2012). Despite these positive findings and the recently stated desire of the Federal Government to improve the vocational LLN skills of the Australian working population (e.g. Department of Industry, 2012), the WELL programme closed on 30 June 2014 as part of funding cuts in the 2014 Federal Budget (Department of Education and Training, 2014). This would appear to attest to the proposal that federal policies on LLN training are driven more by the desire for economy rather than the realities of those with the need for LLN training contextualised to the workplace. However, the uptake of the WELL programme by employers was only 7.1 per cent (Australian Industry Group, 2013). This is likely at least in part to be due to the fact that employers had to contribute to the WELL programme, 25 per cent in the first year and then 50 per cent in any subsequent year, with the government contributing the remaining funds (DIICCSRTE, 2013).

The findings here also concur entirely with my own experience of teaching within these programs, where a single teacher typically has a class of up to 20 students from a diverse range of non-English-speaking backgrounds, sometimes at different levels of English proficiency. These students are often asked to complete workbooks with little opportunity for quality interaction in English, or such interaction may take place only with other NESB students with suboptimal English and/or occasionally with the teacher themselves and then not on any sustained basis. The result is succinctly captured by Musa when he says, ‘That very slowly
(LLN/SEE) course not for me’. This also raises questions about the actual content offered in the ELTPs which is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

8.2.4 Concerns about content and pedagogy within the English training programmes

Some of the MMR participants expressed varying degrees of concern about the English content and teaching style within the ELTPs. Hassen makes note of some problematic issues in the ELTP classroom he attended:

[With interpreter] A teacher should know better how to teach beginner student … we should start learning simple things, very simple things, something very basic. Whatever we learn, we need to practise whatever we have learnt, a lot of practice, instead of giving us a lot of material, just writing down on the board, things like that, just conversation, practise conversation.

It appears from his perspective that some teachers struggle to deal with low level students (‘A teacher should know better how to teach beginner student’), and that there is a lack of meaningful interaction in the classroom, with too much focus on ‘a lot of material, just writing down on the board, things like that’. Hassen desires greater opportunity to practice conversational skills. Musa also echoes some of the concerns voiced by Hassen, but draws distinction between the AMEP and LLN/SEE programs:

[When] I was study [the AMEP] … just the form, they print the form, and they say ‘fill each other’ … only just they give you the paper … maybe you get headaches with them … but these people [LLN/SEE programme] … just 3 months, they try to teach you just like … primary school … because they give you the homework … and also they try to understand you in the class, and try to speak each other … and also myself, I understand how I am going. When I come here is what the different for me now … I understand … that’s what I see the different from [AMEP] to here … But, not only me, I think most people they talking too, they say is better is this [LLN/SEE] programme. (Musa)

Musa thus believes there is too much use of English worksheets in the AMEP (‘they print the form and they say fill each other’) with little opportunity for meaningful interaction. However, he considers the teaching within the LLN/SEE programme as better, given that ‘they try to understand you in the class … I understand how I am going’. He maintains this is the general opinion among ‘most people’ of the LLN/SEE students.
Other MMRs offer further insights into problems they have experienced in their ELTPs, responses elicited when asked what they might offer should they be a teacher within the ELTPs. For instance, Amir notes:

“If someone is primary, he can’t teach secondary ... When I be teacher, I will learn how to explain to people more."

Amir thus believes that teachers on the ELTPs need to ‘learn how to explain to people more’, as he appears to have experienced teachers delivering material above his level of understanding. This is also the view of Abdi:

“They need to help English ... need to talk, between teacher and student ... and ask [if] lesson is hard, or easy, so so ...I have to speak English ... because now is not enough English.

Abdi thus identifies the need for teachers to seek feedback from their students, and ask whether the ‘lesson is hard, or easy, so so’. Youssef adds further relevant information to this:

“Teaching is the same [AMEP and LLN/SEE programs], there’s no different ... you can help him [students] and is still very hard ... sometimes students no understand ... maybe is hard for teacher ... I think it’s not enough [English learnt in class] ... Like talking is important ... because sometimes information I don’t listen before.

In Youssef’s opinion some teachers struggle to meet the needs of all students (‘sometimes students no understand ... maybe is hard for teacher’) and there is too little English learnt in the class (‘I think it’s not enough’), particularly in respect to speaking (‘talking is important’). These comments reflect the perspectives of several other of the MMRs. For instance, Musa notes that:

“If I have that opportunity [being a teacher in ELTPs] ... really, I try to first help their reading, help their speaking ... help how they are going to communicate with the people ... because the paid people [i.e. with jobs] always they understand the language ... [so] I try to always how they are going to read, how they are going to speak ... if they do those, then they may be fine.

Musa here links the need to improve linguistic capital with economic capital (‘because the paid people [i.e. with jobs] always they understand the language’). Hassen and Youssef more specifically identify what they feel should be included within the ELTPs:
If I was a teacher ... I think teach some conversation ... for example, like going to pharmacy, how can speak with them; and then going do shopping to learn some read of the things that you are buying ... about the mechanic, about the bus stop ... about some for example ... you going to a party or you are filling the form ... yeah it is the necessary things during life. (Hassen)

[With interpreter] [If I were the ELTP teacher] I have to teach them only the English language first, [then] I teach them about the law, how to communicate with people, how to manage your life in this country. (Youssef)

Hassen implies that the ELTPs are not adequately teaching the ‘necessary things during life’ – the basic logics of practice necessary in the social fields of Australian culture – conversation and reading necessary to deal with the pharmacy, the mechanic, the bus stop and so on. Youssef articulates this more strongly as the necessity to teach refugees ‘the law, how to communicate with people, how to manage your life in this country’. Without understanding the rules of play in these fields, MMRs will continue to be like fish out of water, unable to take an equal place in Australian society and culture, and thus remaining as a marginal and disadvantaged group subject to symbolic violence. However, not all the MMRs were critical of their ELTPs. For instance, Abdullah comments that:

[With interpreter] I don’t care about if I was teacher of this class. As you know that all the people are like equal so I cannot discriminate you know. So if I were the teacher, I wouldn’t change, I would leave like that the same.

Abdullah is an MMR who is illiterate in his first language and with no job skills, having spent 19 of his 34 years in a refugee camp in Bangladesh which allowed him no opportunity to attend school or find employment. In this respect, Abdullah is unlikely to have any idea about the logic of practice required in an educational context, unlike all other MMRs in this study who have had at least some education and/or work experience in their previous country and culture (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2). The dispositions of his developing Australian habitus, at least in the field of education, are thus mainly the product of his experiences within the ELTPs. He knows the rules of play in this field only from those the teachers and students have stated or implied: students must respect the teacher, be on time, join in, act appropriately, and so on – the rules of the game in the Western classroom. Thus being asked by an interviewer (and teacher) to criticise the ELTPs may have caused some dissonance between his developing educational habitus and his acquired habitus from his own cultural background. Hence his uncritical reply (‘I would leave like that the same’). This interpretation supports Bourdieu’s
proposal of education as reproductive of the dominant Australian culture, a topic further considered in the next chapter.

In respect to the influence of education on habitus, the opinions of Sharif from a relatively academic and professional background are completely different to those of Abdullah. Sharif offers critique of the ELTPs, first the AMEP and then the transition to the LLN/SEE programme:

The first time I come [to do the AMEP], but me study English about something basic ... a little writing, a little listening, a little speaking. Good, but for refugee, something confusing, different to systematic teaching ... in other countries, they give some books and study from books, teach from the books. In Australia no, just sheets of papers ... every day a lot of paper. Student don’t understand today, tomorrow about what subject should study, and other country understand about the tomorrow ... we should study example, tomorrow study page 10 to 12, two-page study or four-page study tomorrow, but Australia don’t understand ... something confusing.

The AMEP he regards as lacking in structured lessons (‘different to systematic teaching ... in other countries’), with too much focus on ‘just sheets of papers ... every day a lot of paper’, leaving AMEP students confused as to their progress in the ELTPs (‘something confusing’). Sharif also critiques the LLN/SEE programme:

The other [LLN/SEE programme] ... some different confusing ... Student ready to study, but a lot of problem ... finish 510 hour AMEP because student one year stay in Australia but they can’t speak, they can’t listening ... If I was teacher ... in these classes sometimes they study something very easy ... not job, for everybody ... I think maybe helpful things, necessary things for study English about word writing, grammar something.

