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David Alejandro Plaza-Coral
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Plaza-Coral, David Alejandro, Australian Spanish-speaking background secondary school students and the construction and reconstruction of their cultural identity: a “wog” experience, Doctor of Philosophy thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, 1998. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/1771>

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**AUSTRALIAN SPANISH-SPEAKING BACKGROUND SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THE CONSTRUCTION AND
RECONSTRUCTION OF THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY:
A "WOG" EXPERIENCE**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

DAVID ALEJANDRO PLAZA-CORAL
M.Ed. (Brazil), B.A. in Philosophy (Chile)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

1998

D E C L A R A T I O N

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signed

.....

David Alejandro Plaza-Coral

D E D I C A T I O N

To Erica, my wife, whose constant support and encouragement has always been present in the almost four years we have spent in Australia. She stoically left behind her work, relatives and friends in Brazil to accompany me on my academic journey.

I owe her a debt of gratitude for her love, patience and devotion.

In this time she bravely and determinedly faced the English language and now can communicate almost without accent, making in that way her stay away from home a less painful experience. Now she speaks three languages: Portuguese, Spanish and English.

Because of her wonderful personality she made a lot of friends from all around the world. "You will be missed" have been the words they said when they saw us off.

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

I would like to express my profound thanks and gratitude to my supervisors Dr. Janice Wright and Dr. Christine Fox who, during the process and writing of this study were, in addition to being persistent and careful critics, a constant source of motivation and encouragement. Their copious and wise advice, and enthusiasm to discuss prolonged and intently many aspects of this project, were invaluable and much welcome. These things, combined with their limitless kindness and enormous consideration, helped to make the writing of this thesis a labour of satisfaction.

I thank the faculty librarian Keith Gaymer for helping me to get some of the statistical data

I also wish to thank all the children, parents, teachers and staff from the schools where I carried out this study. I really appreciate their collaboration and willingness to participate in this study.

A B S T R A C T

There are significant numbers of Spanish-speaking background students in Australian secondary schools, but as a linguistic cohort their experiences have generally been underrepresented in educational research. This study was undertaken to explore the ways in which one group of secondary school Spanish-speaking background students from three different countries negotiated their cultural identity in classrooms, at school and at home.

In any nation where the majority of its inhabitants has a migrant history, there are socio-economic, political, cultural and educational issues that specifically affect immigrants and the children of immigrants. This study deals with concepts of cultural identity and their relationships to education, immigration, language, multiculturalism and racism. Much of the literature does not speak for the subordinated "other" in society, particularly when looking within a multicultural society, as opposed to say, oppressed people in "other" countries. The literature tends to be about the relationships from the dominant society's viewpoints, or about the minority group's material gains and failures, and there is little in the literature which explains the richness of culture and identity of the "other" when seen from within that group.

This qualitative, multiple case study of twenty two students has allowed the participants the opportunity to tell their own stories about their lives and about their school experiences. The conceptual framework of the present study can be defined as an attempt to investigate the formation of identity in the context of those places where it is likely to be formed; that is to say the family, the school and the spaces in between.

The study was designed to be carried out in two phases. First, the students and their parents were interviewed about their experiences as immigrants or children of immigrants in Australia. Second, the students were observed when participating in Science, Mathematicss and English lessons, so that critical incidents and interactions could be recorded. These data were checked with the students, and where possible their teachers were also interviewed either before or after the classes. The data were analysed to throw light upon those factors which both at home and at school appeared to play a crucial part in helping the students to define themselves in terms of their own subjectivities and their possible futures, as well as in relation to their family members, their peers, and other significant people in their lives.

It was found that these students move in an out of two different worlds, the one maintained mainly by their parents at home and the other of the wider society, mirrored in the school. It was also found that the complexities, puzzles and potential conflicts of the spaces in between these worlds were individually constructed, yet at the same time driven by the specific context in which the students found themselves — a context encompassing a particular political/ideological era (which favours certain, sometimes negative, attitudes towards notions of difference), the family's economic and educational background, the expectations of the parents, and the students' own age, experience, hopes and desires. Unlike their parents who appear caught in a cultural bubble, possibly because of their perceived deficiencies in the English language, the students are much freer to construct different, mulit-faceted identities, while generally appreciating their place in the family's heritage.

R E S U M E N

Números significativos de estudiantes que tienen como origen lingüístico la lengua española estudian en escuelas secundarias australianas, sin embargo como grupo lingüístico sus experiencias han estado generalmente mal representadas en la investigación educacional. Este estudio fue llevado a cabo para explorar las formas en que un grupo de estudiantes secundarios de origen lingüístico español de tres diferentes países negociaban su identidad cultural en la sala de clases, en la escuela y en el hogar.

En cualquier nación donde la mayoría de sus habitantes tiene una historia de inmigrante, hay problemas socio-económicos, políticos, culturales y educacionales que específicamente afectan a los inmigrantes y a los hijos de inmigrantes. Este estudio tiene que ver con conceptos de identidad cultural y sus relaciones con educación, inmigración, lenguaje, multiculturalismo y racismo. La mayoría de la literatura no habla por el subordinado "otro" en la sociedad, particularmente cuando se trata dentro de una sociedad multicultural, en oposición digamos, a la gente oprimida en "otros" países. La literatura tiende a ser acerca de las relaciones desde puntos de vista de la sociedad dominante, o acerca del grupo minoritario y sus ganos materiales y sus fracasos, y hay poco en la literatura que explique la riqueza de cultura y identidad del "otro" cuando es visto desde dentro de ese grupo.

Este estudio cualitativo de casos múltiples de veinte y dos estudiantes ha permitido que los participantes tengan la oportunidad de contar sus propias historias acerca de sus vidas y acerca de sus experiencias en la escuela. El marco conceptual del presente estudio puede ser definido como un intento para investigar la formación de la identidad en el contexto de aquellos

lugares donde es más probable que se forme, es decir la familia, la escuela y los espacios intermedios.

El estudio fue diseñado para ser llevado a cabo en dos fases. Primero, los estudiantes y sus padres fueron entrevistados acerca de sus experiencias como inmigrantes o hijos de inmigrantes en Australia. Segundo, los estudiantes fueron observados cuando participaban en las clases de ciencia, matemáticas e inglés, para así poder grabar las interacciones y los incidentes críticos. Esta información fue analizada para iluminar aquellos factores que tanto en casa como en la escuela parecen jugar una parte crucial en ayudar a los estudiantes a definirse a sí mismos en términos de su propia subjetividad y sus posibles futuros, así como también en relación con sus familia, sus compañeros, y otras personas significativas en la vida de ellos.

Se encontró que estos estudiantes se mueven dentro y fuera de dos mundos diferentes, el mantenido principalmente por sus padres y el otro el de la sociedad en general, que se refleja en la escuela. Se encontró también que las complejidades, los enigmas y conflictos potenciales de los espacios intermedios de estos mundos eran individualmente contruidos, sin embargo al mismo tiempo derivados del contexto específico en el cual los estudiantes se encontraban a sí mismos — un contexto que acompaña una era particular, política/ideológica (que favorece ciertas, a veces negativas actitudes hacia aquellas nociones de diferencia), el trasfondo económico y educacional de la familia, las expectativas de los padres y la edad, experiencia, esperanzas y deseos de los propios estudiantes. Diferente de sus padres que parecen atrapados en una burbuja cultural, posiblemente debido a sus percibidas deficiencias en la lengua inglesa, los estudiantes son mucho más libres para construir identidades diferentes y multifacéticas, al mismo tiempo que aprecian su lugar en la herencia familiar.

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

ALP	Australian Labour Party
CMEP	Child Migrant Education Program
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
DELE	Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera (Certificate of Spanish as a Foreign Language)
DIEA	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
EAPS	Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement
ESL	English as a Second Language
HSC	Higher School Certificate
LBOTE	Language Background other than English
LOTE	Language Other Than English
MERCOSUR	Free Trade Market among Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay
NAATI	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
NACCME	National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NESB	Non-English speaking background
NSW	New South Wales
SAE	Standard Australian English
SC	School Certificate
TAFE	Tertiary and Further Education

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Emigrar

Emigran los pájaros, las mariposas,
también los peces,
¿por qué no emigrar los hombres?

Los pajaros, las mariposas y los peces
emigran estimulados por la naturaleza
y casi siempre regresan a su lugar de origen.

Los hombres emigran
forzados por otros hombres
y casi nunca regresan a su natal terruño.

(Belarmino Sarna, 1992).

To Emigrate

Birds, butterflies emigrate
fish too,
why not people?

Birds, butterflies and fish
emigrate stimulated by nature
and they almost always return to their place of origin.

People emigrate
forced by other people
and they almost never return to their home land.

(My own translation).

CHAPTER ONE

I N T R O D U C T I O N

1.1 Aims

This study focuses on the experiences and perceptions of Spanish-speaking background secondary school students in the contexts of their schooling and home, as these relate to the construction and reconstruction of their cultural identity. It investigates how these students view themselves, their families, their teachers and peers in their day-to-day activities outside and inside the classroom. It examines the negotiations of meanings by both students and teachers in the classroom context.

The key to the study is an analysis of the opinions, impressions, attitudes and feelings of students, parents and teachers. These perceptions are corroborated by the situations observed inside the classrooms when students and teachers interact in a variety of lessons. It is demonstrated that in the schools the isolation and indifference that the Spanish-speaking background students are facing are not much different from that which their parents as immigrants had been exposed to in their relationships with the wider Australian society.

In countries like Australia, populated largely by migrants, secondary school students are involved in negotiating their cultural identity on a daily basis as this relates to their heritage and ethnicity. To identify oneself with one group or another is relevant in the day-to-day routine of the school. For example, the ability to speak English (with an accent or not) or another

language is important to the selection of friends and to a sense of self. This sense of identification seems to affect the interaction of students inside and outside the classroom; some students adapt easily to this dynamic, others do not.

How the construction and reconstruction of cultural identity is influenced by the experiences in the secondary school is one of the issues which this study seeks to pursue. It is important to investigate the importance of cultural identity, how it is manifested in the classroom interaction and how it affects students' participation and involvement in the lessons.

Consequently this study seeks to explore:

- how Spanish-speaking background students in three secondary schools in New South Wales (NSW) negotiate their cultural identity in the context of home and school;
- whether the fact of belonging to a cultural and linguistic minority is a significant element in the formation of cultural identity; and
- the relationships between cultural identity and students' opportunities for learning.

Specific research questions are outlined in Chapter Three, *Methodology*, Section 3.2.

1.2 Rationale

Issues of identity, culture and language are crucial to understanding the schooling process and the participation and involvement of Language Background other than English (LBOTE)¹ students and their parents in the Australian school system. It is necessary to explain how cultural identity among specific individuals in the secondary school is linked to expectations in the school context.

Studies of this nature were carried out in Australia some years ago (Novakovic, 1977, Cowley, 1978, Vasta, 1985, 1982 Harley and Maas, 1987, Kalantzis, 1990, Kalantzis et. al, 1992, Inglis, 1992, Martin, 1995) but this is one of the first times that Spanish speaking groups, specifically students, have been studied in an epoch when multiculturalism has been an official policy for almost twenty years in Australia.

In addition, in its focus on the nature and relevance of cultural identity construction and reconstruction in the secondary school, the study pursues an enduring and unresolved global, political and social issue surrounding the issue of national and civic identity (Castles, 1992).

There is much needed research to be done with specific LBOTE groups, and Spanish speakers are a significant group as will be shown in the following pages. Also, the environment in which families interact with the school system can shed light on the appropriateness of multicultural strategies.

¹ Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) was the term used by teachers and school staff when they referred to the students in the study and other students from language backgrounds other than English. The discourse behind this term seems to be that the fact of speaking another language is a deficiency. Some of the participants said that the Anglo-Australian should be called non-Spanish speaking background. In the study I prefer to use the term Language Background other than English (LBOTE) to refer to the Spanish-speaking background students and students from other backgrounds.

