The influence of Australian English (AusE) language use on life satisfaction and employment prospects of skilled Bangladeshi Migrants in Adelaide

by

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Summary

Bangladeshi skilled migrants are gradually increasing in Adelaide, South Australia, and becoming valued contributors to the society.

These skilled migrants who have already proven that they are competent users of English, having passed an English proficiency test (IELTS) as one of the major requirements for Australian Immigration, face persistent difficulties to fit into the host society and find employment commensurate to their skills and qualifications.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the experiences, life aspirations and employment expectations of this migrant group and to gain an insight into the linguistic and cultural factors that may impact on their life satisfaction.

This study contends that unfamiliarity with the Australian English language variety (AusE) and local cultural conventions makes this group particularly vulnerable while interacting with Anglo-Australians.

A qualitative methodology was adopted to conduct a semi-structured interview with the migrants, based on broad themes related to Bangladeshi skilled migrants' daily experiences and challenges in order to fit into the host society.

The study found that linguistic and cultural factors are to a large extent intertwined with migrants' journey of settlement, particularly in building social relationships through daily conversations, and in obtaining suitable employment commensurate to their skills.

The findings highlight the importance of the pragmatic aspects of communication and the connection between language and life satisfaction, an aspect which, we believe, has not been sufficiently investigated by researchers on migration.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed.....Sabrina Rahman .....

Date.....06/06/2019.....

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Since the early days of Australia's colonisation, migration is one of the processes through which many people, the majority from Anglo-Celtic origin, have come to settle in South Australia. The purpose of migration, as stated by the Department of Home Affairs is 'to build the economy, shape society, support the labour market and reunite family'. Nowadays, 68 % of people migrating to Australia are skilled migrants, and 32 % are from family visa streams[1]. Moreover, Australia's Migration Programme encourages immigration of people from a diversity of linguistic and cultural background. For skilled migrants in Australia however, high competency in English is assumed to secure employment and in return, it is expected that through their contribution the skilled migrants will feel better integrated into the host society (Giampapa & Canagarajah 2017). Country ranking for 2014-15 indicates that Bangladesh, which is the origin of the group selected in the present study, is ranked 7th out of more than 20 countries who choose to come to Australia under the points tested skilled migration programme. The 2016 Census reveals that nowadays the highest influx of migrants in South Australia is from India and China. Australian government websites confirm that the Bangladeshi skilled migrants are gradually increasing in Adelaide/South Australia and becoming valued contributors to society (Department of Home Affairs[2] ; Hugo 2014 *Migration Update Report*). Yet, it has also been widely reported that these skilled migrants face persistent difficulties to fit into the host society and fail to find employment commensurate to their skills and qualifications (*InDaily* 24 February 2015). As a result, around 2/3 of skilled migrants, who have already proven that they are competent users of English, having passed an English proficiency test as one of the major conditions for obtaining their visa, leave South Australia within a couple of years after their arrival (*InDaily* 2013). Admittedly, this situation raises concerns around social development issues faced by the new migrants and the communicative tensions likely to result from insufficient awareness of the culture encoded in the language.

1.1 The argument of this thesis

This study contends that attributing the causes of work dissatisfaction and maladjustment to flawed knowledge of the target language is insufficient. It seeks to demonstrate that due to their unfamiliarity with the vernacular Australian English variety (AusE) and the cultural conventions pertaining to Australian ways of speaking and behaving, this group is particularly vulnerable while interacting with Australian people, and this affects their successful adjustment and life satisfaction, particularly with regard to gaining employment. Thus, this project seeks to investigate the relationship between language use and its social implications in terms of adjusting to life in Australia, and how this may

[1] Source: Migration programme statistics 2014-15: https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/migration-programme

[2] Source: The official website of the Department of Home Affairs: https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au

affect the employment prospects of the Bangladeshi skilled migrant group in Adelaide. Maladjustment becomes particularly evident when crucial cultural differences, encoded linguistically and non-verbally, are not decoded by the migrants, who may not be aware of these differences or, in some cases, even refuse to acknowledge them. Therefore, this study seeks to address the following questions: (1) What is the overall impact of linguistic factors on the life satisfaction and employment prospects of skilled Bangladeshi migrants in South Australia?; and (2) To what extent can the familiarity with Australian vernacular English enhance the Bangladeshi migrants' sense of well-being in Australia?

In order to bring into focus this inferred relationship between linguistic factors and life satisfaction, the objectives of this study are to:

- examine the lived experiences, life aspirations and employment expectations of Bangladeshi skilled migrants in South Australia
- gain insight into the sociolinguistic factors that may impact on finding employment commensurate to the skills, qualifications and professional experience of Bangladeshi migrants
- explore the extent to which linguistic factors, in terms of language skills tested through IELTS, interactional competence and cultural conventions, affect life satisfaction, a sense of belonging or adjusting to the host society.

The study is quite significant as research on this specific migrant group is scant, particularly with regard to the issue of English language skills and employment prospects. Even though this issue has been acknowledged by several authors (Kandiah 1991; He & Young 1998; Kirkpatrick 2007; Yates 2011; Amit & Bar-Lev 2014; Hamid 2016; Adsera & Pytlikova 2016), to my knowledge it has been insufficiently explored. Ngoc *et al* (2016:7), in particular, point out that there is 'limited evidence of a *causal* relationship between English proficiency and employability'. This exploratory study based on a small survey and personal interviews of Bangladeshi skilled migrants in Adelaide contributes to highlight the relationship between English language proficiency, well-being and employability. In order to prove a *causal relationship* mentioned above, I am aware that a more systematic study would need to be conducted, which is beyond the scope of the present study. However, the qualitative approach used here, can hopefully contribute to gather further evidence on this particular group and, in addition to studies conducted with other skilled migrant groups, could have far-reaching implications for reassessing language policy implementation for migrants coming to Australia.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

Before focusing on the relationship between communicative issues and life satisfaction including employment in Australia, it will be necessary to give the relevant details of the context to situate the role of English in the education of the Bangladeshi migrants. At the start of this thesis, the context

chapter will provide some background information on Bangladesh with a brief outline of the migration history of Bangladesh, specifically in Australia, and will highlight the reasons of migration for this group. As language is a major area of focus in this research project, the linguistic context of Bangladesh education will also be discussed to provide an overview of current language teaching methodologies in Bangladeshi schools and universities.

As this research follows several strands, the academic literature review chapter will start with an exploration of basic concepts such as the term “life satisfaction”, and consider the Personal Wellbeing Index (Cummins 2013) as an encompassing framework for identifying components of life satisfaction. As it will become apparent, the research on the relationship of language use with life satisfaction is very tenuous. Ongoing debates concern mainly research on English language varieties, and point out the inadequacies of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Discussion of this issue will be briefly introduced as it contributes to the frustration reported by the Bangladeshi migrant group who become aware of their language shortcomings when they fail to secure employment that aligns with their professional skills. This will lead to a closer examination of the research on other socio-pragmatic issues relevant to this thesis, such as the specificities of Australian English language and cultural conventions as they affect interactional competence.

The following chapter will focus on the methodology choices for conducting the research project. The project is best approached from a qualitative methodology perspective in order to provide an ‘emic’ insight into the interconnection between life satisfaction, language use and employment prospects of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia. The data collected consist of semi-structured interviews with ten Bangladeshi skilled migrants who have resided in Adelaide for a period of two to five years. This length of time of their stay in the host society is justified as life satisfaction is assumed to be the result of an evolving process over time. The interview questions explore the participants’ experiences, ideas, thoughts and opinions, derived from the key concepts identified in the research literature. The interview questions are based on the broad themes of the Bangladeshi migrants’ general satisfaction with everyday life experiences while interacting with Australian people, and the linguistic challenges they face in their attempt to fit into the host society and to find employment commensurate to their skills and qualifications. The literature chapter will address the key themes of the present study with reference to several studies in the field of pragmatics.

The findings of the qualitative analyses will be presented and discussed in two separate chapters focusing on personal and cultural factors regarding life satisfaction in Chapter 5, and on linguistic factors in relation to employment, in Chapter 6, as all of these factors appear to have a significant impact on the migrants’ life satisfaction and subjective well-being. A thematic approach is used for the analysis of the interview data, and key themes are identified in relation to the research project’s aims and objectives.

In chapter 5, the findings are discussed as they address the first objective of the research, which seeks to identify the Bangladeshis' primary motivation for adjusting to the host society based on their life experiences, aspirations and employment expectations. Out of a number of motivating factors, a secured life and children's better future act as primary motivators of migration. This analysis is based on a comparison between the expectations and the reality these migrants encounter after arrival in the destination country. From the different perspectives expressed by the participating migrants one common trait emerges, that is, for the sake of survival and adjustment, most of the Bangladeshi migrants have had to compromise their expectations in light of their current circumstances, and hence a certain amount of frustration is felt initially. However, different strategies are being used in order to face the challenges they encounter. For example, doing some research on the host society and gaining knowledge of the destination country's culture before arrival can facilitate the path of adaptation. Community involvement plays a vital role in the journey of settlement. Socializing with Anglo-Australians increases the opportunities to know the culture and language, which eventually act as positive factor on adjustment.

The second of these two chapters (Ch.6) addresses the factors regarding language use and employment prospects in response to the secondary objectives of this project. These include the ability to use the language variety of the host country to build a positive relationship with the members of the host society and, importantly, the fulfillment of one's professional goals to promote life satisfaction. There is no doubt that for these participants language has a direct influence in securing employment. However, although they agree that language plays a role in successfully socializing with Anglo-Australians and securing a job commensurate to their skills, I remain skeptical as to their level of awareness that knowing English and scoring high in the IELTS exam is insufficient to secure successful employment. The interview analysis confirms that in order to enhance their employment prospects, the Bangladeshi migrants I interviewed would need: (1) a greater understanding of the specificities of Australian English language variety as it is used when interacting with Anglo-Australians; (2) an increased knowledge of cultural conventions, particularly the role played by shared knowledge and expectations in comparison to their own language and culture; (3) and a greater awareness of the communicative challenges they face when adjusting to Australian English.

In the final chapter, I summarize the findings and highlight the limitations of the research before concluding on the broader significance of this study. The information gathered from this study may be of assistance to policy makers in appraising the challenges faced by this migrant group in communicating with Australians in everyday life. It could also assist in finding ways to motivate members of the migrant communities to manage these challenges by considering the linguistic and socio-pragmatic issues involved while adjusting to the English variety spoken in Australia.

Chapter 2 Background context of Bangladesh

One of the key areas of this research is to highlight the linguistic challenges faced by Bangladeshi skilled migrants in Australia. The migrants who are the subjects of this investigation are highly skilled and educated prior to their arrival in Australia, hence, it is assumed that they would have acquired their English language proficiency within the academic context of their home country. In order to fully appreciate the challenges faced by these migrants, it is necessary to give the reader some geographical and historical information in relation to Bangladesh at the start of this chapter. Firstly, this chapter will briefly examine the historical development of international migration of Bangladeshi people to Australia, and particularly to South Australia. It will then focus on the place of English in Bangladesh education, taking into consideration the learners' motivational factors and the weight of the teaching approaches used in the primary, secondary and higher education environment in relation to the acquisition of English skills. Finally, this chapter will conclude on the limitations in acquiring English communicative proficiency in Bangladesh and suggest that the linguistic challenges faced by migrants settling in Australia are heightened by the overall English language teaching environment in their home country.

2.1 A brief overview of the geography and history of Bangladesh

2.1.1 Geographical background

Bangladesh is a relatively small country in South Asia, situated on the delta of the two largest rivers on the Indian subcontinent—the Ganges and Jamuna (Brahmaputra). It borders India in the west, north, and east, and Burma (also known as Myanmar) in the southeast, with the Bay of Bengal in the south. Bangladesh is the eighth-most populous country in the world, with over 160 million people (World Population Review 2018). "Its population density is one of the highest on the planet, surpassed only by the city states of Singapore and Hong Kong" (Siddiqui 2003:2). The capital and largest city of Bangladesh is Dhaka, which has a population of 19,580,000. "It is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with a density of 23,234 people per square kilometre within a total area of 300 square kilometres" (World Population Review 2018).

Both geographical location and population density point to apparent reasons for migration. The extremely high population density in such a small country, combined with a geographical dislocation and a troubled recent history, indicates that it is really difficult to maintain a healthy life for all. It is also clear from the following description by Mutton and Haque (2004) that the geography of Bangladesh is responsible for natural calamities, which are a common occurrence in Bangladesh. Citing Rogge and Elahi (1989) and Islam and Islam (1985) the authors present the reasons for the severe natural catastrophes that frequently affect Bangladesh.

> "Because Bangladesh is sited on the delta of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Jamuna river systems, which has more than 300 perennial tributaries and distributaries, it is also highly vulnerable to the effects of flooding and river-bank erosion. In normal flood years, some 18 per cent of Bangladesh's land mass is covered by flood waters, while in severe years this can reach 40 per cent (Rogge & Elahi 1989).
> […] It has been estimated that between 2,000 to 3,000 kilometres of river-bank line experience major erosion annually (Islam & Islam 1985)."
> (Mutton & Haque 2004:42)

The present-day Bangladesh borders are the result of a history of upheavals that marked its struggle for independence.

2.1.2 Historical background

Similar to other nations in the world, Bangladesh has undergone historical and political crises to become an independent nation. Bangladesh achieved independence from Britain in 1947. However, the partition from the British empire was unable to ensure freedom, which was one of the primary aspirations of those who opposed the British rule. That partition ultimately led to the birth of East and West Pakistan as a new sovereign nation. Books written on the history of Bangladesh, such as, for example, *Beyond the Archive of Silence: Narratives of the Violence of the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh* by Saikia (2004), state that several factors, such as political exclusion and discrimination by the politically dominant western group, ethnic and linguistic discrimination, economic negligence, led to the Bangladesh Liberation War and, ultimately, to independence in 1971. However, in spite of the independence there were poverty, natural calamities, political uncertainty and military coups. Later, in 1991, the restoration of democracy brought economic development and relatively calm atmosphere although still, many negative issues, such as political instability, strikes, kidnapping, absconding, murders, rapes are constantly getting reported in newspapers and through social media and networks almost every day. One needs to keep this in mind when considering the impact of these issues on the causes of migration which will be elaborated upon later in this chapter.

2.1.3 Language and education

Bengali is the native language for most of Bangladeshis and it is also the official language of the country. English is widely used as a second language, particularly in higher education and in the legal system. However, the current linguistic status quo has emerged from a history of turmoil. The independence from the British rule could not provide any straightforward language settlement. Banu and Sussex (2004) recount that in the early years after 1947 the two-member Pakistan state (East and West) attempted to enforce the standard post-colonial practice of installing Urdu as a national language in place of English, although it was a minority language compared to the larger populations speaking Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto and Baluchi. Ultimately, "Urdu took the place of English and

policies were enacted to ‘Urdufy’ those areas where English had been predominant.’’ (Banu and Sussex 2004:123)

As for the position of English Banu and Sussex (2004) state:

> The removal of British rule was followed almost at once by debates to remove English progressively from its position of prestige, authority, and dominance in public life, administration, law, education, media, cultural, commercial and everyday life. (Banu and Sussex 2004:123)

In East Pakistan (later to become Bangladesh), the Bengalis also demanded Bengali to be a state language alongside Urdu, as the greater population of Bengalis only spoke a single language. But the West Pakistan authorities did not welcome that request and declared that Urdu would be the only state language. The different attitudes of the two ethnic groups towards language caused severe resentment among the people of East Pakistan. The consequence of this is described in Imam’s (2005) article in which the author mentioned a student movement centred on Dhaka University in East Pakistan in 1948 in support of the Bengali language. However, according to Imam (2005:247), the language uprising was swiftly repressed in 1952:

> In 1952 the national language decision on Urdu was confirmed and this sparked a second wave of language agitation that broadened into a movement against domination by West Pakistan. The Pakistan government moved to prohibit processions and meetings in Dhaka, but on 21 February there was a general strike and a student procession in defiance of the ban order. Police lobbed tear-gas shells at the students, the students retaliated by throwing bricks and the police opened fire. […] Protests continued into the next day. […] The military were brought in and the University was closed.

Imam’s (2005:247), quoting Bari (2002) regarding the aftermath of this movement, commented that “this martyrdom of the language movement left a [profound] impression on the younger generation and locked in the secular linguistic character of Bengali nationalism”. Later, Bengali was formally recognized “as a provincial language in the first constitution of Pakistan, which came into effect on 23 March 1956”. There were other political, social and economic reasons to make East Pakistan separate from West Pakistan, but the language choice played a pivotal role.

Interestingly, following British rule, although East and West Pakistan became both unified politically as an independent nation, they did not resolve their linguistic differences. The following comment by Banu and Sussex (2004) highlight the dramatic irony of the situation:

> Ethnically, linguistically, and politically, West Pakistan and East Pakistan were roped by violence together, and eventually fell by violence apart.

Moreover, Rahman (2005) states that the independent Bangladesh witnessed an overpowering position of Bangla in all spheres of life. He also points out that the Bangla Procholon Ain, or Bangla Implementation Act, implemented in 1987, established the Bengali language as the official language, thus unavoidably confining the use of English to the socio-cultural sphere. However, the use of English was never absent from the society of Bangladesh and today remains a compulsory subject in schools.

Although education is mainly offered in Bengali in schools, both at primary and high school levels, on 19 January 1989, English was declared a compulsory language in all schools from Year1 to Year12. At university level, besides the regular courses in Bengali, English has been introduced as a compulsory subject in many disciplines since the 1990s (Rahman 2000). Because of the spread of globalisation, nowadays well-off parents prefer to send their children to English-speaking schools, as these provide a better prospect for their children.

On the other hand, some Muslim families send their children to attend part-time courses or even pursue full-time religious education, which is imparted in Bengali and Arabic in madrasahs. The Madrasah Education System focuses on religious education, and teaches all the basics of education in a religious environment. In addition, students also have to complete all the courses which are included in the mainstream curriculum.

Considering the situation described above, we could assume that the population of Bangladesh is predominantly multilingual. UNESCO (2016) reveals that the literacy rate in Bangladesh has gone up to reach its highest peak in 2016 (72.76%), which represents an increase of 26.1% since 2007. However, it is unclear whether the rapid increase in the literacy rate in recent times can be attributed to the introduction of English as an additional resource in the Bangladeshis' communicative repertoire.

2.2 Bangladeshis migration

2.2.1 Historical development of international migration

Bangladesh has an extensive history of migration. In an article entitled 'Migration as a livelihood strategy of the poor: the Bangladesh case', Tasneem Siddiqui (2003:2) provides a chronological history of international Bangladeshi migration. According to the author, it is believed that the ancestors of the Sinhala population of Sri Lanka migrated centuries ago from the territory that now constitutes Bangladesh.

> "In the 18th century, when the British developed the tea industry in northeast Bengal, they brought indentured labourers from different parts of India. Again, when colonial policies destroyed Bengal's jute and cotton industries, and the market for fine muslin fabric collapsed, there followed large-scale migration of Bengalis to Assam. People from East Bengal also migrated to Burma. Since the emergence of independent states in South Asia in 1947, the gradual imposition of regulatory mechanisms has restricted the movements of people between states."

In some instances, migration was not restricted within the subcontinent. Mahmood (1994) reported that "in 1942, Bangladeshi nationals migrated to the port cities of London" and another wave of migration to the Middle East occurred after independence in 1971, as new opportunities for international migration emerged:

> "With rising oil prices, the Middle Eastern countries went through a phase of major infrastructure development for which they needed large numbers of expatriate workers. Various categories of Bangladeshi workers joined the Middle Eastern labour market. Gradually, migration also expanded to the newly industrialised countries of Southeast Asia. The nature of such migration was qualitatively different from migration to the West. These migrants went on short-term employment, with specific job contracts, and had to return home on completion of their contract period. This category was the largest of the country's migrants". (Siddiqui 2003:2)

Based on Siddiqui's report "Migration to industrialised countries, particularly to the West, has primarily been connected to the country's colonial past. During the 18th and early 19th century, sailors originating from the south-eastern part of East Bengal (Chittagong and Noakhali) found jobs in the British merchant navy, which carried goods from the port of Kolkata to all parts of the world". Historians conclude that, unlike the seamen of Chittagong and Noakhali, this group did not have much seafaring experience and jumped ship when the opportunity arose. They found themselves in a number of countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom (Alam 1988; Ali 1997; Carey & Shukur 1985, cited in Siddiqui 2003:2). Migration to the West still continues to this day following a more legal path.

> "In some instances, migration is through work visas, in other cases it occurs by changing a visa status from student to work, and in others, through family reunification. Most of these migrants have become long-term residents; some have adopted the citizenship of their countries of destination." (Siddiqui 2003:2)

2.2.2 Migration of Bangladeshis to Australia

The official website of the Department of Home Affairs[3] provides a picture of Bangladeshi migrants' journey to Australia. Bangladeshi migrants are relatively recent arrivals in Australia dating from 1970. The majority of arrivals occurred under the Skilled Migration Program. This source also confirms that most Bangladeshis settled in the urban areas of New South Wales, while smaller numbers have joined other states and territories. "According to the 2001 Australian Census, there were 9,050 Bangladesh-born people living across Australia" (Multicultural SA 2014). The increasing number of the Bangladesh-born migrants in Australia is quite noticeable in the following 2006 and 2011 censuses. The 2011 census reported that the total number of Bangladesh-born people in Australia was 27,809, which is a growth of 72.8% from the 2006 Census, compared to 62 % of the total overseas-born population. Among the total Bangladeshis born in Australia, according to the 2011 Census, 33.5 % arrived between 2001 and 2006 and 37.1 % arrived between 2007 and 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011). According to the recent 2016 census, total Bangladeshi ancestry is 39,566 which is an increase of 42 % compared to 2011. This trend indicates that Bangladeshi migrant arrivals are increasing in Australia.

The Department of Home Affairs has more recently taken steps to attract overseas migrants to Australia by introducing different visa programmes including skilled independent, state-sponsored and family sponsored visas, business visas, employer sponsored visas, and student visas.

2.2.3 Migration of Bangladeshis to South Australia

As this study focuses particularly on Bangladeshi migrants in South Australia/Adelaide, it would be relevant to know the time and reason of their arrival in South Australia. Historically, Bengalis were prohibited from entering Australia by the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, commonly known as the White Australia Policy. The act was relaxed after 1967 and abolished in 1973. According to the profile of Bangladesh-born South Australians, published by the Government of South Australia, Multicultural SA (2014),

> "The first Bengali immigrants came to South Australia to escape the 1971 [liberation] war between West and East Pakistan. They were later joined by family and friends. In 1993 there were around 25 Bangladeshi South Australian families". (Multicultural SA, 2014)

Looking more specifically at the Bangladeshi migrant population in South Australia, according to the 2011 Australian Census, "1,287 people who were born in Bangladesh were living in South Australia [that year], four times as many as in 2006 when there were only 317 Bangladeshi South Australians". Furthermore, "in 2011, 1,076 South Australians reported having Bangladeshi ancestry. This

[3] Source: The official website of the Department of Home Affairs: https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au

community represents 0.1% of the South Australian population, and 0.4% of overseas-born South Australians". The census also confirms that "the Bangladeshi South Australian population is younger than the total South Australian population, particularly with a greater proportion of people aged in their 20s and 30s." (Multicultural SA, 2014)

The recent 2016 census reveals that the total population of South Australia is 1,676,653 of which 1,764 has Bangladeshi Ancestry. This represents a growth of 64% compared to the 2011 figures. From the above census' statistics, we can see that the number of Bangladeshi migrants in South Australia are increasing day by day, following the national trend of Australia migratory policy. This increase has been particularly noticeable especially since the introduction of two new pathways of migration — state sponsorship and employed sponsorship — by the Department of Home Affairs. These are seen as significant incentives for people to choose South Australia as their destination.