In respect to the LLN/SEE programme, Sharif criticises its employment focus because refugees have typically not yet acquired sufficient linguistic capital in English to enter employment, ‘If I was teacher ... in these classes sometimes they study something very easy ... not job, for everybody’. This in fact contradicts the opinion of other MMRs who desire more focus on job skills as noted in the next section of this chapter.

Sharif appears to criticise the English Language training programmes, basing his criticism on the dispositions of his own habitus influenced by his educational experiences in Iran. Rather than his educational habitus being in dissonance with his new field within the ELTPs, Sharif simply appears to be offering critique of the ELTPs based on his own expectations of how such
an English training programme should be run according to his understanding of the rules of the game in the field of education.

I would qualify the opinions of the MMRs above by noting that in my experience the content and style of teaching within the ELTPs depends on the teacher and classroom being considered. Some teachers are highly empathic and concerned about the English language learning of their students and try to conduct ELTPs according to a logic of practice based on principles of language acquisition; to others it is simply a job. Teacher attitudes, of course, are reflected in the quality of the English language teaching they offer.

In Bourdieusian terms, only where a teacher normalises the power relationships in classroom interactions, and offers teaching of cultural capital directly relevant to the students, will this motivate the students towards learning English as realised in an increase in their illusio, their commitment to their learning. In terms of the current vocational education system of Australia, of which the ELTPs are at least nominally a part, teachers should act more as ‘facilitators’ of learning, with the students taking an active part in their own learning. This is difficult as, first, the MMRs often lack the skills to be independent learners, and, second, the logic of practice of the ELTPs is driven by the need for outcomes and efficiency, which is not always conducive to the often slow, accumulative learning necessary for the MMRs. In this respect, the duration and structure of the ELTPs (800 hours with mandated six-monthly breaks) also weighs against such focused, needs-driven teaching. However, it should be possible to at least begin to teach the MMRs the logics of practice necessary for success in the fields of employment, but which the ELTPs generally fail to do given the perspectives of the MMRs outlined in the next section of this chapter.

8.2.5 Concerns about the lack of focus on employment within the English training programmes

Abdi made a succinct comment – ‘They teach me English here, not job stuff’ – concerning the general focus of the ELTPs on teaching English for the sake of English rather than that required for gaining employment. This comment provides a concise summary of the general opinion of the MMRs about this matter, as evidenced in further comments by Amir and Abdi:

*English class … always I go but I never get any job. When I finish last year, I look eight month. I look for job … You say the English class they help you to get job, no I don’t know, I never seen … English class teach letters and numbers, I never see someone they talk to the job. (Amir)*
Most I want any job, any place here. Farmer, cleaning, any ... this is better than just English here [ELTPs] for just talk ... because income Centrelink is not enough ... I need more hours ... I look for a job, but I don’t know how to look. (Abdi)

Amir identifies that the ELTPs fail to provide a focus on teaching job skills (‘English class teach letters and numbers, I never see someone they talk to the job’); and Abdi notes any job is ‘better than just English here [ELTPs] for just talk’. He also makes the telling comment, ‘I look for a job, but I don’t know how to look’, a direct failing of the ELTPs to explicitly teach MMRs basic job search skills. Other MMRs also note the need for the ELTPs to focus on the realities for these people:

We talk about the job, can you find for me job? I need a job ... you have to teaching about the job ... what kind of job can people easy to do, that’s it. (Hossani)

I am doing my effort to find a job and I wish if you can help me to find a job. I have to find a place where I can do a job there and have some training, and then I can get the job. (Youssef)

Hossani notes he wants teaching about the ‘kind of job can people easy to do’, and Youssef wants a place where he can do some on-the-job training, and ‘and then I can get the job’. Hossani was able to make his viewpoint clearer when provided with an interpreter during a further interview:

[With interpreter] I learn English only here ... sometimes they [teachers] talk about search job but not much ... The thing is, you have to teach some about the job, like this course (LLN/SEE) ... you have to teaching like something jobs ... that’s like cleaning or tiles or carpets, and painting and plumber and electricity.

The MMRs are thus aiming towards what they consider realistic choices in terms of their own skills and expectations. For example, Hossani previously had an electrical trade certificate and worked in this field of practice during his 18 years as a refugee in Bangladesh. However, as highlighted in the previous chapter, cultural capital in the form of work experience and qualifications gained in the men’s home countries is generally not recognised as legitimate in any Australian field of employment. This leads Sharif to make the following comment:

Because before I have 14 or 15 years' experience for that job ... construction, building [architectural design] ... I think I can easier here continue my job ... I have many experience, many understand ... If I don’t have a job ... if I can’t have the job I like, I have
Sharif’s developing Australian habitus appears to accept his new social reality, that his previous cultural capital is gone as it lacks legitimacy in the Australian workplace. Thus he tends towards a doxic acceptance of his lower social position in Australian culture and reduces his illusion accordingly – all he aspires to now is: ‘if I can’t that job, doesn’t matter which job, any.’

The remaining MMRs also aspire only to jobs they think themselves capable of doing. For example, the ‘kind of job can people easy to do’ (Hossani) or ‘farmer, cleaning, any’ (Abdi). There is a problem, however, in that the rules of game in most fields of Australian employment have been set by the powerful, those with legitimacy and symbolic power/capital in the fields of government, education and employment. This represents the problem of gaining legitimacy in the fields of the Australian workplace, the topic of the next section of this chapter.

8.2.6 Concerns about gaining legitimacy in the Australian workplace

In respect to the Australian workplace, Hassen makes a point critical to understanding the problems of MMRs and the failings of the ELTPs:

[With interpreter] In Australia, you must have a certificate for anything, any skill that you want, and any job that you want to do, and it’s very difficult to get a certificate from here [Australia]

For most jobs beyond the low-status and unskilled in Australia, the ‘system’ now mandates that you must have a vocational training certificate which is representative of institutionalised cultural capital, and also symbolic capital as it provides the holder with the legitimate competence to work in that field. However, as Hassen goes on to note, ‘it’s very difficult to get a certificate from here [Australia]’.

Consider, for example, Hossani’s ambition to work in ‘cleaning or tiles or carpets, and painting and plumber and electricity’. All these fields of practice in Australia now assume and prefer that you have cultural capital in the form of an appropriate qualification that is completed in Australia, in English, and with appropriate work experience. Such qualifications and experience assume a reasonable degree of linguistic capital in English, with both oral and literacy skills above the basic which most MMRs do not have. They also assume trade experience and a workplace willing to accept non-English speaking background refugees. However, as we have
seen, this can be problematic where workplaces often regard those who are visibly different as ‘others’ (Colic-Peisker, 2011). Hassen goes on to make a further comment relevant to this discussion:

[With interpreter] While they are learning [English] language, whatever [work] skill they are learning, they have to be learning English according to that skill. So once they go to the normal life, put that into practise, so they will be able to do that job.

Hassen notes that ‘whatever [work] skill they are learning, they have to be learning English according to that skill ... so they will be able to do that job’. This highlights the need for English to be taught in context, not as an isolated activity which appears to occur in many ELTP classrooms judging from the earlier comments reported in the previous Section 8.2.5 of this chapter. Hassen was not the only MMR to note the need to teach English in context of work experience. For example, Youssef states that:

Education is the most important issues for me. I have to do the work according to the training I receive, and ... how to communicate with the people ... this English language [in ELTPs] will not help me, just [what] would help me to do a training first at work, like work experience. I cannot find a job, unless I do work experience.

Yousef thus notes that the ELTPs in his experience fail to deliver English situated in a field of employment (‘this English language [in ELTPs] will not help me’), and that ‘I cannot find a job, unless I do work experience’ which most ELTPs fail to offer. As noted earlier, the ELTPs also generally fail to build on the cultural capital that MMRs bring from their pre-Australian lives. However, while the ELTPs may devalue the existing capitals of the MMRs, they are still there. As Sharif noted, ‘I have experience, doesn’t matter the job’. A related comment is made by Musa:

You know some people, before they come here ... if they don’t know English, what the work they doing ... they know the job what’s going on ... maybe little bit different from Australia, but everyone doing something ... they understand ... Those people someone before understand something, he do like 500 and 800 hour, really if you go to course or job place ... they can catch with them.

Musa thus makes the point here that, even if the MMRs ‘don’t know English’, they still ‘know the job what’s going on’, and after attending an ELTP they should be able to reapply those work skills in the Australian workplace (‘really if you go to course or job place ... they can catch with them’). In Bourdieusian terms, the MMRs develop an acquired habitus as they live in Australian society, and that may be influenced by experiences within the areas of education and
employment (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Given this, instead of devaluing and delegitimising the cultural capital of the MMRs, the ELTPs could build on them by teaching English in the context of employment, and aim to provide the MMRs with the Australian cultural capital and legitimate competence so valued in the Australian workplace.