There are always issues of identity for immigrants and for the children of immigrants in the school and the wider society. The present study gives the participants, the Spanish-speaking background students and their parents, the opportunity to tell their own stories; to talk about themselves and their perceptions of their lives in Australia. It is important to listen to their voices not just to know how these Spanish speakers fare in relation to Anglo society but for their own sake too. Their voices tell us what have been the elements which have contributed to make them identify so strongly with their culture of origin and how discriminatory, ethnocentric, prejudiced and racist attitudes have isolated them in the context of the mainstream Australian society. Their voices evoke the migrant experience.

Because of the above this study is based on a corpus of insights, impressions perceptions and feelings provided by twenty two students, their parents and teachers. The study maintains this double movement between broader context and personalised detail by including twenty two individual cases through the participants' own voices.

Spanish speaking immigrants make up a substantial minority in the region² being studied. The majority of these arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. The Spanish were the first big group to arrive: 9,756 Spanish-born-people settled in Australia between 1962 and 1970 . The Chileans were the second largest group: 6,747 Chilean-born people settled between 1974 and 1991. 1,761 Uruguayan-born-people settled in Australia between 1973 and 1974 (Australian Immigration. Quarterly Statistical Bulletin, 1966 to 1995).

² Because of confidentiality from now onwards the area where the study took place is called the region.

The Spanish language ranks from the fifth to the ninth position among languages spoken in Australia. Spanish is the fifth most spoken language in the Metropolis³ where the schools which participated in the study are located, the fifth in the region⁴, where the students live, the seventh in the State⁵, and the ninth in Australia⁶.

The Metropolis, the biggest of the five cities which form the region, has a vigorous and dynamic Spanish speaking community drawn from all parts of Spain and the Americas, and this is reflected in the existence of a flourishing Spanish Club, and two Chilean clubs. There are three weekly FM radio programs in Spanish⁷, and two live TV news programs from Spain and Chile⁸ respectively. In the Australian Press the Spanish-speaking community is served by four national Spanish language newspapers which appear weekly in the region⁹. Some community and religious organisations also publish local newsletters and information pamphlets¹⁰.

Despite the number of Spanish speaking students in the region, Spanish is not offered in local schools as part of their main curriculum, unlike for instance, some schools in the Sydney area. In the document *Unlocking*

³ English 128,032; Macedonian 6,023; Italian 5,586; Greek 2,122; Spanish 1,676; Portuguese 1,320. Census 1996. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (Because of confidentiality from now onwards the city where the study took place is called the Metropolis).

⁴ English 281,848; Macedonian 7,337; Italian 6,882; Spanish 2,776; German 2,583. (ibid).

⁵ English 4,379,189; Arabic 114,701; Cantonese 100,239; Italian 100,009; Greek 89,183; Vietnamese 51,804; Spanish 46,311; Mandarin 38,313. (ibid).

⁶ English 13,498,094; Italian 367,290; Greek 259,019; Cantonese 190,104; Arabic 161,966; Vietnamese 134,011; German 96,651; Mandarin 87,320; Spanish 86,860; Macedonian 68,126. (ibid).

⁷ EL Ritmo Latino (The Latino Beat) on Mondays and Tuesdays from 5 to 6 pm and on Fridays from 7 to 8 pm, Voces Populares (Popular Voices) on Tuesdays from 6 to 8 pm. Both programmes broadcasted by an FM Radio Station "The Voice of the region."

⁸ Telediario (Teledaily) direct from Madrid daily from 10:15 to 11:00 am, and Esta Semana (This week) direct from Santiago on Sundays from 6:30 to 7:00 am, both by Special Broadcasting System Television (SBS).

⁹ El Español en Australia, Extra Informativo, Noticias y Deportes and the Spanish Herald (three times a week).

¹⁰ For example La Iglesia Unida Metodista Pentecostal en Australia. (The Pentecostal Methodist United Church in Australia).

Australia's Language Potential. Profiles of 9 Key Languages in Australia. Vol. 9 - Spanish, Valverde et al. (1994) mentioned that at the primary level in 1991 Spanish was taught in two schools. Now in 1997 it is only taught to secondary students on a weekly basis at one Metropolis Saturday school as an addition to the normal curriculum. In the Metropolis, in 1991, Spanish was taught in two secondary schools (Valverde 1994), now it is only available to secondary school students (invariably those from a Spanish-speaking background) through correspondence courses at Higher School Certificate (HSC) level. At a tertiary level, the local Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE) college offers a two-year introductory course in Spanish and there is a third year continuation course which is dependent on demand. At the local university Spanish has been a relative late comer. It was the third language to be introduced to the university, with funding from the Spanish embassy in 1987, after French in 1975 and Italian in 1977. Spanish was offered as a minor sequence until 1996 when it was reduced to one introductory course, taught on a three-hour weekly basis. This is despite the high number of Spanish-speaking immigrants in the region and the demand for community workers with a recognised qualification in Spanish¹¹.

Despite the large number of Spanish-speaking background students in Australian schools, they have been generally ignored in educational research. The present study intends to address this gap in the Australian research. For example, there were 2,680¹² Spanish-speaking background students studying at secondary state coeducational schools in NSW in 1996.

¹¹ As an example, the Region Health Service has been advertising positions in the local newspapers for bilingual professionals (Spanish).

¹² Figures provided by the NSW Department of School Education. They come from the forms parents filled in at the beginning of the academic year. However, these figures might be under representative because in that form only fathers are asked about the language they spoke at home and some of them do not even answer that question.

The Australian educational system has apparently not only ignored the number of these students in Australian schools but also the international importance of the Spanish language. At a worldwide level, after Mandarin, English and Hindi-Urdu, Spanish¹³ is the fourth most widely spoken language in the world and after English, French and Arabic, Spanish is also the fourth official language in 20 countries¹⁴.

After English, Spanish is already the second most-widely spoken language in the United States with over 32 million speakers, originating mainly from Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba¹⁵. Shortly after the turn of the century, it is predicted that Spanish will be spoken by a majority of the inhabitants of North America, and by the same token it is forecast that by the year 2010 Spanish will overtake English worldwide and will become the second most widely spoken language in the world (*World Almanac*, 1997).

After English, Spanish also ranks next in importance in the fields of international relations, administration, commerce and culture. Spanish is one of the six official languages of the United Nations Organisation (the others being English, French, Mandarin, Arabic and Russian). It is also one of the official languages of the European Union (formerly the European Community). Spanish is also one of the most important languages other than English (LOTE) in the United Kingdom and Germany (Valverde et al., 1994). In South America, as a result of the Free Trade Market among Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (MERCOSUR), in the biggest

¹³ Mandarin 901 million; English 457 million; Hindu-Urdu 377 million; Spanish 360 million; Russian 291 million. English Consulting and Language Reference Services. Available <http://www.odyssey.net/subscribers/english/engcons8.html> (Accessed 4 September 1997).

¹⁴ English 28; French 28; Arabic 23; Spanish 20; Portuguese 8. (ibid).

¹⁵ In 1990 there were 13.5 million Mexican-Americans, representing the largest Hispanic subgroup in USA (Hamnerand and Turner, 1996: 167).

country of the region – Brazil, Spanish is also one of the most important languages to be taught after Portuguese.

Furthermore, a significant rise in the profile of Spanish in the area of trade and commerce can be expected as the economic potential of South and Central America is realised. Already the establishment and growing importance of trading blocks such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), among United States, Canada and Mexico (and the entry of other Latin American countries such as Chile into this block), the Andean Pact and the MERCOSUR are leading to greater global trading links with South America, and to an increase in the importance of the Spanish language in international relations, administration and commerce. A number of Australian companies already have significant share holdings in Latin America. In Chile, for example, Australian capital has been invested in the national telephone company, in a local airline, as well as in several mining companies. Further expansion of Australia's trade, diplomatic and cultural links with South America can be anticipated.

Finally, from the perspective of the humanities, Spanish also has a distinguished cultural and literary tradition; Spanish is the language of ten Nobel prizes of literature from five different countries¹⁶.

1.2.1 Spanish among LOTEs in Australia

Spanish is among the nine languages more commonly viewed by Australian exporters and the Australian Government as most in demand.

¹⁶ Spain: 1904 José Echegaray, 1922 Jacinto Benavente, 1956 Juan Ramón Jiménez, 1977 Vicente Aleixandre, 1989 Camilo José Cela; Chile: 1945 Gabriela Mistral, 1971 Pablo Neruda; Guatemala: 1967 Miguel Angel Asturias; Colombia: 1982 Gabriel García Márquez; Mexico: 1990 Octavio Paz. (World Almanac 1997).

The other languages are: Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, and Thai. However, Spanish seems to have been relegated to minor importance with recent Federal Governments' emphases on Asian languages over the other trade languages (Valverde, 1994).

In 1987, at a national level Spanish was counted as one of the most widely spoken LOTEs in Australia. The others were: Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Greek, Mandarin and Cantonese (Lo Bianco, 1987). Spanish was also included as one of the recommended languages in the *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy* published by the Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) in 1991. The other languages were Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Mandarin, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Greek, Russian, Thai and Vietnamese (Valverde, 1994). This Commonwealth Government language policy emphasises the political, economical and trade aspects as one of the main reasons for language study (Iredale and Fox, 1994).

At a State level in NSW the same languages, except Thai, were also identified as priority languages in the document *Excellence and Equity: New South Wales Curriculum Reform* (1989). This document recommended that the study of these languages should be an integral and essential part of the curriculum (NSW Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, 1989: 42-3, cited in Valverde, 1994: 15). *The National Policy on Languages* also suggested that the maintenance of these languages was justifiable for "emotional, cultural, intercultural, social and educational" reasons (Lo Bianco, 1987 cited in Partington and McCudden, 1992).

After the adoption of the policy it was expected that large numbers of LOTE teachers would enter the system. However in 1995, the schools where this

study took place were offering only French, German, Italian and Japanese, with only two teachers and sometimes only one teacher teaching three different languages.

In November 1997 a Metropolis Member of Parliament (MP) announced that the State Government provided more than \$68,000 for the region community language programs. The grants were provided to support the operation and development of six languages schools (Greek, Vietnamese, Turkish, Spanish, Polish and Serbian) operating outside regular hours. The community language schools operate throughout NSW on evening and weekends teaching 63 different languages to more than 40,000 young people in state coeducational and non-government schools, migrant resource centre and community centres. These schools have been established to help migrant children to be in touch with their heritage. MP Sullivan said, "Without language, cultures die. Language training is essential to maintain cultural traditions"¹⁷.

1.3 Organisation of the Study

It was necessary to locate a group of students in the region in order to carry out an in-depth analysis of how they position themselves in and outside school, and with significant others (teachers, peers). After determining the number of Spanish speakers in the region, a variety of both state coeducational and non-government schools were approached to ask for participation in the study.

Since values, attitudes, opinions, feelings and emotions were the focus of the study, a qualitative paradigm was chosen, and procedures such as face-

¹⁷ Govt. Grant for Language Projects. *The Advertiser*, November 5, 1997:14.

to-face open ended interviews and observation techniques were utilised to gather the data.

In order to fully understand the students' experiences, it was necessary to understand the context from which they came. Thus after interviewing the students the parents were interviewed. However, their parents' stories became so compelling, that they became crucial to the study. The students' and parents' insights are presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six: Spanish, Chilean and Uruguayan participants respectively. The schools were visited to observe students in classrooms in order to understand the way students, peers and teachers negotiated their interactions during the teaching-learning process.

In the first stage of data collection, schools, students and parents were approached to participate, and the study proceeded with those who agreed to participate. With the students the interviews were carried out in the school and with the parents at home. The students were the first to be contacted and they were interviewed in order to hear directly from them, their perceptions about the school, their families and their experiences as children of immigrants or immigrants themselves (six of the students were not born in Australia). The students became the tip of the iceberg of the study and they were also the ones who provided the first contact with their parents; they were the ones who took home the letter of consent and who told their parents about the study. Parents were then interviewed concerning their own life stories. their experiences in Australia and in their home countries before emigrating to Australia. They also talked about their dreams, hopes, frustrations and aspirations in Australia and the way they positioned themselves in relation to the rest of mainstream Australian society.