2.2.4 Employment in South Australia

Although the 2016 census is the recent one, I also consider the 2011 census relevant for this study due to its important source of statistics, particularly on Bangladeshi South Australians. For example, information gathering on employment and language of Bangladeshi South Australians received particular attention in the 2011 census, and a comparison between 2011 and 2016 data will assist this research in identifying the trends regarding details on employment and language—two key themes of this study. According to the 2011 Australian Census, 53.5% of Bangladeshi South Australians aged 15 years and over reported being employed and 28.7% reported that they were looking for work or were not in the labour force. The most common industries which employed Bangladeshi South Australians were manufacturing (20.5%), health care and social assistance (19.0%) and accommodation and food services (14.6%). The most common occupation categories were labourers (41.2%), professionals (20.9%) and community and personal service workers (11.5%)[4] . This data is very important as it indicates that labour jobs outnumbered the professional jobs and, in the following chapters, I will attempt to find out whether this disparity has any impact on skilled Bangladeshi migrants' settlement in South Australia.

According to the 2016 census, in Australia the total number of Employed Bangladeshis is 24,938 and Unemployed or Not in the Labour Force is 12,814; and particularly for South Australia, the total number of Employed Bangladeshis is 1,028, and Unemployed or Not in the Labour Force is 576.

[4] These figures are sourced from: Multicultural Australia 2014: http://www.multicultural.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/22019/Bangladesh-Dec-2014.pdf

The below table presents the 2016 census data which reveals the Bangladeshi South Australians involvement in different employment sectors.

Managers	47
Professionals	298
Technicians and Trades Workers	57
Community and Personal Service Workers	175
Clerical and Administrative Workers	80
Sales Workers	61
Machinery Operators and Drivers	27
Labourers	258
Inadequately described	3
Not stated	7
Not applicable	940

Table 1: Occupations of Bangladeshi South Australians- Population and Housing, Census 2016, Table builder

From the above table we can see that out of 1,953 respondents, only 345 are employed as managerial or professional positions which is only 8% of the total respondents. Therefore, it can be assumed that there are some underlying reasons that explain why the Bangladeshi skilled migrants do not appear involved in professional jobs. These reasons will be explored in the later chapters of this thesis.

2.2.5 Community organisations and clubs

Interestingly, Bangladeshi migrants have formed several community clubs in South Australia. Like many other ethnic groups, they organize different cultural programs to celebrate historical and cultural occasions. Amongst them are:

- Bangladesh Australia Society of South Australia (BASSA)
- South Australian Bangladeshi Community Association (SABCA)
- Adelaide Bangladeshi Cultural CLUB (ABAC)
- Radio Bangla Adelaide
- Bangla Theatre Adelaide
- The Bangladesh Puja and Cultural Society of South Australia[5]

[5] Sourced from Multicultural SA's contact database of cultural organisations.

As a migrant myself in South Australia, I have heard that more clubs are planned to be formed in the future. These organisations try to represent the diversity of cultural, ethnic and national identity, introduce the history of Bangladesh to the next generation of young Bangladeshis and more broadly to the community at large. It may be worth mentioning here that the 2011 Census also records the high religious affiliation of the Bangladesh-born people in Australia. It indicates that religious ideologies of the Bangladeshi people who migrate to Australia are strongly represented. If we consider particularly the South Australia data, the 2011 census reveals that 84.1% of Bangladeshi South Australians reported an affiliation with Islam, 8.9% with Hinduism and 4.0% with other religions and only 1.7% of the Bangladesh-born stated 'No Religion', compared to 22.3% for the overall Australian population, and 2 % did not state any religion. The 2016 census also reveals Islam as the major religious affiliation for Bangladeshi South Australians.

However, although statistical data indicate the Bangladeshis' strong religious affiliation, by looking at the names of the clubs and associations cited above, it can be assumed that for the Bangladeshi migrants in South Australia, cultural rather than religious ideologies play a key role in the journey of settlement in the host society.

2.2.6 Reasons for Migration

Reasons for migration depend largely on an individual's circumstances. However, several reasons for migration have been discussed in the literature over the years. The majority of researchers who work on the Bangladeshi Migration context have referred to Ravenstein's concept/theory of push and pull factors (1885), although these concepts have now been superseded in favour of considering transnational movements in contemporary society. (Migrants in Society: Diversity and Cohesion, 2005)

According to Datta (2004:346), push factors can be defined as those characteristics that appear undesirable in the original place and push people out of their home country. Unlike, the push factors, the pull factors are those that seem appealing and eventually make people decide to migrate to the host country.

As mentioned already, Bangladesh is a highly populated and developing country. Therefore, it cannot be denied that social and economic issues play a major role as push factors in migration. On the one hand, political instability and the lack of social security act as strong forces to make people decide to migrate. These social factors include poor housing and health, unhygienic and unhealthy food, few job opportunities, social insecurity, poor medical conditions, political fear or persecution, death threats, war and so on. Economic factors include unemployment, poverty, slavery or forced labour, loss of wealth, excess taxation discrimination, slow economic growth, low wages, land tenure

issues, etc. Besides social, economic and political factors, it can be said that the state of the environment also acts as a push factor. Environmental factors include natural calamities such as desertification, or drought that lead to famine, earthquake, floods, hurricane due to climate change, environmental pollution that results from the mechanization of agriculture.

On the other hand, pull factors, attract migrants to the positive features of the destination country. Pull factors also comprise social, economic, political and environmental factors. Social and political factors include standard of living conditions, better education, proper medical care, political and religious freedom, justice represented by law and order, ample recreational facilities, etc. Economic factors include employment and business opportunities, higher wages, security, and industrialisation. Furthermore, attractive climate, low population, and clean environment are some of the environmental factors of migration.

This model may seem to fit the apparent pattern of Bangladeshi migration who flee from dire conditions to expect to find a better life elsewhere, however, the situation is more nuanced than this. For example, the group who participated in the present study was composed of skilled migrants who were financially solvent in their home country, and therefore enjoyed a relatively high standard of living. Migration is the result of various reasons and in actual fact this model is becoming increasingly criticized because it does not take into account some subtle reasons underlying population movements in certain societies. Therefore, one needs to also look at other reasons to explain Bangladeshi migration. The following reasons, as pointed out by Rozario and Gow (2003), highlight some of the other factors that may also play a role in Bangladesh immigration.

> "Bureaucratic lack of efficiency is another reason for leaving the country: getting electricity or phone lines, paying bills, applying for jobs, opening a bank account, getting loans and generally getting anything done that involves government offices, take much too long. […] list also involves bribes and an unnecessary waste of energy. Often things never get done, especially for those who do not have prior contacts in the relevant section of the government." (Rozario & Gow 2003:56-57)

In summary, the reasons for migration that have been identified by scholars are mostly political, economic and environmental. However, some other issues persuade people to choose this path. Family disputes and conflicts make them decide to be away from the family. These reasons may be identified as psychological reasons.

The attractiveness of Australia is so strong that people who migrate with permanent and temporary resident status try to take up citizenship even when they may have a plan to return at some stage of their lives. They do this so that their children, family members or themselves can activate their entry

visa anytime in the future, should any unexpected incident happens in their lives. According to the Department of Home Affairs website, more than five million people from just over 35 different nationalities have become citizens since Australian citizenship was introduced in 1949.

2.3 The language used by Bangladeshi migrants in Australia

The question of language mastery is one of the major problems facing migrants who enter a destination country where a second language is prevalent. Being a tool of communication, they have to use the new language in everyday communication as well as the workplace. The lack of awareness of different aspects of linguistic factors may hinder communication spontaneity and create miscommunication which ultimately impact on migrants' overall adjustment. This study aims to show to what extent these two intertwined areas, language and employment, affect migrants' well-being in the host country. In the following section, the language used by these Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, as well as the English teaching methodology that prevailed in Bangladesh will be introduced in order to shed light on the significance of this issue in facilitating or hindering these migrants' adjustment to the new country.

2.3.1 Bangladeshis' language use in Australia

In 2011, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the main languages spoken at home by Bangladesh-born people in Australia were Bengali (25,626), English (1,497) and Rohingya (113). However, out of 26,314 Bangladesh-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 92.1 % spoke English very well or well, and 6.8 % spoke English not well or not at all[6] . The 2016 census also released a list which stated that 22,503 people spoke the Bengali language very well/well at home, and 2,696 did not speak it well or not at all. The 2016 Census also reveals that in South Australia, out of 1,604 Bangladesh-born people speaking Bengali, 869 speak English very well, 619 speak English well, 110 not well, and 44 do not speak in English at all. Although none of the above censuses recorded whether the number of the Bangladesh-born people in Australia or South Australia who speak Bengali at home and do not speak well in English were having language difficulties or not outside their home, it can be assumed that a majority would be challenged to use the Anglo-Australian variety in their day to day lives.

2.3.2 The language teaching methodology in Bangladesh

The approach to language teaching has gradually evolved in Bangladesh. Abedin (2013) reiterates that the language teaching methodology initially adopted by English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners in Bangladesh followed the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). However, he asserts that there was a shift in English language teaching in Bangladesh from GTM to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was introduced around the year 2001. The timeframe of this shift

[6] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) *Census of Population and Housing*. Accessible at http://www.abs.gov.au/census

is highly significant in order to understand the linguistic background of migrants. Generally, skilled migrants decide to move to a new country mostly in their adult life (approximately between 30 to 40 years of age) because of the point-based system of the migration policy. Furthermore, they consider relocating at this stage as they are aware of the struggling stages involved in re-settlement. So, if the Grammar-Translation Method was predominant in the 1990's, it can be assumed that most of the Bangladeshi skilled migrants were exposed to the English language in a Grammar-Translation Method environment.

Abedin (2013) highlights the features of the Grammar-Translation Method following Richards & Rodgers (2001):

> 1. Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences into and out of the target language.
> 2. Reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening.
> 3. [. . .] a list of vocabulary items is presented with their translation equivalents, and translation exercises are prescribed.
> 4. Much of the lesson is devoted to translating sentences into and out of the target language,
> 5. Accuracy is emphasized.
> 6. Grammar is taught deductively - that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, which are then practiced through translation exercises.
> 7. The student's native language is the medium of instruction. (p. 5-6)
>
> (Abedin, 2013:2-3)

Assuming that the migrants were exposed to the features of the GTM while learning English in the 1990's, then the impact and challenges in terms of communication seem quite clear. If students spent around 12 to 14 years within this sort of language learning environment, it is highly unlikely that they would have gained spontaneity and confidence in communication as speaking skills are neglected in this method. Moreover, as it will be argued in this thesis, the linguistic challenges are compounded when the destination country uses another variation of English, such as the Australian English variety, instead of British or American English varieties that are commonly taught in Bangladesh.

As is clearly observed in a case study by Erling *et al* (2012) the realisation of the importance of English in Bangladesh is not only limited to urban areas but also affects rural areas.

> "There is [….] strong evidence that English is associated with modernity and high social status. English is seen as providing access to global information and international

communities, as well as to better employment opportunities, both abroad and in the local communities [….].” (Erling *et al* 2012:18)

In the same study, one of the participants expressed a clear understanding of the importance of English in lifestyle improvement. “[N]o matter what the profession is, if you have a better knowledge of English you can improve your lifestyle.” (Erling *et al*, 2012:12)

Therefore, the need to communicate fluently in English has incited Bangladeshi students and their parents to intensify their efforts in order to improve their fluency. The awareness that the formal classroom setting is not enough to acquire the pragmatics dimensions of the language eventually has driven them to find alternative resources outside the education setting in order to familiarise themselves with spoken English. These include, from hearsay, attending enhanced communication skill courses outside school settings, watching English movies, listening to radio stations in English, reading English newspapers, etc. However, as all these efforts require financial solvency and a well-equipped environment, not all students are able to take part in these activities.

It is well known that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) arose out of the failings of the GTM and other similar methods to enhance communication skills in learners (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Abedin (2013:3) reinstates that the successful implementation of the CLT approach depends on a number of factors, such as the number of students in the class, the motivation in learning English, teachers’ training, the logistic support for classroom activities, and so on.

For example, Abedin (2013) reveals some interesting facts in a study which was conducted with a number of Bangladeshi college students and their teachers. On the one hand, the teachers disclosed their lack of knowledge of CLT. In addition, the teachers were of the opinion that it would be more effective to apply a mixed methods approach, for example, Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching, as insecure learners prefer the use of their first language, in this case Bengali, to learn English. A surprising finding was that the emphasis on students getting good grades outnumbered the importance given to their ability to communicate. On the other hand, the students revealed that their teachers preferred the use of Bengali as the medium of teaching English, and that the majority of teachers followed the Grammar Translation Method exclusively. Significantly, the learners indicated frustration as they were missing out on interacting with their teachers and fellow classmates. However, the major finding was that a large number of students still preferred to learn English language through grammar.

The above discussion has been mainly concerned with the English language teaching and learning situation in Bangladesh, highlighting the drawbacks to the GTM and the CLT methods. This overview would remain incomplete if it did not include one of the emerging educational methodologies in

contemporary language teaching environment, that is, the Content and Language Integrated Learning approach (CLIL) (Marsh 2001). This is relevant because the teaching of English, mainly in Bangladesh higher educational institutions can be unbalanced and CLIL implementation could be seen as a possible improvement. Marsh (2001) defines CLIL as "a dual-focused educational approach" which relies on a supplementary or an additional language to learn and teach content and language. As the objective of CLIL is to promote language through content, Marsh (2001) states that the rapid demand of teaching subjects through the medium of English has gradually made the CLIL approach a popular option for teachers of English in non-English speaking contexts. Marsh (2001:3) points out that the essence of CLIL lies in "integration". Moreover, he seems critical of communicative language teaching in EFL (English as a foreign language) settings because, according to him, CLT focuses solely on the functional aspect of language whereas CLIL focuses on both topic and language content. He points out that one of the reasons for CLIL implementation is to prepare students for future studies and working life using English either in their home country or abroad.

With regard to Bangladesh higher education, at undergraduate level Bangladeshi students are allowed to choose a variety of subjects, such as IT, Accounting, Sociology, Engineering, Medicine, and so on. Although, most reference books are written in English, in some public universities students have the option to sit for exams in Bengali, and lectures may be delivered in Bengali as well. This sometimes creates an imbalance for the development of an in-depth professional knowledge of English. By contrast, although the quality of education is often questionable, the medium of instruction and exam modality in most private universities is solely English based. Furthermore, beyond the completion of graduate or/and post-graduate studies, Bengali is the widely-used language in the community as well as in the employment sector, and therefore, when migrants start living and working in an English-speaking environment, besides everyday register, they also lack knowledge of professional registers. This particular need for English proficiency in the employment sector will be discussed in later chapters in view of the experiences of the interviewees who are involved in this research. From the present discussion it can be established that a more informed application of current teaching methodologies would be highly relevant in Bangladesh educational settings as well as beneficial for future migrants as it would extend their English repertoire and communicative skills. Furthermore, it can be assumed that those migrants who have been interviewed for the present study have not benefited from contemporary approaches to language teaching.

So far in this section, I have given a brief overview of language teaching methods in Bangladesh. However, the educational setting and language policy alone cannot guarantee the success of communication skills. The learners' motivation and integrational disposition also play a major role in explaining the linguistic challenges faced by the Bangladeshi migrants involved in this study.

2.3.4 The importance of the motivational factor

Thus far, it has been established that in Bangladesh, English language learning has been mostly confined to acquiring grammatical structures and lexical items till students reach the secondary level of education. This limitation shows the incomplete nature of learning a language, as research has shown that the purpose of language learning is more holistic than this. Dörnyei (2003), for example, has stressed the importance of "integration" by referring back to Gardner (1979) and William (1994) who view language learning as a social event that involves the integration of L2 culture. Dörnyei's (2001:47) discussion of intrinsic motivation (performing an act in order to get pleasure and satisfaction) and extrinsic motivation (performing an act for the purpose of receiving an extrinsic reward) resembles Gardner and Lambert's (1972) distinction of the integrative and instrumental motivation. However, Dörnyei (2003) has gone further in defining an integrative disposition as the identification to the cultural and intellectual values allied to the language:

> "[….] in the absence of a salient L2 group in the learners' environment (as is often the case in foreign language learning contexts in which the L2 is primarily learned as a school subject), the identification can be generalized to the cultural and intellectual values associated with the language, as well as to the actual L2 itself." (Dörnyei 2003:6)

Looking into the overall L2 learning environment of Bangladesh, we can conclude that in most instances instrumental motivation prevails over integrative motivation, as demonstrated by Rahman's study (2005). Rahman (2005) conducted a research on the Bangladeshi university students at undergraduate level, and his findings highlight the status of the instrumental motivational factor of the Bangladeshi students:

> "All the respondents think that English is learnt for its utilitarian value, i.e. getting good job, going abroad for higher study, reading books, traveling, etc. Only one respondent claimed that he learns English so that he can interact with the native speakers comfortably." (Rahman 2005:49)

In Rahman's study it is clearly noticeable that the majority of the students are instrumentally motivated to learn the L2 English and, from their response, it is evident that they are not learning the language due to their interest in exploring another culture. As a result, when someone has to explore the language in an L2 natural setting, it becomes much more challenging as communication no longer remains restricted to a formal setting but extends well beyond that.

This tension is expressed quite clearly in Blommaert's (2016) study of a number of international students who gained high IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores. The study reveals the students' frustration at not being able to engage in social interaction with others despite

their good results. They acknowledge the importance of integration with the values associated to the language and the necessity to master a range of competencies, such as culture-specific vocabulary, jokes, knowledge of the cultural context, which contributes to their involvement in informal social interaction. Indeed, Blommaert (2016) was himself quite candid in presenting his own struggle while teaching and living in Chicago, due to his lack of familiarity with the everyday register that prevailed in his new environment:

> "On campus, I was a 'near-native' user of English, while in the supermarket or with the plumber I must have sounded like just another immigrant struggling with basic English vocabulary." (Blommaert 2016:2)

These findings seem quite relevant to the present research, as undergraduate and postgraduate levels are the recent completed degree for skilled migrants for whom the mastery of English represents a tool for advancing their social status or enhancing their work opportunities. The migrants are exposed to communicate in the host culture both in professional and day-to-day settings. They can be highly skilled and have obtained high scores in IELTS exams. However, the lack of affinity with the language and culture, and lack of knowledge of registers of that particular culture may create real challenges for adapting to a new environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be established that as a result of Bangladeshi students' instrumental focus in learning English and the lack of integration of L2 culture in language teaching methodologies, which, as was suggested, could be made possible with a more systematic adoption of a CLIL methodology, the English used in educational contexts in Bangladesh ultimately acts as a hindrance for the Bangladeshi migrants' adjustment. This fact is especially compounded in situations where a different variety of English is used in the host country.

Hence, it can be inferred that the presence of Dörnyei's integrational disposition and the effective inclusion of CLIL in educational settings could enhance the communicative proficiency of Bangladeshi students in English beyond the classroom setting. However, as mentioned earlier, where a form of CLIL is already implemented in English-medium schools and universities, there are limitations in terms of academic standards and resources involved.

Establishing the contextual background in this chapter has revealed some of the reasons that can explain the challenges that migrants encounter in their journey. From the beginning, new migrants face different challenges in the new country. Gradually, these challenges have an effect on their psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction.

In any society, a migrants' life is full of obstacles as they struggle to adjust and try to fit into it. Although some recent studies (Chowdhury & Hamid: 2016; Shafiq 2017) have been conducted on Bangladeshi migrants, they have dealt with different categories of migrants than the one in the present study. For example, on the one hand, while the sample of Chowdhury & Hamid's (2016) participants are also skilled migrants, their highest education level was year 10 and all of them have limited proficiency in English. Hence, their expectations and outlook on life in the migrated country are different from the skilled migrants of this study who are highly educated and proficient speakers of English. On the other hand, the primary objective of Safiq's (2017) study is to identify the privileges and challenges Bangladeshi women experience after migrating to Australia. Although, some similarity is visible between this study and Shafiq's one, particularly concerning some of the experiences encountered by the women participants, the focus and aim of these two studies are different. Shafiq's (2017) study is definitely gender specific whereas my study is not. Apart from these studies it can still be said that very little research has been conducted about the difficulties faced specifically by Bangladeshis who migrate to Australia and their struggle to cope with the language and culture in spite of their strong language proficiency and established profession. Admittedly, the experience of this journey of settlement differs from individual to individual. In this research, my aim is to explore this journey and find out the extent to which cultural and linguistic factors have an influence in shaping this phase of settlement. In the following chapter, I will critically examine the bulk of research that has been conducted in this area.

Chapter 3 - Literature Review

Introduction

A search using “life satisfaction” and “language use” as keywords on a web engine brings up a considerable amount of scholarly literature, principally located within the field of pragmatics and sociolinguistics. A basic understanding of pragmatics can be drawn from George Yule’s (1996) definition of pragmatics as a study of meaning, communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). Yule further advances that pragmatics is a way of examining people’s utterances and their interpretation rather than focusing on the denotative meaning of the words they use. Thus, the concept of pragmatics goes beyond the familiarization with the vocabulary of a language and invokes two other important terms - that is, knowledge of the “cultural conventions” attached to the use of the language, and “interactional competence” as the ability to interact with interlocutors in appropriate ways. This current study primarily seeks to investigate to what extent the pragmatic use of the language in interaction with native speakers of Australian English (AusE) impacts on the Bangladeshi skilled migrants in terms of their life aspiration and employment opportunities. In addition, this study also attempts to draw upon the experiences of those migrants to determine the kinds of challenges they face for being unaware of the distinctive nature of the interactional competence (He and Young 1998) and the cultural conventions (Kirkpatrick, 2007) in use within Anglo Australian society.

It is quite understandable that when migrants move from their home country to the host country and encounter the dominance of a second language, smooth communication is affected, as understanding and speaking a second language becomes a challenge. The situation becomes even more variable when the recently arrived migrants realize that despite having the background knowledge of the second language, in this case English, they have to go to the extra length of familiarising themselves with an unfamiliar variety of this language, that of Australian English (AusE). Therefore, a major focus of this study is to gain an insight into the linguistic factors that may impact on the life satisfaction of skilled Bangladeshi migrants in Adelaide. Primarily, this chapter will discuss the relevant scholarly literature in order to operationalize the concept of “life satisfaction” and will examine the crucial role of language use in shaping the life satisfaction of the skilled migrants.