As noted earlier in this chapter (Section 8.2.3), research shows that a specific and motivating sociocultural context promotes optimum language learning (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Larsen-Freeman, 2007). In reference to this thesis, optimum language learning in any field of employment would enhance both the work skills and job prospects of the MMRs, tipping the scales in that field towards favouring the MMRs. Such work-based teaching and learning would also be highly motivating to the MMRs, potentially shifting their doxa and illusio to higher levels by providing them with the skills and capital necessary to exercise agency, thus challenging their social position as disadvantaged.

8.3 SUMMARY
The research question in this thesis is concerned with the perspectives of the male Muslim refugees about the effectiveness of the federal English language training programmes in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia. The research question has been explored in this chapter by thematically analysing the responses of the MMRs to questions about what they hope to achieve and what they see as problematic in their ELTPs. From the perspectives of the MMRs, the positive aspects of the ELTPs lie in the fact that they provide newly-arrived refugees with the basic linguistic and cultural capital that enables them to begin the settlement process into the social fields of Australian society. However, beyond this, the ELTPs are generally regarded by the MMRs as deficient: in the way training hours are structured and delivered; in the sociocultural learning environment they generally promote; in the content and pedagogy within the ELTPs; in their general lack of training with any focus on employment; and finally in their failure to recognise the existing skills, qualifications and work experience of the MMRs.

The responses of the MMRs highlight the flawed logic of practice under which the ELTPs offered to the MMRs must function, driven as they are by a policy framework that mandates economic efficiency and specific outcomes within dictated time frames. The English language training programmes thus fail on two major counts. First, in their primary aim of assisting the MMRs to gain employment. Second, because they are reproductive of the social status quo (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), with the MMRs positioned as disadvantaged, rather than as
potentially successful people with a wealth of experience from their own cultures that could be harnessed in the Australian workplace and other fields of Australian life.

The reality for most of the participants in this study is thus relegation to repetitive attendance at socially-reproductive ELTPs, interspersed with policy-mandated six-month periods of ineligibility after every 800-hour round of training (during which time they are typically unemployed). If the MMRs fail to attend their English training programmes, they face the prospect of loss of their Centrelink benefits and thus economic threat to their social lives in Australia. The result for most of these people is a doxic acceptance of their disadvantaged social position, and a consequent lack of motivation towards improving their capital and social position in Australian culture. This suggests a form of symbolic violence is operating within the English language training programmes. This is the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER NINE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMMES AS A FORM OF SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

9.1 OVERVIEW
The data in the previous two chapters demonstrates that the male Muslim refugee participants in this research commenced their English language training with low levels of cultural, linguistic and economic capital. At the end of this training they were still in much the same position, having achieved only basic oral English proficiency and little else. In this chapter, I draw upon the same previous data set to show how these people are caught in a reproductive cycle not of their making and in a system that is unable to respond to their needs. This is illustrated by demonstrating that the federal English language training programmes represent a form of symbolic violence in several ways.

This chapter is divided into six sections. Section 9.1 sets the context for this chapter about symbolic violence. Section 9.2 considers the English language training programmes (ELTPs) as the site of struggle from several perspectives including as socially reproductive or transformative. Section 9.3 casts the ELTPs as the site of symbolic violence as considered from several aspects relating to its underlying logic of practice. Section 9.4 considers reaction and resistance demonstrated by the male Muslim refugees (MMRs) in this research in response to the symbolic violence experienced within their ELTPs. Section 9.5 considers the relative success of the ELTPs in assisting the MMRs to settle into multicultural Australian society, but still being problematic when viewed through the lens of symbolic violence. Section 9.6 draws the chapter to a close, and provides a link to the next and final chapter of this thesis.

9.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMMES AS THE SITE OF STRUGGLE
As has been noted in Chapter Five, Bourdieu regards schools and education as commonly reproductive of the dominant culture and its values, replicated within the identities and habitus of students attending those schools (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1996). This proposal may be considered in relation to English language education. Research suggests that the learning of English, or indeed any language, is never neutral, but is political and always inherently laden with the cultural values of the dominant society using and teaching that language. Furthermore, those dominant cultural values are implicitly or explicitly acquired by the language learner within the language teaching classroom (Butorac, 2014; Young, Sachdev & Seedhouse, 2009). Related to this, Kubota (2002) makes the salient point that the epistemological underpinning of much current English language teaching is based on white Eurocentric traditions, and thus its values can be conveyed as ‘normal’ to any NESB student.
learning English as an additional language within a Western Anglocentric culture such as Australia.

Bourdieu’s primary viewpoint appears to regard an educational system that teaches English language as an object of struggle and the site of competition that nevertheless usually promotes social and cultural reproduction, and thus the hegemony of the dominant white culture. The point does need to be emphasised here that even within a socially reproductive educational system such as the federal ELTPs, there is struggle between agents who wish to maintain the social status quo, and agents who wish to increase their capital through the exercise of agency and improve their social position within the status quo. Furthermore, the exercise of agency is quite possible even within a socially reproductive educational system, as demonstrated in the case studies discussed in Chapter Five on Bourdieu’s theory of practice and also in the cases of some of the MMR participants as described in the preceding two chapters (for example, in the cases of Musa and Sharif).

In relation to the argument that education is predominantly reproductive, there has been much criticism of Bourdieu for being excessively deterministic, in that his opponents maintain that while his theory of practice explains how social hegemony and power may be maintained, he fails to offer any method as to how resistance and transformation may occur (e.g. Heller. 1992; Jenkins, 2002). However, Bourdieu himself suggested the need for struggle to transform education and society for the benefit of all, inclusive of not only the powerful, but also the disadvantaged. As Wacquant (2008, p. 264) notes of Bourdieu: “Struggle, not ‘reproduction’, is the master metaphor at the core of his thought”.

To extend Bourdieu’s metaphor of struggle, it is possible to conceive of education as a struggle between reproduction and transformation, two contesting forces, heavily weighted towards the socially reproductive end of the spectrum in normal social circumstances, for example in the federal English language training programmes. The aim of teachers and teaching should be to shift that balance from the reproductive towards the transformative end of the educational scale. In this respect, however, Bourdieu (1988) appears to regard education as a site of struggle regardless of whether education is reproductive or transformative:

[Any] objective break in the circle of expectations and opportunities leads … teachers … to leave the race, that is to say, the competitive struggle implying acceptance of the rules of the game laid down and the goals proposed by the dominant class, and to take up a struggle which we may call revolutionary in so far as it aims to establish alternative
goals and more or less completely to redefine the game and the moves which permit one
to win it (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 172).

Reproduction in education thus presupposes acceptance of the rules of the game that reproduce
the social status quo, which nevertheless still represents a ‘competitive struggle’ among those
involved in social reproduction. On the other hand, Bourdieu regards the struggle for
transformation in education as ‘revolutionary’ and in fact presages the basis for the
recommendations made in the next and final chapter of this thesis that aim to “establish
alternative goals and … redefine the game and the moves which permit one to win it” (Bourdieu,
1988, p. 172) – these being from the perspectives of the MMRs in this research.

Bourdieu, however, does add the qualification that his theory of practice must be applied to
situations which represent “a particular case of the possible” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 13): in other
words, his notions must be considered in relation to the specific sociocultural context to which
they are being applied. If this is done, the mechanisms of social reproduction can be identified,
but also “the contradictions and conflicts that can be at the basis of their transformation”
(Bourdieu, 1998, p. 13). This, of course, is the focus of the analysis carried out in this and the
preceding two chapters: to tease out the contradictions and conflicts within the socially
reproductive ELTPs with the aim of identifying areas of change that would make them socially
transformative for the MMRs instead of reproductive.

Education, from Bourdieu’s perspective, is thus not simply reproductive without challenge and
the possibility of transformation. This can be illustrated by reference to the MMRs in this study.
Education is seen by many migrants and refugees as the way out of disadvantage and a path to
upward social mobility. However, this depends on the programmes being offered and the
teachers and teaching being considered. Teachers can simply reproduce social relations of
power, the social status quo, or they can choose to contest these and make education
transformative for the MMRs: to reject the reproductive tendency of education, and aim to
establish alternative goals that redefine the rules of the game with reference to the sociocultural
context and student cohort concerned.