In the second stage of the study, it was sought to explore student, parent and teacher opinions, feelings and attitudes about how the negotiations of meanings were made manifest and how these negotiations influenced students' participation in the lessons. Consequently a multiple case study approach was chosen as the one most suitable for permitting investigation and which would allow comprehension of the situation from a holistic perspective.

In its selection and development of a range of complementary data collection methods the study establishes a comprehensive situational analysis of cultural identity in the secondary school. Such analysis provides a methodological exemplar of how a range of data collection methods may complement each other in illuminating research issues. Interview data are collected as a prelude to the collection of data by using student and teacher interactions in the classroom and lesson observation. Sufficient data are generated from these sources to enable theorising on a wide range of issues surrounding cultural identity in the secondary school. In Chapter Three, Methodology, the research design and research process employed in the investigation are fully explained.

1.4 Description of the Study

Chapter Two is a review of some of the literature which explores the themes presented in the study. The scope is vast, exploring as it does such areas as political and economic implications, the sociology of immigration, employment and education, citizenship, and identity in their broadest sense; the sociolinguistics of second language learning, cultural studies and identity; multiculturalism and education policy, language and identity; and the cultural study of racism and anti-racism. There has been therefore no

attempt to cover in detail all the literature in all these areas. First a selection of literature including policy and historical background has been made to illuminate the main concepts as they interrelate: education, culture, identity and language. Second a brief explanation has been made of multicultural policy in the NSW education system to place this study in its education policy context. Third, a section is included on the concept of racism in order to provide a background for some of the beliefs in society manifesting themselves through the media and current political events at the time of writing which have impacted on the participants in this study.

Chapter Three sets out the research design and research process employed in the study. The chapter starts by describing the research design and continues by identifying the research questions which were derived from the research problem and which were guided by the identity issues and the theoretical ideas discussed in Chapter Two. Then the research process and the rationale for combining interview and observation data collection are explained. This section is followed by a description of the approach to data analysis and the relation of the theory of the study to the research design. Next is the description of the schools and the strategies for entering them. Finally this chapter presents the data analysis procedures and the data analysis categories.

Chapters Four, Five and Six present the information gathered in the interviews of the seven Spanish, ten Chilean and two Uruguayan families who participated in the study. Analysis is focused on the characteristics of the participants and their opinions, feelings and perceptions of their lives in Australia as immigrants and children of immigrants.

Chapter Seven presents the data gathered from the set of observations, audio and video recordings in the classrooms and conversations with students and teachers. The analysis is focused on the characteristics of the classrooms, the way teachers addressed students and how students perceived the interaction in the process of classroom practice.

Chapter Eight presents the general themes which emerged from the data after the analysis. This chapter draws together the findings in terms of perceptions and opinions from both parents and students and some of the teachers who participated in the study.

Chapter Nine draws some conclusions from the data analysis and refers back to the literature in order to see some of the wider implications of the findings of the study for secondary schools and their multicultural approaches.

1.5 An Autobiographical Note

My own perceptions as a researcher have been significant elements when choosing the problem to be studied, the way of carrying out the investigation, the mode of interpreting the theory and the manner of selecting the participants. The presentation of the study reflects my interpretations as a researcher and a sojourner in the community to which the participants belong. Thus the following short autobiography will clarify some of the points mentioned here.

I was born in South America and I have studied and worked in the area of education for more than seventeen years first in Chile and then in Brazil. I travelled to Australia as an international student to undertake my doctoral

studies. In the time I have been in Australia, almost four years, I have, in some instances, being considered an immigrant like the participants in the study, and treated differently because of my non-Anglo-Australian accent and my olive skin. As a way of illustrating this point I mention the following example: my Brazilian wife, Erica, is a beautiful and attractive blonde white woman with blue eyes, and every time we are in public and someone (Anglo-Australian) wants to know the time or a direction they ask her. At the beginning I answered the questions because my wife did not speak English and they looked very surprised and disappointed that I was the one to respond to them; some of them said as a way of compliment "your English is very good", but it was very easy to detect in their tone of voice their patronising attitude.

Speaking Spanish has also been a major advantage, for instance when interviewing the students and their parents. They openly told me about their frustrations and achievements. I was able to identify with the struggles of the parents and students to become someone in this country. With the students, I could empathise with the way they portrayed themselves as caught in the middle of two cultures, as young Australians and on the other hand, as the children of parents who were trying to preserve, and at the same time, transmit their own culture to their children. This was the main scenario within which the study took place. Because there were no linguistic barriers to sharing our feelings and attitudes, it was possible to create a excellent rapport very quickly.

The participants welcomed me into their homes as one of them, a member of their community, a compatriot in a distant and foreign land. This was an advantage in developing a sense of trust between us. It was not necessary to resort to an interpreter for them to express feelings and sentiments which

for many, had been kept silent, sometimes, for more than twenty years. Some of the participants, particularly women cried and sobbed when they were talking about their most personal experiences as an immigrant in Australia. Others described how it was a real honour to have someone who showed an interest in their lives as immigrants and offered them the opportunity to talk about the past, their countries, their cities and historic events which were so important and which were sometimes decisive influences in their lives, including their decisions to come to Australia.

Es la primera vez que me siento escuchado al hablar de todas las cosas por la que hemos pasado, desde el momento en que pensamos en salir de nuestro hogar hace tanto tiempo atrás.

(It is the first time that I feel someone has paid attention to me when I talk about all the things we have passed through, since the moment we thought of leaving our home such a long time ago).

I have sincere admiration for these people who emigrated to Australia without first having learned to speak the English language. In some instances, I also felt pity for some of the participants who were so talkative in Spanish but could barely communicate in English.

On the other hand, from my own experiences in this country and as a Spanish speaker, I am well placed to respond to and empathise with Spanish-speaking immigrants' feelings and attitudes towards their compatriots, and Australians, especially Anglo-Australians. At the same time, as an international student who does not have to seek employment or permanent status in the Australian society, I am also in the position of "outsider" in the research.

In the above paragraphs it has been possible to talk about my subjectivity, "the conscious and unconscious. thoughts and emotions of the individual"

(Weedon, 1987 cited in Coates, 1996: 300). In talking about my biases, which have linked me to the participants in the present study (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992), it is also necessary to mention here that I was very close to the data and I identified very strongly with participants, the parents in particular. I have also to acknowledge that I brought my own experiences of being a Spanish speaker who has sometimes been discriminated against, and my own anger about that. This has also been explored in the process of analysis and interpretation, with my two female Anglo supervisors, one of whom speaks Spanish quite well for a "gringa"!

This study acknowledges these potential biases and subjectivities, while emphasising the richness of the data that have been collected. The methodical and meticulous reading of the data, the corroboration with teachers, and the cross-checking and subsequent analysis are presented here in the following chapters as unique evidence of one group of Spanish-speaking background students in a particular context in a particular historical time.

Migration

The effect of mass migration has been the creation of radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves —because they are so defined by others — by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves.

(Salman Rushdie, 1991 cited in Norindr, 1994: 233).

La Emigración

El efecto de la emigración en masa ha sido la creación radical de nuevos tipos de seres humanos: gente que se enraisa en ideas en vez de lugares, en recuerdos tanto como en cosas materiales; gente que ha sido obligada a definirse a sí misma— porque ellos son así definidos por otros - por su diferencia; gente en cuyo más profundo interior ocurren raras fusiones, uniones sin precedente entre lo que ellos fueron y donde se encuentran a sí mismos.

(My own translation).

CHAPTER TWO

L I T E R A T U R E R E V I E W

In this review an analysis will be undertaken of literature dealing with identity and its relationships to immigration, language, multiculturalism, education and racism. These relationships have been grouped in this sequence to point out the major findings concerning problems of identity construction in English speaking countries in general and in Australia in particular. The review is based on an eclectic approach, focused on educational, historical, philosophical and sociological sources, to emphasise different ways in which the issue of identity has been addressed from a variety of disciplines and political viewpoints.

Much of the literature, with a few exceptions, does not speak for the subordinated "other" in society, particularly when looking within a multicultural society, as opposed to say, oppressed people in "other" countries. The literature tends to be about the relationships from the dominant society's view point, or about the minority group's material gains and failures, and there is little in the literature which explains the richness of culture and identity of the "other" when seen from within that group.

According to Paulo Freire, the marginalised, or the oppressed, are the only ones who can understand the full significance of oppression, and are hence the only ones who will have the vision and the strength to eliminate it. The great obstacle to their accomplishing this feat, he says, is that the oppressed "are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalised. The conflict lies in the choice between wholly themselves, or being divided..." (Edgerton, 1996: 45).

This review of literature does not attempt to deal with every aspect of identity, language, multiculturalism, education, or racism, but seeks to draw out the significance of these for understanding the position of the participants in this study.

2.1 Immigrants' Identity

Nowadays, as we approach the third millennium, people belonging to different cultures and living in far away places are not any more only present in the romantic discourse of brave travellers like those who appear in the National Geographic Magazine and foreign correspondent TV programs¹. We are living in the post-colonial era, in which the question of identity, "the great bugbear of postmodern thought" (Eagleton, 1996: 126), and the subject, an individual who is in the dynamic constant process of becoming rather than being (Hall, 1986, 1996), has become a constant source of concern and debate (Brooks, 1995) especially in countries which have implemented lasting and large-scale immigration programs.

Identity has become a key word in academic and political discourses (Sarup, 1996). In Australia discussions about cultural identity have been punctuated by specific events. The bicentenary in 1988, when two hundred years of "settlement" were commemorated by some in the face of considerable Aboriginal outrage, and the approaching centenary of Australian Federation in 2001 have provided the momentum for a national debate about Australian identity and citizenship (Castles, 1992).

¹ For example, Foreign Correspondent with George Negus and Postcard with Clive James telecasted by Australian Broadcasting System (ABC).

Identity has both a self-reflexive and an interactional aspect, in which location, context and experience are concepts that denote a constant interactional and heterogeneous process (Sarup, 1996). As Hall suggests:

identity is actually something formed through unconscious processes over time, rather than being innate in consciousness at birth (1994: 122).

For McRobbie (1996) full identity is never achieved, the issue of the self is never determined and established and is thus always open to refinement, and to rearrangement. Identity is never unified, it is fragmented and fractured and constructed across de-centered positions (Biskowski, 1995), or as Hall says, across different, intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions (Hall, 1986). Bhabha (1996) refers to identity as an “intersubjective, performative act” that rejects the separation of “public/private and psyche/social”. For him the self is not given to consciousness, but a “coming-to-consciousness”. In addition, identity is conceived of as a social, historical and political phenomenon. As Pujolar explains:

meaning and identities are constructed and negotiated in social interactions through social processes that have a historical and political dimension (1996: 88).

The concepts of the subject have not been fixed in the past, they have continued as discursive positions in the present. Hall has developed his notion of identity from the following three different historical conceptions of the subject:

- the enlightenment subject: based on a conception of the human person as a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose ‘centre’ consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same continuous, or ‘identical’ with

itself through the individual existence. The essential centre of the self was a person's identity;

- the sociological subject: reflected the growing complexity of the modern world and the awareness that this inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self sufficient, but was formed in relation to 'significant others', who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols—the culture—of the worlds s/he inhabited. Identity is formed in the 'interaction' between the self and society; and
- the post-modern subject: conceptualised as having no fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Identity becomes a 'moveable feast' formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented, or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historical, not biologically defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent 'self' (Hall 1992: 275-77).

The conception of the enlightenment subject, which locates the individual as a rational, scientific being, has its "bible" in the publication in France of the *Encyclopédie* in 1751; this concept of the individual was in vogue until the beginning of the twentieth century when earlier sociologists such as the founders of Symbolic Interactionism, George Mead (1863–1931) and Charles Cooley (1864–1929) put the emphasis in the sociological subject and the development of the individual's self concept through group interactions. Philosophically, too, French authors like Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) with his concept of the existential self and Pierre Bourdieu and his theory of capital and the self have contributed significantly to the debate about identity.

How identity is constructed in social contexts is in part influenced by social and cultural resources from which the individual has to draw. These resources in turn are not equally validated in different social contexts. Bourdieu, for instance, talks about the notion of cultural and social capital as related to a kind of "symbolic credit" that is acquired through learning to express and accomplish indications of "social standing".