This chapter is divided into two main parts based on the key words of the project title, “life satisfaction” and “language use”, with respect to skilled migrants and their employment prospects in South Australia. Firstly, the chapter explores the concept of life satisfaction and its multiple features; secondly, it discusses the importance of linguistic factors in enhancing migrants’ life satisfaction.

3.1 Aspects of life satisfaction

As stated earlier a key concept to be considered for the present study is that of "life satisfaction", as according to Amit and Bar-Lev's (2014) study on migrants, this is a significant motivator for migrants' adjustment to the host society. Furthermore, in the research literature on migrants, it is clearly specified that one of the motives to migrate is to accomplish one's life satisfaction. Gunasekara *et al*. (2014:475), for example, state that achieving higher life satisfaction is one of the primary reasons of migration. In relation to this, it seems appropriate to start this study by asking the question: is it possible to measure life-satisfaction. The Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) originally designed by Cummins (2006), and used in Gunasekara *et al*'s study, provides an entry tool in defining life satisfaction in the context of migration. A critical review of the PWI scale is deemed essential in this chapter because of its direct relevance to the present study. The PWI scale contains seven items of satisfaction, each one corresponding to a quality of life domain. Cummins (2006) identifies the following seven domains based upon a global question: "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?"

Questions	*Domains*
How satisfied are you with…?	
1. your standard of living?	[Standard of Living]
2. your health?	[Personal Health]
3. what you are achieving in life?	[Achieving in Life]
4. your personal relationships?	[Personal Relationships]
5. how safe you feel?	[Personal Safety]
6. feeling part of your community?	[Community-Connectedness]
7. your future security?	[Future Security]

Figure 1: Personal Well-being Index-Adult (Cummins, 2013:14)

When considering the above domains as components of life satisfaction, their relevance with migrants' life satisfaction in the host society can easily be justified. By evoking the history of the Personal Wellbeing Index, Cummins (2013:8) specifies that the PWI was shaped from the Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale (ComQol) that encompasses both an objective and subjective measure of life quality. However, according to Cummins (2013) the ComQol was abandoned due to two major shortcomings; on the one hand, the objective scale failed to formulate seven simple straightforward domains like the ones above and, on the other hand, the multiplicative composites (Domain Importance X Domain Satisfaction) were psychometrically invalid, according to Trauer and Mackinnon (2001).

Hence, it is notable that compared to the Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale (ComQol) the Personal Wellbeing Index proved to be psychometrically strong. Cummins's scale retained only the questions on satisfaction and six of the seven domains. Cummins (2013:8) substituted from the original ComQol domain 'How satisfied are you with your own happiness?', 'How satisfied are you with your future security?'. The 'happiness' domain was removed to fulfil the principle of PWI life-domain scale construction, that is any domain must be amenable to both objective and subjective measurement.

Importantly for this study, in critically reviewing Cummins's PWI scale I discovered that this scale included cross-cultural data as well. In 2002, Cummins and Lau (2003) initiated the International Wellbeing Group (IWbG) with the aim to develop the PWI into a valid cross-cultural instrument. As my study explores the experiences of the Bangladeshi skilled migrants in Australia, the cross-cultural aspect of the scale was deemed highly relevant and was therefore selected largely on this basis. However, it should be noted that the PWI is only an approximation in the form of a global measure that fails to capture the complexity of how life satisfaction is interpreted at the subjective level; furthermore, there is no mention of the linguistic aspects which, as it is argued in the present study, play a major role in migrants' ability to adapt to a new environment.

I will now further discuss various alternative terms that are subsumed under the concept of life satisfaction. For example, Cummins (2006) used the term 'subjective well-being', which has a close resemblance to the definition of life satisfaction and quality of life. He states that subjective wellbeing (SWB) can be measured through questions of satisfaction directed to people's feelings about themselves (2001: 6). This subjective well-being is the specific focus of Cummins's scale to which he added an eighth item, that is, spirituality or religion and the extent to which someone is satisfied with their religion and how it is valued by the host society. However, he observes that not all respondents of his study have spiritual or religious beliefs and hence recommends including it only in samples where spiritual and/or religious beliefs are commonly held. Some empirical studies have been later conducted using this additional dimension. For example, in their study, Amit and Bar-Lev (2014) indicate that religious and ideological motives can also have a significant influence on life satisfaction. They draw upon Sabar's (2010) empirical study, where Sabar describes the way in which African immigrants in Israel seem to infuse with the host society just because it is a Holy land for them. In this study, given that the majority of the Bangladeshi population are Muslims, it may well be that the Muslim community could feel uncomfortable in adopting Anglo ways of speaking because the values of the host society do not correspond to their claimed identity; that is, an identity defined by Block (2007) as someone's own preference, or that someone chooses out of their own will. However, in contrast to Amit and Bar-Lev and Sabar's studies, which view religious motives as key motivator for migration to Israel, the motives of the skilled migrants selected for the present study are mainly focussed on gaining employment rather than on seeking religious affiliation with the host

country. Thornley (2010) also pointed out that unemployment, financial stress and prolonged separation from family members have enormous impact on wellbeing. Still, in light of these previous studies, it is not excluded that the Bangladeshi migrants' religious and ideological values could keep them apart from the host society to a certain extent.

From an overall perspective, it is notable that the PWI scale attempts to explore the concept of life satisfaction but does not indicate any guidelines to enhance it. Although helpful, it can be argued that Cummins's attempts at identifying "life satisfaction" by listing a comprehensive set of features have some shortcomings. For example, it is simply a measuring scale that is not meant to provide any indication on how to achieve these goals. The present study intends to include some additional factors that are deemed influential in enhancing the migrants' life satisfaction. Indeed, the study has purposefully chosen to focus on language use and language factors as helpful means to achieve life satisfaction for migrants. However, before elaborating on the linguistic features of Australian English (AusE) and their relationship with migrants' life satisfaction, the following section will discuss the concept of "life satisfaction" in relation to the notion of "subjective well-being" and the "sense of belonging" with the aim to further clarify my argument.

To explore the term "life satisfaction" from the perspective of migrants, the present study draws on Black's (2002) analogy of feeling "at home". Black (2002) introduces this term as an analogy because it highlights the relationship between life satisfaction and a sense of belonging by focusing on the subjective and dynamic sense of being part of a social group or a place. Likewise, Sigmon *et al*. (2002) create the association of 'psychological home' with the concept 'sense of belonging', where self-identity is attached to a particular place. They assert its dynamic and constant negotiated nature throughout a person's lifespan. In relation to my study, this means that in order to determine life satisfaction of recent migrants, it was deemed necessary to take into account the length of time of their stay in the host society as this is the result of an evolving process. In order to capture this time dimension more fully, a longitudinal study, which would measure the life-satisfaction at a certain point in time and compare the results to a further point in the time of the migrants' residency could be seen as appropriate. As this was not possible within the scope of a research Master, the decision to target migrants with a period of residence in S.A. of two to five years in order to provide a snapshot of their sense of life satisfaction seems partly justified.

Sigmon *et al*. (2002) and Duncan and Lambert (2004) also support the term 'home' in this psychological context by placing it in an "imagined" or "preferred room of belief and longing" of the individual. Importantly, they acknowledge its possibility of carrying spiritual, emotional, nationalistic and patriotic connotations. They strongly recommend examining the process of development of this feeling in relation to migrants from the moment they set foot in their new society. These authors thus provide a helpful suggestion towards understanding the concept of life satisfaction as an ongoing

process. For the present study, this concept of “belonging” suggests framing the discussion on life satisfaction in relation to adaptation and community connectedness, which is covered under item 6 of Cummins PWI (2013:14).

A small number of authors have conducted empirical studies on the impact of life satisfaction in migrants’ cultural adjustment. The salient phrase “life satisfaction”, mentioned by Amit and Bar-Lev (2014), is one of the key stimuli which encourage migrants to follow the path of either assimilation or integration. The authors examine, in particular, the significant connection of life satisfaction with the migrants’ sense of belonging. This is of concern to the current study as dissatisfaction with one’s life makes the migrants’ capacity to adapt and develop a sense of belonging vulnerable. Amit and Bar-Lev (2014)’s concept of “life satisfaction”, as one of the major components of subjective well-being, resembles the idea of subjective-well-being introduced by Cummins (2013). They conducted their study with two highly skilled migrant groups, one from France and the other one from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) in Israel, with the aim to examine the extent to which life satisfaction plays a significant role on identity formation. Their study reveals that life satisfaction plays a pivotal role in promoting migrants’ sense of belonging.

In another study on the influence of life satisfaction on migrants’ well-being and success in developing a sense of belonging, Massey and Redstone (2006) found that the higher level of life satisfaction goes hand in hand with higher adjustment with the host society. Indeed, this satisfied group ultimately decides to stay in the destination country. In her study on Bangladeshi women’s settlement experiences in Australia, Shafiq (2017) uncovers to what extent freedom, spending quality time with family and empowerment impact on migrant women’s life satisfaction in Australia. Further studies (Phinney *et al*. 2001; Amit 2010) also indicate a significant correlation between self-identity and general life satisfaction. Capra and Steindl-Rast (1991) and Phinney *et al.* (2001) justify the importance of the feeling of well-being in migrants’ lives. These authors perceive the ‘feeling of being an outsider’ as a hindering factor for attaining this feeling, and imply that this feeling of uncertainty weakens the long-stay commitment of migrants in the host society.

Studies on migrants’ identities have focussed on the prerequisite factors that encompass life satisfaction. Studies on identity establish that the presence of self-esteem in one’s life is an indicator of life satisfaction. For example, Phinney *et al*. (2001) show that people strive to achieve or maintain a positive social identity, thus boosting their self-esteem. Similarly, in her review of the use of the term ‘identity’, Spencer-Oatey (2006) introduces ‘self-esteem’ as one of the key concepts which plays a significant role on life satisfaction. Exploring the discussion on different functions of identity, she cites Simon (2004), who notes that self-esteem is the reflection of people’s positive evaluation of their own self-aspect understood as their own image of the self. The importance of self-esteem in migrants’ life satisfaction is also discussed in earlier literature. For example, Kamal and Maruyama

(1990) identify self-esteem as one of the positive adjustment outcomes of adaptation in a new culture, which significantly works as a pre-condition of life satisfaction.

Besides self-esteem, a person's self-inclination and motivation have been taken as active promoters of life satisfaction. 'Motivation' is a key concept in second language acquisition and, therefore, is assumed to play a direct role in adjustment in a second language speaking country. This is relevant to the current study that wishes to identify what plays out to be the Bangladeshis' primary motivation for making an effort in adjusting to the host society. Importantly, Chow (2007) argues that besides motivation, the immigrants' desire to be accepted by the host culture can be used in indicating the measure of their sense of belonging in the host society. Chow (2007:513), however, further argues that this measure may not be applicable to certain immigrant groups and brings up the example of the Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, who do not necessarily aspire to be part of the Canadian society but are eager to acquire Canadian citizenship; particularly in light of the uncertain political future of their homeland and their apparent need to secure an 'insurance policy'. This finding indicates that there could be various reasons of migration, depending on the individual circumstances, however, feeling part of the community, according to him, enhances the sense of belonging, which ultimately helps in the positive adjustment to the host society. Chow (2007) shows the close relation between the sense of belonging and life satisfaction by thus further refining the definition of the term 'belonging':

> "Belonging has a double sense. When I say, 'This belongs to me', I mean that I possess something. But when I say, 'I belong', I don't mean that something possesses me, but that I take part in, am intimately involved with a reality greater than myself, whether it's a love relationship, a community, a religion or the whole universe. So 'I belong' means 'Here I find my place', 'That is it' and at the same time, 'Here I am'."
> (Capra & Steindl-Rast 1991:14 - cited in Chow 2007:513)

From the above definition of the term 'belonging', it is quite clear that the sense of belonging is intertwined with taking part in the host community, and is meaningfully connected to life satisfaction. On the other hand, in her empirical study on the influence of social interaction in the identity formation of migrant students in Australia, Miller (2000) argues that self-imposed segregation or unwillingness to be part of the host culture can be one of the factors that act as a negative impact on achieving life satisfaction. However, she does mention the fact that the lack of opportunities to use English socially, sometimes work as hindrance to acquiring the language. (Please refer to *Figure 3* at the end of this chapter for a summary of these influential factors which contribute to migrants' life satisfaction)

According to Kandiah (1991), a critical factor which influences the life satisfaction of migrants, is the importance of 'willingness' to cooperate with one's interlocutors in interaction. Willingness to communicate, in particular, is necessary for conducting appropriate communication as communication between cooperative interlocutors is likely to enhance life satisfaction. For instance, in his study on cross-cultural communication, Kandiah (1991) highlights the importance of interlocutors' willingness to adjust with one another at both individual and interactional levels. He emphasizes that each participant's willingness is vital for successful communication as he observes that sometimes intentionally a participant can use different cues to create distance with the interlocutor, which works as a drawback in appropriate communication. Hall (2012:38) also draws on the concept of "cooperative agents" as participants in communication who strive for a common aim. However, Kandiah also draws attention to the fact that the willingness to cooperate is an assumption that precludes an individual's agency while interacting with other cultural groups. Different cultural groups might not share the same assumptions and communicative styles may not necessarily value cooperative interaction. This is an important aspect that needs to be kept in mind as cooperation relies on shared assumptions between different cultural groups; and because these are not explicit, there is plenty of room for miscommunication to occur.

3.2 Relationship between language use and life satisfaction

Adsera and Pytlikova (2016) bring attention to the extreme importance of language proficiency for international migrants as language proficiency assists in their adjusting with the host culture and social integration, increases their job opportunities and maximizes the scope of accomplishing education and health benefits. However, research also disclosed the difficult part of attaining this proficiency. For example, Yates (2011) acknowledges the frustration and difficulty a newly arrived migrant encounters when trying to be competent in a language which is not their means of everyday communication.

> "[…] It is enormously frustrating and challenging for new arrivals with only developing competence to speak to strangers in the community, particularly if those strangers are 'expert' native speakers unused or unwilling to accommodate to their level of proficiency." (Yates 2011:459)

A number of researchers that we have reviewed thus far suggest that successful interaction with the host society is to a large extent dependent upon a number of individual and situational factors. Amongst these, Amit and Bar-Lev (2014:5) ascertain that the length of time spent in the destination country and the level of 'native language proficiency' are both important parameters that influence the migrants' sense of belonging. The longer they stay in the host country, the more opportunities they have to increase their interaction with the local community of speakers and gain knowledge of appropriate communication cues. Such studies establish that smooth communication and

understanding can promote life satisfaction. In other words, the majority of studies, although not all focusing directly onto language, indicate that the ability to use the language of the host country appropriately enhances life satisfaction and contributes to the positive relationship with the members of the host society.

The sense of belonging was discussed earlier as part of the overall concept of life satisfaction; I would like to revisit this concept now in view of various studies which explore the relationship between the sense of belonging and language. Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997), in particular, examine language identity from three perspectives, each of which has been reiterated more recently by Block (2007:40). First, **expertise,** which indicates the proficiency level of an individual and the ability to talk in a way that they will be accepted by other users of that language; second, **affiliation**, which reflects the individual's affection and attitude towards a language; and third, **inheritance**, which is a matter of being born into a family or community setting that is linked with a particular language or dialect.

As the first perspective mentioned by Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997) relates directly to language, I will focus more extensively on the concept of expertise, first in relation to the International English Testing System that migrants must pass prior to their acceptance in the host country. As researchers have become more interested to study migrants' persistent challenges with the acquisition of the second language (L2) as it is spoken in the host country, I will also examine the pragmatic nature of communication which, according to Piller (2002), emphasizes the importance of the acquisition of "discursive practices" in order to gain communicative competence in an L2:

> "[…] SLL (second language learning) implies the acquisition of not only lexico-grammatical knowledge but also discursive practices by which L2 users make identity choices and position themselves in relation to other discourse participants […]" (Piller 2002:183)

With respect to the concept of 'affiliation', which can be derived from the acquisition of discursive practices, Shea (1994) highlights, for example, the importance of displaying affiliating strategies between interlocutors to facilitate communication. In her close observation of interactions between a non-native English-speaking student and two English native advisers, she differentiates between affiliation strategies (such as amplification, requests for clarification and agreement markers) and distancing strategies (such as interruptions, exclusions) to demonstrate their importance in establishing and maintaining communication. Furthermore, Yates also highlights the relationship of the host country's language and affiliation: 'where social connections are not made through English, immigrants can lack a sense of affiliation and remain isolated and insulated in their 'ethnic bubbles'' (Yates 2011: 469). The extent to which the Bangladeshi migrant group selected for this study is willing to affiliate with the speakers of the host community will be examined in the light of this concept.

The analysis of the interviews will also bring to light whether these migrants might be expected to display affiliative strategies because of the goals of finding employment. In other words, is it the case that their primary motivation for making an effort in adjusting to the host society is related to the improvement of their economic and social status?

Turning to the concept of 'inheritance' which, according to Leung, Harris and Rampton is the third aspect to affect the relationship between language and belonging, Harrison (2012:193) highlights the importance of 'cultural capital' as a prestigious commodity for establishing connections in social life. Drawing from Bourdieu (1991:230), he defines cultural capital as a form of symbolic capital that consists of knowledge, values and other lifestyle factors attained in the course of socialization. In particular, Harrison (2012) justifies the significance of language mastery by exploring Bourdieu's idea that language competencies act as a form of 'capital' that is differentially valued in the 'linguistic market', and as such perform a central role in regulating access to public resources and income. I argue that this is of crucial importance for how the migrants are going to sell themselves to their prospective employers.

Gaining appropriate "discursive practices" to ensure effective communication encompasses an understanding between the interlocutors requiring interactional competence and knowledge of cultural conventions and codes. However, the Bangladeshi migrants who have gained a command of English through their education, are undergoing a mixture of experiences when they arrive in Australia. Before exploring the major aspects of language and demonstrate the extent to which these have an impact on the positive adjustment of migrants into a host society, it is necessary to briefly introduce the kind of English language variety which is already familiar to the Bangladeshi migrants and briefly examine the critical literature on IELTS.

3.3 English language varieties and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

I have already mentioned that one of the primary objectives of this thesis is to explore the extent to which linguistic factors, in terms of language skills tested through IELTS, interactional competence and cultural conventions, affect migrants' life satisfaction and adjustment to the host society. In this chapter, I particularly focus on IELTS and the critical studies which have highlighted its shortcomings or inadequacies that ultimately impact migrants' day to day lives.

Hamid (2016: 472) asserts that "International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is a global leader of English language testing". The reason for using British English varieties to a large extent in the academic sector overseas may be because of its wide acceptance as an international standard for English communication testing across the world.

In a study involving a large survey of test-takers, Hamid (2014) however questioned the fact that although a majority of the test-takers' backgrounds were from other varieties of British English, they were hesitant to accept the inclusion of World Englishes (WE) in a global test. The common reasons given were: difference in accents; unintelligibility in communication in non-native varieties; and the necessity to maintain a standard test for fairness, as pointed out by one of the respondents:

> "[…] there has to be a standard. If we are to use English, we can have Malaysian English or Bangladeshi English or Vietnamese English but when we try to communicate with each other, I don't think we can understand each other well. But if we all go towards a standard, that will be better." (Hamid 2014:272)

Another one commented,

> "It is now fact that there are many varieties of English in the world today, but I think following British English is OK as IELTS Standard Language. Having many IELTS in non-native varieties will not give any comparable sense of students or immigrants in an international context which, I think, is necessary when an institution has to select candidates from many. Local variety of English test may be for local purposes only but for global purposes the existing IELTS practice is acceptable." (Hamid 2014:274)

However, there is critical discussion in the recent literature on the definition of International English. For example, Seidlhofer (2004) clearly expresses her doubt on choosing any single variety as an international language. She states:

> "The term *International English* is sometimes used as a shorthand for EIL, but is misleading in that it suggests that there is one clearly distinguishable, codified, and unitary variety called *International English*, which is certainly not the case." (Seidlhofer 2004:210)

Furthermore, drawing on Firth (1996), she defines a *lingua franca* as

> "contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication." (Firth 1996: 240, cited in Seidlhofer 2004:211)

Kirkpatrick (2007) also defines *lingua franca* "as a common language used by people of different language backgrounds to communicate with each other". The point to be emphasized in the present context is that the Bangladeshi migrants, possessing Bengali as their mother tongue, also use English (considered as a second language in Bangladesh) as a *lingua franca* outside their home

country, or wherever other than the Bengali language is used. However, it should be noted that the term *lingua franca* does not take into account the cultural specificities of the source language so that people are able to understand each other regardless of their culture of origin. The knowledge of these cultural specificities, which appears to be crucial to the well-adjustment of migrants in Australia, will be discussed later in this chapter.

Miah and Zhang's (2012) empirical study on the perception of three varieties of English (American, British and Australian) by Bangladeshi students, aged eighteen and a half, is highly relevant to the present study. These students disclose the uncomfortable, unnatural and comparatively difficult task in understanding the nature of Australian English in comparison to American and British English varieties. The authors suggest that the reason for this difficulty is due to the unfamiliarity and limited exposure to Anglo Australian varieties in the Bangladeshi context. As it has already been mentioned in Chapter 2, English is used as a second language in Bangladesh, and it has a significant presence in the academic context from primary to tertiary levels of education. Besides the English medium, the Bengali medium schools also have to teach English as an elective subject from primary level. Being ruled as a British colony for a long period of their history before independence, British English is the most commonly accepted and used language in Bangladesh. Having no strict monitoring policy and regulation, American English is also used by some educational institutions. However, as Miah and Zhang's study (2012) indicates, the Australian English variety is not yet popular in Bangladesh in comparison to British and American varieties. The use of British English certainly becomes an advantage for those individuals who are inclined to sit for the IELTS examination at any stages of their lives because the test uses British English as a standard. It is well known that, on the one hand, the IELTS exam is counted globally as a prerequisite for getting admission to studying abroad and, on the other hand, it is conducted for assessing a person's suitability for migration to Australia, even though this may not have been originally intended (Ingram 2015). The groups of Bangladeshi migrants who come to Australia are therefore at a linguistic disadvantage even though they are assessed as proficient in English according to their IELTS score. They lack interactional competence and the knowledge of cultural conventions specific to Australian English. This realization, and the situations they encounter in everyday life in Australia, may make them dissatisfied. This dissatisfaction impedes their ability to socially interact with speakers of the host society and probably hampers their effort to obtain a favourable response while seeking employment.

Nevertheless, while the IELTS is one of the essential criteria that is used to review the performance of the eligible candidates, discussion of the suitability of the English standard test has begun to assess whether IELTS helps provide the best candidates for immigration purposes. Hamid (2016) adopts a critical perspective of the IELTS test in his study on the perceptions of the test-takers themselves regarding IELTS exam retake policy. His study reveals that the test takers did not identify any reasonable justification behind the IELTS exam retake policy. The retake policy provides further

opportunities for a candidate to keep sitting for exams until the required score is achieved. The reason behind the test takers' reluctant attitude to support the multiple exams by a single candidate is due to the inconsistency of the test performance. Therefore, Hamid's finding (2016) seems to lay the ground for a critical review of the test.