From the data and analysis in the preceding two chapters, it can be appreciated that the English
language training programmes lie towards the reproductive pole of the Bourdieusian educational
spectrum of struggle. They represent a site of struggle for teachers and administrators who must
provide the mandated educational outcomes of the ELTPs representative of the social status
quo, and within strictly controlled budgets. They also represent the site of struggle for MMRs to
gain anything more than a basic oral proficiency in English from their ELTPs. These struggles
are reflected in the findings from this thesis, which can be reconceived and cast in terms of Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic violence, the focus of the next section of this chapter.

9.3 **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMMES AS A CONTEXT FOR SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE**

The findings from this research identify several problematic areas within the logic of practice of the ELTPs offered to the MMRs. This section frames these areas within Bourdieu’s conception of symbolic violence that he describes as “gentle, invisible violence, unrecognised as such, chosen as much as undergone” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 127), and that imposes an expectation of certain social behaviours and positioning on those experiencing the violence which results in them tacitly accepting their disadvantaged social position as normal (Bourdieu, 1990b; 1996). This is violence imposed on people in a symbolic rather than physical manner, for example in “people being denied resources, treated as inferior or being limited in terms of realistic aspirations” (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. xvi). From this perspective, there are four problematic areas in the logic of practice of the ELTPs that follow on from the concerns of the MMRs about their English programmes as discussed in Chapter Eight (Sections 8.2.2 to 8.2.6) and which represent forms of symbolic violence. These are discussed below and summarised in Table 9.1.

The first problematic aspect of the ELTPs is that their underlying policy framework appears to be flawed, in that this framework is driven more by a mandate for economic efficiency and auditable outcomes than a focus on the needs of NESB learners. In fact, the least proficient language learners (e.g. those who are illiterate in their first language) are increasingly likely to be excluded under the ‘no capacity to benefit’ mandate of the LLN/SEE programme (as detailed in Chapter Three).

The second major failing in the ELTP logic of practice is represented in the duration and structure of the training hours offered in the ELTPs. The training hours available (510 hours in the AMEP, and 800 hours in the LLN/SEE programme followed by a mandated six-month period of ineligibility) are disjointed and inadequate for effective additional language learning, particularly for those illiterate in their first language.

The third problematic area is that the sociocultural learning environment of the English training programmes appears to be flawed and demotivating to language learners. Learners with different needs attempt to learn English within a standardised one-size-fits-all programme that typically lacks any focus on gaining work skills or experience, despite the fact that this is the desired objective both of the ELTPs and the MMRs themselves. There is an associated failure to
provide adequate opportunity to practice English speaking and failure to teach the specific capitals and logics of practice necessary to find and sustain employment in Australia.

The fourth and final problematic aspect of the ELTPs is that they commence from the pedagogical construct that the additional language learner is inferior, for instance in being considered as lacking in any existing capitals useful in the Australian workplace. The ELTPs, in fact, appear to be structured on the assumption that the language learner is culturally and linguistically disadvantaged. Ndhlovu (2015) captures this concept in a comment relating to African refugees that is equally applicable to the MMRs in this research:

We are talking here about people who occupy a marginal space within the Australian immigrant context – their cultures are seen as marginal when compared to dominant Anglo-Saxon cultural norms and their languages are considered to be marginal and less favourable compared to English, which is perceived to be the only language of access, participation and engagement in the necessary social transactions of everyday life (Ndhlovu, 2015, p. 12).

The ELTPs thus construct the additional language learner from this perspective of deficit, with failure to recognise non-Australian qualifications and work experience as legitimate in the Australian context, and/or with failure to build on the existing capitals of the MMRs.

The final outcomes of the English training programmes for the male Muslim refugees reflect the results of the ELTPs’ flawed logic of practice. The MMRs generally remain with low level linguistic proficiency in oral English, minimal skills in English literacy, and lack vocational skills and qualifications. The refugees have little chance within the ELTPs to improve their cultural and social capitals which are both critically necessary to successfully enter the Australian workforce with something more than occasional casual, low status work. The MMRs thus typically end up as unemployed and condemned to a repetitive disjointed cycle of attendance at ELTPs.

The reality here is that the ELTPs tend towards education as reproduction of the social status quo, where MMRs are marginalised and positioned as other and socially inferior. Referring back to the quote above from Webb, Schirato and Danaher (2002, p. xvi), the MMRs are thus triply disadvantaged in the stakes of symbolic violence: being denied resources in the ELTPs, treated as socially inferior, and limited in any realistic aspiration to rise above their disadvantaged social position.
These considerations are summarised in Table 9.1. In short, it is proposed that the entire logic of practice underlying the ELTPs is flawed as it relates to the MMRs (and other NESB communities): in terms of their underlying policy framework, the duration and structure of the hours offered, the demotivating sociocultural environment in which the ELTPs are conducted, and the pedagogical assumption that constructs the additional language learners as deficient and lacking in any capital. Furthermore, the suboptimal and problematic final outcomes of these programmes for the students are accepted as satisfactory by those who manage the ELTPs at both the local and governmental level. Put bluntly, the overall scenario within the ELTPs is not only socially reproductive of the MMRs as disadvantaged and subject to symbolic violence, but also representative of a veiled form of institutionalised discrimination and racism. The ELTPs set the Muslim refugees up for failure, in that both what is missing and what is present in these ELTPs contribute to ensuring these refugees stay in their disadvantaged social place in Australian society. However, this is not to say that some of the MMRs do not exhibit resistance and agency when confronted by the symbolic violence within their English language training, as considered in the next section.
### Table 9.1 The failures and symbolic violence inherent in the Australian federal ELTPs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problematic areas in the ELTPs’ logic of practice</th>
<th>Example/s</th>
<th>Symbolic violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ELTP policy framework is flawed</td>
<td>ELTPs are driven by mandated ACSF outcomes and economic efficiency rather than the needs of the language learners.</td>
<td>Language learners are denied appropriate resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is an inherent threat of denial of any English language training where MMRs are deemed as having ‘no [further] capacity to benefit’.</td>
<td>MMRs generally remain with low level linguistic proficiency in oral English, minimal skills in English literacy and lack vocational skills and qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language learners are denied appropriate resources.</td>
<td>MMRs can aspire only to low status, often short-lived menial jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MMRs generally remain with low level linguistic proficiency in oral English, minimal skills in English literacy and lack vocational skills and qualifications.</td>
<td>The reality for most MMRs is unemployment and repeated cycles of attendance at the ELTPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The reality for most MMRs is unemployment and repeated cycles of attendance at the ELTPs.</td>
<td>ELTPs tend towards reproduction of the Australian social status quo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELTPs represent a veiled form of institutional discrimination and racism.</td>
<td>Language learners are marginalised and positioned as ‘other’ and socially inferior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Duration and structure of the ELTPs’ hours are problematic</td>
<td>The training hours available for English language learning are inadequate and disjointed.</td>
<td>ELTPs represent a veiled form of institutional discrimination and racism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Socio-cultural environment of the ELTPs is flawed and demotivating to language learners</td>
<td>Standardised ELTPs - fail to provide opportunity to practice English speaking - fail to provide a focus on job skills - fail to teach the specific capitals and logics of practice necessary to find and sustain employment in Australia</td>
<td>ELTPs represent a veiled form of institutional discrimination and racism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ELTPs’ pedagogical construct of the language learners as deficient and lacking in any capital</td>
<td>Standardised ELTPs - fail to recognise non-Australian qualifications and work experience as legitimate - fail to recognise and build on the existing capitals of the MMRs</td>
<td>ELTPs represent a veiled form of institutional discrimination and racism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9.4 Reaction and Resistance to the Symbolic Violence of the ELTPs

The ELTP policy discourse is one that promotes English language training as transformative with employment as the outcome (DIAC, 2008; DIICCSRTE, 2013a; Liebig, 2007). For example, in respect to the AMEP, there is the statement that: “the Adult Migrant English Programme [is] to help migrants learn English and find employment as soon as possible” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008), and in respect to the LLN/SEE programme, the aim is “to improve clients’ language, literacy and/or numeracy with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force” (Department of Industry, 2013b, section 3). However, as outlined in the previous section of this chapter, the reality is entirely different. A point salient to this argument is made by Butorac
The assumption that English language acquisition leads to social and economic inclusion is not challenged [in these programmes] … and the language learner is seen as linguistically deficient in English, rather than as an emerging bi- or multilingual. Moreover, the ways that race, as well as gender [and religion], mediate both language learning and social inclusion are never problematised (Butorac, 2014, p. 234).