For Bourdieu cultural capital is convertible to economic capital through advanced academic credentials, or in the way that it helps its bearers, for example, to secure loans, find business partners, or otherwise receive the benefits of the doubt in financial decisions. Yet it is nonetheless separate from economic capital, and valued in and of itself (Bradley and Holland, 1997: 6).

These notions of cultural capital can be of importance in exploring the contemporary effects of schooling among immigrant groups and linguistic minorities in countries of great immigration because of the interrelationships between academic success, class and background. However, according to Connell et al., the model of cultural capital "exaggerates" and sees relationships between home and school as impoverished and static, in which,

the student is treated merely as the bearer of cultural capital, a bundle of abilities, knowledge and attitudes furnished by the parents (Connell et al., 1983: 188).

In their book *Making the Difference School, Families and Social Division* they point out that,

what children actually bring to the school is their relationship to their parents' educational experiences and strategies... the interactions among kids, parents and teachers are constantly being renegotiated and reconstructed, at times quite dramatically mutated in crisis of the pupil's school life. Finally, the plain facts are that privilege is not always passed on and under-privilege is not always perpetuated (Connell et al., 1983: 188).

In the post-colonial era, the post-modern subject and his/her cultural identity is positioned as dynamic and each of the various groups s/he belongs to becomes more, or less significant for her/him depending on a given situation. Cultural identity is seen as incomplete, "partial in construction and relative in value by the diverse challenges of class, sexual and postcolonial discourse" (Botting, 1995: 87). The subject is reconstructed upon the notion of cultural difference, otherness and hybridity (Bhabha, 1990, 1994) via a system of similarities and differences (Hall, 1996) "in terms of race, class, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, etcetera" (Edgerton, 1996: 46). Recognising that individuals have a variety of different cultural identities, or memberships available to them (Pedersen, 1993), individuals *become* subjects rather than *being* subjects (Hall, 1986). In this process subjects do not only associate themselves with a set of characteristics but they also distantly relate themselves from other subjects (Cohen, 1994). In other words, this attempt to define themselves has a lot to do with whom, or what they attempt to define as Other to them. Thus, although identity is constituted within the subject, not outside, yet it is produced in specific historical and institutional sites (Hall, 1986, Weis, 1997).

When talking about identity and the great "forced and free migration" (Hall 1996:4) movements which have taken place in the last fifty years, Hall describes the present era as a period where identity has been marginalised, fragmented, disadvantaged and dispersed for migrants, and as Bhabha suggests, the "unhomely" denizens of the contemporary world (Bhabha, 1994: 271). In this so-called crisis of identity period, the process of negotiation of meaning and representation aims at getting healthy relationships between the migrant, the other, who is always defined as representative of the outside (Hewitt, 1996), and the local.

According to Hall (1986) migration and the process of becoming migrant are the most important experiences of this century; Bammer uses the term "displacement" to refer to migration as,

the separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, exiles, or expatriates), or the colonising imposition of a foreign culture (Bammer, 1994: xi).

This process of migranhood (1989) has been called a constant "re-departing". In other words immigrants find themselves constantly building their cultural identity in an endless, dynamic and sometimes painful process. In this context, as Hall eloquently describes:

cultural identity is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture... Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, cultural identities are subject to the continual play of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (Hall, 1989 cited in Gever, 1992: 193).

However, this idea of identity being understood as a dynamic process is not new, as Mead pointed out in 1936:

The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experiences and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process (Mead, 1936: 135).

Identity construction, transformation and reformulation works in both directions. In the case of immigrants living in English-speaking countries the local sees them, sometimes, as intruders and the immigrants cluster themselves in groups, creating a kind of vicious circle in which interactions reinforce preconceived ideas. However, strong cultural affiliation reinforced

by positive feelings about it makes it easier to accept one's own identity because "our culture offers us a wide range of ways of being" (Coates, 1996: 233) "as embodied subjects constituted in and through discourses" (Wright, 1996: 63). According to Kenny,

as we pick up symbolic messages in verbal and non-verbal interchanges with other people, we develop our own self-identity. Through long processes of interactions we become labelled. We may be identified as "honest", "intelligent", or "reliable", for example. If we are given a stigmatised label such as "stupid", "neurotic", "dishonest", or "unreliable", this can have a powerful effect on the way other people see us, and on the way we see ourselves (Kenny, 1994: 62).

When the local and the migrant interact, the former positions the latter as disadvantaged and marginalised. Marginality is thus seen as a "binary opposition to centrality, or dominance" (Edgerton, 1996: 39). The local sees the migrant as the Other and vice versa. In this way this metaphor of otherness is used to perpetuate the effects of cultural difference (Bhabha, 1994). In other words, the local identifies her/himself as the old coloniser, in the times of the Empire, and identifies the migrant as the marginalised (the colonised). Thus the relations between them are:

characterised by a deep ambivalence, "the other" is both an object of desire and derision, of envy and contempt, with the coloniser simultaneously projecting and disavowing difference in an essentially contradictory way, asserting mastery but constantly finding it slipping away (Bhabha, 1983, 1994 cited in Hall, 1996: 70).

An important element which contributes to the construction of immigrants' cultural identity is their home culture. By validating their culture, it is possible to eliminate sentiments of inferiority, which sometimes make immigrants feel so different. For some adolescent students in the study this was certainly the case. They find themselves living in a

difficult situation caught in the middle of two cultures. As (Anabel, 4.3)² a Year Twelve Spanish-Australian girl student, for whom Spanish represents the intimate, private family language, and English the language of the public sphere, said:

es muy difícil porque no sé lo que te debes de llamar: española, australiana o qué, es como que estás en medio de los dos, en casa casi siempre hablo en español, entonces en casa me llamo española, pero como vivo en Australia y nací en Australia, entonces soy Australiana; es muy difícil.

(it is very difficult because I don't know what you should be called: Spanish, Australian, or what? it is like being in the middle of both. At home I always speak in Spanish, and so I call myself Spanish, but as I live in Australia and I was born in Australia, then I'm Australian; it is very difficult).

There are several studies of the children of immigrants carried out in Australia which refer to this issue of living in two worlds and the complex relationships that children must negotiate between parents, parents' culture, local culture and their place in schools.

Bochner, for example, (1982) refers to the following two studies: Novakovic (1977) who studied second-generation Yugoslav migrant children in Australia discovered that this group did not totally reject their parental culture, but neither did they accept it without question; and Cowley (1978) who worked with third generation Australian children from British-Irish ancestry, concluded that children who had at least one close migrant friend should be more aware and appreciative of cultural differences than children with only Australian friends.

Vasta, in her studies of long settled Italian migrants in Brisbane, concludes that "they have lived on the edge of Anglo-Australian culture and at the

² 4 refers to the chapter and 3 to the section in that chapter. Participants' quotes in Spanish are translated into English by myself.

same time have lost much of the essence of their Italian heritage" (1985: 82). In another study about identity and second generation Italian-Australians, Vasta (1992) refers to the notion of "cultural ambivalence" to explain, for instance, the conflict involved between parents and children in the process of identity formation. Second generation, "cultural brokers" in Vasta's terms, are those who represent their communities and negotiate Australian institutions as well as socio-political and cultural practices.

In another study, Kalantzis et al. (1992) investigated parents and participation in schools. They found that parents and students, of Aboriginal/Koori, Greek, Arabic, Vietnamese, Tongan and English background, participate and communicate with the school more through ethnic/cultural channels than through the formal channels of communication.

In the preliminary conclusion to the study *Proyecto Lengua Española en Australia* (Project Spanish Language in Australia) Martin (1995) enumerates four social causes why Spanish is transmitted to the second generation: because parents do not speak English; the emotional linkage by the parents to the country of origin; the belonging to community organisations where Spanish is used as a language of communication; and the visit by the children to the country of origin. This project is based in fifty five interviews carried out with members of the Spanish community from different ages and nationalities, and it has as its main purposes to determine the use of the Spanish language in Australia.

Language plays an important role in all of the issues mentioned above and it is one of the major elements helping in the construction of cultural identity (Kilito, 1994).

2.2 Identity and Language

How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities... (Deleuze and Guattari, 1992: 61).

Language is largely constituted in our thoughts, experiences, feelings and interactions as a "heterogenous collection of discourses" (Coates, 1996: 239). It plays a crucial role in the experience of cultural displacement and the construction and reconstruction of our cultural identity (Mead, 1936; Argyle, 1982; Bammer, 1994; Brock and Tulasiewicz, 1985; Coates, 1996; Hall, 1996).

Language is the place where our bodies and minds collide, where our groundedness in place and time and our capacity for fantasy and invention must come to terms (Kaplan, 1994: 64).

According to Varennes (1996) language is one of the strongest symbols of community and shared culture in human society and signals one's membership in a community. Language is used by immigrants as a resource to convey cultural and personal identity.

Language is not merely a cultural artefact nor is it regarded this way by ethnic communities. Language contains both symbolic and instrumental communicative aspects. Ethnic communities tend to regard language maintenance as an important tool for cultural enrichment, social access and intergenerational communication (National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education (NACCME), 1987 cited in Partington and McCuddden, 1993: 121).

It is on this basis that it has been argued that children should be supported to maintain their home language. Language and identity are entwined and if children are to maintain a cultural identity which links with that of their parents, it is important for children whose home language is not English to

study that home language and culture (Partington and McCudden, 1993).

As a Spanish father in this study said:

Como padre tienes que enseñar a tus hijos tu cultura y si no enseñas la lengua, la cultura no va detrás; eso es lo más importante: enseñar a tus hijos lo que es tuyo, lo que tú sabes.

(As a father you have to teach your culture to your children and if you do not teach the language, the culture does not follow; that is the most important thing: to teach your children what is yours, what you know).

As Land and Butner (1984) argue, such an opportunity provides a stronger base for children to develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy. It is also of importance for the maintenance of family ties, especially in immigrant families who find themselves "divided across cultures" (Spiegelman, 1991 cited in Bammer, 1994: 96), where the children speak a language different from their parents, and "confront them in the new tongue" (Kaplan, 1994: 59).

The study of their language and culture also helps to increase the children's perception of their identity as members of a minority in which their home language is central to their social and cultural identity (Varennnes, 1996). In addition, Street (1993) points out that schools should acknowledge immigrant children's culture and language, in order to exploit their full potential and abilities. Where the language, culture and experiences of immigrant children are not acknowledged, then children might wish to leave or change school. As (Helena, 5.4), a twelve Chilean-Australian girl student, for whom the fact of being in a school with other Chilean students seemed to make a big difference in her involvement in the lessons, said:

Creo que si estuviera en otra escuela con más estudiantes chilenos, los profesores nos prestarían más atención y eso nos incentivaría a participar en la clase.

(I think that if I were in another school with more Chilean students, the teachers would pay more attention to us and that would encourage us to participate in the class).

For others their years at school may be an ordeal difficult to bear, as "a lot of people are going through hell because of their background" (Henry and Edward in Kanlantzis and Cope, 1989: 52). Schools and teachers therefore have a responsibility to acknowledge the cultural characteristics of these students and develop methods of instruction which satisfy all children's needs, not only those of the mainstream (Street, 1993).

When people migrate to countries where the language is not the same as that which they speak at home, they are often considered worthless by the locals. Immigrants who have emigrated to an English-speaking country and can barely communicate in English, are likely to feel jeopardised by their lack of competence in the language. They are negatively stereotyped because of their perceived linguistic deficiency and because of this, most of the time, they have to take only low skilled jobs because these are the only positions available for them (Castles, 1992). At school their children's variety of English is sometimes labelled as "wrong", or "inferior" just because it differs from Standard Australian English (SAE) (Derewianka, 1992: 70). Australia, with a population of immigrants coming from practically every corner of the world, faces the great challenge of helping these linguistic minorities to overcome the linguistic isolation in which some of them live. As Kaplan writes:

there is no language change without emotional consequences. Principally: loss. That language equals home, that language is a home, as surely as a roof over one's head is a home, and that to be without a language, or to be between languages, is as miserable in its way as to be without bread (1994: 63).