It should be noted here that the critical perspective towards the overall English Language Testing System is addressed in various studies. For example, He and Young (1998) are critical of the conventional testing system as they find that loopholes exist when tests are conducted to judge a candidate's proficiency level at an individual level only. In their study on a discursive approach of language proficiency interviews, He and Young (1998) highlight the importance of interactional competence that is co-constructed between interlocutors. They rightly suggest that in a real-life communication context, all the participants have to interact and therefore the communication should be taken as a jointly constructed phenomenon and learners should be assessed accordingly in interaction with others. Moreover, Piller (2002) in her empirical study on the justification of examining the proficiency level of bilingual speakers compared to the monolingual ones seems critical towards the conventional approach of passing an exam as, according to her, it is simply a performance that is only relevant to a very specific context (2002:192).

To conclude this section, it is worth noting, with reference to the above discussion, that the world-wide accepted test gets its name as *International English Language Testing System* and uses the British format and language, and it could easily be argued that this provides a valid reason for accepting the British English as International English. However, the aim of this present study is not to shed light on those debates. Rather, it acknowledges that there is indeed a difference in the use of the Australian and the British English varieties and argues that this difference may affect Bangladeshi migrants who are familiar with British English and get confused while communicating with users of Australian English. I will now examine important linguistic factors that go hand in hand with interactional competence, and thus work positively on building appropriate communication. That is, in the words of Kramsch (1986)

> "whether it is a face-to-face interaction between two or several speakers, or the interaction between a reader and a written text, successful interaction presupposes not only a shared knowledge of the world, the reference to a common external context of communication, but also the construction of a shared internal context or "sphere of inter-subjectivity" that is built through the collaborative efforts of the interactional partners." (Kramsch 1986: 367)

3.4 Australian English cultural conventions and interactional competence

There is no doubt that the English language has different varieties, as any language naturally evolves with its context of use. The Australian variety of English is distinct from other varieties of English,

such as American English (AmE) and British English (BrE), and this difference is not only apparent in vocabulary choice but also in interactional or discursive practices. About Australian English, Collins (2012) states

> "Traditionally, AusE is thought of as the dialect spoken by native-born non-Aboriginal Australians (q.v. Ramson 1970; Collins & Blair 1989; Blair & Collins 2001), and contrasted with 'English in Australia', a term understood to encompass AusE along with varieties associated with the community groups of various non-English migrant backgrounds and the English of Aboriginal communities." (Collins, 2012:75)

It is also acknowledged by Thornley (2010) that having knowledge of English does not guaranty having smooth communication if someone is unaware of the difference in accent and local dialect of that language.

> "While participants in the skilled migrant groups tended to be proficient in English (and often were from countries where English is widely spoken), some participants said it was challenging at first to understand the Australian accent and use of Australian 'lingo'." (Thornley 2010:42)

For the purpose of this study Australian English is understood as the language used by non-aboriginal native speakers of Australia. The distinct nature of Australian English (AusE) has been identified in several studies and different cultural conventions associated to the Australian language usage have been well documented. Kirkpatrick (2007), for example, identifies the distinctive nature of language varieties within the language itself because communication is comprised of both informal and formal communicative registers. Citing Cheshire (2003), he agrees with the fact that individuals take into consideration interactional and social factors while communicating, such as using the appropriate variety required by the context. Kirkpatrick states:

> "Australian English has been classified on a continuum with a broad variety at one end of the continuum and an educated or cultured variety at the other. …the broad variety often serves the function of identity and the educated variety the function of communication. The general variety of Australian English operates somewhere along the middle of the continuum." (Kirkpatrick 2007:12)

This continuum can be shown in the following identity-communication continuum figure below:

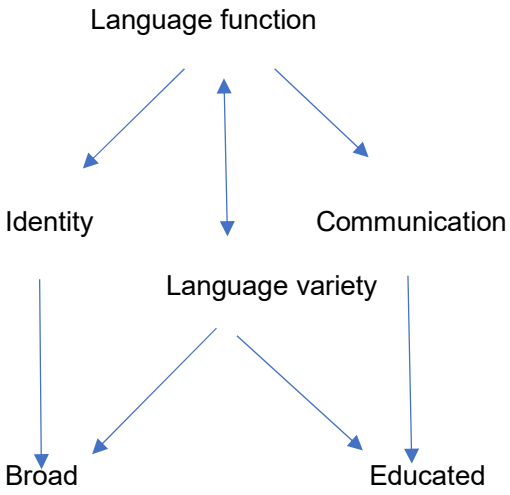

Figure 2: The identity-communication continuum (Kirkpatrick, 2007:12)

The figure clearly indicates that since the language has different functions, upon arrival in the host country, the Bangladeshi migrants come across all the varieties in different stages and situations, though this may be in varying degrees.

3.4.1 Cultural conventions

Kirkpatrick identifies "cultural convention" as one of the mostly common ways language is used in real life situations. He highlights the importance of the familiarization with cultural conventions for smooth communication and defines it as "cultural routines". He provides the example of three varieties of English in relation to the cultural convention of expressing greetings, which is shown below:

BrE	How are you?	Fine thanks.
AmE	How are you going?	(Just) Great (thanks)
AusE	How are you going?	Good thanks

(Kirkpatrick 2007:23)

Although these differences may not always register huge misunderstanding, being aware and able to communicate in that way definitely makes the interaction more fluent, which ultimately enhances the sense of belonging.

Another example of a commonly used expression in Australia highlights the difference with the expression of a Bangladeshi cultural convention and brings into sharp focus the difference in the cultural conventions of the two language groups. For example, the Australian phrase 'no worries' can be used across a wide range of situations, both formal and informal, and it may depict the cultural convention of an Australian showing gratitude to someone who has helped someone else. In the Bangladeshi cultural convention, the most acceptable use for that context is the word 'welcome'.

Hence, when the Bangladeshi migrants come across this phrase, being unfamiliar with the Australian cultural convention, they are likely to misunderstand it.

Cultural convention and codes also include non-verbal behaviours as knowledge of the non-verbal codes plays a vital role in communication. It is widely accepted that non-verbal communication differs from culture to culture. Wang (2009) in his study on the analysis of the classifications of various non-verbal signals emphasizes different non-verbal stimuli such as body movement, general appearance or dress, space or distance, posture, silence and interruptions, signs and symbols, and so forth. Besides these, he also mentions other categories that are attributed to non-verbal communication, such as facial expression, eye-contact gaze, touch, smell and paralanguage. Therefore, gathering the knowledge of how migrants communicate non-verbally is important as it may impact on interaction significantly. For example, a migrant may need to know what attire would be preferable for a job interview in the host country, whether they should offer their hands first to shake hands or not with the interviewer. In Bangladesh, for instance, the commonly accepted formal dress for a job interview for a woman is wearing a saree. However, in Australia it is quite different. Before attending their job interview migrants thus need to possess that knowledge to avoid jeopardizing their chances of success in obtaining the job. Hang (2007:156) also points out that the proper use of nonverbal communication directly influences the result of interpersonal communication.

The different ways of addressing someone are even more noteworthy to mention in determining the importance of cultural conventions in communication. Addressing someone is significantly different in several contexts between Bangladesh and Australia. For example, whereas in the Bangladeshi context addressing an academic person by their first name will be taken as a serious offence, i.e. showing disrespect towards that person, in Australia this practice is quite acceptable as the reciprocal first name usage indicates familiarity and friendliness (Bowe & Martin 2007). The focus of the present study is to identify to what extent this unfamiliarity with cultural conventions reflected in language use affects the Bangladeshi migrants' general life satisfaction in terms of their sense of belonging to the Australian community. It is clear that using terms of address inappropriately can affect the affiliative strategies between interlocutors.

A further aspect of different cultural conventions associated to the AusE language use has also been well documented. Several academic studies, which have already been mentioned with regard to the unique nature of Australian colloquial English, focus in particular, on the vocabulary, the idioms or phrases, swearwords and slangs. The following example illustrates quite clearly the difference between Australian and British colloquialisms usage. When Australians use the slang word "bloody" it can be meant as a compliment, whereas in Britain it is mostly perceived as 'insulting' or lack of respect for one's interlocutor (Hong, 2008). If migrants are not familiar with this cultural convention, it is not hard to imagine that they will find themselves in a lot of trouble!

Pam Peters (2007) also found that the Australian variety is blended with history and culture as stated below,

> "Australian idioms […] are demonstrably connected with historical persons and institutions, with the built and natural environment, with the earlier phase of settlement as well as twentieth century metropolitan life. […] Some of this phraseology also taps deeper issues in Australian society and culture, expressing common values in consciously varied terms." (Peters 2007:242)

Social themes, humour and stoicism expressed by similes are one of the unique features of Australian English. Peters provides many examples of Australian idioms and phrases, such as for example, if someone gets overdressed for any occasion, the Australians use 'dressed like a pox-doctor's clerk' or 'dressed up like a Christmas tree'. Too much busyness and hectic activity are expressed as 'flat out like a lizard drinking' or 'busy as a one-armed bill-sticker in a gale'. She also points out another unique characteristic of Australian similes and idiomatic phrases and that is the use of alliteration. Some examples are, 'mad as a meat-axe' (crazy or eccentric), 'gone to Gowings' (will not work at all), etc.

Besides these, Bert Peeters (2007) identifies interesting phrases typical of Australian workplace language, which he titled 'Friday send-offs and Monday morning greetings'.

> "Saturday and Sunday had a different rhythm. The weekend was your own time, the rest of the week it was the boss's. It's little wonder that the standard Friday send-off between work-mates is 'Have a good weekend'." (Peeters 2007:101)

In different media we can observe the shortening of commonly used words as a widespread practice in Australia. For example, *cuppa* (a cup of tea), *Macca* (McDonalds), *arvo* (afternoon), *bickie* (biscuit), *devo* (devastated), *dero* (derelict), *tradie* (tradesman), *ambo* (ambulance) and many more.

From the above discussions and examples, one can imagine the challenges faced by the newly arrived migrants, coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and being unaware of these cultural and linguistic differences, when engaging in daily communication.

3.4.2 Interactional competence and discursive practices

As mentioned earlier, besides the knowledge of the distinct vocabulary items and cultural conventions in use in Australian English, acquiring knowledge of discursive practices plays also a crucial role in achieving successful communication.

In particular, Piller (2002) emphasizes the importance of the knowledge of discursive practices, which are especially relevant for migrants when, for example, they need to adjust to the management of turns in conversation with Australian speakers. Dörnyei and Thurrel (1994:675) have also been critical of the common belief that informal day-to-day conversation is unstructured and haphazard. Rather, they establish that all conversations follow patterns and subtle rules.

> "[…] conversation is highly organised activity which requires certain skills on the part of the speaker. This is why language learners who are familiar with the grammar of a language and know a vast amount of vocabulary may still "fail'', that is let themselves down in real conversation." (Dörnyei & Thurrel 1994:675)

These authors illustrate the various conversational rules and structures of how to start/open a conversation, how and when to take turns, how to shift a topic, etc., which make conversations run fluently. One of these rules, for example, concerns the use of interruptions in conversation.

> "In English, a certain amount of interruption is tolerated (especially when the purpose is to sort out some problem of understanding), but too much, or in the wrong situation, appears rude. Interruptions are almost always introduced by set phrases (e.g. Sorry to interrupt, but…or Sorry, but did I hear you say . . .?), which, depending on how they are introduced into the conversation, provide polite and natural ways of performing this rather delicate task." (Dörnyei & Thurrel 1994:42)

The quote above easily resonates with the experiences of the skilled migrants who, despite having proven their language proficiency on entering Australia, face many challenges in attaining successful communication. For example, it is common for Bengali speakers to interrupt each other in conversations for the purpose of adding points, showing disagreement and so forth. This practice is not perceived to be impolite or rude at all, rather it is meant to be taken more as showing involvement in communication.

Another unique characteristic of conversational patterns in English usage is observed while 'closing the conversation.'

> "Unless we want to be deliberately rude, we cannot end a conversation by simply saying, 'Well, that's all I want to say, bye', or, on the phone, just hang up abruptly without any notice. Instead, people typically apply a sequence of pre-closing and closing formulae to prepare the grounds for ending a conversation (e.g. It's been nice talking to you . . ., Well, I don't want to keep you from your work . . ., We must get together sometime . . .)'' (Dörnyei & Thurrel 1994:43)

Coming from a different cultural background, Bangladeshi migrants may not be aware of these patterns which are not commonly practiced in their home country. In fact, interrupting or closing closing a conversation abruptly is not taken as impolite.

We can therefore assume that it is highly likely that the Bangladeshi skilled migrants will be involved in misunderstandings in conversation on account of the loophole in the language class which has been identified by Dörnyei and Thurrel, namely that knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is insufficient in attaining successful communication.

Dörnyei and Thurrel (1994) introduce several conversational strategies to conduct communication effectively. They define conversational strategies as an individual's means of dealing with communication "trouble spots" (1994:679), for example, not knowing a vocabulary item, or misunderstanding the other speakers. They recommend some conversational strategies such as message adjustment and/or avoidance, paraphrase, appeal for help, request for repetition, request for clarification, use of fillers/hesitation devices to promote a spontaneous smooth conversation. These are of crucial importance to migrants' day to day interaction as well as in work communication, and ignorance of these strategies can hinder smooth communication in the destination country, which may lead to misinterpretation and even discrimination in the workplace. Moreover, Dörnyei and Thurrel emphasize the significant role of the knowledge of social and cultural context in being able to communicate appropriately. The following quote highlights the importance of contextual variations.

> "[…] a beach party is entirely different social situation from a university degree ceremony, and as people are usually aware of such differences, they adjust their language accordingly. If they don't, they are likely to be on the receiving end of comments like *He behaved as though he was at a football match or You're not at home now*, etc." (Dörnyei & Thurrel 1994:681)

It exemplifies the extent to which a person can be misinterpreted if the speaker does not accommodate their utterance to the context. It is highly unlikely that the migrants, coming from

different cultures are familiar with all different social contexts in the host society and, hence, the risk of misunderstanding is a further obstacle on the path to their adjustment journey.

He and Young (1998) interpret the term “interactional competence” as being parallel to interactive practice. They view interactive practices as co-constructed by the participants, and hold out that each participant has responsibility to contribute to this practice through the use of their linguistic and pragmatic resources (1998:5). The examples they present, such as topic and turn management strategies, are handled by all the participants involved in a conversation to make the communication smooth. The rules of taking turns at talk are largely implicit, so new comers to the language are supposed to acquire this ability by themselves. Therefore, it becomes obvious that interactional competence is a key to communicative effectiveness, and effective communication should not be assessed from an individual native speaker’s perspective only, but needs to be evaluated by considering the fact that communication is a two-way interaction.

The linguistic and pragmatic resources that combine into interactional competence, to build appropriate communication between the interlocutors also need to take into account the reference to a common context of communication, or shared view of the world. This was mentioned earlier under the term “inheritance”, or what Harrison calls the “cultural or symbolic capital” that consists of knowledge, values and other lifestyle factors attained in the course of socialization. Bangladeshi migrants, however, have had (or presently have) limited exposure to these in their daily interactions. It follows that the knowledge of interactional competence is extremely demanding for migrants’ day to day lives as well as for their adjustment into a more formal setting such as the workplace. It assumes a period of adaptation which may vary from individual to individual depending on a number of factors, such as length of stay and willingness to communicate with Anglo-Australians. The present study seeks to expose these subjective experiences in an explicit way, as they will be revealed through interviews with migrants and analysed from an ‘emic’ perspective.

Conclusion

A review of the academic literature around the concept of life satisfaction has highlighted that these three terms: life satisfaction, sense of belonging, and subjective well-being, are interrelated and several individual factors, such as self-esteem, self-inclination and motivation, willingness to communicate, length of stay in the host society, all play a substantial role in migrants’ lives in their efforts to adjust to the host society and enhance this life-satisfaction. This chapter has also revealed that few empirical researches have been conducted which focus on the linguistic factors as the tool of enhancing life satisfaction. Besides the expertise in language (as highlighted by Leung, Harris & Rampton 1997), there are other factors at play which relate to the desire to affiliate with the host

society. These include knowledge of the cultural conventions of the host society and the management of discursive practices as part of interactional competence through which communication appears to be spontaneous and effective. These arguably go towards better adjustment of migrants and enhancement of life satisfaction. This present study goes towards expounding on this relationship. The overall impact of linguistic and cultural factors on life satisfaction can be summarized in the diagram below:

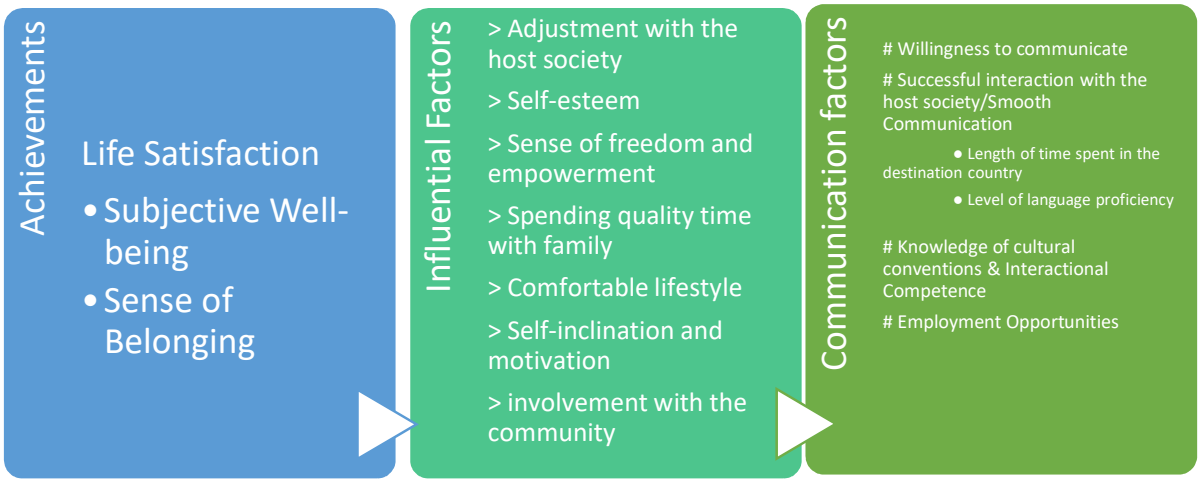

Figure 3: Impact of linguistic & cultural factors on life satisfaction

Even though the multilingual character of Australian society is increasingly being recognized by research (see for example Chowdhury & Hamid, who point out that better life does not always mean high level of English proficiency in certain situations, 2016:25), in Australia, English is used as the official language and its dominance is observed in every public sector, such as education, employment, the economy, and many more. Given the widespread use of English in everyday life and the workplace, it cannot be ignored that communication is likely to be enhanced by increased familiarity with the vernacular variety of English. Because of its unique characteristics and history, the Australian English language variety has developed a unique vocabulary and cultural conventions, and consequently differs from the British English variety, which is mainly taught to students overseas. This may prove to be one of the major challenges affecting the adjustment of Bangladeshi migrants in Australia, and achieving competence in the Anglo-Australian discursive practices is crucial for their successful adjustment and life satisfaction. Various researches have been conducted to establish the importance of grasping the proficiency of the language of the host society. However, they may have underestimated the fact that appropriate communication is something beyond the knowledge of the language and language proficiency.

Furthermore, the discussion on the relationships of language use with migrants' adjustment to the host society raises an important issue, articulated by Trofimovich and Turuševa (2015). They argue that positive self-identification with the L2 group may not go parallel with the desire to improve one's L2 skills. This suggests that when someone reaches a certain level of proficiency, which satisfies their needs, they may consciously retain their level of L2 skill as they are reluctant to adjust to a new L2 identity. They do not necessarily make any effort to improve their L2 proficiency further. However, as the present discussion suggests, language functions both as a marker of self-esteem and as fulfilling communicative goals. In the case of the migrants' use of L2, they may adopt one of the goals oriented to communicative function of L2 while hanging on to their L1 identity. Importantly, the negotiation of choice gives birth to ambivalence and ambivalence affects life satisfaction.

Chapter 4 Methodology

The objectives and the research questions of this study inform the choice of the methodology to carry out this project. The primary objective of this project is to examine the experiences, life aspirations and employment expectations of Bangladeshi skilled migrants in South Australia and to gain an insight into the linguistic and cultural factors that may impact on life satisfaction of this migrant group. The information gathered from this study particularly aims to assist the migrant group to evaluate the pragmatic importance of adjusting their speech to the Australian variety of English in order to enhance their sense of belonging into the host society.

Deriving from the above research objectives, the information gathered for this project is primarily dependent on the subjective experiences of the Bangladeshi skilled migrants' interviews in relation to their life satisfaction in the host society. Therefore, in this chapter I seek a methodology that will give sufficient breadth to capture the experiences, perceptions and opinions of the informants, and which should be of direct relevance to the aims and research questions mentioned. First, I explore the range of appropriate methodologies to address the research questions, and justify the reasons behind the choice of the particular methodology that has been selected for this project. Second, I explain the study design, the selection of participants and the procedures involved in this project. Third, I discuss the analytical tools that will enable me to carry out in-depth analysis of the data and support evidence-based findings.

4.1 Selection of Methodology and Rationale

At the outset of this project, I considered a range of approaches that would most effectively yield a wealth of information about the way migrants talk about their experiences of fitting into their host society and the extent to which they make use of their linguistic resources to meet their life aspirations and employment prospects. In order to meet the aims of my study it seems appropriate to adopt a qualitative framework and conduct interviews with the migrants as a central data gathering technique. In preference to adopting a quantitative approach, in the form of a large-scale questionnaire survey for instance, I deliberately chose the qualitative approach as it presents a number of advantages. First, it is better suited for gathering evidence that reveal qualities of life, which this project seeks to explore. It is also best suited to this study as it reflects the multiple realities experienced by the participants; and furthermore, it allows me to capture the context of social contacts that migrants may have with the community. In the literature, researchers also recommend using qualitative approaches as they are more suited to particular types of project. For example, Benet-Martinez *et al*. (2002) highlight some of the positive aspects of qualitative researches. The following quote stresses the broad emphasis of the qualitative approach which encompasses not only external factors relevant to the participants but also their subjective aspects. The stories of the

migrants include their emotions, motivations, perceptions and aspirations from living in the host culture. In that sense, a qualitative approach seems to yield richer data for the purpose of this project.

> "Quantitative research may effectively document the external factors that affect cultural identity, but qualitative research is necessary to address **cognitive, affective and motivational variables** [my emphasis]." (Benet-Martinez *et al*. 2002:493)

Moreover, Dörnyei (2007:40) lists some of the strengths of qualitative research; some of which are highly relevant to this study. For instance, he identifies the exploratory and flexible features of this approach. As this project aims to explore the experiences of the skilled Bangladeshi migrants through semi-structured interview techniques, both of these characteristics are particularly helpful to generate rich data most effectively. It thus seemed appropriate to conduct semi-structured interviews around theme-based questions that would prompt the interviewees to express their opinions, feelings and varied life experiences in adjusting to their chosen country more freely, without the undue pressure of having to respond to a set of fixed questions. Dörnyei also mentions that qualitative research is specifically helpful in contributing deep insights into a reduced data sample. As my study is relatively small in scope, this is one of the major reasons for selecting a qualitative approach to account for the migrants' insightful reflexions and shared experiences. An analysis of the transcriptions can best give access to varied contextual factors as well as the complexity of human experiences.