It may be reiterated here that religion, Islam in particular, is also not problematised in respect to additional language acquisition within the ELTPs, and for the male Muslim refugee from a non-Anglo and visibly different culture, even high English language proficiency may not lead to social and economic inclusion (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Johnstone, 2011). This appears to be related to veiled racism from within the general Australian community (e.g. AHRC, 2015; Dunn et al., 2007; Markus, 2011, 2014), and also from the institutions of Australian society (e.g. Barkdull et al., 2011; Loosemore et al., 2010; Lovat et al. 2013). This becomes even more unsettling in respect to the participants in this study when the ELTPs are viewed though the Bourdieusian lens of symbolic violence. As they progress through their English training, the MMRs marginally improve in the cultural and linguistic capital that is deemed to be legitimate in the meta-field of Australian society, but not to the degree where they ever become fully legitimate in the Anglocentric Australian culture. This represents institutionalised discrimination and racism at governmental level.

As seen from the findings in this study described in the previous two chapters, the reaction of the MMRs to the symbolic violence of their English training programmes is variable. Some of the MMRs demonstrate resistance and agency – as in the case of Musa, Hassen, Sharif and Hossani – though with varying degrees of success. Relevant to the argument that the ELTPs are not serving the needs of the MMRs, as it may be noted that none of the employment opportunities for this group of MMRs were gained through their attendance at these English training programmes, but rather through links from within their own Muslim communities (Musa, Hassen and Sharif), and/or from their Job Service Agencies (Musa and Hossani). The other MMRs – Amir, Youssef, Abdi and Abdullah – have never had the opportunity of employment in Australia despite their keen desire and efforts to gain this. The final result for most of the MMRs (except Musa who remains in employment and Hassen who is on a disability pension) is repeated attendance at the ELTPs with intermittent periods of unemployment (see Chapter Seven for more detail).
Bourdieu contends within his notion of symbolic violence that people come to a doxic acceptance of their disadvantaged social positioning as normal and expected, this being due to their ‘misrecognition’ of the real power relationships in the society and culture being considered (Bourdieu, 1977). This perspective may be considered as deterministic in the suggestion that these people show complete acceptance of their disadvantage with no allowance for agency. However, as has been demonstrated in the findings from the previous two chapters, and referred to above, the MMRs in this research have all demonstrated agency and struggle in one form or another as they attempt to improve their social and economic positioning in Australian society despite the socially reproductive tendency of their ELTPs. This notion of doxic acceptance thus needs to be reconceptualised to include agency, something which Bourdieu did himself within what he terms the ‘tendential law of human behaviours’:

… by virtue of the law that, through the dispositions of habitus … expectations tend universally to be roughly adapted to the objective chances … [the] tendential law of human behaviours, whereby the subjective hope of profit tends to be adjusted to the objective probability of profit (Bourdieu, 2000a, p. 216)

Thus, rather than a doxic acceptance of their plight, the agents concerned adopt a more balanced and realistic perspective about their social reality. Consider, for example, Sharif, once an architect with a middle class social status living in Iran, who now finds himself in Australia with his skills and qualifications not recognised as legitimate. He now accepts that he must lower his aspirations in Australian society (‘First thing, I try to find that job I like. I have experience. If I can’t that job, doesn’t matter which job, any’). Another example is provided by Musa, who attended the AMEP but left before his training hours were complete, considering that economic capital (a job) was more important than linguistic capital (English proficiency). In fact, Musa later returned to the LLN/SEE programme of his own accord to try and improve his English proficiency and gain a qualification (‘If I try to do like course for good job … I can’t do with my English … I can’t read good … for that I decided let me back to do the English classes’). However, he appears to have come to a doxic recognition that his English skills were not going to improve at the rate he desired or expected, so he left and found another job, content with its low status (‘I’m not finish [ELTPs] … before I finish, I get the job, family day care and because of that I can’t, you know, continue … That very slowly [LLN/SEE] course not for me. I need the job.’).

In general terms, if an agent does not possess the forms of capital valued within the variety of Australian social fields, or if the capital they possess is not viewed as ‘legitimate’, then the agent is unlikely to be successful in the field under consideration as they lack power and
influence in that field. This is a critical point about why these Muslim males find it so hard to succeed: they are in a game that is not of their making, and they must share in the ‘illusio’ of investment in the game through attending classes and attempting to get a job. The reality, however, is that the stakes are against them as they do not possess the legitimated capitals necessary to gain meaningful employment in Australia. The MMRs in this study all occupy a lower socio-economic position which not only limits the capital they might expect (not) to achieve, but also ultimately disposes them towards what is suggested to be a realistic acceptance of their limitations, this being due to Bourdieu’s tendential law of human behaviours as mentioned above. The refugees have little option but to accept their social reality, and still ‘play the game’ to the best of their ability, otherwise their Centrelink-paid welfare benefits will be at stake. In respect to this argument, Bourdieu’s concept of misrecognition does not necessarily imply an inability to recognise the inequity inherent in a social field of practice, but rather may simply indicate an inability to deal with or change the implicit conditions within the field/s concerned (Herzfeld, 2005), a critical distinction that takes agency into account. Additionally, as Schleef (2002, p. 4) notes, “Far from being unwilling dupes of ideological indoctrination, students are self-reflective, and they strategically accommodate and resist the ideologies of their education” – as do the MMRs in this research, albeit to varying degrees.

9.5 The Symbolic Violence of Settlement within Multicultural Australia

Given that the perspectives of the MMRs are generally negative towards their English training in respect to the various ways identified in Chapter Eight, the question may be asked as to whether there are any real gains for these refugees in attending such training programmes. The answer would appear to be in the affirmative when the responses of the MMRs to questions about their settlement into Australian culture are considered. All express a degree of relief at being in Australia with its social support systems, and all wish to integrate into multicultural Australia where they can celebrate their religion and first culture in safety while respecting Australian values. This is demonstrated in quotes from their interviews: For example, Musa stated:

You know when we are here ... you cannot do your culture the way you do before ... just for remember it ... mostly just by action, by everything, that’s why we study every day, all of us, we take Australian culture ... and that’s what we doing now ... and I take already, but still what I mean ... you know, celebrate ... like Ramadan time ... still I wanna catch also my culture ... My religion say any government you are under ... you have to be follow the rule before you take to your religion ... if I have enough English, I will try.
It is interesting here that Musa is able to justify his stance on religious grounds, possibly making it easier for him to accept (‘My religion say any government you are under ... you have to be follow the rule before you take to your religion’).

The theme of being free to mix with others regardless of religion or race and in safety was also especially important to the MMRs. This is demonstrated in responses from Youssef and Abdi:

*Culture and religion is no changing never ... in Australia I have opportunity, I can choose in my culture ... You can change sometimes, you can join together and sometimes we have friend, community Sudanese, we can enjoy together. (Youssef)*

*I’m Australian now ... all Australia same people ... you have religion, we have religion, ... Muslim, Christian ... but everything, every person in Australia ... they must keep all Australia ... all student meet this morning ... our class is not talk religion ... we conversation about education ... I like ... because all my friend, lady or men, no different, just all student come in class. (Abdi)*

These responses illustrate that culture is a process, and not a fixed and stable, unchanging entity. In Bourdieusian terms, a cultural habitus can change its disposition/s to accommodate a changing social field of practice, as appears to be occurring for Youssef and Abdi.

Hossani drew a distinction between culture and religion, but noting again that he wants to keep both in Australia. The same was the case for Abdi:

*Culture, religion is very, very different ... our country culture is not Muslim culture ... We respect Australian rules ... When we working in the factory or anywhere, we discuss with them [about Friday being a Muslim holy day] ... I don’t want to be separate with my culture ... we have got choice in Australia ... this is our freedom ... we need our culture, we keep our culture. (Hossani)*

*Australia culture is very good ... Australia freedom country, everybody relax, everybody free ... Australia people, good people so culture we follow, no problem ... we have my culture, I am Australia culture ... people, they talk culture in country for all, but religion for different. Every religion is serious. (Abdi)*

Similar responses were obtained from the remaining interviewees. Basically, life in Australia is preferable to life as a refugee. As Youssef and Hassen state:
This discussion does raise the issue of the trope of the ‘grateful refugee’, who is expected to conform to the (inferior) social position offered to them within multicultural Australian society. In this respect, multiculturalism as realised in the Australian social space allows for the expression of cultural identity, including language and religion. However, this must be “within carefully defined limits … [and] all Australians [including immigrants] should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia to its interests and future first and foremost” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989). The inherent assumption here, of course, is that these ‘carefully defined limits’ of multiculturalism are set by the dominant white Anglocentric Australian culture – thus the very basis of multiculturalism, and the preferred settlement pattern of male Muslim and other refugees, has at its heart an institutionalised symbolic domination and violence.