More than a quarter of the Australian population speaks languages other than English. For example in NSW one fifth of state coeducational schools students come from non-English speaking backgrounds (Turk, 1997). However, negative attitudes to the use of language other than English in schools have created a situation in which, for some students, the only opportunity they have to talk in their parents' language is at home. As a result without formal instruction this may lead eventually to its loss (Partington and McCudden, 1993).

2.3 Identity and Multiculturalism

In Australia there have been three identifiable "stages" in the official response to immigration: assimilation, integration and multiculturalism. These different approaches reflect the changing attitudes in Australian society to immigration. From the later 1940s to the mid-1960s, the policy in Australia was to encourage the assimilation of migrant populations with the idea that only the Anglo-Australian culture was legitimate, and the other cultures would have to disappear (Castles, 1992). Migrants' cultural background was totally ignored and it was naively expected that non-English speaking immigrants, mainly southern Europeans, would learn English, easily assimilate and be socially absorbed into the Anglo-Australian population. As the school was supposed to play a key role in turning migrants' children into Australians, there were no special courses for migrant children and they were supposed to speak English, or pick it up very quickly from their entry into schools. Migrants' culture was considered inferior and it was expected that migrants and their children would assimilate to some supposedly "Australian" culture (Castles et al. 1990).

By the 1960s the "New Australians", who were supposed to speak English and live among Anglo-Australians, were socially segregated and worked and lived in "occupational ghettos". Their children were failing at school because of the lack of support in learning English and they were also seen as suspicious by many locals who avoided them. As a consequence many started to go back to their countries of origin and it became increasingly difficult to attract new immigrants (Castles, 1992).

From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, "recognising that adaptation to Australian society was not a simple and automatic process" (Castles, 1988: 27), the policy shifted to one of integration. The White Australia Policy, which prevented most non-Europeans from entering the country, was also officially abandoned in the mid-1960s. In 1966 the Minister for Immigration announced that "a few well-qualified immigrants from Asia³ would be admitted under stringent conditions" (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA), 1986 cited in Castles, 1992: 186). People from non-European countries started to come to Australia in greater numbers.

The new policy provisions covered aspects of welfare, introducing some new measures between 1965 and 1972 which:

included an Integration Branch within the Department of Immigration, immigrants welfare grants for community agencies, a Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications, a special law providing for English courses for children and adults, English language courses on television and the workplace, and the first step towards a Telephone Interpreter Service (Castles, 1992: 186).

³ This ignored the fact that Asians had come to Australia in the 19th century with the various gold rushes. They were also since those times constantly subjected to racism, which as will be pointed out below continues today, for example in 1887, the Australian tabloid *The Bulletin* published the statement that "No nigger, no Chinaman, no lascar, no kanaka, and no purveyor of cheap labour is Australian" (cited in King, 1978: 65).

In practice, however, immigrant children continued to be expected to learn English just by attending schools. For example in NSW it was only in 1969 that the first English as a Second Language (ESL) positions for school were funded through the Child Migrant Education Program (CMEP) of the Federal Department of Immigration (Iredale and Fox, 1994).

In the early 1970s, many immigrants continued to resist assimilation. Instead many formed enclaves with a significant proportion of votes. The Australian Labor Party (ALP) sought the "migrant vote", and introduced changes in welfare and education systems as a way of integrating migrants into the mainstream society. This foreshadowed a new approach of multiculturalism introduced by a speech by the Immigration Minister, Al Grasby, in which he talked about "the family of the nation" in 1973, a speech often claimed to be the beginning of Australian multiculturalism (Castles, 1992). Castles locates the first phase of multiculturalism between 1972-75 when the Whitlam government directly shifted from integration to multiculturalism and launched a grant program for the extension of the welfare state. During this phase the emphasis was not on cultural pluralism but on improving welfare and education systems, without changing the basic ideas which had underpinned the previous assimilation and integration policies.

In the second phase of multiculturalism, which Castles locates as extending from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, Fraser's national Coalition government redefined multiculturalism emphasising cultural pluralism. In 1977 the Ethnic Affairs Council advocated a multicultural society based on a diversity of ethnic groups and cultural identities. In spite of the fact that the government emphasised multiculturalism as a way of achieving national identity, or social cohesion, cultural issues remained relegated to cuisine

and dress (Castles et al., 1992), using a very narrow understanding of culture as "innocuous folk-life" (Cope, 1987: 7). According to Castles (1990), multiculturalism was an ideology to co-opt the leaders of ethnic organisations, while providing welfare on the cheap, through an ethnic group model. It was designed to win the support of ethnic community leaders and consequently get the "ethnic vote".

The Whitlam and Fraser multicultural models were part of a process of engaging ethnic groups as the main agents for social cohesion and participation in Australian society (Castles et al., 1990). In the early 1980s during the Hawke Labor government, multiculturalism developed its third phase, which Castles (1992) calls "access and equity", in which the government made attempts to consider migrants' needs in its social policies. The emphasis was then put on the economic merits of immigration. In 1983 the Federal Government launched its Access and Equity Strategy. The various states followed with similar policies, including in NSW its 1983 Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (EAPS) (Iredale and Fox, 1994: 15-6).

The most outstanding achievement of the new approach to multiculturalism was the 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*. According to Castles (1992), however, multiculturalism remained relegated to matters of welfare, social justice and economic opportunism. According to Kalantzis and Cope (1983), the socio-cultural area of multiculturalism ignored and failed to explore the meaning of the concept of culture in its fullest sense and how we are all formed as cultural entities, not just the "ethnics" with remnants of traditionalism (Kalantzis and Cope, 1983: 31). they went on to advocate a study of migration which goes beyond describing imported artefacts and customs, to look at the traumas of adjustment to new socio-cultural situations, that have to be learnt, or

adapted to, and how much plurality of culture there is in Australia. They felt that what was lacking in the 1980s was a serious discussion of racism and prejudice, why it happens, its effects on people's lives and its irrationality.

The *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* identified the three dimensions of the Australian multicultural policy in the following terms:

- cultural identity: the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion;
- social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender, or place of birth; and
- economic efficiency: the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background (*National Agenda for A Multicultural Australia... Sharing Our Future*, 1989: vii).

On the surface each dimension of the Agenda seems to respond to the Australian myth of a "fair go". However, a close and careful reading demonstrates that when it refers to economic efficiency it only values economic rationalism as a contribution to the profitability of the state. In relation to social justice, it does not make reference to equality of outcomes but of opportunities as though contexts and needs were the same.

In relation to cultural identity, the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* merely describes the Australian society in order to celebrate its diversity (Castles et al., 1987; Fincher et al., 1993). Difference is constrained. The Agenda allows for cultural expression, and approved expressions of difference but within "carefully defined limits" — i.e. specific sites, say, home, community club, place of worship.

persons belonging to minorities shall not be denied the right
(note the negative) to enjoy their own culture, practice their

own religion, or use their own language (Mackey, 1975; cited in Beetham, 1984: 218).

In other words, this is what Bhabha calls the creation of cultural diversity and containment of cultural difference in which:

these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid (Bhabha, 1990: 208).

In other words, non-Anglo Australians, "the ethnics" (Kalantzis and Cope, 1983), have the right to express and share their cultural identities in their homes, in their clubs and occasionally in one of those celebrations called International Nights, or International Folkloric Festivals⁴, where migrants have the right to publicly show off their folk music, costume, handicraft production and above all cuisine. In this way multiculturalism has been reduced to tokens such as "polka" and "spaghetti", or for the dominant group, Irish ditties and Yorkshire pudding (Kalantzis and Cope, 1988, Kalantzis et al., 1990). Thus, cultural differences have been trivialised as stereotypes (Kalantzis and Cope, 1983, Castles, et al., 1990).

Multiculturalism is interesting and colourful, and offers many choices of lifestyle; in human relationships it offers great variety, wide horizons and the chance to discover other points of view. Australian society has sometimes failed to appreciate the cultural resources within itself... (Australia Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, 1982 cited in Kalantzis and Cope, 1983: 21, their emphases).

As a consequence of such "multicultural" approaches, many of those in mainstream Australian culture tend to interpret and evaluate non-Anglo Australian customs, values and beliefs only in reference to the Anglo-Australian culture. Anglo-Australians position themselves inside the Anglo grid, setting up their boundaries. These Australians consider minority groups as located in different, or anomalous positions, outside the

⁴ In the Metropolis, in the Civic Plaza in front of the town hall, The City Coast Folklorika Festival takes place every first weekend of June.

grid, outside the boundaries. An immigrant is seen as someone who wants to cross the local's border. Therefore the migrant faces, at the same time, both the preconceived definition rooted in the locals' mind and her/his own fears of living in an unknown place, on the borders, in the margins; for her/him it is "like trying to swim in a new element, an alien element" (Anzaldúa, 1987; cited in Hirsch, 1994: 71). As Sarup declares:

a migrant is a person who has crossed the border. S/he seeks a place to make "a new beginning", to start again, to make a better life. The newly arrived have to learn the new language and culture. They have to cope not only with the pain of separation but often also with the resentments of a hostile population (1996: 1).

In other words, Anglo Australians have positioned migrants in the culturally defined limits identified in the Australian multicultural policy. The norm has been that of the "typical Australian", which Toorn and English and White described in the following terms:

Until recently, the dominant cultural construction of "the typical Australian" way of life, Anglo-Celtic, working class (heterosexual) male, whose cultural life revolved around ritual of mateship, drinking, and sport was the dominant one. This image of the national type and of a "typical Australian way of life" left out of account the everyday lives of a numerical majority of the population, who found themselves racialised, gendered, and ethnified in ways that differed from the so-called norm. Even today, members of visible, or audible "minority groups" such as Aborigines, women, people of non-Anglo-Celtic origin can "speak", or participate in "Australian cultural life" only from positions situated as anomalous (Toorn and English, 1995: 2).

The emphasis was on masculinity, and on masculine friendship and team work, or "mateship" in Australia. All the clichés - man of action, white man, manliness, the common man, war as a test of manhood -were not sexist for nothing. Women were excluded from the image of the "Coming Man", and so were excluded from the image of the Australian type as well (White, 1981: 83).

Since 1945, and until the 1970s, except for a relatively small number of refugees, exiles and skilled professionals, the migrant population in Australia, has meant labour immigration, or what Castles et al. (1990) have called "factory fodder". A economic move, as King (1978) says, from the sheep's back to that of the migrants.

In the 1980s the public discourse started to change, giving significant new emphases to economics and business; since 1981 some 15,000 business people and their families have settled through the Business Migration Program. In 1994 the review of the Business Skills Class of Migration showed that the policy was producing economic benefits. In 1995 the creation of three new classes of business migrant was announced for: temporary entrants who have established successful business in Australia; those deemed capable of making a 'substantial' investment in this country for three years (deposit between \$750,000 and \$2 million in designated government securities); and those who expect to conduct further investments and business activity.

The arrangements also allowed temporary residents to seek permanent residence under the existing off-shore rules without leaving the country (*The Australian Financial Review*, Thursday, March 23, 1995: 11). Also in the 1990s immigrants come to fill vacancies in the service sector, low skilled personal jobs such as taxi driving, household cleaning and child care and in the lower ranks of the tourism and recreation industries (Burnley et al., 1997).

2.3.1 Multicultural Education

Multicultural education implies that students should have an equal opportunity, an understanding of different cultural lifestyles, and respect for and appreciation of others in an attempt to strive for a healthy interaction among diverse groups. Multicultural education attempts to facilitate understanding and empathy, develop critical thinking abilities, and encourage a sense of fairness, equality and cooperation between people. In these terms, La Belle and Ward (1994), refer to the document *One model American* published by the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education which defines multicultural education as,

education that values cultural pluralism, rejecting the view that school should serve as institutions to eliminate differences. The publication contends that schools should preserve and extend cultural diversity to all students (1994: 22).

Davidman and Davidman (1994) define multicultural education as a "multifaceted, change-oriented strategy" which has six interconnected but different goals:

Educational equity; empowerment of students and their parents; cultural pluralism in society; intercultural/interethnic/intergroup understanding and harmony in the classroom, school and community; an expanded knowledge of various cultural and ethnic groups; and the development of students, parents, and practitioners (teachers, nurses, counsellors, principals, curriculum coordinators, etc.) whose thoughts are guided by an informed and inquisitive multicultural perspective (1994: 2).