The reasons given above support the overriding choice of a qualitative approach over a quantitative approach for this project. To elaborate further, the qualitative methodology satisfies the purpose of this particular project because it is guided by interpretation rather than by prediction; it takes into account the whole context of the individual migrant's life experiences rather than generalising about a particular group; and it fulfils the need to understand the perspectives of the participants rather than seeking a causal explanation (Burns 1994:242). The qualitative approach will assist me as the researcher to analyse the data by themes from the participants' narration in their own words. As it has already been mentioned, the project primarily seeks to collect data of the subjective rather than objective experiences of the Bangladeshi migrants; hence the qualitative approach will assist in gathering comments and suggestions on overall life satisfaction as the migrants recount their daily life experiences and how they adjust in the host society.

Most importantly, it seems appropriate to choose a qualitative approach because by directly accessing the migrants' stories, interviews provide deeper insights into their lives and their situation from their own perspectives. Dörnyei (2007:38) emphasizes the importance of the participants' subjective involvement in the qualitative approach as the participants themselves can interpret the experiences most effectively. In that sense, a qualitative approach allows the 'emic' perspective. An

'emic' or insider's perspective seeks to capture the participants' experiences and thoughts from their own point of view (LoCastro 2013). It should be mentioned here that this approach also includes the researcher herself as a participant observer. The researcher, who is a Bangladeshi skilled migrant, shares with the interviewees an insider's perspective and is thus in a better position to understand the social reality of the everyday life of the participants, and to establish rapport with them, thus enabling her to gain access to their stories with empathy. In conducting interviews, it has been shown that the researcher who shares some characteristics with the interviewees has a good overview of the issues at stake and is therefore able to develop the most appropriate questions in advance (Dörnyei 2007:136). According to Dörnyei, engagement with the target community that one is researching carries "more face-validity" (2007:61) as long as ethical issues are covered in order to ensure the integrity of the researcher.

Thus far, I have considered the rationale for choosing an appropriate methodological approach for this project, I now turn to the presentation of the study design, the selection of the participants, and the procedure used to collect our data.

4.2 The study design, selection of participants and procedure

This study consists of data collected from ten interviews. The 40-60 minutes' interviews were conducted with ten Bangladeshi immigrants in South Australia. The interviews were semi-structured, based on broad themes related to Bangladeshi skilled migrants' daily experiences and challenges in order to fit into the host society. These themes were informed by the researcher's own experiences in relation to language expertise and its role on overall life satisfaction as a skilled migrant, and the interviews were seeking to substantiate this proposition based on a literature review of language and migration issues.

It is necessary at this point to clarify the characteristics of semi-structured interviews, aligning with the points raised by Dörnyei (2007). In a semi-structured interview, there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions to help the interviewer and interviewee focus on a particular theme crucial to the study and stay on track. It is not necessary that these questions follow the same chronological order or use a fixed order of questions or wording. As Dörnyei (2007) mentioned, the format of this form of interview follows open-ended interviews and the interviewer stimulates and probes the interviewee to elaborate on key issues in an exploratory manner. On the one hand, the 'structured' part of this approach is the guided questions and direction given by the interviewer. On the other hand, this approach always encourages participants or informants to follow-up interesting developments and explanation of issues, and that is why it is called semi-structured interview. It allows for greater flexibility than a close-ended interview, but on the downside it makes it more difficult to code the responses, and thus is open to interpretations. In this way, however, as pointed out by Burns

(1994:279), “the informant’s perspective is being provided rather than the perspective of the researcher being imposed.”

The interviews started with some theme-based questions (for a sample of questions, refer to the Appendix at the end of the thesis). Sometimes, the wording or sequence was modified from one interviewee to the next to help the informants feel comfortable and inspired in expressing their personal views naturally. We carefully chose this semi-structured format because it ensured a balance between control, in order to maintain track, and focus on the key issues that the study sought to address, and freedom in order to encourage willingness to talk with authenticity.

The selection of the interviewees was based on a relatively small sample of voluntary participants. However, in order to examine the interconnection of migrant’s life satisfaction and linguistic aspects holistically, as it is the focus of this study, the researcher initially considered including some demographic factors such as age, gender, language, educational background and socioeconomic status to guide the selection of interviewees. The target group were adult skilled migrants, aged 30-40, who had spent at least two years and a maximum of five years in South Australia. The gender difference was not significant as the focus was on skilled migrants, irrespective of whether they were male or female. However, to avoid categorizing the project as gender–biased, the researcher aimed at conducting interviews with a mix gender group. In the final selection they were six males and four females.

More importantly, characteristics of the target group included a required period of residency in the host country between two to five years. That is because it has been widely acknowledged that around 2/3 of skilled migrants leave SA within a couple of years after arrival. As a result, concerns have been raised around social development issues faced by new migrants who have settled in South Australia (*InDaily* 2013). It is also believed that after two years of early settlement, the migrants would have built a social network with the Anglo community (Yates:2011). Research has also shown that the period of two to five years is crucial for the decision to stay, return home, or move on to another state. This is indicative of the migrants’ successful integration. Another consideration which justified the choice of residency period is that acquiring communicative competence is a lengthy process according to Colic-Peisker (2002):

> “Long-term… proficiency in English is essential to ‘emotional integration’, that is, to feeling at home, and thus ‘the precondition for any degree of cultural integration.” (Colic-Peisker 2002:156 – cited in Yates 2011)

The selected participants were Bangladeshi migrants, who voluntarily migrated to South Australia as skilled migrants. Some elaboration is in order here as the term ‘skilled migrants’ can cover many

different types. In the research literature, Lising (2017:297) talks about several perceptions of the definition of skilled migrants. For example, it may refer either to short or long-term movement for work; the dichotomous types of skilled migration consist of skilled/unskilled, white/blue colour, high and low skilled. From this, it can be seen that the definition of the skilled group is not homogenous. The word 'skilled' has also a special connotation in this study. Skilled migrants are basically those migrants who already held professional jobs in their home country. In Bangladesh, it is commonly understood that skilled professional people have a higher education background with a university degree. Before obtaining their residency visa in Australia, they also had to sit for the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) exam to prove their proficiency in English. Although other English language testing systems, for example TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and so forth, are accepted by the Department of Home Affairs in Australia, the focus for participating in this study is specifically those migrants who sat for IELTS in order to ensure data consistency. The participants were those who proved themselves at least as 'competent' or 'more than competent' users. The reason for choosing this group is because, to get access for a residency application visa in South Australia, the minimal requirement is to be 'competent' users, though some professions require higher competencies. Therefore, the skilled migrants from Bangladesh who participated in the present study are those who have had both an academic and job experience in their individual fields in their home country. In addition, as English language testing is one of the essential criteria to obtain the residency visa, most of them are in the professional job category, i.e. white collar employment. Lising (2017) cited Purkayastha's study (2005) on Indian migrants where the term "skilled migrants" is used in relation to the qualification migrants possess through tertiary education. As a neighbouring country, this mostly applies to Bangladeshi skilled migrants as well.

Once the pre-requisites were established, the recruitment followed the arms-length method, which consists in a random selection of participants who are contacted through common acquaintances, or through shared membership in different community programmes. Some of them were referred to the researcher by the participants themselves. Initially, for the purpose of seeking consent for attending the interview, I designed a brief notice inviting participants interested in the research to contact the researcher. The notice contained the brief outline of the project, the principal researcher's contact address and specifications of the prerequisite factors for participating in the study — they had to be adult skilled migrants who have deliberately chosen to settle in South Australia and have sat for an IELTS exam as part of their visa requirement, with a length of residency between two to five years. Copies of this notice were posted on notice boards in several public places where Bangladeshi people most frequently visit, such as university cafeteria, local community halls, Bangladeshi grocery stores, halal shops, community radio, and so forth. Within a defined timeframe of six weeks, the number of participants was expected to be between a minimum of eight and a maximum of ten people. Purposely, the number of the participants was limited so as to allow for prolonged discussion and investigation of complex variables (Korne *et al*. 2008:294). Considering

the safety protocols stipulated in the Ethics application submitted for this project, the interviews were conducted in public venues such as cafés, libraries, community halls, and so forth, depending on individual circumstances, and by mutual agreement between the interviewee and me as interviewer. The duration of the interview lasted between 40 to 60 minutes.

As mentioned earlier, I was either already acquainted with some participants as I belong to this migrant group myself, or I met them for the first time in the interview. Being a part of the same community is significantly important for collecting the data of this project and there is a valid reason behind this precise selection process. The Bangladeshi community is still a small community in South Australia and most people meet with each other in different community programmes. In addition, informants may feel uncomfortable to share their day-to-day personal life experiences without having established a relationship of trust with the person with whom they are sharing. However, to maintain the objectivity in the data collection process, the involvement of the interviewer remained at a professional level and was conducted in English from start to finish rather than the shared Bengali language. I was aware that allowing the use of the Bengali language would have some limitation, for example the participants might have tried to influence me with some of their responses. The responses might have been biased and ended up being very casual. I noticed, for example, that while speaking in English the respondents sounded professional. They may have realized that their answers in English were valued as they presented themselves as skilled migrants who are competent users of English. Another reason for selecting to conduct the interviews in English was dictated by the project research question on the migrants' familiarity with the English Australian vernacular, and I expected them to provide me with some examples. It may also well be that the interviewees' eagerness "to please" the interviewer is not specific to expressing themselves in their mother tongue and that the same phenomenon may occur if the interview is conducted in English. This consistency in using one language for the interviews was ensured by adhering to the strict protocol required by the Ethics Board Committee[7].

4.3 Analytical Tools

As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I chose a qualitative approach for this study as it is more conducive to explore the issues raised by the research questions from the points of view of those directly involved. In other words, this approach gives access to the informants' own interpretation of what's going on in their daily lives. The theme-based questions (see Appendix) were designed to help the researcher gain concrete evidence of conversational interactions with Anglo-Australians and accounts of successful, or challenging, experiences migrants might have encountered during their early settlement in South Australia. Therefore, a 'thematic analysis' seemed

[7] The ethic application received approval by Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (approval 7023)

the most effective as one of the primary analytical tools for this project. The essence of a thematic analytic approach is also highly relevant in informing the questions for the participants. Thematic analysis is acknowledged as a widely used research method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes (Boyatzis 1998; Braun & Clarke 2006), and is well suited for the exploration of the key issues which were identified in the previous literature review chapter. These authors elaborate the features of thematic analysis by showing how it aims to organise, describe and interpret qualitative, non-numerical data in a rich, detailed and complex manner. They further mention that the thematic analysis seeks to discover patterned responses across a series of interviews and, therefore, the researcher depends on what is explicitly said to identify underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations of the content. As we conducted a series of semi-structured interviews based on theme-based questions, the choice of the thematic analytic tool for analysing the data in this study feels justified.

Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight the advantage of a thematic analysis over other qualitative methods by identifying that it is not bound to a particular theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke 2006) and it can be implemented flexibly “using a data-driven, bottom-up approach deriving meaning from the participants’ discourse and inductively extrapolating patterns”. An inductive analytical approach means that the themes are strongly linked to the data (Patton 1990) and not driven by a theoretical interest. A deductive approach, on the other hand, strives to code the data by fitting it into a pre-existing analytical frame.

Being Bangladeshi ‘skilled migrants’ as defined earlier, the participants already have the knowledge of English, which is a major tool of communication in an English-speaking country. However, the task of the researcher is to gather precise information from the authentic situational experiences of skilled migrants in a holistic way. This information is meant to address the research questions about the range of factors that influence life satisfaction in the host country, with a particular focus on linguistic and cultural aspects of the vernacular Australian English usage. The analysis is thus based on the participants’ experiences, beliefs, expectations and opinions.

From the discussion provided so far in this chapter, the use of a qualitative approach through a semi-structured interview setting appears logical in order to meet the aims of the project, and hence works as an appropriate methodological choice to approach the present study. Moreover, this project aims to follow an inductive analytical approach and the responses to the theme-based questions are used as data in an attempt to provide information that hopefully will throw some light on the research question as it relates to the interconnection of language use and life satisfaction of a particular migrant group who has chosen to settle in South Australia. However, this methodological approach is not without its challenges with regard to its validity, which we will briefly address in the following section.

4.4 Limitations/challenges

The project needed to be approved by the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee at Flinders University (SBREC 7023) before the data collection was commenced. Through a thorough process of modifications and amendments to meet the stringent criteria of the committee's requirements, the overall project has been refined in order to ensure a non-biased approach. Inevitably, it can be argued that reliability and validity in research where individuals' responses to interviews could be distorted may be to a certain extent compromised. However, having articulated my analytical focus in the above section, I acknowledge that different possible responses might have been expected from the participants' subjective position. The theme-based questions guided me in formulating a series of patterns which work as a kind of direction for identifying some crucial facts in relation to skilled migrants' life aspirations in the host country.

In this endeavor, the researcher's own position is also taken into account as it may have both a positive and negative impact on the project. The researcher is of Bangladeshi nationality, herself a skilled migrant addressing Bangladeshi migrants and positioning them as such. The possibility is always there that the participants' answers could have been influenced by the researcher's known face. The participants might feel shy to share their personal experiences with someone from their own community. The bias influences cannot be simply overlooked. However, as the researcher was aware of all these speculations before starting the data collection, she was able to manage these as tactfully as possible. There is actually a valid reason behind this precise selection process as well. This basis of trust and rapport between interviewee and interviewer is crucial to obtain significant information on this particular topic. Otherwise, it may have been more difficult to gather relevant data which could have hindered the integrity of the overall research project. Moreover, as the information sheet and consent form were provided before the interview, the interviewee had the opportunity and plenty of time to think whether they felt comfortable to share personal experiences with the interviewer or not. Indeed, the interviewee had the freedom to withdraw from the interview at any stage during the interview process, if they did not feel like answering any of the questions.

Other than the limitations related to the above considerations, I faced some minor challenges as well. For example, although I intended to explore a limited data sample, I was still expecting more detailed responses from the participants. In that sense, this study could be thought of as an exploratory pilot study towards a larger project. Finding a suitable and agreed time and venue for both the interviewee and interviewer was also challenging at times, although always negotiable. In addition, it was sometimes difficult to make the participants understand the significance of the project. Some of them had a preconception that this project was only a requirement for academic purpose, and did not see how they could ever benefit from it in anyway. Once the semi-structured

interview had started, the researcher was able to make them realize the significance of the project; they then responded more enthusiastically and felt motivated in contributing to this sort of project.

From the above discussion, the choice of a thematic analytic tool within a qualitative research approach seems justified to fulfil the primary aims and objective of this project, and is particularly fitting for such an exploratory study. As it does not invoke any a-priori theoretical framework it allows for a more complex view of social experiences as reflected by the participants' own understanding. The inductive approach assists in forming thematic patterns from a series of interviews and as a result I was able to gather information from the participants, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 Findings and Discussion

Part 1: Personal and cultural factors in relation to well-being/life satisfaction

Introduction

This chapter will report and discuss the participants' responses to the interview questions. These were designed to explore the experiences, perceptions and opinions of a sample of ten Bangladeshi skilled migrants to South Australia in accordance with the first objective of the study. It also seeks to address the broad aim of the study, which is to gain an insight into the linguistic and cultural factors that are perceived to affect the migrants' level of well-being during their early period of settlement. The analysis of the findings will be presented over two chapters. While chapter five will primarily discuss the personal and cultural factors that impact the migrants' well-being as they have been identified from their responses, chapter six will more specifically discuss the linguistic factors in relation to well-being and employment prospects within the framework of the research questions as outlined at the outset of this study.

In the present chapter, the focus of the analysis will be on the exploration of the concept of 'subjective well-being' and its associated factors as they relate to the initial settlement of the migrants. From the participants' responses, I will try to gain an insight into the personal and cultural factors that impact on life satisfaction of skilled Bangladeshi migrants. The following chapter will predominantly address the second key research question, that is, to explore the extent to which the level of linguistic factors, in terms of language and communicative skills, affect the well-being and employment prospects of skilled Bangladeshi migrants in South Australia.

Using a thematic approach to analyse the interviews, I was able to identify some of the crucial factors that have become salient in the participants' responses in relation to their perceived well-being. Under sub-sections 5.2 Primary reasons for migration, and 5.3 Aspiration vs. Reality, I will discuss the personal factors that have influenced migration and the extent to which the migrants' expectations were fulfilled when they moved into the host society. Under sub-section 5.4 Community involvement, I will discuss the cultural factors that influence the extent to which the Bangladeshi migrants involve themselves in their local communities and how this contributes to their well-being. Finally, under section 5.5 Employment and life satisfaction, I will discuss their job aspirations and the challenges they encounter in entering their desired job field. The critical discussion arising from the respondents' interviews seems to indicate that all of these factors play a significant role in the migrants' journey and are of direct relevance to the connection between the migrants' well-being and their employment prospects.

5.1 Characteristics of the Participants

To start with it is important to introduce the Bangladeshi migrants who were interviewed for this study. The interviews were conducted with ten participants with varying degrees of tertiary education and diverse professional backgrounds. As mentioned in the previous chapter, to avoid setting up the project as gender–biased, I chose to conduct the interviews with a mix gender group comprising in total six males and four females who responded to the call for expression of interest and volunteered to be interviewed. All of the participants (aged 30-40) were highly educated, having completed either a Bachelor or a Master degree at university, and all had been involved in employment commensurate to their professional and academic skills in Bangladesh. All the participants had a number of years of work experience and a good command of English prior to their arrival in Australia, as attested by all of them passing the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) exam, which is one of the requirements for obtaining residency in Australia.

The table below provides the demographics, level of education and occupational background of the interviewees:

Participant	Age	Length of Stay in South Australia	Education level	Pre-migration Employment	Employment in Australia
Male (M1)	36	3 years	Bachelor in Computer Science and Engineering from Bangladesh	IT Manager in a mobile company	IT related job in different sectors
Female (F2)	33	3 years	Masters in Psychology from Bangladesh	Banker	Unemployed/ looking for work
Male (M3)	35	2 years	Master in English	Teacher and administrative officer in an educational setting	Customer Service representative in government sector
Female (F4)	33	2 years	Medical graduate and Masters in	Medical officer in research institute	Unemployed/ looking for work. However, has

			Public Health from Bangladesh		worked as a carer in Aged care in Adelaide
Male (M5)	37	3 years and 7 months	Masters in Social Sciences from Bangladesh. Currently undertaking Diploma in Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs in Australia	Working in Non-Government Organization (NGO) in development sector, particularly in health sector	Employed with a Dutch organization in health sector
Female (F6)	38	4 years and 10 months	Bachelor and Masters in Economics from Bangladesh	Assistant Director in a governmental sector	Owns and runs community based supermarket and grocery shop and also works in Australian store (Foodland)
Male (M7)	37	2 years	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery	Physician	General Practitioner(GP)
Female (F8)	32	2 years	Bachelor and Masters in Business Administration from Bangladesh	Community Worker	Administrative job in government sector

Male (M9)	39	4 years	Masters in Business Administration and Finance and Masters in Accounting from Bangladesh	Employed in different jobs such as accounts, finance, marketing and sales. Then started own business related to water purification system	Working as personal carer in aged care
Male (M10)	39	Almost 5 years	Bachelor and Masters in Economics from Bangladesh	Marketing Specialist in multinational organization	Businessman in community based supermarket and grocery shop

Table 2: Demographic data of the participants

The demographic data contained in the above table shows that all the participants completed their higher education in Bangladesh and were successfully employed in professions matching their skills prior to coming to Australia. To enhance their skills and increase their chances of finding work, some of them have undertaken further studies in Australia as well. The table indicates that, except for two (F2 and F4), all of the participants are currently in employment. However, it is worth pointing out that the interviewees have expressed some level of dissatisfaction with regards to their current position. A possible cause for this could be attributed to differences which exist in the social fabric and work structure between Australia and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, a well-educated person expects to find a job which corresponds to their educational background and this, in turn, grants them an equivalent higher social status. The social stratification in Bangladesh is such that some of the lower paid jobs, which do not require a university degree, are performed by lower status individuals and are considered less gratifying. After migration to Australia, when the migrants have to start working in any kind of job to survive and settle in the new country, especially those jobs that are not considered as gratifying as in Bangladesh, they find themselves quite challenged. For them, this amounts to a downgrading of their social status and is perceived as an assault on their identity. This type of dissatisfaction is perceptible in the following statement provided by one of the participants (F6):
I thought I would also get good job. Four months I didn't get any job. After that I got a job in Foodland, super mall. I tried to get job in my field and failed.

Having completed a Masters in Economics in Bangladesh, understandably, F6 expresses frustration at not being able to obtain the higher status position she already held in Bangladesh. To highlight the difference in social structure between Bangladesh and Australia, she mentioned that, in Bangladesh, the job she was involved in was highly regarded. She had a leadership position and she received some entitlements because of her professional status. For example, she was provided with a car and a chauffeur when involved in official business travel. Having had this sort of experience, she felt quite dissatisfied with her status in Australia as she struggled to obtain basic employment. In sum, although it may seem, by looking at the overall response data in the table above, that the participants were doing relatively well, in reality two thirds of them expressed dissatisfaction with the lower status granted to their current positions.

Another example provided by a male participant underscores the real impact this can have on the migrants' state of mind. This male participant (M9) is currently working as a personal health care worker in an aged-care facility. In Bangladesh, this sort of occupation is mostly carried out by women. One can imagine that the situation is challenging for him as he has to compromise with the social gender representation this position was afforded in his native country.

Another relevant issue which stands out from the interviewees' background relates to the stability versus casualness of the job currently held. One of the participants (M1), working as an Information Technology (IT) manager in the mobile phone sector in Bangladesh, emphasized that although he is currently working in IT in Australia, he is not working in the same field, which he considers to be temporary. This could mean that either he desires to be employed in the same field as he was engaged in Bangladesh, or we can assume that he is looking for a more permanent position. As employment expectation is related to one of the key themes of this study, we will discuss the employment issue in relation to the migrants' life satisfaction in the final section of this chapter.

In the following discussion, I will examine some of the personal and cultural factors that appear to affect the migrants' life satisfaction and subjective well-being, starting with the respondents' primary reasons for migration and the extent to which their expectations were met during their initial period of settlement.

5.2 Primary reasons for migration

Although finding out the reasons of migration is not the primary focus of this research, knowing them will assist us in shedding light on the processes that are explored in this chapter and reflected upon in discussing my findings.