These Bourdieusian perspectives contribute to answering the research question in that they indicate that the socially reproductive ELTPs are at least successful in supporting the MMRs as they settled into Australia and learnt about its culture, and then assisted them in coming to a ‘realistic’ acceptance and rationalisation about their inferior social position in Australian society. In fact, from this viewpoint, the ELTPs are fulfilling the primary function of education as proposed by Bourdieu – to reproduce the dominant status quo (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1996).

9.6 SUMMARY

The realities of the English training programmes for the male Muslim refugees in this research are quite different to those stated within the rhetoric of the federal ELTP policy documents that promote employment as the expected outcome of English language training. The result of the multiple failings of these programmes identified in this and the previous chapter, at least for these male Muslim refugees, is to consign them to a reproductive cycle of intermittent and unproductive English language training, and to a reliance on Centrelink benefits and a socially inequitable existence. The only real ‘success’ of the ELTPs is that they have assisted the MMRs to settle into Australian society, or at least its social periphery, and to change their perspectives on religion and culture, though largely in ways that leave the Australian social status quo unchallenged. However, these training programmes are generally of little help in assisting them
to gain meaningful employment, which for these men is the most meaningful sign of successful settlement.

The research question in this thesis concerns the perspectives of the male Muslim refugee participants about the effectiveness of their English training programmes in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia. The data obtained has been analysed using the notions of Pierre Bourdieu. The failings of the ELTPs have been framed in this chapter using Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence. The insights gained from this analysis can now be directly applied to determining how the English language training programmes need to improve and thus offer social transformation to the MMRs as opposed to social reproduction. As Wacquant (2008) states: “this account of symbolic violence – the subtle imposition of systems of meaning that legitimize and thus solidify structures of inequality – simultaneously points to the social conditions under which these hierarchies can be challenged, transformed, nay overturned” (Wacquant, 2008, p.264). Recommendations as to how this might be achieved are the focus of the final chapter of this thesis.
CHAPTER TEN
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

10.1 OVERVIEW

The Federal Government of Australia wishes to improve the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) levels of the Australian population. This aim seems well founded. For instance, within industrialised countries, research over many years has demonstrated a consistent relationship between the literacy levels of the population and economic productivity and prosperity. Additionally, having reasonable levels of LLN skills contributes to personal health and wellbeing, and these skills are central to the social and economic participation of an individual or community (OECD, 2013; Shomos & Forbes, 2014; Young-Scholten, 2013). Conversely, lack of LLN skills can lead to social exclusion, poor health, young parenthood, children’s poor school performance and increased levels of criminality (Young-Scholten, 2013). The linking of education, skills and employment is thus now an accepted belief of modern society, and the basis of much government policy.

Based on the above, it would seem appropriate for refugees and other immigrants to learn English LLN skills for optimal settlement into Australian society. In this respect, for refugees, sufficient skills in the host language to communicate with the native speakers of the country of settlement may be regarded as “probably the most important single alterable factor contributing to their social and economic integration” (Dustmann & Van Soest, 2002, p. 473). English language proficiency and associated English language training programmes thus feature prominently in the policies of the Federal Australian Government in management of newly-arrived refugees and other immigrants. However, the question arises as to the effectiveness of these English language training programmes.

For refugees who have spent years trying to find a home, and/or living in the squalid conditions of refugee camps, the oft-cited link between education, skills and employment is broken: unemployment and little or no education is the norm for them. Thus when refugees arrive in their new affluent country of settlement, they are desperate to find work and support their families (Oh, 2011). This has been one of the findings from this research: that the desire of the participants for a job takes priority over their desire to attend English language training programmes. However, in order to access the social benefits of Australian life, refugees and other immigrants must follow the federally predetermined pathways of English training within the AMEP and then LLN/SEE programme.
As has been seen, it is possible for some refugees to exercise agency and break out of this cycle by finding employment, but most follow the pathway of repeated attendance at English language training, without gaining employment and without gaining the capital that would allow them to integrate into Australian society. The question thus arises as to how this situation can be improved. In the previous chapter, the failings of the federal English language training programmes were cast within the lens of Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence. Considering those failings, a series of key recommendations are made in this chapter that I believe would begin the process of making the English training programmes offered to male Muslim refugees (MMRs) and other similar communities more successful in terms of skilling them for meaningful work in Australia, and allowing them a more equitable settlement into multicultural Australian society.

This final chapter is divided into six sections. Section 10.1 provides the context for this chapter. Section 10.2 delineates the significance of this study. Section 10.3 proposes a series of key recommendations that would assist the MMRs and similar communities to gain English training contextualised around work experience and qualifications which would enhance their employment opportunities in the Australian workplace. Section 10.4 provides recommendations for further research. Section 10.5 considers the limitations of this study. The final section 10.6 makes some concluding remarks and draws this thesis to a close.

10.2 Significance of this Study

The focus of this research on male Muslim refugees highlights the experiences of this ‘visibly different’ group of immigrants and the problems they face in Australia. This thesis contributes to the growing body of knowledge about the needs of such illiterate or low-literate adult NESB learners within their English language training, and also their preferences about how and where they learn their additional language of English. In fact, while language learning was not the prime focus of this study, there were some insights into the additional language learning of the participants in that several identified for themselves that learning of English is optimised when in a sociocultural context of interest and value to the learners. This concurs with the perspectives of sociocultural models of learning of an additional language (Firth, 1997; Larsen-Freeman, 2007).

Another issue identified from this research was the lack of any significant progress in literacy (reading and writing) skills among those participants who are illiterate in their first language, despite hundreds or (in some cases) thousands, of hours of English language training. These same learners did, however, achieve a basic proficiency in oral English. This concurs with the findings of Young-Scholten (2013) who reviewed several non-English studies in this area.
As Young-Scholten (2013) and Tarone (2005, 2009) note, past research into acquisition of an additional language has previously been centred mainly on middle class learners with reasonable literacy education in their first language and culture. However, given the increasing numbers of adult refugees illiterate in their first language arriving within various Western countries, these authors highlight the need for studies of additional language acquisition that focus on these low-educated immigrant adults. Such studies would have implications for teaching of such individuals and communities. This present study examining the perceptions of male Muslim refugees contributes to this much needed area.

In respect to the federal English language training programmes offered to refugee communities in Australia, this study has highlighted a range of problematic issues within the structure and delivery of these programmes. When considered against the currently-accepted principles of additional language acquisition, the structure of the ELTPs in terms of the training hours available and the method of their delivery appears to be highly problematic. There are also concerns identified in respect to the sociocultural and pedagogical environment of the ELTPs. These various concerns are the basis of the recommendations for change delineated in the next section of this chapter.

### 10.3 Key Principles and Recommendations for Change in the Federal English Language Training Programmes

If the federal English language training programmes are to succeed in their stated goals of assisting the male Muslim and other ex-refugees now living in Australia to find and keep employment, then they must change in several ways to achieve this. They must move from the present standardised English language training programmes towards a more supportive and individualised model of training that encourages and assists students to build on their existing skills and move into the Australian workforce. In order to achieve this, the following five major changes need to be implemented:

(i) **Changes in the perspective of deficit underlying delivery of the ELTPs**

As has been clearly shown in this research, the male Muslim participants are not a group of homogeneous learners, but rather a diverse group of people with a range of abilities and individual needs. However, the current model underlying delivery of the English language training programmes represents a one-size-fits-all deficit approach that is based on a Western-centric assumption of the additional language learner as formally literate in their first language but deficient in their abilities. This conceptual basis does not take into account the interrupted education of many of these refugees, nor their typical lack of formal literacy in their first
language. Crucially, it also ignores the considerable assets that the refugees bring to their English language learning, such as oral proficiency in at least one other language, and sometimes work skills and/or qualifications from their own culture.

An English language programme that teaches language out of context, and also ignores and overlooks not only the real assets that students bring, but also their particular needs (e.g. in the areas of mental and physical health due to previous trauma as refugees) is unlikely to be successful for most participants. Students are unlikely to progress far in their additional language learning if they are psychologically and physically unwell, yet still subject to accountability demands. For instance, that they attend their English language training programmes or face loss of their Centrelink payments.