Multicultural education is the education that educates everyone about the multicultural nature of society. According to Banks (1992),

multicultural education is what good schools do in the face of extensive "cultural" differences among students and teachers. multicultural education is what good schools do to assure that "cultural" factors don't get in the way of equal educational

opportunities and high students achievement. (cited in Fullinwider, 1996: 3).

In other words, multicultural education aims to train people to understand, appreciate, accept, and tolerate other cultures in the environment which they share with other people of other ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds.

Multicultural education is an idea stating that all students, regardless of the groups to which they belong, such as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, culture, social class, religion, or exceptionality, should experience educational equality in the schools. Some students, because of their particular characteristics, have a better chance to succeed in school as it is currently structured than have students from other groups. Multicultural education is also a reform movement designed to bring about a transformation of the school so that students from both genders and from diverse cultural and ethnic groups will have an equal chance to experience school success. Multicultural education views the school as a social system that consists of highly interrelated parts and variables. Therefore in order to transform the school to bring about educational equality, all the major components of the school must be substantially changed. A focus on any one variable in the school such as the formalised curriculum, will not implement multicultural education (Banks, 1993: 25).

Multicultural education is also aimed at encouraging and improving cross-cultural relationships and cooperation and ultimately, multi-ethnic or multi-racial cohesion. Students need to experience a wide variety of intercultural experiences, and incorporate a global perspective, the ultimate results of which are: international understanding, development of self concept, empowerment and respect for others (La Belle and Ward, 1994; Davidman and Davidman, 1994; Fullinwider, 1996).

Multicultural education is largely a matter of developing appropriate attitudes of tolerance and intercultural understanding in all Australians (Rizvi, 1986: 23).

Immigration wrought changes in classrooms. Teachers, administrators and theorists have grappled with the problem of minority student underachievement and sought ways to understand and overcome it.

The institutional response in Australia to the migrant presence in the 1950s and 1960s was in the form of assimilation and Anglo-conformity. Immigrants were expected to fit into the Australian social and economic situation as quickly as possible (Bullivant, 1981). The cultural forms were exclusively Anglo-Australian. Predominantly, the policy makers at that time wished to see the Australian nation as a whole, political and culturally indivisible. Children and adults were left to pick up English and a knowledge of Australia and to assimilate as rapidly as possible in the homogeneous Anglo-Australian Culture (Foster, 1988).

According to Rizvi (1985), the assimilation ideology was emphasised in schools by deliberately ignoring the presence of students whose language background was other than English. Educators and policy makers were able to exercise their power through neutralisation and marginalisation of potentially contentious issues. By the end of the 1960s, the policy of assimilation began to be increasingly subjected to critical scrutiny. The bases for these criticisms were both practical and moral. Assimilation was seen to be morally reprehensible because it denied the right of a group of people to retain their languages and cultures (Grassby in Rizvi, 1985).

There were some signs of a shift in the official educational thinking with a recognition that migrants' children after all had important cultural contributions to make in the classroom and that they should not be expected to abandon their culture. This coincided with a shift in orientation among educators from a system-centred to a child-centred philosophy, with an

attendant increase in school and teacher autonomy to devise their curricula (Bullivant, 1981).

Australia gradually became committed in the 1970s to a policy of multicultural education. The state education departments also began to introduce various programs. Developments at the Commonwealth level gained momentum in 1971 with the passage of the Immigration Education Act. Due to an increase in demands from schools, the Child Migrant Education Program had to be expanded. It was conceived as a measure to overcome the problems of immigrant children with English language difficulties (Iredale and Fox, 1994). Each state had the obligation to train its teachers and the training consisted of a four-week inservice course conducted under the auspices of the Commonwealth. Much as the schemes were innovative and orientated towards solving some of the issues for the education of LBOTE children, there were still some criticisms such as the lack of enough resources accompanied by a lack of accurate data on the numbers of children to be catered for in schools. There was also a general apathy among teachers many of whom had attitudes towards migrant children that ranged from patronising to uncaring (Bullivant 1981).

In 1977 a review group was established to look at post-arrival programs and services to migrants and to report back to the government. In 1978 the known as the Galbally Report was produced, proposing a major Commonwealth initiative to ensure that greater priority was given to multicultural education for all children and recommending substantial financial aid. It also made structural proposals for the co-ordination of Commonwealth policies and programs with regard to schools and school systems in the field of multicultural education, and the inclusion in courses at tertiary institutions of appropriate multicultural dimensions.

Since 1975, the Australian Schools Commission had been encouraging both the government and non-government education systems to allocate funds for the stimulation of the new initiatives in implementing multicultural perspectives into the schooling sector. In 1979 the Australian government initiated its Multicultural Education Program, which over a period of five years financed 2,871 projects across Australia in an attempt to infuse the multicultural philosophy into the schooling system. An independent evaluation found out that while the Multicultural Education Program had resulted in many achievements, it had not brought substantial and lasting change (Cahill, 1986).

The 1980s had brighter prospects for building a successful multicultural society, a society which could well be an example to many others in creating unity from diversity (Grassby, 1982). During this period the Commonwealth Schools Commission encouraged teachers to come to grips with multicultural classrooms.

What has been argued so far is that immigrants have been generally subjected to disadvantage and discrimination. There have continued to be strong counter arguments to this position. Some of these came from Bullivant's (1986), Mistiles' (1986), Birrell's (1987) and Williams' (1987) work. They have argued that "ethnic disadvantage" is a myth and that coming from a NESB is not an element which causes educational disadvantage. These arguments and counter arguments were published together in an issue of the *Journal of Intercultural Studies* in 1988 in an article called "Why we need multicultural education: a review of the 'ethnic' debate" by Kalantzis and Cope.

In October 1992 the NSW Department of School Education published the *Multicultural Education Strategic Plan 1993-1997*. It is stated in this document that the future direction of multicultural education depends heavily on past experience and present realities. This plan has as main objectives that:

- all students understand the role that cultural and linguistic diversity plays in the lives of individuals, their families and the nation; and
- students from languages background other than English (LBOTE) have equal access to educational opportunity *Multicultural Education Strategic Plan, 1992: 3*).

In order to get both results the NSW public school system and its component schools require strategies that could deliver the following strategic results:

- students learning is enriched by teachers and staff who are cross-culturally aware and able confidently and competently to impart multicultural values;
- student learning is assisted by curriculum and resources which reflect and promote diverse cultural and linguistic traditions;
- student learning is enhanced by research that identifies good practice and ensures quality of multicultural education;
- student learning is supported by the participation of parents and community in the life of their local school;
- students learning is enriched by schools and regions where excellence in multicultural education is recognised and acclaimed;
- student learning is supported by the provision of programs and teachers that meet the special teaching and learning needs of students from language background other than English (LBOTE) *Multicultural Education Strategic Plan, 1992: 4-14*).

Kalantzis et al. (1990) analysed school curriculum from an historical perspective. They studied the changes from the traditional curriculum of cultural assimilation from the 1940s to the 1960s, then the progressivist curriculum of cultural pluralism from the 1970s and 1980s and finally the

post-progressivists curriculum of the late 1980s. In their multiple case study they witnessed the enormous and difficult job teachers and schools were faced with, when only ad hoc support was available to cope with an increasing multilingual and multicultural school population in Australia.

Teaching in a multicultural society to a myriad of students coming from the most diverse backgrounds demands a lot from everyone participating in the learning-teaching process. According to Fullinwider,

multicultural education opens the door to a series of basic questions about schooling — what to teach? how to teach? who to teach whom? — whose answers cannot help but mirror the political struggles of the larger society, with its racial tensions, ethnic hostilities, religious conflicts, class divisions, gender grievances, and ideological cleavages. The classroom becomes an arena where larger cultural and political contests play themselves out. Almost any form of multicultural education will generate quarrels (Fullinwider, 1996: 4).

Despite the rhetoric of the multicultural agenda, deep divisions continue to be seen among educators who argue from positions between those proclaiming the benefits of a multicultural policy to those who perceive the hypocrisy of government intentions and who point out the potential for further marginalisation that the policy could bring upon LBOTE students. Since the studies of LBOTE students in the days before the multicultural policies were implemented, and in the early 1980s, the political climate for multicultural education has radically changed, and the discourses have moved away from such issues as "tolerance", a patronising concept at the best of times, and towards questions of accepted difference, multiple voices, and dialogue with Others. On the other hand, the rejection of Otherness, and the fear of equity have also produced more outspoken discussion of racism in contemporary Australian society.

2.4 Relationship between Difference, Multiculturalism and Racism

The great majority of migrants are working class people in their own countries (Castles et al., 1990). From the point of view of many Australians they have brought to Australia only deficiencies in education, skills and English language proficiency which have positioned the majority of them in low status jobs (Castles et al, 1990). In other words, from working class people, or rural peasants in their own countries these people have become working class "wogs" in the "lucky country".

These migrant workers, in times of recession, or economic stagnation and due to racist and stereotypical attitudes, become the scapegoats especially in the political scene, where government and opposition take turns to speak either in favour, or against them. In the early 1990s, Keating's Labor government and now in the late 1990s, Howard's Coalition government have created a political discourse that connects unemployment and immigration. The threat of rapid economic change and long term unemployment, together with the Pauline Hanson phenomenon in 1997 have revived latent feelings against migrants. In 1996 when John Howard, the Liberal leader launched his election campaign, the Liberal policy on immigration was emphatic in its support of family reunion:

The family unit is the foundation of our society and must be at the core of immigration (and settlement) policy (Millet, 1997: 32).

However, in the last week of May 1997, the Federal Coalition Government blaming high unemployment, announced cuts to immigration by 6000 in addition to the 8500 already cut in that financial year. By reducing the number of places reserved for parents from 6000 to 1000 (Millet, 1997: 32),

the Australian government virtually ended the immigration of aged people to join family members already settled in the country. Asian groups were the most affected. As newly-arrived immigrants they are the largest users of the family reunion program. The public rhetoric behind such a move points to high unemployment. Following the economic rationalism stated in the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, Ruddock points out that

The cuts were necessary, because the migrants lacked the qualities necessary to produce a national benefit "These people are older, not able to access employment, impose significant costs on the community and do not give us a substantial economic benefit" (Millet, 1997: 32).

The political discourse as well as the Anglo "common sense" have tended to put an emphasis on the assumed inadequacies which immigrants bring to the "lucky country". As a consequence the political and popular discourses have rarely recognised the positives in the education (high, or technical), the expertise (professional or scientific), and the proficiency in the home language immigrants have transferred to the "promised land". They have not recognised the value of difference produced through what is now called "richness in diversity". As Rushdie declares:

not all migrants are powerless, the still standing edifices whisper. They impose their needs on the new earth, bringing their own coherence to the new found land, imagining it afresh (1992: 458).

Despite the rhetoric of the Australian multicultural policy, it has not produced the expected cohesion among the different cultural groups currently living in Australia. Multiculturalism has not been the panacea for the country's previous mistakes when immigration was approached from assimilationist and integrationist policy perspectives. It has not been able to cope with the differences embedded in each culture now present in the country. Multiculturalism has been a curious blend of sophistication and

naivety; it has expected that different forms of culture can effortlessly harmonise. But as Bhabha suggests:

it is actually very difficult, even impossible and counter-productive, to try and fit together different forms of culture and to pretend that they can easily coexist (Bhabha 1990: 209).

Conflict between cultures would seem to be inevitable; however, cultures can and have coexisted in multicultural societies. Bhabha proposes a kind of theoretical solution when he introduces the notion of "cultural translation" as a way of articulating different cultures in multicultural societies:

translation is a process by which, in order to objectify cultural meaning, there always has to be a process of alienation and of secondariness *in relation to itself* ... the act of cultural translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies the essentialism of a prior given original culture... (Bhabha, 1990: 210-11).