The design of the interview questions was intended to elicit the subjective experiences of the migrants involved in the corpus in relation to their state of well-being in South Australia based on

Cummins' Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) as discussed under section 3.1 above. As part of gathering information on the participants' background, a question was asked about the reasons for migration: "Is there any particular reason that you have decided to migrate at this stage of your life? What is the particular reason that attracted you to choose South Australia as the destination country?" In response to the interviewer's question on the reasons of migration, various responses came out which are explored henceforth.

The migrants' responses indicate a number of factors that prompted them to make up their minds to migrate. Among those, the principal reason mentioned is aspiring to a secured life. Many participants expressed their concern about the political instability in Bangladesh, which eventually led them to migrate. In addition, better education and a better future for their children is also found as one of the primary reasons for migration. There are other reasons mentioned by the participants which persuaded them to migrate. One of them is to improve their standard of living. On the one hand, they mention some of the predominant factors for leaving their home country, such as over population, traffic-jams as well as insecure life due to political instability and religious conflicts, and busy life-style. On the other hand, the participants also mention some of the factors which motivated them to choose Australia as their preferred destination country. These factors include, but are not limited to, a well-equipped health infrastructure, opportunities to use their skills professionally, a temperate climate, a safe atmosphere, work-life balance, a migrant-friendly environment and various civic facilities. However, it needs to be stressed that, although some of these factors are commonly mentioned by the interviewees, the degree of the influence of these factors varies depending on the individual's subjective experience, and clearly not all factors carry the same weight in their decision to migrate.

According to research (Gunasekara *et al*. 2014:475), reasons for migration are indicative of the perceived level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the migrants' present life in Australia. This is also included in Cummins' (2006) Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI), used in Gunasekara *et al*'s study, which highlights that acculturation or adjustment to the host society is one of the various dimensions that contribute to the migrants' well-being. From the participants' responses, it is possible to identify a number of factors that correlate with Cummins' domains of well-being. The reasons given by the participants relate to the standard of living, the desire for security, achievements in life and feeling part of the community – all of which appear in Cummins's PWI.

Interestingly, the participants who indicate that the major reason for their migration was to further explore their professional skills, are actually in a better position now than those who mention other reasons as their priority. For example, a participant (M7) who is now working as a General Practitioner (GP) mentions that he anticipated to work in an established infrastructure as a GP; consequently, he moved to Australia as he believed that the Australian health sector was better

equipped than that in Bangladesh. Another participant (M3) mentions that one of the reasons for migrating to Australia was to establish himself as a successful migrant. He seems satisfied with his current role as he is working as a customer service representative in a South Australian government department. One of the advantages he finds in his present position is that it requires direct involvement with linguistically and culturally diversified groups of people. He was an English teacher in Bangladesh with administrative responsibilities in an educational setting. In his case, having switched professions is presented as advantageous.

It is worth noting that among the several reasons mentioned by the participants, a recurrent theme concerns children education, which is missing in Cummins' Personal Well-being Index. It seems that Cummins mostly focused on a self-centric view of the concept of well-being while I found that respondents feel happy to take on challenges for the sake of children and family. All the participants emphasize increased opportunities for their children's better future as one of the major reasons for migration to Australia. One of the participants (F2) even claims that this is the only reason which has driven her to migrate. She states that she has migrated "only for kids and for their good education". Besides the desire to ensure their children's secured future, the family partner's improved status as a result of migration also contributes to their overall life satisfaction, as stated by another interviewee, F4:

> *'I did not get any job I am not satisfied for myself, but my husband got a job as physician, doing well, my son is getting better education, I am happy for that.'*

Another major reason for migrating identified through these interviews is the aim to live a secure life in a politically tolerant society. The vital reason that is strongly put forward by the participants concerns the security of life in Australia in comparison to the insecurity of everyday life in Bangladesh. The realization of the lack of social, religious and political security in Bangladesh is a strong motivating factor for migration. Besides fleeing political intolerance, F4 also mentions religious intolerance, which deterred her from staying in Bangladesh. It can easily be seen from the participants' responses to this question on motivation that Australia, being a moderate and tolerant country, is an attractive destination for migration. An additional motivating factor can be attributed to an individual's adventurous personality which also plays a role in the migration of one of the participants (M9) who claims:

> *'From the childhood I had hidden ambition to go to Europe or America. I love experimental life. So, I moved in Australia*.'

Besides these, I found that some Bangladeshi migrants wanted to keep away from the hustle and bustle of life, such as when a participant (M1) mentions that he wished to move to a quieter place.

The above-mentioned reasons indicate that all of the respondents had some sort of expectation before settling in the host country and I now turn to the question of whether these expectations were fulfilled or not after their arrival in Australia.

5.3 Expectation vs reality

A central theme that transpired from the interviewees' responses concerns the extent to which the expectation held by the participants matches the reality they face after their arrival in the destination country. In response to a single inquiry about job expectations vs. reality: "What was your job expectation before arrival? Did the reality meet your expectation?" responses varied to a considerable extent. Those participants who did some homework and found information either as a result of their own research or from word of mouth prior to their arrival were aware of the difficulties awaiting them and were better prepared and more resilient when faced with unexpected circumstances. However, for others, the reality in Australia seemed quite different from what they expected prior to their arrival. For example, one of the female participants (F2), who has been unable to secure employment, did not intend to become involved in any job search after moving to Australia. All she had hoped for was being able to give more time to her family life. Her initial priority was to have enough time to raise her children in a nurturing environment, as in Bangladesh she led a busy working life and missed time to devote to her family. Nevertheless, after arriving to Australia she realized that, due to the high cost of living, she needed to start looking for work to supplement the family income. At first, she was happy to look for a part-time job; however, as she was not able to secure one, she tried to obtain fulltime employment instead. This ran against her initial intention of devoting quality time to her family. It should be noted here that the same participant at one stage also said:

> *'I was not happy in Bangladesh because…...my promotion was not satisfactory. I had to give more effort/time but the output was not good such as salary increment.'*

Her statement sounds inconsistent for, on the one hand, she says that she did not intend to seek a job in Australia due to her desire of devoting sufficient time to her family; but, on the other hand, she makes reference to her dissatisfaction in her job in Bangladesh because she was not being promoted. The extent to which migrants have to compromise their initial aspirations in order to survive and settle in Australia warrants further exploration. It is quite prevalent in skilled migrants' lives that although they might have lived their lives lavishly in the home country, they might have viewed their future in one way, but after migrating, the circumstances have forced them to readjust and to live a life they can afford in the new country. That dilemma of unfulfilled aspirations came out quite strongly during the interviews.

As mentioned earlier, responses to the question related to expectation and reality varied among individual participants and extended far beyond the employment field to cultural factors. Some participants responded positively in terms of expectations and reality. For example, participant M1 gives a very enthusiastic response when he says:

> *'When I first came to South Australia the ideas of civic facilities nearly met almost all my expectations. According to me, kids in SA [South Australia] are one of the luckiest kids among [in] the world. Nature is almost untouched; the environment is fresh [not polluted].'*

Other participants, such as M3, expressed a more realistic awareness of the expected hardship in his initial settlement phase. He says: 'I knew I need to start from scratch here, so I didn't have much expectation to get a job straight away.' However, possessing plenty of work experience and professional skills, it may not be an easy task for an adult to start from scratch, which is what immediately transpired from the following response: 'Though I did not have much expectation, I had to get through [a] challenging period.' Another participant (M7) revealed that he did not find a huge difference between his expectations before and after his arrival in Australia. This indicates that he was able to more easily adjust to the differences which he encountered after the move. Although he now seems positive towards his experience in Australia, he pointed out his initial bemusement when faced with the disparity in social norms with regard to the level of respect shown towards elders in Australia compared to the strong family bonds to which he was accustomed in Bangladesh. It is interesting to note that, just after expressing slight frustration on this matter, he corrected himself at once by saying that this solely reflects his personal opinion and he did not want to generalize his view and judge the Australian family cultural bond as 'weak'. Several times during the interview, he showed appreciation for the helpful and friendly nature of Australian people and praised the good neighbourly spirit he encountered. However, a slightly different response was provided by participant M1 who seemed open with regard to children's freedom of choice demonstrated in Australia, as he states:

> *'I believe [we should not impose any belief] It is not [the] right thing, let the kids decide to choose their path, it is up to them. It shouldn't feel like a moral obligation that whatever my father is doing I should also do.'*

Several other comments were made on the question of expectation vs. reality but as they are mostly tied up with the challenges faced by the migrants in relation to employment issues, they will be discussed as a separate sub-section further on in this chapter under 5.5. However, before looking into that, I need to examine an additional factor that several studies have highlighted as greatly impacting migrants' overall adjustment to the host society. According to Chow (2007), community

involvement is one of the major factors influencing adjustment in a foreign country. This factor is also recorded in Cummins' Personal Well-being Index introduced in Chapter 3.

5.4 Community involvement

In the semi-structured interviews, questions were asked about general community involvement as part of the participants' background information. This included both the local community as well as the participants' own Bangladeshi community. A subsidiary question was added: "Do you involve yourself in any kind of religious or cultural activities at home or outside in the wider community?" to assess whether religious beliefs and ideology played a significant role in the migrants' new life in Australia.

All the respondents indicate that they make regular attempts to socialize with Anglo-Australians on a regular basis, but are not always successful. Although the majority of the participants experience positive social relations with Anglo-Australians, whom they find very friendly on the whole, a minority remarks that they feel they are not always welcomed by them. One of the participants (F8) openly shares her frustration by stating:

> '*In my experience in two years, I have seen something- I don't think they [Australian] are friendly. I myself tried to talk to them [in several occasions], their responses are very short like 'hi' and 'hello'. I didn't get them so friendly. I tried to participate in the council I belong to. Even in my daughter's school I find they [Australian] only mix with their community. I tried; I don't have positive experience. I think language can be one reason but I think they are more comfortable with their own community.*'

From the above response, I note that this participant appears quite determined in trying to mix with the Australian group as she attempts to initiate conversation with them on separate occasions but is not successful. She explains the reason for this behaviour by stating that, according to her, the Australians may feel more comfortable interacting with members of their own group. However, this behaviour is common in any group, and feeling like an outsider is not a very comfortable position, as has been shown by many studies on group identity (See Fukuyama 2007, for example). Capra and Steindl-Rast (1991), and Phinney *et al*. (2001) also perceive the 'feeling of being an outsider' as a hindering factor for achieving the feeling of well-being. In such situations, migrants become vulnerable and are prone to feeling uncertain about their long-standing commitment to the host society. As the participants reiterated that migration is a one-way journey, if they have to face this uncertainty, their journey of settlement becomes more difficult. M1, for example, commented that '*Immigration is not like [a] visit for some days. Immigration is a one-way journey*.'

The work setting is a major place for the migrants to get acquainted with Australians. M7 said: '*I have some [Australian] friends [in a sense] for example, my colleagues, some of my patients are getting friends now. There should be a wait for getting friends*.' From this statement, we can see that arriving in Australia at an adult age, the migrants take on the added challenge of making new friends as well.

With regard to Bangladeshi community involvement, the majority of the respondents mention that they may not be active members of any Bangladeshi community organization; however, they do participate occasionally in community cultural programs. The reason they give for doing so is that they see them as opportunities for passing on the Bangladeshi norms, values and language to the next generation. Those who mention this clearly do not want to lose their culture of origin and, consequently, even if they experience difficulties and stress about settling down in the new environment, they are aware of the importance of keeping the next generation in touch with their own culture. One of the participants (F6) felt strongly about retaining her cultural identity as she states: '*I go to Bangladeshi community program. I wish my kids will be familiarized with our festival, our culture*.' This identity claim suggests that her attempts to retain her Bangladeshi culture works as an additional challenge for her in Australia.

Although most of the participants feel positive about getting involved in the Bangladeshi community, some are aware of the fact that mixing only with the Bangladeshi community may restrict their cultural awareness and communication skills to this community of co-nationals, thus limiting their exposure to Australian culture and Australian English speakers. I will discuss further, in chapter 6, how the issue of language is interconnected with involvement in the host community. However, an interesting observation was made by one of the participants (M9) who draws a distinction between two types of communities, rural and urban, in terms of service facilities and opportunities to socially interact within the local community. He notes, for example, a discrepancy in the provision of service facilities between urban and rural areas in Australia. According to this interviewee, this has also an incidence on the type of English that the migrant will be exposed to. M9 observed that urban areas offer more job opportunities in comparison to rural areas. Moreover, he points out that in urban areas, one is likely to be surrounded by more highly educated people than in rural areas. In his opinion, this sometimes makes it harder for the migrants to communicate with rural Australians who display different language characteristics. The different language varieties used by urban and rural Australians are highlighted by him as he states that '*Mostly rural Australian people use different slangs*.' M9 further mentions that sometimes the migrants do not have the opportunity to mix with educated Australians and, as a result, that may work as a hindrance to further enhance their communication skills. According to this participant, a lot of time is wasted in that way. His frustration during his initial settlement is clearly felt when he remarks:

'*After coming in Australia, I was in rural areas. Regional or rural areas are bit deprived as they don't get fund[ing] from the government. The facilities of cities and rural areas are not equal. …Mostly Rural Australian people sometimes use different slangs.*'

This remark resonates with the fact that skilled migrants are mostly well-educated people who enjoyed a relatively high social status in their home country. During the initial settlement period, they don't always get the option to choose to live in a particular area or in a good neighbourhood, depending on their financial situation. So it is most likely that they look for cheap rental accommodation where the surrounding community has a lower social status than the one they were used to in Bangladesh.

As was mentioned in the literature review chapter, Cummins' (2006) subjective well-being index included spirituality or religion as an item which attempts to capture the extent to which someone is satisfied with their religion and how it is valued by the host society. However, as we recall from an earlier discussion of the PWI, not all respondents in Cummins's study had spiritual or religious beliefs and hence it was recommended to include this item only in samples where spiritual and/or religious beliefs are commonly held. Amit and Bar-Lev (2014) also identify religious and ideological motives as having a significant influence on migrants' life satisfaction. In asking this question, however, I did not mean to draw any link between religious ideologies and life satisfaction of the migrants involved in this study, nor did I intend to focus on the influence of religious practice on personal well-being. My focus was simply on evaluating community involvement in line with the research which has shown (Akresh *et al.* 2014) that cultural and social adaptation is very much dependent on participation in social and cultural settings of native speakers of the host country, and that people who hold strong religious beliefs "outside the Judeo-Christian tradition tend to worship and socialize in congregations dominated by co-nationals, thus limiting exposure to English-speaking natives." (2014:203). There was no elaborated discussion on religious ideology in the interviews, except to note whether the interviewees follow their own religion actively or not as this would have an influence on their community involvement. There were mixed responses to this question as well. The issue worth noting was that some of the practicing Muslim migrants reported that they did so in order to pass their beliefs to their children, and some of the participants, who did not seem to hold strong beliefs, reported being less rigid about passing their values to the next generation as they think that their children will eventually do what they prefer to do. Although my research focus is not on finding out the extent to which religion plays a role on life satisfaction, I identified from the respondents that religion does not work as a hindrance to their adjustment in the host culture; rather participants feel a sense of security in practicing their religion in Australia, as highlighted by M3: '*Australia is an open country and I found no impediment from the Australian to practice religion*.' And F8, who is also a practicing Muslim stated: '*I give preference to practice religion and even I wear hijab regularly'*. Indeed, it was interesting to note that she also demonstrated her keen interest on exploring Anglo-

Australian culture by stating: '*Not only Bangladeshi event, I try to go to some of the Australian events also.*']

To summarize the above discussion, I identified several reasons behind the skilled migrants' decision to migrate and from the interviewees' responses I found that each migrant moves with individual expectations. A typical scenario is that after moving to the host country, their journey of settlement meets with challenges and the expectations and reality take on different shapes based on individual situations. However, community involvement is recognized as having a positive influence in helping them to settle into the host society. The majority of the skilled migrants interviewed have an open mentality towards the host culture especially when they enthusiastically state that they partake in the major Australian celebrations, such as Australia Day, Harmony Day, etc. This clearly suggests that this group of migrants is not confined to their own ethnic community but are willing to involve themselves in the larger Australian community. As a step towards greater social integration, however, the experience of socializing with the locals can sometimes have contrary effects and is not always conducive to create a sense of belonging. Overall, I did not find that religious ideology had a particular significant role to play in the respondents' engagement with the community as much as community involvement. This was identified as having a vital relevance to migrants' lives and was discussed at greater length in the interviews.

In this final section, I discuss the extent to which employment contributes to migrants' personal well-being, while the issue of employment will be further discussed in chapter six when I explore the vital relation between language and employment.

5.5 Employment and life satisfaction

Judging from the participants' extended responses to questions related to employment, it is quite clear that this factor plays a significant role with regard to these migrants' level of life satisfaction. According to Lynda Yates (464:4),

> "Finding employment is often considered an important indicator of settlement success and social inclusion, not only for its economic benefits, but also for the self-esteem and social connections that employment is thought to bring."

As already mentioned with regard to the issue of expectation versus reality, most of the migrants that were interviewed remark that the greatest challenge they face is mostly related to employment issues. Regarding the job situation in Australia, most of the participants find that the primary barrier for the migrants' lack of success in obtaining a desired job is the lack of local experience. Most participants mention that their lack of local job experience worked as a hindrance to getting an entry

into the employment market. One of the participants (M3) shows his frustration by saying '*Australian employers are very particular in terms of local experience*.' All the participants unanimously wondered how they would be able to acquire the so-called 'local job experience' if the local employers do not provide them with opportunities to demonstrate their skills. This frustration can easily be appreciated in the following quote from participant F4 who has not been successful in obtaining a job. She detects a sense of distrust on the part of the Australian employers about her overseas qualification:

> '*If Australian government value the experience what I already have in my country, if they use that experience then it will be beneficial for us as we can use our expertise straight. But if they always ask for local/ Australian experience, how can it be done?'*

Another participant (F8) shows her frustration for being unsuccessful in obtaining a position on several occasions, even though she lessened her expectation in order to get into any sort of job. She says: '*I didn't get any response from employers in Australia though I tried, not even a call! Those jobs were not very high profiled*.'

Another participant (M3) also expresses his frustration by saying that

> *'Australian employers have little faith in people that came from overseas. They don't want to venture into some sort of employing substantial experience from overseas. They do want to play safe. Résumé and cover letter is bit of [need to be] Australianised. My suggestion is to modify the résumé so that it would attract employers.*'

And another participant (M 5) responds similarly:

> '*Though all my certificates and skills are accredited by Department of Immigration, I don't get any job. I was a project Coordinator. The department of Immigration visited my workplace to verify my job and skills. After analysis, they gave me sponsorship. Still I did not get any interview call. Here you have to study. [However] even after study you can't be sure you will get the [skills commensurate to a] job*.'

For some individuals this kind of situations can be very dire. A participant (F4) speaks of her deep frustration of being a diabetic patient and raising her son who is also sick, by herself. She talks at length of her struggle to keep her family financially viable. Consequently, she took on a position, which she defines as an 'odd job'.

'*They [fellow migrants] suggested [me to] try to do some job which we call 'odd job' just to survive and settle here and side by side look for your professional job'.*

The above quotes underscore the fact that migration is a continuous process of adjustment with the goal of settlement. The subjective experiences of this process have been shared by the respondents and they have pointed out some crucial scenario which may need attention. From the above responses, it is clear that the migrants are made to feel vulnerable and lose their confidence, knowing that if they engage themselves in further education here in Australia, it may not guaranty them the jobs they were hopeful to secure.

An important clarification should be made as it was raised by the participants. A number of participants appear to be critical of some of the visa requirements, which they feel make the journey of settlement harder. It is worth mentioning that out of the ten respondents interviewed, who have all arrived as skilled migrants, some have come with a 190 sub-class visa and others with a 489 visa[8]. These visas set up different paths for settlement. As a point of clarification, the 190 visa allows the skilled migrants permanent residency status and entitles them to Medicare provision. However, those who arrive in Australia on a 489 visa are not entitled to receive the Medicare provision straight away. They have to wait for two years before applying for permanent residency. The Department of Home Affairs also states that 489 visa holders need to work full time for 12 months in a regional or low population growth area in Australia to qualify for permanent residency. They also frequently review the skill shortage and amends the process of visas based on the skill demand and other necessary requirements.

The hard reality faced by the migrants is well understood by M5 when he says '*I have seen lots of professional Bangladeshi migrants who had to work in factory or anywhere to meet these (visa) conditions.*' As a result of the current policy, some skilled migrants may not have a choice as they have to start earning a living to support their family upon arrival, unless they have brought with them significant funds to ensure a less stressful transition period. Many social benefits are not available to them if the required number of work hours is not met, so these migrants involve themselves in any sort of work they may find, irrespective of their skills, interest or status.

Moreover, some of the participants express their frustration regarding hidden discrimination in their workplace. One of the participants (M 5) comments:

[8] (Department of Home Affairs: https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/skilled-regional-provisional-489)

"*In Australia discrimination is not visible, nobody can quantify that. In workplace, I trained people. However, they became permanent employee, for me it takes longer because I am from overseas*.'

The above statement suggests that in terms of promotion or employment tenure, an overseas qualification can be one of the obstacles, and locals generally get a preference.

Interestingly, the self-identity split that results from accepting an 'odd job' while continually looking for a 'professional job' at the same time highlights the emotional challenges that the migrants have to overcome on top of the financial readjustment they have to make. That sort of dissatisfaction may work as hindrance to the overall settlement in a new country. Moreover, several studies, for example, Kamal and Maruyama (1990), Phinney *et al*. (2001) and Spencer-Oatey (2006) have also focused on identity and self-esteem as the indicators of life-satisfaction for migrants. F4's statement clearly conveys the extent to which the migrants are forced to compromise their initial aspirations during their initial settlement period. The often difficult situations of survival they face makes it very challenging to maintain their self-esteem and self-respect. Besides F4, at least two-thirds of the participants at some stage of their interview also express frustration to maintain self-esteem while recounting their experiences of hardship. Their self-respect seems further weakened when the participants are subjected to discriminatory attitudes from Anglo-Australians as reported by M5.

A crucial point raised by two participants concerns the disparity between the ratio of the number of skilled migrants, which is increasing, and the ratio of the number of jobs in Australia, which is decreasing. The migrants face the real prospect that job scarcity is growing day by day. From their perspective, there is no point in inviting new skilled migrants into the country when the government is not able to ensure jobs for the skilled people who are already living in the host country. Thus, it may not be simply that the participants are struggling to obtain an employment position corresponding to their skills but, rather, it may be that the low employment environment encourages this prevalent attitude.

The above findings express an inconsistency that may well exist in the host country; that is, on the one hand, the Australian government's willingness to sponsor skilled migrants and provide them residency status based on the skills they provide to the Australian community, and, on the other, the realization that Australian employers cannot rely entirely on those skills! It may be due to a lack of awareness of one's own cultural assumptions and biases or there may be underlying factors which may exacerbate this issue. Whatever the reasons, as Australia prides itself as a multi-cultural society, there should be a mutual trust. Clearly, more qualitative, rather than quantitative research needs to be conducted to address this situation as the Australian economy may not only be

benefitting from the remittance migrants bring from their home country, but also the multifaceted skills gained from overseas experience can make a positive contribution to the host country.