The current deficit model underlying the English training programmes sets refugees up to face unemployment, disadvantage and an existence as social pariahs. The model thus needs to evolve to recognise and deal with the larger picture of these learners, and the support they require to sustain their learning. This goes beyond the mandate that learners simply acquire basic oracy and literacy in the ELTPs towards a wrap-around model that actually and effectively supports the holistic needs of these people. Naidoo et al. (2015, p. 13) term this as “an enabling learning culture … a holistic process that extends beyond the formal walls of the … classroom and takes into account the needs and abilities of students. It encompasses assistance and targeted support at both individual and systemic levels”. From Bourdieu’s perspective, such an educational model would be socially transformative as opposed to reproductive of the status quo, in fact, “revolutionary in so far as it aims to establish alternative goals and more or less completely to redefine the game and the moves which permit one to win it” (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 172).

(ii) Changes in the policy framework of the ELTPs

Underpinning beliefs of deficit seen in the practices of the ELTPs are obviously closely articulated to the policy framework. This means that the current ELTP policy framework must also evolve if male Muslim and other refugees are to successfully gain and keep employment within Australia. The present policy demands mandatory time-limited outcomes based on specific gains in English proficiency, and there is the threat of removal of the client from the ELTPs where they have only a low level of English proficiency and/or fail to achieve these targets. These requirements must be removed and replaced with realistic targets of English attainment for each English language learner based on an individualised needs assessment and training plan. This assumes a fundamental shift in the ELTP policy framework away from one driven by economic efficiency to one driven by the needs of the additional language learner and
along the lines suggested below in terms of increased hours of training within a suitable sociocultural training environment.

(iii) Changes in the structure of the ELTPs
The current structure of two separate English training programmes for refugees in the form of the AMEP and then the LLN/SEE programme needs to be reconsidered, particularly as these programmes offer only a standardised one-size-fits-all strategy in the form of 510 hours in the AMEP followed by 800-hour training cycles in the LLN/SEE programme with mandated six-month training breaks. A programme specifically targeted towards the English training needs of refugees would seem the most appropriate option. For example, the AMEP could be restructured to include training options beyond just the present focus on ‘functional English’ (ISLPR level 2 in all macroskills) regarded as necessary for settlement, in fact a level of proficiency reached by about only seven per cent of the total AMEP cohort (ACIL Allen Consulting, 2015a).

Such a programme would require a significant extension of the hours offered within the current model of the AMEP and would assume a shift in focus of the AMEP towards English training contextualised around LLN-supported VET qualifications and outcomes. The alternative might be an extended AMEP that would provide such contextualised training, but only to the point where a particular NESB student’s English proficiency had reached a level satisfactory for articulation with the LLN/SEE programme and/or work experience opportunities.

There is, in fact, already a programme embedded within the AMEP that could provide the framework for such changes, namely the Settlement Language Pathways to Employment and Training (SLPET) programme. This aims to provide NESB students with vocational skills necessary for the Australian workplace. However, the SLPET provides only 200 hours of additional training, and the entry requirements demand that NESB students have relatively high English proficiency levels (around exit ISLPR 2) for all macroskills, both in oracy and literacy. Most refugees, including the MMRs in this research, would not be eligible for entry to the SLPET based on these English proficiency criteria.

(iv) Changes in the sociocultural and pedagogical environment of the ELTPs
The current deficit models of teaching and training within the ELTPs may be seen as representative of a “pathological worldview” (Grant & Cadell, 2009, p. 425) that privileges the negative and what is going wrong in the lives of male Muslim and other refugees. Such a perspective tends to reinforce the unequal power relations between teachers and NESB students, and thus maintain the social status quo (Grant & Cadell, 2009). There must be a shift away from
this “discourse of vulnerability” (Gateley, 2015, p. 27; Naidoo et al., 2015, p. 15) towards a teaching model within the ELTPs that represents a strengths-based approach. Such a model regards adult refugee students as being resourceful, capable and skilled people (Naidoo et al., 2015). This type of approach promotes collaboration between teachers and students, and thus student-centred learning (Grant & Cadell, 2009).

A strengths-based teaching and training model would assume that wherever practical the ELTPs should build on (rather than ignore) the pre-Australian work experience, qualifications and other skills possessed by particular MMRs. In respect to this, the ELTPs should offer specific contextualised teaching and training with a focus on the job skills and qualifications needed by particular trades, industries and businesses within the Australian workplace. This would presuppose vocational/work experience for the MMRs within their workplace of choice as far as practical. The research literature (e.g. Kurvers et al., 2010; Ortega, 2009; Watt & Lake 2004; Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006) suggests that this would have positive effects at multiple levels: for example, provision of more frequent opportunities for MMRs to practice their English in a motivating workplace context where they can learn about the expected behaviours and etiquette of the Australian workplace, while at the same time gaining work experience and training towards a VET qualification recognised in Australian society and culture. The MMRs would simultaneously begin to increase their social networks within the Australian workplace and wider community, these being important both for gaining meaningful employment and also increasing their acceptance by and within the dominant Anglo-Australian culture.

(v) Changes in the expected outcomes from the English language training programmes

The ELTPs need to move away from their present mandated focus on outcomes based on gains in English proficiency. They should be driven by policies such as those suggested above based on research evidence from studies in additional language acquisition – for example, in provision of sufficient training hours (Cummins, 2008; Garcia & DiCerbo, 2000) within a motivating and supportive sociocultural environment that provides for much practice of English language skills (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Larsen-Freeman, 2007). If the ELTPs were structured around such evidence-based principles, then their final outcomes would improve in terms of not only gains in English oracy and literacy by the MMRs, but also the acquisition of vocational qualifications reflecting actual work skills and knowledge within the vocational area concerned.

Such an integrated model of Vocational Education and Training (VET) is favoured not only by the participants in this research, but also the Federal Government who wish to see LLN support integrated into all vocational training in Australia. Nevertheless, there remains insufficient
funding from the Federal Government to support such strategies, and this relates to vocational training for any Australian, not just refugees (Queensland VET Development Centre, 2011).

Another issue is that there is currently a discourse of panic around refugees in Australia, Muslim or otherwise, relating to concerns about racial tensions and danger to the community (Marr, 2011). There are also concerns about the cost to the nation of refugees, largely driven by the media (Coorey, 2012; Sheehan, 2012). However, if the Federal Government had the political will to adequately fund English language training for refugees along the lines suggested, then such concerns would be likely to quickly regress. For example, research undertaken by Hugo (2011) identified the significant social and economic benefits that refugee migrants bring to the Australian economy and society when a longer-term perspective is taken. This, unfortunately, cannot take into account the intangible effects of the discourse of racism so prevalent within the Australian community and media at the present time (e.g. Graham, 2015; Lueck, Due & Augoustinos, 2015).

10.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This study has identified a range of problematic issues relevant to federal English language training programmes and made recommendations as to how these programmes might be improved. If a best practice model for delivery of English language training programmes to refugees and other refugee migrants were to be established (pilot study or otherwise), then this would need testing in a formalised study of outcomes in English proficiency and occupational achievement.

In respect to further research in relation to the research question, this study has limited itself to male Muslim refugee migrants from generally interrupted educational backgrounds. An equivalent study on female Muslim refugee migrants would identify whether their concerns about their English language training is similar to and/or different to their male counterparts. Similarly, a widened study taking into account the perspectives of multiple cohorts of refugee migrants from a range of sociocultural backgrounds and Australian geographical locations (e.g. urban versus rural) might identify further problematic issues within their English language training not identified from this present research.

10.5 Limitations of the Study

The focus of this study was on male Muslim refugees, and the problems they face in their English language training programmes and gaining employment in Australia. The findings are likely to be similar for other refugee groups, particularly the visibly different and with low
literacy skills from their own cultures. However, this would need confirmation by appropriate research focusing on the experiences and perspectives of these different and diverse communities now living within Australian society and culture. Similarly, the needs of female Muslim refugees are unlikely to be entirely the same as their male counterparts because as women they are positioned very differently to male Muslim refugees, even in Australian society. Thus studies of their experiences, particularly those with low level literacy in their own language, would be important.

The male Muslim refugees in this research also have only a basic oral proficiency in English which limited their ability to fluently answer the questions asked during their interviews. In fact, secondary interviews were conducted with several of the MMRS with interpreters present (these were sourced through the Australian Translating and Interpreting Service, TIS National). However, the end result was that these secondary interviews added only slightly more clarity to some of the responses of the MMRS, but little in the way of additional data.