For Hall, translation is a "continuous process of re-articulation and re-contextualisation, without any notion of a primary origin" (1996: 393). From the concepts of difference and translation Bhabha also derives the notion of cultural hybridity, or "hybridisation", the process whereby two cultures retain their distinct characteristics and yet form something new.

All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity... so that identification is a process of identifying with and through another object, and object of otherness... The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha, 1990: 211).

Thus, the notion of cultural hybridity is important not because the origins from which the third emerges, but for what Bhabha called the "third space" that allows new political initiatives (Bhabha, 1990).

Multiculturalism remains an ambiguous and illusive phenomenon, "multiculturalism provides a convenient umbrella for the smorgasbord of

radical ideologies present in the academy" (Kimbal, 1991 cited in Cope and Kalantzis, 1992: 87). Multiculturalism is a vague concept and remains highly controversial (Castles, 1988). On one hand, it denotes a kind of relationship between racial and ethnic groups within the society, and on the other hand, it implies a set of policy prescriptions (McAllister, 1993). In Australian politics, it has become a necessary ideology, and has created its own constituency and institutional basis. Yet neither of the major parties has a clear idea of the way ahead in this area (Castles et al., 1990).

Political and taken-for-granted visions about the Other have recently begun gradually to change. During the colonial era it was the Anglo people who invaded far away places and imposed their language and culture on the "inferior races" overseas. Feelings of "scientific racial superiority" so strong at the end of last century are evident in this quote:

The descendants of the settlers who have gone out from England, Scotland, and Ireland may become a proud aristocracy, and may have their own work done for them by inferior races. These new social and economic conditions if they arise... will greatly modify the national character... Will the high-tempered Australian people, with their splendid visions of the future greatness and glory of their country, consent to share the control of its legislation and its policy with races of weaker fibre and inheriting neither the ethical nor political traditions which inform the manners and which inspire the laws of the Australian commonwealth? (Dale, 1899 cited in Hall, 1996: 75).

While the last bastions of colonialism are finally crumbling in the late part of the twentieth century, the so-called "inferior races" from the colonialist discourse, are no longer only living overseas, in distant parts of the world, in the countries where they were "colonised". The invaded have now become "pacific invaders" in the land of the "superior races", through the processes of immigration.

While the "superiority" of different races can no longer be supported scientifically because,

there is no dominant race, a race is not defined by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination. Bastard and mixed blood are the true names of race (Deleuze and Guattari, 1990 cited in Edgerton, 1996: 170),

the "white" descendants of Europeans continue to consider themselves superior to the "olive" and "yellow" skinned peoples who have emigrated and are living in their countries (King, 1978). In spite of the different immigration trends in different English-speaking countries, they share more similarities than differences in relation to the current wave of racism which is spreading in their cities. Today, it is not the "scientific" racism which justifies Anglo attitudes towards their fellow citizens, but the alleged cultural supremacy that sees the culturally different as deficient (Fox, 1997). Locals see immigrants as different and in a position of inferiority in relation to them and resort to their asserted cultural superiority to justify their hostile attitudes. As Bhabha argues

the concept of cultural difference focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority: the attempt to dominate in the *name* of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation (Bhabha, 1994: 34).

On the other hand, when Anglos continue to consider their culture as the only one worthwhile embracing, they find it difficult to accept the current situation of different cultures living in their country. In a way they are living in the past. It is the binary opposition of present and past which occurs in the ethnocentric discourse as well as tradition and modernity. Past and traditions means power and superiority, present and modernity means acceptance and sharing, elements difficult to embrace in modern societies (Bhabha, 1994).

Nowadays there are strong links between the ideas of nation and nationality which overlap with the concepts of cultural racism and race. They serve as an excuse for a strong cultural nationalism, as Gilroy (1992) explains:

we increasingly face a racism which avoids being recognised as such because it is able to line up "race" with nationhood, patriotism and nationalism. A racism which has taken a necessary distance from crude ideas of biological inferiority and superiority now seeks to present an imaginary definition of the nation as a unified cultural community. It constructs and defends an image of national culture (cited in Hall, 1992: 298).

The concept of cultural racism refers to the reduction of somebody from a specific group to a negative, or positive stereotype (Chow, 1994). Stereotyping means "the fixing of the other, as though with full knowledge" (Bhabha, 1983 cited in Gunew, 1993), or the creation of that "picture in our heads" that give us the idea that we have the knowledge of what "they" are like even before we have really met them (Klineberg, 1982).

Cultural beliefs of superiority may be related to dominant relationships inside a community. In Australia the white, mainstream, group is the one which holds the power (Bochner, 1982; De Lacey and Fielding, 1985). They consider their empowerment is a result of their cultural superiority (Partington and McCudden, 1993).

Currently, this is the situation in Australia, demographically speaking the sixth largest country in area⁵ and the English speaking country with the highest proportion of immigrants in its population except for Israel (Castles, et al., 1987, Kalantzis and Cope, 1988, Burnley et al., 1997), where public opposition to immigration, particularly of Asians, and to multiculturalism appears to have been strongest among working-class people who feel

⁵ Russia 6,592,800 sq mi; China 3,600,930; Canada 3,560,220; USA 3,539,230; Brazil 3,265,060; Australia 2,941,290; India 1,147,950 (World Almanac, 1997).

particularly threatened by current processes of economic and social change. The conflict over economic and social interests has been used to make openly public a racist discourse. Member of Federal Parliament, Pauline Hanson's following statement attempts to represent that public discontent against migrants:

I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. Between 1984 and 1995, 40 per cent of all migrants coming into this country were of Asian origin. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate (cited in Leser, 1996).

As a result in May 1997 Pauline Hanson's political party, One Nation, has emerged as a genuine political force, claiming a support as high as twenty five percent in the opinion polls. While the Prime Minister, John Howard, has argued that "Ms. Hanson would not survive the next election because voters would realise she had no answers", other politicians are less optimistic. Queensland Premier Rob Borbidge, for instance, said, "The figures are believable and they're troubling... I'm not a prophet, but I would take them seriously and I do take them seriously" (Farr, 1997). The debate on the Pauline Hanson phenomenon shows the dangerous twist multiculturalism has taken in relation to public attitudes. These discourses are not dissimilar from those which took place during the past racist White Australian policy formation nearly a century ago. As Bhabha points out:

in societies where multiculturalism is encouraged racism is still rampant in various forms. This is because the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests (1990: 208).

In the last decades, attitudes towards migrants have also followed the same trends in other Western countries. In the USA, for instance, the country with the highest immigrant intake in numbers, minority groups have been negatively and derogatively stereotyped with images of drugs, laziness and

gang criminality. For example, Smith and Feagin refer to a California study about Mexicans which found that:

a quarter of whites would find it distasteful to eat with a Mexican and that 37 percent felt that "Mexicans are shiftless and dirty" (1995: 11).

In Canada the situation seems to be even more complex. British and French colonisation has led to a division among the white population, some of whom have turned their discontent against indigenous people and immigrants, especially those coming from Asia (Castles et al., 1990).

In the UK, Balibar (1991 in Rattansi, 1994: 55) has used the terms "cultural racism" and "differentialist racism" to refer to the Englishness and aggressive Englandism that members of the dominant ethnic group have taken to express their fears of other cultures. According to Hall (1994) this kind of "fundamentalism" is present in Left and Right British political parties and in holders of extreme political views in Western Europe. This "new racism" is a substitute for the previously and now scientifically discredited biological theorisations (Barker, 1981 in Wieviorka, 1994: 182).

In schools, racism can take a number of different forms: for example, discrimination and stereotypes. According to Rattansi (1994), if the school system does not cope efficiently with immigrant children's needs it will be almost impossible to break with models which perpetuate stereotypes imposed on migrant children. If the system insists on repeating that girls are inferior to boys, that Black is inferior to White, then that is the message that the children are adding to their comprehension of the world (Torbe, 1986). One of the consequences in the UK, for example, has been the portrayal of British Asian and British African-Caribbean pupils at school as lazy and unacademic, resulting in acts of discrimination such as, placing them in

less academic streams and sets. However, as the same Rattansi points out, not every teacher holds these racialised stereotypes and the stereotypes are often contradictory in their attribution of characteristics (Rattansi, 1996).

In the classroom racism is reproduced by students stereotyping through generalisations such as “they’re not like us because...” and name calling, when students use terms with perceived racial characteristics, for example, “I don’t want to work with him. He is just a wog”.

Other racist behaviours include negative attitudes like rejection, or violence towards other students on the grounds of differences; and criticism of a teacher because s/he is perceived to be giving favoured treatment to a student who is a member of a particular group (Partington and McCudden, 1993).

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been stated that cultural identity construction and reconstruction is a highly complex and never-ending process that may begin in the home but continues among peers and the wider society. Language plays a crucial role in that construction, especially in the case of immigrants in a country whose language is different from the language spoken in their homes.

In countries of high rates of immigration, multiculturalism has been the current policy on migrant settlement since the mid 1970s. A monoculture is no longer desired and cultural diversity is supposed to be celebrated. Where before all other cultures than those of Anglo-Celtic origin had to disappear,

now culture is seen under the scope of plurality, where each different culture is allowed to express itself, though inside certain limits.

However, the language of multiculturalism is still full of terms such as Anglo, non-Anglo, ethnic, non-English speaking background (NESB), disadvantaged, among others more derogatory, like wog, skippy, etcetera. These ways of expressing social relations and the current political situation in Australia, have contributed to a climate of racism, in which the migrant comes under intense scrutiny, and is sometimes blamed for, situations of unemployment and social dysfunction in the country.

To teach migrant students and children of immigrants without prejudice from, and with respect for their gender and social class, and their ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics in a multicultural society is still an Herculean task which demands, first of all, great willingness to provide equal opportunity to learn in school and which sees multicultural education as:

a continuing process because the idealised goals it tries to actualise — such as education equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination — can never be fully achieved in a human society (Banks, 1993: 25).

Gathering

"God doesn't want us to separate out, but for some reason, it is in humans to want to stay with their own kind".

Frantz Sanon — Pastor
French-speaking Baptist Church of St. Lois.

Cited by Adam Cohen in *Gathering in Faith but not too Close*.
(*Time*, July 21, 1997: 105).

Reunirse

"Dios no quiere que nos separemos, pero por una u otra razón, está en los humanos que quieren estar con los de su propio tipo".

(My own translation).

CHAPTER THREE

M E T H O D O L O G Y

The present study has emerged from a need to explain the way Spanish-speaking background secondary school students construct and reconstruct their cultural identity. The purpose of this chapter is to outline and justify the research design. It delineates the research questions which have emerged from the literature and theory review presented in Chapter Two as well as the rationale presented in Chapter One.

The chapter provides an outline of data collection. This is recounted in two sections which correspond with the two stages of the research design, where stage one focuses on the students and the parents and stage two on the school and classroom contexts. The research utilises various techniques to collect qualitative data. For each data collection stage there is a description of, and justification for, the selection and structure of collection procedures, the selection and involvement of participants, the strategies for selecting and gaining access into the schools and classrooms, and procedures for lesson observations and recordings.

The first stage of data collection describes the process of interview. Details are given in relation to the interview schedule, as well as the importance of the in depth face-to-face interview for the present study. The second stage of data collection presents the instances of observation and outlines the three instances that were the contexts for collecting data inside the classrooms.

In the fourth part of the present chapter, the data analysis process is described, as well as the categories of analysis which were organised for the present study.

3.1 Research Design

During the second term of 1994, when this study began, it was decided that the best way of grasping the situation lived by non-English speaking background students at secondary school level, was to choose a specific group and investigate it in detail. It was thought that one of the best ways of addressing any of these minority groups, was exploring and talking about their reality in their own language.

Spanish-speaking background students were chosen to carry out the study because of the importance of the Spanish language in Australia in general and in the region where the study was carried out, in particular. Moreover, since Spanish is my mother tongue, I was in a position to be more easily accepted by the students and their parents. A sense of mutual acceptance was built, they considered me as a "trusted person" (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992: 39). In addition they regarded me as belonging to their group and a rapport was easily built up between the participants and myself. As a Spanish speaking person and as one who is other in a foreign country I could strongly identify with the participants' position and because of that I was welcome. I have to acknowledge that there are also dangers in this identification with their position and I have constantly been careful to step back and try to see what they were saying not only from their position but also from the position of researcher and as an outsider. Important to this were the dialogues I had with my supervisors both of whom are Anglo

women. These dialogues helped me to keep my own perspectives as a researcher.