While some of the migrants share their story of compromise with regard to their expectations due to unfavorable circumstances in Australia, such as the high living standard, which forces them to get any sort of job which does not always appear prestigious to them, not all participants tell stories of initial hardship; there are others who share their positive experience about their employment status as well. A participant (M1) indicates that it is comparatively easier to communicate in the workplace than in everyday life situations.

> *'In workplace language is not that big [of an] issue as you are working with colleagues, they will try to help you and they are your helping hand. Outside of your comfort zone you will face more difficulty.'*

In this chapter I have explored the reasons of migration which indicate that a secure life and children's future received priority. In terms of expectations and reality the variance in responses is noteworthy. However, it is clear that a little preparation and homework definitely assist the migrants to face the reality they encounter in the host country. A positive indicator of settlement is found in terms of community involvement. The majority of participants are open towards mixing with Anglo-Australians and they report a mostly positive experience but individual circumstances can mitigate the results. Probably the most important responses I have come across concerns the experience of employment opportunity in the newly arrived country. The participants sound critical on visa requirements, job scarcity and feel frustrated about the demand of the employers regarding so-called local expertise. They find the hesitant attitude of the employers surprising given that these skilled migrants have already proven their skills before receiving a visa approval. In the next chapter, I turn to the impact of linguistic factors, including language proficiency and communication skills, on skilled migrants' initial settlement. The participants' responses may provide some further insights into identifying the reasons to account for this experience.

Chapter 6. Findings and Discussion

Part 2: Linguistic factors in relation to well-being and employment prospects

The discussion in this chapter will primarily focus on the impact of the linguistic factors in relation to migrants' life satisfaction and employment prospects. Based on the responses obtained from the skilled Bangladeshi migrants being interviewed, some important factors in relation to linguistic aspects that affect their lives have come to light. First, in sub-section 6.1, I will outline the overall impact of their language proficiency on their subjective well-being/life satisfaction. Then, I will further explore, in sub-section 6.2, the extent to which communicative issues, with respect to the pragmatic use of the English language, affects their employment prospects. To understand the disconnect between their self-perceived language proficiency and the actual language competence required to behave in appropriate ways within the new society, it will be necessary to consider, in sub-section 6.3, the issue of proficiency within the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as it clearly fails to serve the Bangladeshi migrants in their initial period of settlement in Australia. And finally, in sub-section 6.4, I will discuss the particular challenges faced by skilled Bangladeshi migrants when confronted with the variety of English spoken in Australia (AusE). I will consider both the knowledge of cultural conventions attached to the use of the language and the Bangladeshi migrants' discursive practices as they interact with native speakers of Australian English (AusE).

6.1 Impact of language proficiency on well-being/life satisfaction

Language is a tool of communication which affects one's sense of well-being. For the skilled migrants, having a background of English as a second language before moving to an English-speaking country is considered to be a positive asset, as language plays a vital role for being able to obtain the required visa and settling down in the host country. Within Cummins' personal well-being Index (2006) linguistic aspects have been disregarded, which, as it is argued in the present study, play a key role in the migrants' ability to adapt to a new context. I have already mentioned earlier that several other studies, such as Amit and Bar-Lev (2014), Blommaert (2015) and Yates (2011), have recognized that smooth communication and understanding promote life satisfaction. Such studies have also shown that the ability to use the language of the host country appropriately enhances life satisfaction and contributes to the positive relationship with the members of the host society. Blommaert (2015) interestingly found, as a TESOL instructor of international students in London, that his students were not able to speak using the variety of English spoken in that region. For example, students showed frustration by stating 'I don't express English that can help me find a boyfriend/girlfriend'; 'I don't have the English I need to understand entertainment shows on British TV.' Blommaert (2015) observed that unfamiliarity with the spoken local English variety may make people feel socially awkward and isolated, and that it works as a hindrance for making friends.

The Bangladeshi participants in my study report that in spite of being acquainted with British or American varieties of English in their home country, they face many challenges while interacting with Australian speakers. Participant M9, for example, was wondering why he was struggling to understand the Australian variety of English, even though he watched many English movies and dramas in Bangladesh. However, he identifies the reason for his struggle by stating *'I used to watch movies, drama in Bangladesh but not Australian, it was either USA or British*.'

My interview data also indicate that participants are facing difficulties due to their lack of familiarity with the Australian variety of English. I found that the respondents are aware of the fact that they need to be able to speak in a way that will be accepted by other users of that language. For example, participant F8 states:

> *'There are so many times I faced that if I don't reply in their own way, they don't understand. I get totally confused [whether] my answer is ok as they [Australian] behave [as if] they don't understand it. Actually, I think I have to start their way of using English. Otherwise they can't understand.'*

In response to the importance of acquiring the language variety of the destination country F4 states:

> '*Yes, I think I will adopt Australian English otherwise I think it would be hard to communicate especially when I am talking with mass people, general people in the shops, groceries and also as I want to be a doctor here and I have to talk to patients, I need to know common phrases otherwise it might be hard. It's good to know to be familiar with them.*'

F4's statement clearly indicates that in order to ease communication, it is important to be accustomed to the variety of language that is widely spoken in the destination country and within the community one will mostly interact. In addition, her examples include both employment and day-to-day scenarios where she needs to speak using the appropriate Australian variety. Hence, it can be stated that the need to acquire English language proficiency is not limited to any particular domain, and language teaching should include sufficient socio-linguistic varieties that can be applied to a range of social situations.

The above responses clearly show that migrants realize that knowing the Australian variety of English definitely adds value to their language experience in the Anglo-Australian context and facilitates daily communication with Australian speakers in a range of settings. With the passage of time, they also realize that they need to accommodate to their interlocutors' different ways of speaking and to extend their repertoire to adapt to different speakers. For example, M5 says: '*If I*

speak with an Aussie, I use jargons and slangs because it's more communicable. But if I speak with other Asian people, I don't use Aussie slang.' Based on the type of interlocutors they are interacting with, migrants have to work out their role and communicate accordingly. This is clearly observed when participant F4 is similarly aware that both speakers have to change their speech when they are interacting with one another. She says:

> *'When I am in conversation with Australians, naturally it comes in mind that they are Australians, I have seen that, when they talk with me, even they are also conscious that I am not from their background.'*

However, some surprising response came out from one of the participants (M5) who consciously discourages his children to acquire the Australian variety. He states:

> *'I prefer to tell the full word and don't allow my kids to follow that way of speaking English. I think if you speak in English, it should be clear and good English.'*

Interestingly, this participant who does not encourage his children to adopt Australian English because of its features, which he considers are non-standard English, has actually migrated to Australia for the safety and future prospects of his children. On the one hand, he chose Australia to increase the children' s future opportunities; on the other hand, he does not find the language used here to be appropriate for his children. This may be a reflection of the difficulty he experiences in his adjustment as it reflects the difficulty he has in controlling the situation. This attitude ultimately holds him back in achieving well-being. This goes to show that the participants' responses reveal an underlying disconnect between what people say and what they do.

Another seemingly contradictory statement is made by participant (M3) who firmly argues that acquiring a strong command of the English language is most important for new migrants, overriding the possible difficulties brought about by a specific variety. He observes:

> *'I don't think we should start talking like typical Australians. What we migrants need in order to get [a]job is to speak English fluently and correctly. As it is a predominantly English-speaking country, we need thorough command over English. The migrants don't need to acclimatize themselves with Australianised English.'*

Strikingly, although this participant mentions that he does not feel that using the Australian variety is necessary, while conducting the interview, I noticed that he, himself, was using some very typically non-standard British English, for example 'ta' for 'goodbye' and/or 'thank you', which is very frequently used by Anglo speakers in Australia. This indicates that he is, instinctively, uttering

something which he has acquired in Australia as this word is not at all used in Bangladesh. Certainly, one of the consequences of adopting such words in his speech, of which he may not be fully aware, is that it makes the communication more engaging when he is having a conversation with an Australian speaker. It can be seen that although all participants agree that familiarization with the Australian variety is bound to make communication easier, especially in day-to-day conversation, not all participants appreciate the unique features of the Australian variety.

Yates (2011) provides examples of the challenges immigrants face when dealing with the local variety of spoken English: 'Karen did not know what to order to eat or what topics to chat about, and her colleagues who could have helped her were either unaware of her difficulties or chose not to assist.' (2011:467). Yates, citing Holmes (2000), also highlights how important social context is, as it enables one to build both social and work relationships.

> "If societies are to value diversity rather than merely tolerate it, then it must be recognised that social interactions in the early settlement phase are of crucial importance to facilitate social inclusion." (Yates 2011:470)

Yates (2011:470) highlights the importance of a negotiated approach between interlocutors to ensure smooth communication and enhance life satisfaction.

> "We need to equip new migrants with the language and cultural skills to participate in dominant language interactions. At the same time, it is also crucial to equip speakers of the dominant language with the awareness, attitudes and skills that will help them to engage and communicate more successfully with new arrivals." [my emphasis)"]

In order to further explore the impact between linguistics factors and the skilled migrants' well-being, during the course of the interviews, I tried to detect whether the migrants naturally initiated conversation with Australian people and how easy it was for them to make Australian speaking friends. I found that most of the respondents attempted to mix with Australians, but the interviews also revealed that it is mostly the workplace that provides the opportunity to mix with a larger range of people. In response to the importance of mixing with Anglo-Australians, participant M1's responses are noteworthy:

> *'As a new comer always there will be stress and pressure. Try to follow their [Australian] communication and go into the crowd, see how they are expressing in their own way. Kids can be your mentor. Try to communicate with them.'*

In making the above suggestion, the respondent is convinced that a greater exposure to mainstream culture will eventually enhance language proficiency. This is also supported by studies which have found that the migrants' children tend to become their parent's tutor in acquiring the Anglo-Australian English. Espinosa *et al*. (1997), cited in Akresh *et al*. (2014:202), for example, have shown that having children in schools acts as an incentive to facilitate linguistic assimilation. On the whole, migrant families with children have more opportunities for conversational interaction with the local community than childless migrants.

M1 also expresses his understanding of the importance of familiarizing himself with the host language by stating: '*Every society has their own style of communication*', and further suggests '*You have to educate yourself in what way they like to hear from you*.'

The purpose of asking such question was to ascertain how easily the migrants spontaneously mixed with the host people and how comfortable they feel to be involved in day-to-day informal conversation. This is based on Kandiah (1991) who emphasized that each participant's willingness is vital for successful communication, and appropriate communication advances migrants' life satisfaction. Although most of the participants express their willingness to be involved in communication with Anglo-Australians, as newly arrived migrants, these people may still prefer to interact within their own community. Hence, they may not get enough opportunities to be involved in communication with Anglo-Australians. Some are aware of the fact that mixing only with the Bangladeshi community may restrict their communication skills to their co-nationals, thus limiting their exposure to Australian English speakers. Studies, such as Yates's (2011), and Chiswick and Miller's (2001), also emphasize the importance of mixing with the people from the host country in order to enhance language proficiency.

> "Although the strong L1 networks of these ethnic bubbles can be an important source of support for newcomers, they can also be a disincentive and constraint on developing proficiency in English, particularly if all basic economic and social needs can be met through L1. Chiswick and Miller (2001), for example, found that migrants showed less ability in the destination language (and used it less) the larger the portion of the population who speaks their native language." (Yates 2011: 458)

Some respondents made comments about the need to explore a diversified multicultural environment to develop their communication skills further. They see interacting with people of different cultural and linguistic background in the new society as an opportunity to improve their social and communicative competence. They observe that if they communicate with people from different cultures they will get more opportunities to become familiar with different words and expressions and this may work as a learning tool, which ultimately will enhance their communication

skills. The impact of adopting the Australian variety of English (AusE) is not only limited to daily conversations but also extends to migrants' professional lives. In the next section, I will examine to what extent communicative issues, in terms of proficiency, accents and non-verbal signals impact the employment prospects of these migrants. This is important because, as skilled migrants, they expect to fulfill their desire to get involved in employment commensurate to their skills.

6.2 Communicative issues in obtaining employment

Most interviewees acknowledge the importance of knowing English for obtaining a job:

> *'Migrants who are planning to come Australia, they have to practice because otherwise no option. If you want to get a job, good, better or best, you have to have good knowledge in English.'* (F4)

Recalling from chapter 5 that participant M10 identified communication as a hindrance for obtaining a position matching his skills, participant M3 reiterates '*Many of us don't get job because of not having command over language*.' Similarly, participant (F6) also points out the lack of proper communication skill as a hindrance for obtaining a desired job when she says:

> *'I think communication is a big problem. I feel shy. ……While speaking here I feel may be I am telling something wrong. I feel hesitant. I always think it's [not being confident] my fault. Sometimes they talk and they laugh because of my accent. Sometimes I think why do I come here? The very next moment I feel its ok. [I realize] I need to do language course. I don't get time as I have to run the shop. [Managing] time is difficult. May be I will start any course to improve [my] communication [skills].'*

These responses echo Kisselav *et al*. (2010) and Gunasekara *et al*'s (2014:492) findings, which highlight the fact that migrants with better English language skills are better able to handle day-to-day activities or find a job more easily. Even Chowdhury and Hamid's study (2016) which established that the migrant workers were satisfied with their lives in Australia despite their limited English proficiency and were able to contribute to the society as skilled workers, admit that English proficiency is necessary to upgrade their social status and career progression. It is clearly visible in one of the participants' response, 'I need to develop English proficiency because I want to open my own business. I will need to fill in lots of forms and documents for this.' (Chowdhury & Hamid 2016:18)

As several participants mentioned that they find the Australian accent challenging, I sought to find out whether their foreign accent may be the source of any discriminatory attitude from Anglo-Australians. In response to whether they faced any discriminatory behaviours from Anglo-Australians as a result of their 'foreign' accent, the participants provided few examples of discriminatory attitude,

but they unanimously agreed that they believe these attitudes are only occasional occurrences which should not be taken to represent the general behaviours of all Australians. Even though one participant (F2) received negative feedback about the articulation of her mother language, regarded as 'bullshit language' by an Anglo-Australian, she took it to be an exceptional behaviour. F6 who, as we recall from her earlier statement, feels tentative about her language fluency, reveals that she also has been the subject of taunting attitude for having a non-native accent. Another remark made by participant M3 made me reflect that non-native accents rather than language proficiency *per se* could exert a considerable influence on migrants obtaining a desired job, and make initial adjustment more difficult. In this regard, M3's comment is noteworthy:

> *'I don't bother whether they (Anglo-Australians) look upon my English because that's how I talk. There are quite a few incidents of discrimination because of my accent not because of my ability of speaking in English. There will be always people like black sheep.'*

F2 also mentions her problem with communication and hence her struggle in obtaining a job.

> *'I have applied for some jobs but did not get any reply. [However], I did not try to get any feedback, just applied. I found that job process in Australia is different. Here the language is a problem and [I believe] language [proficiency] is the main problem. Sometimes I don't understand what they [Australian] are talking. I lose confidence.'*

Rahul Chakraborty *et al* (2017) highlight the importance of adopting a standard accent, which was also discussed by Fuertes *et al*. in 2012. Rahul Chakraborty *et al* (2017:28) noted "Standard accent has been associated with more social attractiveness, increased job opportunities, higher social status, higher intelligence, and more trustworthiness". Drawing upon these authors and Harrison's (2012:192) findings, it is quite possible that accents are of concern because not only they have an impact on obtaining a job but also in gaining promotion in the workplace and elevating the migrants' social status. Harrison points out that being

> '*categorized as a 'non-native' speaker of English could diminish their professional credibility and thwart their chances of upward mobility in the workplace.'*

Therefore, accents can act as an impediment to success and can be a drawback for migrants in acquiring a desired employment.

Interestingly, during the interview process I noted that women reported more difficulties than men in obtaining a job, a fact which was also mentioned by Chiswick *et al*. (2002). Although in this research the focus is not on making any gender comparison, it nevertheless transpires that as women get less

opportunities to expose themselves in social activities outside their home, communication gets more challenging for them.

Further probing questions to elicit information regarding any underlying reasons which may work as a hindrance for these migrants to gain entry into their desired field yielded an interesting communicative factor. Non-verbal communication is part of a society's cultural conventions, a notion identified by Kirkpatrick, as already mentioned in my previous chapter. It therefore stands to reason that, besides acquiring appropriate oral communication skills, migrants also need to acquire knowledge of the non-verbal communication codes of that society. During job interviews, for example, interviewers may not only rely on the applicant's oral communication skills but also on their attire and other non-verbal cues that are likely to convey an overall impression. Research by Wang (2009), in particular, has shown that besides verbal communication, awareness of appropriate non-verbal communication plays a significant role in interpersonal communication.

> "Because of the differences in gender, occupation, class, race, culture and so on, the messages and meanings of nonverbal behaviors become more complex. Especially the effect of culture, in different cultures, the same nonverbal behavior even transmits just opposite messages and meanings." (Wang 2009:158)

As stated by Wang (2009) non-verbal communication differs from culture to culture, and it may be that during the interview, the skilled migrants, possessing Bangladeshi cultural background, appeared and behaved in ways which might be accepted in their home country, but may have clashed with the different expectations held by Australian employers.

Surprisingly, only one third of the participants conceded that communication might be a significant issue for securing a job interview. I assume that the majority of the migrants interviewed do not think that communication is a problem because they are confident that they already have an acceptable command of English. According to the present study, this could be one of the possible reasons why migrants overlook the need for due preparation before attending job interviews or communicating with their fellow Australians. The respondents' answers show that the migrants are not paying enough attention to communicative practice before interviews and hence are not active enough to overcome the shortcomings. However, the migrants' perspective should also be taken into consideration. It cannot be ignored that these migrants are selected on account of their skills and they have already demonstrated their language proficiency through the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), a widely accepted standard language test in the English-speaking world. In order to confirm my assumption, in the next section, I investigate the extent to which the IELTS exam procedure and test results can be deceptive and work negatively for the

skilled migrants' journey of settlement in the destination country, as it is likely to give them a false sense of confidence.

6.3 Language and IELTS

The interview data show that, although they had already proved that they were competent in English, having passed the IELTS exam prior to coming to Australia, the participants enrolled themselves in language courses to upgrade their language skills. This can be seen as an indication that the IELTS score cannot guaranty that an appropriate level of communication for use in real-life scenarios has been achieved. Therefore, some migrants deliberately make an extra effort to enhance their language skills by enrolling themselves in language courses. The limitation of assessing one's proficiency in language through an IELTS exam is addressed by M10 when he states: *'Before coming here, we didn't know that IELTS score is not enough to judge how proficient my English is.'*

Amongst the many critics of the conventional procedure of IELTS, He and Young (1998) identified a loophole in the IELTS judgement procedure as it only evaluates the participants' proficiency level at an individual level. In their study, they highlighted the importance of assessing the applicants' interactional competence that is co-constructed between interlocutors. They recommend that the test should be designed in a way which reflects real-life situations, and that involves dialogue between interlocutors. During the interviews, the migrants stated that, in real-life context, they were involved in communicating with Australian speakers on various occasions but, judging from the response given by F6, the migrants mostly struggle with speaking skills: *'In IELTS I obtained good grade in writing but in speaking not good*.' He and Young (1998) seem justified to recommend that there should be further modifications applied to the IELTS exam as this is one of the well-accepted exams which skilled migrants have to sit before applying to immigrate to an English speaking country. In a way, this is the only time when the skilled migrants pay due attention to enhancing their communication skills before moving to a predominantly English-speaking country. Thus, there is ground to believe that interactional, rather than individual competence, should be taken into account in the IELTS assessment, and that skilled migrants should be introduced to the English variety which is used in the destination country.

Some respondents mention the positive outcome of the use of communication strategies. M9 provides such an example:

> *'After arriving I realized that every department (like Centrelink) has customer service. So I call them to ask whatever questions I had, I did not understand all. I requested them to slow down so that I understand. After speaking half an hour, I was able to understand.'*

F4 also states,

'[When I am in conversation with the Anglo-Australians] naturally it comes in mind that they are Australian, but I say the way what I am saying now. If I don't understand I apologize and ask them to repeat.'

From the respondents' statements it is clear that the use of different communication strategies enhances appropriate communication. In addition to adapting to the variety of Australian English, some participants mention that they apply certain strategies, such as asking interlocutors for repetition and requesting them to slow down their speech to facilitate understanding and avoid miscommunication. These strategies actually resonate with Dörnyei and Thurrel's (1994) conversational strategies, which are used to make conversation successful.

However, the majority of the participants do not seem to be familiar with these strategies, and hence communication appears challenging to them. English being these migrants' second language, this in itself is an issue when considering that the majority of the participants do not seem to think their lack of communication skills is a major hindrance in their initial settlement in the host country. The participants' responses reveal another important issue which works as a hindrance to spontaneous communication. M10 states:

'My suggestion is if someone is not from English medium background they should do diploma or higher education in English. I found lot of my friends they passed O level and A level [Medium of instruction is fully English medium] and they did not suffer. Though [academic] degrees are same, their communication is better than us. Australians accent is different. For English medium background people that is not a big problem.' (M10)

From M10's statement above it is noticeable that the struggle with the language is not only due to the limitation of the task at hand or assessment of IELTS, but also to the medium of instruction used in Bangladeshi education. Communication appears more challenging for people who received their education through the Bengali medium than for those who were educated through the English medium.

In the final section of this chapter I explore the extent to which the Australian variety of English has an impact on the migrants' journey of settlement as these migrants have been educated through a British or American variety of English medium. I am seeking to find out in what ways the features of AusE help or hinder the migrants get on with their life in their new environment.

6.4 Australian English and its features

In the previous section, I reported testimonies of a few participants who identified that language could be a reason for hindering appropriate communication. In addition, the participants reveal that Anglo-Australians do not always appear to encourage migrants to join in conversations. In order to explore this issue in more depth, more specific interviews questions were directed to probe language. Almost all the participants mentioned that they sensed a difference between Australian variety of English and the British or American variety of English which is familiar to them in Bangladesh. Most of the participants also mention that in daily conversation where colloquialisms are prevalent, it is essential to be familiar with the Australian variety. Some of the examples provided by the participants were as follows:

> '[…] *in Mac [McDonald] let's say you are asking for cone ice cream, you have to use the words 'soft serve' instead of 'cone ice cream' because 'soft serve' means 'cone ice cream' there. Here 'soft serve' is commonly used instead of 'ice cream' which is popular in Bangladesh. Here you have to know what they are using as they won't understand you and you would not feel comfortable of not being understood properly. [Your expectation may not be fulfilled if you are not being understood appropriately.']* (M1)

> *'They [migrants] have to communicate with Australian [language] and Australians sometimes don't understand the (British or American English), for example you need a plumber to do things at your home, they will speak in their own language. Accent, they will not bother your English/ your own language. So for that situation it is hard for you to understand his words because of lack of familiarization*.' (M7)

M1 and M7's statements emphasize that miscommunication is due to a lack of familiarization with some local expressions as well as the accent and that there is a need for using strategies of accommodation on both sides. Yates's (2011) study supports that interaction can be successful when both sides contribute. The respondents in this study provided examples of several instances when they initiated the conversation and no positive responses were received in return from the Anglo-Australians.