Finally, I must acknowledge that I am a female, Taiwanese-born English language teacher interviewing male Muslim refugees. This could be seen as potentially detrimental to this study given the different cultural roles ascribed to women in some Muslim communities, as well as the unequal power relationship between myself as teacher and the male Muslim refugees as participants. However, as noted in Chapter Six on Research Design (Section 6.5), several steps were taken to minimise and ameliorate these issues. For example, none of the participants were my students at the time of this study, and before voluntarily taking part in this research they were all quite aware that I was the sole female researcher and interviewer. They were also aware that they could decline to answer any questions they saw as inappropriate and could leave the study at any point without explanation or repercussions. Furthermore, my conduct during interviews was always cordial towards the participants, and respectful of their culture. The interviews were also conducted in a semi-public but private place to protect both their reputation and my own. The end result were responses from the participants that appeared truthful and consistent across all interviews conducted.

10.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS
Unless and until the federal English language training programmes provide opportunities for participation and practice of English in a variety of different Australian cultural contexts, particularly in the Australian workplace, refugee learners, particularly those from visibly different backgrounds, will be far less likely to achieve the linguistic competence needed “to be understood … believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished … [and] to impose reception” (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 648). This group will also remain socially and economically disadvantaged
in Australian society. Australia needs to encourage and harness the capital embodied in the refugees settling here. Only then can they start to change the rules of the game within which they live.

A comment about social concerns may also be made here. This research has shown that the current ELTPs as they stand are entrenching a cycle of unemployment and social disadvantage among male Muslim refugees. This provides a potential context for social violence and disturbance, and also seeds the racial prejudice of some White Australians, often driven by the Australian media. This additionally provides a context for the potential radicalisation of some with extreme views among the Muslim community. There is thus an urgent and immediate need to restructure the English language training programmes offered to refugees if they are to become equal and contributing members of multicultural Australia.

From their responses to the questions posed in this research, the male Muslim refugee participants indicate that they regard themselves as both Australians and Muslims. They are simply people who wish to settle in a peaceful country and live out their lives without fear and violence. There are obviously exceptions to this, but these are few: similar exceptions are found in any community in Australian society that one might like to examine. It is up to the Federal Government and Australians in general to redefine and broaden their understanding of who and what constitutes an ‘Australian’ in an increasingly multicultural society, and to give all refugees in this country, Muslim or otherwise, a ‘fair go’ in accessing vocational training and employment. Some of the ways forward have been suggested from this study, but further research is necessary to determine the optimal ways to achieve this.

I conclude this thesis with two quotes. The first is from Pierre Bourdieu, previously used to title Chapter Seven, but entirely appropriate here to highlight the problems faced by generations of refugees in Australia:

> Those who talk of equality of opportunity forget that social games ... are not ‘fair games’. Without being, strictly speaking, rigged, the competition resembles a handicap race that has lasted for generations (Bourdieu, 2000a, pp. 214–15).

Over the last four years while completing this thesis, I have been frequently questioned by non-academic friends and acquaintances as to the topic of my research. When I explain, there is often the response as to why don’t they (the male Muslim refugees) just get jobs if they are so concerned about their English training. Few people among the mainstream community realise the difficulties faced by Muslim and other refugees in finding and keeping employment within
Australian culture and society. A quote from Musa, who has been the only participant in this study able to find ongoing work, effectively summarises, though understates, the problems faced by refugees seeking employment in Australia:

It’s very hard for the people like me to get the job [in Australia] ... we need help.

If we actually listen to the opinions of refugees such as those who have participated in this research project, this will assist us to see the ways in which ‘social games’ are effectively played in Australian society. Perhaps then some of the difficulties faced by refugees can be removed, so that the “handicap race that has lasted for generations” (Bourdieu, 2000a, pp. 214–15) is diminished, and the ‘race’ becomes more equitable in its outcomes for all Australians, not just the select few – a place of possibility rather than symbolic, or even real, violence.
Why is the research being conducted?
This research project is titled *Perspectives of male Muslim refugees on English language training programmes offered to assist with settlement and employment in Australia*. Its aim is to gain better understanding of the adequacy of the English language training offered in meeting the settlement and employment needs of male Muslim refugees.

What will you be asked to do?
I am asking for your participation in completing a set of semi-structured interview questions. The interview questions are divided into three sections concerning your: (i) Biographical information; (ii) English training programmes; and (iii) Employment information.

Participation in this research is voluntary. Thus to take part you need to sign the attached consent form which asks for your agreement to participate in the research.

Participants may be asked to take part in a further interview
You may be asked to take part in a second interview to gain further information. This may be conducted in English or your own language using an interpreter. You are, however, under no obligation to participate and are free to withdraw from this research at any stage without explanation and without any penalty to you.
The expected benefits of the research
Your participation in this research is important because it may help to improve the knowledge and skills of second language teachers; and it may also improve the effectiveness of the English language training programmes you attend in order to gain skills for employment.

Risk to you
It is not expected that this research will place you at any risk.

Your confidentiality
All participants within this research will remain anonymous, and your real name will not be included in any publication or documentation resulting from this research project.

It may be possible for people reading reports about the research to identify the location where the interview was conducted. However, it will not be possible for anyone to guess the identity of any participant (apart from their cultural and ethnic background).

Any hard copies of information collected will be stored in secure, locked filing cabinets for a period of five years, but then destroyed via a secure file disposal system. Electronic copies of information will be accessible only by the research team, and will be carefully secured on personal computers.

Your participation is voluntary
Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any penalty. You can withdraw permission before, during and after any stage of the research.

Questions / further information
For further information about the research you can contact that researcher:

Ms Yi-jung Teresa Hsieh (Teresa) | Email teresa.hsieh@griffithuni.edu.au | Phone (07) 3382 1520

The ethical conduct of this research
Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If potential participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of this research project they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you
A summary of the results and a chance to discuss the research will be provided to any participant who requests this.

Privacy Statement
The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information, consult the University’s Privacy Plan at http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 558
Perspectives of male Muslim refugees on English language training programmes offered to assist with settlement and employment in Australia

Consent Form: Participants

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By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet on this research project and in particular have noted that:

• I have had all questions about the research answered to my satisfaction
• I understand the risks involved
• I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research
• I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary
• I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the researcher
• I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without comment or penalty
• I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on (07) 3735 5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
• I agree to be a participant in the project.

Participant: .................................................................

Signature: ................................................................. Date: ..................................................
APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION PROMPTS FOR PARTICIPANTS

*These questions are a guide only and the researcher may not ask all questions*

**Research Question:** What are the perspectives of male Muslim refugees (MMRs) on the effectiveness of their English language training programmes (ELTPs) in facilitating their settlement and employment in Australia?

**Contextualising statement:** The AMEP and LLNP/SEE programme have been around in Australia for many years. I am doing a study to find out about what perceptions male Muslim refugees have about attending these programmes. I am interested in exploring your ideas and experiences. I want you to feel that I am the student here and you are the expert in these ELTPs. I want you to tell me as much as you can about your experiences in these programmes.

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**
1. Tell me something about yourself (e.g. age, religion, education and family background)?
2. When and how did you come to be in Australia?
3. What have you been doing since you first arrived in Australia?

**ENGLISH TRAINING PROGRAMMES**
1. What training programmes have you attended? How many hours of training have you completed?
2. Why did you do the AMEP and LLNP/SEE courses?
3. Tell me about what you learnt from these ELTPs.
4. How do you think attending these ELTPs have helped you?
5. How did attending the ELTPs affect your life in Australia and/or that of your family?
6. What are the problems in these ELTPs?
7. If you were the teacher in these ELTPs, what would you do differently?
8. What do you think your English levels are now compared to when you first arrived in Australia?

**EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**
1. Tell me about your employment background before you came to Australia (e.g. type/s of work; place of work; length of employment; qualifications etc).
2. Have you ever worked in Australia? If so, what jobs have you had?
3. What are the problems you have had in finding jobs in Australia?
4. Did attending the ELTPs help you in looking for a job (e.g. work experience, qualifications, gaining contacts etc)?
5. If you were the teacher in these ELTPs, what would you do differently to help other refugees find work in Australia?

Interviewer may seek further information or clarification using various prompts (e.g. Could you explain that further?; What do you mean by that?; Is there anything else you would like to say about the ELTPs/employment problems? etc).
LIST OF REFERENCES


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