Miah and Zhang's (2012) empirical study on the perception of three varieties of English (American, British and Australian) by Bangladeshi students reveals that understanding the nature of Australian English in comparison to American and British English varieties is a comparatively difficult task to do. The authors contend that the unfamiliarity and limited exposure to Anglo-Australian varieties in the Bangladeshi context could be the reasons for this perception. Therefore, we can presume that, given the Bangladeshi migrants' educational background, these migrants perceive the Australian variety of English in a similar way. However, when they were asked to what extent dealing with this

difference posed them a challenge, the participants' responses varied. While some were able to adjust to the varieties of English they heard in their everyday lives, others found communicating with Australian speakers more difficult. The common features relative to the Australian variety identified by the interviewees were the use of jargons, idioms, everyday slang, shortened form of words and abbreviations, and the interpretation of the same words in different contexts.

The examples provided by the respondents also illustrate the realization that the interpretation of words differ from their denotative meaning, and the extent to which this may cause miscommunication. Yates's (2011) study also shows to what extent social interaction plays a vital role on migrants' initial adjustment. It is quite understandable that migrants face challenges while coming across such scenarios as described by M1 and M7 where they may be familiar with the vocabulary but are unaware of the other person's interpretation. In those circumstances, continuing the conversation requires a lot of effort from both parties in order to resolve the communication difficulty that may occur as a result of misinterpretation.

Notably, hardly any participant showed a strong affiliation for the host language or appreciation for the host language. It could be that the migrants I interviewed do not consider the Australian variety of English as a unique one, and hence do not make the effort to become proficient at it. This is noticeable when they define it as a kind of variety they are already familiar with:

> *'We learnt the British English, here also they follow British English but average people how they speak, I find it difficult, it is bit a tongue-twister how they talk. Sometimes I can't understand, they use slang and phrases that are not familiar to me.'* (F4)

This lack of familiarization with the AusE variety, and actually defining it as British, shows that these skilled migrants do not acknowledge it as a unique variety. As a result, this works as a hindrance for them as they don't follow through with a desire to adopt it.

Participant M7 even makes some disparaging remarks about how he perceives the local language as a reflection of a low level of education:

> *'They (Australians) don't know their proper English, they only know Australian English. They are also deficient in English. It's not their fault and they are used to it from their school. It's not our fault as well. It is actually part of life. <u>We</u> have to minimize the gap.'*

Another explanation could be that they do not perceive this variety as a prestigious one and hence do not find it appealing. In the above quote the pronoun "we" is used ambiguously and could be understood as condescending in this instance. Participant M3 also states:

'I don't think we should start talking like typical Australians…...The migrants don't need to acclimatize themselves with Australianised English. Australians can comprehend other varieties of English. For example, people from UK and USA are not using /speaking so called Australian English. So no need to use Australianised English. Being a migrant you need to know English, not Australian English.'

However, affiliation relates to a sense of 'belonging' as pointed out by Colic-Peisker (2002), cited in Yates 2011:458), who found that competence in English is crucial not only for matters of 'practical integration' such as finding appropriate employment, but also for finding a sense of belonging. The question may be raised as to whether without having an affiliative attitude it is possible to be proficient in communication, as I contend that affiliation may enhance expertise. Absence of an affiliative approach towards the language variety of the host country could very well be one of the obstacles that prevent migrants to gain the desired language proficiency.

However, there were a few respondents who showed their affiliative approach towards the Australian variety as indicated by participant F8:

'They[Australians] use 'pardon' so many times. [The use of] no worries was fantastic thing for me. Now I started using that; actually, I have to start otherwise they can't understand us. There are so many times I faced that if I don't reply in their own way, they don't understand.'

F8's comment actually shows an appreciation for the politeness markers she noticed in Australian conversations and makes a point of wanting to use them more. Kirkpatrick (2007) identified the notion "cultural convention'' being one of the most common ways language used in real life situations can have an impact on migrants' day-to-day communication. The above acknowledgement complements Kirkpatrick's identification that the familiarization with cultural conventions is highly important to ensure smooth communication.

In addition, several academic studies have focused on the unique nature of Australian colloquial English, in particular, its vocabulary, idioms or phrases, swearwords and slangs. Miller (2011), for example, reiterates that Australian idioms have their own features and are not necessarily the same as other varieties of English. However, although most participants feel that the difference is only noticeable in informal settings, one participant (M5) says that in formal settings, the distinct Australian variety is present as well. He provides the following examples:

'[…] *instead of air-conditioning, they use air-con. [I find Australians don't use the full words. For example, if your name is Kona, they address you as Kon. Like breakfast, Australians say breaky.'*

Another participant (M3) observes:

'The English they [the Australians] speak is very Australianised. They have specific and typical dialect, slang and that takes time for me to get used to. Rather than telling 'lazy' they say [what sounds like] 'blazza', rather than saying 'thank you' they say 'ta', rather than asking how are you they say 'howdy' […]

And participant (M9) adds:

'Australians say 'Oxtion' instead of 'oxygen'. Instead of 'curtain' they say 'caution'. One day someone was requesting me, "Please close the caution."-I did not get that. Mostly rural Australian people sometimes use different slangs.'

He further says:

'Not only everyday use, if you go to any professional settings, even in the class [educational setting], you face this problem. You won't understand everything. They [Australian lecturer] don't complete the English [sentences].'

From the above examples, communication in everyday situations as well as professional settings appears to be challenging for these migrants as they are not familiar with these words. When they find themselves in conversation with Anglo-Australians, the spontaneity of the communication can easily be hampered, and the possibility of miscommunication is increased.

The major characteristic of Australian English identified in the participants' testimonies is the use of abbreviations or shortened version of the words. This feature seems very prevalent among the migrants' Australian experience as almost all the participants provide examples of this characteristic. Some participants exemplify some of the words which, to them, seem to be a distortion of the original words. This is a clear indication that the Bangladeshi migrants who are not familiar with the Australian variety of English are facing difficulties both in formal and informal settings.

In summary, these respondents' statements raise the issue of awareness of the effect that one's speech variety has on the spontaneity of conversations, and therefore on the migrants' ability to hold

sustained conversations with Anglo-Australians. This is important because eventually, this affects to a large extent the overall adjustment of the migrants in the host country.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been to address the central research question of this study: what is the overall impact of linguistic factors on the life satisfaction and employment prospects of skilled Bangladeshi migrants in South Australia? An examination of the interviewees' responses has shown that linguistic factors are intertwined with the migrants' journey of settlement, especially in building social relationships through daily conversations and in obtaining suitable employment. The interview data suggest that the migrants' awareness, attitude and language skills are crucial in the fulfillment of their goal. About a third of the migrants I interviewed demonstrated this awareness by enrolling themselves in further language classes upon arrival in the host country, by engaging with Australian native speakers, and by using communicative strategies to accommodate to the local variety of AusE. The majority of the participants agreed that being familiarized with the AusE variety works as a positive force for the settlement into the host country, and for appropriate communication to occur it is important to speak in ways that the interlocutors are familiar with to ensure the exchange of the right message. The migrants also demonstrated their positive attitude by their willingness to communicate with Australian speakers as a way of improving their social and communicative competence, although this attitude is not always consistent. This led me to examine in more depth the migrants' language skills and their willingness to embrace the features of the AusE variety. With regard to the Australian accent, the majority of respondents found it challenging, but a non-native accent was not found to be the source of discriminatory attitude towards them. What undermines the migrants' confidence, however, is the disconnect between the belief that their English proficiency skills are good but their communicative success does not follow suite. The interviewees tended to focus on their English proficiency skills, ignoring the fact that proficiency in the language is not the only factor to ensure smooth communication. Communication also involves awareness of appropriate non-verbal communication as well as a knowledge of cultural conventions and other socio-pragmatic features. These can become an issue when ill-prepared Bangladeshi migrants go for job interviews. Simply focusing on language proficiency tests such as the IELTS to measure communicative skills is not sufficient. Some interviewees tended to believe that their limited exposure to AusE in Bangladesh was also the cause of their disadvantage. Others recognized that there are differences in vocabulary and accent between the English they learnt in Bangladesh and AusE, but insist that knowing standard International English is more beneficial to them in the long run. It seems that the IELTS exam score, with its emphasis on British English overlooks the candidates' interactional competence, and gives the migrants a false sense of confidence. This false sense of confidence does not allow them to move forward. I contend that accommodating to the particular features of the AusE variety is really important for both social and work integration as it can help

migrants to overcome the linguistic challenges they face in the host country, as demonstrated in the interview data.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

The questions which informed this study were twofold: (1) what is the impact of linguistic factors on the life satisfaction of Bangladeshi skilled migrants in Australia? and (2) to what extent can the familiarity with Australian vernacular English enhance the Bangladeshi migrants' sense of well-being in Australia? In order to carry out this study I designed a semi-structured interview with a non-directed questionnaire and interviewed ten Bangladeshi skilled migrants with a 2-5-year period of residency in Adelaide. Throughout this interview process, I sought to capture the informants' experiences, perceptions and opinions regarding their life aspirations and employment expectations in line with the objectives of this research to:

- examine the lived experiences, life aspirations and employment expectations of Bangladeshi skilled migrants in South Australia
- gain insight into the sociolinguistic factors that may impact on finding employment commensurate to the skills, qualifications and professional experience of Bangladeshi migrants
- explore the extent to which linguistic factors, in terms of language skills, interactional competence and cultural conventions, affect life satisfaction, a sense of belonging or adjusting to the host society.

In order to analyse the transcribed data of the interviews I used a thematic analytic tool, as part of a qualitative research approach.

This exploratory study suggests that, depending on their different cultural, social and linguistic background, and the level of their academic qualification, the Bangladeshi migrants face many challenges when they arrive in Australia, mainly due to the disparity between their expectations and the reality they encounter. Their value expectation is revealed by analysing the reasons they invoke for migrating. It seems that what matters most to them is securing a safe life and seeking a better future for their children; this reason comes ahead of securing employment that will bring them a better income. They are convinced that finding employment won't be an issue given their status as skilled migrants and the level of English proficiency they have already gained through their education in Bangladesh. However, the interview data reveal that in spite of this, the Bangladeshi migrants are ill-prepared to face the employment reality in Australia, and the majority of them are struggling to meet their goal and find life satisfaction. A small number of the migrants who seek to develop their own professional and social skills once they arrive in Australia are, however, in a better position in terms of employment and community integration than those who rely on their previously acquired knowledge and skills. This finding is supported by several other studies on migration, for example, Chow (2007), Amit and Bar-Lev (2014) and Akresh *et al.* (2014). These studies show that during the

early settlement stage, community involvement plays a key role towards enhancing migrants' life satisfaction through the support and advice they receive from their group of co-nationals. After the initial stage, better integration can be ensured by engaging with the wider community. When asked about their level of engagement with the Australian community, my interviewees reported that they generally feel welcomed, although minor forms of discrimination towards their way of speaking were also reported. Some migrants drew attention to a range of factors that they felt affected their sense of well-being. Amongst these, they mentioned differences in accessing resource facilities between rural and urban Australia, visa conditions, job scarcity in South Australia, absence of local experience required by employers, all of which affected their life satisfaction. These varied circumstances experienced by individual migrants become compounded when they realize the inadequacy of their language and communication skills due to a lack of familiarity with the Anglo-Australian English language variety and local cultural norms. This is found to be a major obstacle on the path to settlement and towards fulfilling their communicative goals in everyday life. Although most interviewees expressed a positive attitude towards a willingness to communicate with Australian speakers, with a view to improve their social and communicative competence, it was found that being unfamiliar with the distinctive variety of Australian English affects their spontaneity in communicating with Australian interlocutors. In addition to the previous factors found to affect their life satisfaction, the migrants I interviewed did not fully realize that the knowledge of conversational strategies and local cultural conventions play a vital role in their sense of well-being. Very few amongst them reported taking practical steps to acquire this pragmatic knowledge in order to increase their chances of communicative success, convinced as they were that they were already sufficiently proficient in English.

Furthermore, the interview data reveal that with regard to securing employment, the lack of appropriate communication skills is reported to be one of the major reasons for being unsuccessful. However, from the migrants' own point of view, it is clear that they are aware of their shortcomings but don't always feel responsible for this gap in their knowledge because they have already proven that they are competent users of English through having successfully passed the IELTS exam. In actual fact, the IELTS exam score lifts up their expectations and creates a false sense of confidence that eventually fails the migrants in the pursuit of their goals. Due to this boosted confidence, they may overlook factors other than language proficiency, such as, for example, interactional competence, non-verbal communication and the appropriate use of the Australian vernacular, which could be the reasons why they are not being successful in winning a desired job. Hardly any of the participants mentioned doing preparatory tasks to enhance their skills before facing their prospective employers in job-interviews.

In this exploratory study, I have found that linguistic and cultural factors are to a large extent intertwined with migrants' journey of settlement, particularly in building social relationships through

daily conversations, and in obtaining suitable employment commensurate to their skills. This finding led me to further examine the migrants' need to enhance their communication skills beyond the IELTS score and the extent of their willingness to adapt to the local features of the AusE variety in order to improve their life satisfaction. In this regard, I noted that although migrants occasionally realize that the Australian English variety sounds different from the English they were familiar with in their home country, some do not view it as a prestigious or a unique one; hence they intentionally adopt a reserved attitude towards modifying their speech, or mix australianisms inappropriately with the variety they are familiar with. Importantly, this attitude holds them back in achieving their communicative goals. Moreover, some interviewees reported that a "foreign" accent can sometimes prompt a discriminatory attitude from Anglo-Australians. This response is particularly discouraging, although this was not addressed specifically as a major concern by the participants in this study. What was more important to them was achieving spontaneity in conversation as a sign of satisfaction, and therefore accommodating to these features is seen to be crucial for both social and work integration.

This study contributes towards enhancing research on migrants' life satisfaction and overall adjustment to the destination country in many ways. By highlighting a language and communication perspective, this project has drawn attention to some aspect which has not sufficiently been investigated by researchers on migration. For example, this study establishes that the IELTS exam procedure lacks an evaluation of the candidates' interactional competence (He and Young 1998) in real-life situations. The issue I have identified is that the IELTS exam score evaluates skilled migrants as competent or proficient speakers of English. This sets them up to experience frustration in achieving communicative success once they settle in Australia. The IELTS exam may therefore be insufficient to judge a person's interactional competence, which contributes significantly to a sense of well-being if smooth communication is achieved. In addition, appropriate communication in real-life cannot be achieved only through interactional competence but needs to include being familiar with the local cultural conventions, conversational strategies, and non-verbal communication shared codes. This study has thus brought to the fore the importance of the pragmatic aspects of communication. This project has also highlighted the connection between language and the achievement of life satisfaction for the skilled migrants I have interviewed. Gaining a greater awareness of the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of communication will increase the migrants' chances of obtaining employment commensurate to their skills while enhancing their general well-being.

This final section concludes with addressing the project limitations and making suggestions for further reflection and future work. One of the concerns that arose as I was conducting the analysis of the semi-directed interviews was the elusiveness of the interviewees' responses. For example, I expected the responses to be more focused on the language issues, but the topics that interested

me as a researcher were often brushed aside or imprecise. In my view, an improved methodology would need to take into consideration the following measures in order to yield more substantive results.

- The interview questions need to be better tailored to focus on linguistic issues, as these were the major concern of this research project. While transcribing the interview data, I realized that more probing questioning was needed through seeking clarification and further elaboration from the respondents' vague responses on language issues. Improved interview techniques would have been helpful for addressing the research questions more extensively. Although several questions on language were asked, this may appear to be insufficient to capture the complexity of the English communicative issue for migrants in Australia as this project intended to take a grounded approach on language, as distinct from a sociological approach.

- This research could have benefitted from a larger pool of respondents to enhance the reliability of the findings. A sample size comprising ten participants may not be sufficient to draw any definite answers to the project research questions, which may impact on the strength of the results. Some of my comments are based on one or two respondents, which is insufficient to confirm the findings, and I fully acknowledge that this evidence can be taken as perceptions only.

- Generally, a mixed method approach can make a greater contribution to the reliability and validity of the project result, as stated by Dörnyei (2007:38) 'I have also come to believe that in most cases a mixed methods approach can offer additional benefits for the understanding of the phenomenon in question.' In the present study, I found that although there were pre-prepared guiding questions, it was sometimes hard to keep control over the questions, and unplanned questions had to be formulated on the spur of the moment based on the participants' responses. This tended to steer the conversation away from the focus of the central question. Alvesson (2003) draws attention to this problem. He argues that interviews are complex social and linguistic situations where the respondents are eager to create a positive impression, minimize embarrassment, and therefore align his/her response to what they think the interviewer wants to hear. The interview situation may also be stressful for them as they are trying to formulate complex ideas (as they see the interviewer as an academic) to fit the research project through language. This is even more so for migrants whose first language is not English. Research (Dörnyei,1994) has suggested, for example, to conduct repeat interviews in order to check for consistency and to give interviewees the chance to reflect on what was said before. A mixed method approach combining a small number of interviews selected on the basis of a larger questionnaire might have been easier

in this instance, as it would have been easier to circulate a more detailed questionnaire survey to a large number of participants while maintaining participants' anonymity effectively.

- This project may also benefit from a longitudinal study to enhance the understanding of the language issue in more detailed way. As settlement in a newly arrived country does not happen overnight or within a short period of time, a longitudinal research approach would assist in following the participants' journey of settlement and adjustment with language in the destination country over a period of time. Given the time constraints mentioned above, it was not possible to carry out such a research within the framework of a Master's thesis.

In addition to the above limitations, I should not discard the fact that one of the challenges attached to the conduct of the study was finding a suitable and agreed time and venue for both the interviewee and interviewer, which proved to be difficult at times, due also to time and ethical constraints.

In spite of these limitations, the exploratory nature of this project is significant for raising awareness of crucial linguistic issues related to skilled migrants' search for enhancing their life satisfaction in Australia. Although this project is based on a particular migrant group, it will add a new perspective to the adjustment of other vulnerable migrant groups to the host society, particularly in relation to enhancing their chances in gaining suitable employment. Finally, the broader implication underpinning this study concerns the claim that this study may contribute to bring up some vital questions to the attention of Australian government agencies. These questions concern the design of policy measures to address migrants' language proficiency, which need to be based on an insider's point of view that takes into account the migrants' thoughts, motivations, experiences of life pressure, and amount of personal investment to achieve a better life satisfaction.

Appendix

Themes discussed at the semi-structured interview (60-90 minutes)

1. Background information

- Education level – secondary/higher education; types of degree obtained and professional background in Bangladesh
- Demography – age, religious affiliation, gender, region of origin
- Reasons for migration to Australia
- Involvement within the community and level of engagement with Bangladeshi community groups in SA

Sample questions

- Is there any particular reason that you have decided to migrate at this stage of your life? What is the particular reason that attracted you to choose South Australia as the destination country?
- Do you involve yourself in any kind of religious or cultural activities at home or outside in the wider community? If yes/ no- please elaborate your answer.

These sorts of information will make the researcher acquainted with the participants' educational and professional background and will guide her to form further questions on their employment expectations and experiences. The information on engaging in community activities will disclose the skilled migrants' current affiliation with the home and the host culture.

2. Employment experience

Sample questions

- Are you in current employment? For how long/How did you find the job?
- What was your job expectation before arrival in South Australia? Did the reality meet your expectation?
- Approximately how many numbers of jobs you have applied for? What is the percentage of positive or negative response? Did you take any initiative to get feedback for not being contacted by the employer for the interview?

- Have you been successful in obtaining a job according to your skills or profession? If yes/no, what are the reasons according to you for being successful/unsuccessful?
- Did you try or get any sort of government or non-government assistance for preparing yourself as a competitive candidate in getting an interview call or facing the interview?
- What sort of challenges did you face during the interview process here? Do you identify any difference from Bangladeshi interview context?
- Do you think the use of English was an issue in the application process or writing your resume? What aspects of language could you identify as being problematic?
- How do you perceive the accent of Australian English? Did you find any particular difference of the Australian variety of English and English as a second language you were introduced in Bangladesh?
- Can you provide an example when you found it challenging to deal with the Australian accent during the interview process? Did you come across any situation where you were bit confused about an employer's question but find it hard to ask him/her to repeat?
- Do you find that familiarizing yourself with the Australian variety of English will enhance the chance of getting employment?
- What could you do to increase your knowledge of the Australian English variety?
- What would you recommend in order to increase the chances of skilled Bangladeshi migrants to find employment commensurate to their skills and qualifications?

The employment related questions highlight the extent to which these skilled migrants' were successful and/or challenged in getting into their expected jobs. Their answers will identify the reasons for their success or their challenges in obtaining a job from an insider's point of view. As the project deals particularly with language challenges, these questions will assist the researcher to figure out to what extent language is creating any significant barrier for this particular group in obtaining prospective employment. The gathered data will address the main hypothesis of this project regarding the influence of the Australian English language use on the employment prospects of the Bangladeshi migrants.

3. Influence of language and communication on migrant's life satisfaction and experience

Sample questions

- Do you feel comfortable to communicate with Australian people during your day to day life? Do you keep in mind that you are not speaking to someone from your own community but from other background? How does that consciousness facilitate/ obstruct the communication flow?

- Do you generally initiate conversation with an Anglo-Australian in the shops or public places or wait for the other side to start? What sort of approach do you identify from them? Are they friendly and cooperative?
- Are you aware of strategies of closing a conversation, topic-shift or taking turn when you are involved in conversation with an Australian? Please, give some examples.
- Would you be able to provide any example where you were asked to repeat several times for not being understood by an Australian? Do you find this upsetting? Usually how do you handle the situation? Do you prefer to avoid these situations?
- If you can't understand any particular content/ vocabulary of an Australian are you able to figure out the message easily? Do you follow any strategies-for example by interrupting the person for seeking explanation or asking to rephrase the message?
- To what extent do you feel that acquiring the conversation skills and strategies impact on enhancing the chances of adjusting with a new culture?
- Could you give some examples of Australian cultural conventions?
- What are some of the common phrases you use in your daily life when you meet with an Australian (Do you address some with 'mate'? Is it very common in your country? If not, what is the reason of using that?)
- Can you provide any example situations where you find that different accent is making you aloof from mainstream culture?
- Have you come across any discriminatory attitude from an Anglo-Australian because of your accent? / Have you ever been appreciated by the Anglo-Australians for being able to use the Australian accent appropriately?
- Do you have any Australian friend? Do you invite any of your Australian friend or colleague in any community programmes or party at private home? Do you have to take any extra effort for making them comfortable there?
- Have you taken any effort to enrol in any courses to get more familiar with the vernacular Australian English (AusE) and the cultural conventions that go with it?
- Do you feel that attending workshops/seminars or attending courses on these sorts of topics would be beneficial for migrants in order to settle in the host society?
- To what extent do you perceive that communicating appropriately is a vital factor of life satisfaction?
- Do you count that familiarization of the Australian variety of English will have positive impact on your life satisfaction in Australia? Elaborate please.

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