The second important decision to make was in relation to the way of conducting the investigation and the way of collecting and analysing the data. As I was interested in the participants' perspectives, attitudes and feelings in relation to the contexts where they interact, a qualitative approach was chosen to carry out the study.

The research has taken the form of case study where the case (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1994) is each of the students and their contexts (Miles and Huberman, 1994), in their homes, schools and classrooms. This multiple case study approach calls for the interpretation of the spoken accounts provided by the students, their parents and their teachers (Tesch, 1990; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, Hopper, 1995).

The case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of a real life situation. The researcher attempts to establish connections by identifying questions such as what happens here?, how do people around here see things, how do organisations operate?, why does it happen here?, how does it happen here? and so on (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992).

The greatest strength of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and identify, or attempt to identify, the various processes at work. The researcher attempts to examine individuals in depth, tries to discover all the variables that are important in the history or development of the subject. It involves the collection of very extensive data to produce understanding of the entity

being studied (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The major limitation to the case study approach is of course the certain limitations to the generalisations that can be made.

The conceptual framework (Miles and Huberman, 1994) of the present study can be defined as the attempt to investigate the formation of identity in the context of those places where it is likely to be formed; that is to say the family, the school and the spaces in between. Both in its choice of this framework, and in the pursuit of issues reflected in the research questions, there was a need to understand a web of numerous social relationships existing in a heterogeneous and complex social situation. Thus, when there was a situation where many different variables were interacting it was deemed necessary that the situation be grasped as a whole, in an attempt to understand, interpret, and appraise not only the significant events, but also why they happened under the scope of the "participant's perspective" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). This need to grasp social complexity in a holistic way was a justification for utilising the present two-stage-research process and design in this study.

The initial purpose of the study was to investigate communication during classroom interactions between students and teachers and how they influenced chances of success or failure. However, as the study progressed, the family and cultural contexts became central to understanding the students and how they participated in the process of schooling. The welcome I received into the families' homes and their willingness to tell their stories also meant that I had access to background information not always available in educational studies. One of the consequences of this was a shift in emphases from classroom interaction to the home and classroom

context as these contributed to students' identity formation and opportunities for classroom learning.

The following chronological sequence provides an indication of the scope of the study:

- the second term of 1994, when the study began, was taken up with applying for authorisations, first from the Ethics Committee at the University, the NSW Department of School Education- Regional Office, the Catholic Education Office, then school Principals and finally the parents;
- 1995 was spent reviewing relevant literature, interviewing students at school and their parents at home, transcribing the interviews and analysing their transcriptions with the assistance of the *Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising* (NUD•IST) program;
- 1996 was spent observing, audio and video recording the English, Mathematics and Science lessons, interviewing teachers, talking to the students and parents after the observations, coding, classifying and writing up the data, updating and consolidating the literature review, and then discussing the process in fortnightly sessions with supervisors; and
- 1997 was devoted to interpreting the data and the literature, drafting chapters and holding long weekly discussion sessions with my supervisors while writing and re-writing the nine chapters of the study.

The combination of interview and lesson observation data collection in the study resulted from the assumption that the nature of the research problem suggested the method employed. In this case it was thought that the fieldwork would need to include diverse techniques to collect different kinds of information. Several forms of qualitative data could then be used to supplement and verify each other to see, for example, the relationship between parents' interviews and their children's classroom realities. In this triangulation (Creswell, 1994) students', parents' and teachers' interviews as well as classroom observations were intended to provide diverse yet complementary kinds of data on different perceptions and manifestations of schooling and negotiations of meanings inside the classroom.

In the second stage of the study, when the classrooms observations took place the teachers were invited to comment on the students, their progress and participation in their classes. Only a few of the teachers, however, agreed to be interviewed, and others made brief comments, during class breaks, that were more anecdotal than systematically gathered. Both interviews and comments are presented in Chapter Seven, *Classroom Challenge*.

There were further reasons why an observation procedure was chosen for stage two of the study. Having documented the existence of perceived situations relating to classroom interactions in stage one of the study, it was necessary to concentrate on how Spanish-speaking background students and their teachers acted in and interpreted these situations, with a view to providing information for future educational practice.

3.2 Research Questions

The research questions in the present study deal with the negotiations of meanings and cultural identity formation involved in the processes of parenting and schooling of Spanish-speaking background secondary school students. The following questions are focused on the Spanish-speaking background students who participated in the present study, and they explore the two phases of data collection which took place in the research.

- What are the key factors that affect Spanish-speaking background students' negotiations of meanings in the home, the school and the classroom?
- How does the home language of a specified group of Spanish-speaking background students contribute to the dynamic process of constructing and reconstructing their cultural identity?
- What are Spanish-speaking students' and their parents' expectations of the secondary school in relation to future opportunities?
- How do Spanish-speaking background students' parents involve themselves in their children's education?
- How does the school and its teachers influence the way Spanish-speaking background students negotiate their identities?
- How do schools and teachers in conjunction with the students' home background influence students' perceptions of success in the education system?

3.3 Research Processes

3.3.1 Research Process Stage One: Students and Parents

Negotiating entry into the schools was carried out in three stages. First, approval was sought from the Department of School Education and the Catholic Office of Education to approach six schools in one school region of New South Wales to provide the number of students in their schools coming from Spanish-speaking backgrounds. Three schools agreed to participate: a boys’ non-government school, a girls’ non-government school and a state coeducational school.

Second, the study was explained to the principals at each of the three schools which agreed to participate in the project. Third, sixty students across the three schools were identified as being from Spanish-speaking backgrounds. These were invited to participate through a letter of consent written in Spanish and English sent to their parents (see Appendix One). Of these sixty, twenty two students were allowed by their parents to participate in the research.

The following table indicates the distribution of the consent letter across the schools .

Table 3.1: Consent Letter

Parents	Boys’ School	Girls’ School	State School	Total Students
Parents Contacted	18	34	8	60
Parents Agreed	7	11	4	22

In the boys’ school the deputy principal did not allow students from Year Eleven and Twelve to participate in the study because he believed them to be too busy preparing for the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

The twenty two students allowed to participate were distributed across the school academic years as presented in the following table.

Table 3.2: Students Interviewed¹

Schools	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total Students
Boys’ School	Sergio Luis	Damaso Juan	Orlando	Braulio Ivan			7
Girls’ School	Helena		Carlota Marta Fernanda Ester Ursula		Zulma	Anabel Rita Violeta Noelia	11
State School	Berta	Patricia	Quimera	Gonzalo			4
Total Students	4	3	7	3	1	4	22

Once in the schools the following steps were taken:

- The principals and deputy principals, (See Appendix Two) of one state coeducational school and two non-government schools, introduced me to the Spanish-speaking background students.
- The study was explained to the students and they were invited to participate. With the students a timetable for the interviews was worked out with the students.

¹ Because of confidentiality pseudonyms for students and their parents have been used throughout the study.

- At the end of each interview and after having talked in an informal way, and establishing a good rapport with the students, they were told that I would like to talk with their parents as well, and they were asked if they could provide their parents' phone numbers. All of the students responded willingly, even enthusiastically to this suggestion.
- All the parents who were contacted agreed to be interviewed. In the letter of consent the interview had been already mentioned, and the time table for their interviews was arranged over the phone.
- In this first contact with the parents, they were given a detailed explanation of the study. Most of them already knew about the study from their children and were expecting the phone call. This helped to break the ice, and at the same time it made them willing to receive me in their homes and share some of their free time after work or on a weekend. Every one of the parents seemed to welcome with considerable enthusiasm the possibility of talking, for more than an hour, about their lives in Australia and their home countries as well as their children's experiences at school. After each of the interviews I was given a lift to my home. During that trip which lasted between twenty and forty minutes all of the parents expanded and commented enthusiastically and animatedly about the issues dealt with in the interviews. These conversations were immediately put in the form of field notes and helped to complement and illustrate parents' opinions and feelings.

Stage one of the study was designed to enable the collection of qualitative data from the students and their parents. In view of the purpose of stage one of the study it was decided that an interview would be better employed than a written survey. It was recognised that written surveys are limited by:

communication problems caused by possible ambiguities in question wording; the inability of some respondents to understand the survey; the lack of control over question sequence; non-response bias; the lack of personal motivation for respondents to provide full accurate answers; and the lack of flexibility in extending and following up responses (Tesch, 1990).

In this first stage of the study the research sought to collect first hand data from students and parents. For this reason, it was considered important to use in depth face-to-face open ended interviews, in which participants were encouraged to talk freely about their experiences, interests and points of view (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Besides, these kinds of interview allow interviewees to talk in terms of their own "frames of reference" (Tesch, 1990).

Such interviews possessed certain advantages: they were relatively long, but inexpensive to administer. Each interview with the parents took between one and two hours and with the students between thirty and sixty minutes. It is worthwhile mentioning here that all the participants agreed to have their interviews audio recorded (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992).

In the interviews and conversations, parents and most of the children talked in Spanish. Interviewing in Spanish avoided the interference of an interpreter and at the same time allowed the participants to express themselves without the constraints of using a foreign/second language. In that way they were able to tell their stories in their own words (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). I got the status of "trusted person" (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992: 39) through the process of interacting with the parents and students as a participant observer.

The present data, in the form of the participants' words, reflects the strength of their voices. The analysis of the data is illuminated by direct quotations from their conversations. The voices of all parents and most of the students are presented, in the study, first in Spanish as they enunciated them, and then in English in my translation of their words. The translation, however, is a very inexact way of expressing the participants' feelings and opinions. The ideas, manners, feelings and the metaphors parents and students expressed in the conversations with me have sometimes been difficult to translate into English. The power behind the words and the connotations embedded in their words have sometimes been diluted. Also as a native Spanish speaker, it was easy to interpret their words, but at the same time it was difficult to translate into English the connotations expressed in their words. The decision was made to retain the Spanish so that the richness in Spanish has been preserved together with the authenticity of the participants' voices.

Students were interviewed first at school. This first contact was very important, as the students became the ambassadors for the study. They told their parents about the study and about me and the result was excellent as all the parents wanted to be interviewed. Information was gathered regarding students' perceptions and experiences of their life at the high school and in Australia. The data indicate the degrees of expectation about the students' future, and the students' insights about home and school in Australia.

Parents were interviewed at their homes, after work hours or at weekends. Depending on the time of the interview I was asked to share their meals. These interviews provided biographical data about students' families and their stay in Australia, as well as the parents' experiences in their home

countries before coming to Australia This in turn helped to locate their lives historically within the context of the Australian immigration process.

The following table provides the distribution of the participants interviewed across schools.

Table 3.3: Participants Interviewed

Schools	Students	Parents	Teachers	Total
Boys' School	7	11 ²	6	24
Girls' School	11	17 ³	2	30
State School	4	7 ⁴	3	14
Total	22	35	11	68

In total sixty eight interviews were conducted: twenty two students, thirty five parents, and eleven teachers. Of the twenty two students; nine were Spanish (two sisters), eleven Chilean (two sisters and two brothers) and two were Uruguayan. Most of the students were interviewed at their schools mainly in Spanish. However, if they responded to the first question in English, they were asked if they wanted to continue the interview in English. For those students who responded positively it seemed that for the moment they felt more confident in English than in Spanish. Frequently, however, they mixed both languages and shifted freely back and forwards between English and Spanish. To conserve anonymity, all the students and their parents were given fictitious names.

Thirty five parents were interviewed: sixteen were couples and three separated mothers. All the parents were interviewed at their homes in

²There were two brothers and one of these parents was a separated mother.
³There were four sisters and one of these parents was a separated mother.
⁴ One of these parents was a separated mother.

Spanish, with the exception of one mother, a British woman who was interviewed in English. Eleven teachers were interviewed: six at the boys' non-government school, two at the girls' non-government school and three at the state coeducational school. All the teachers were interviewed in English at their schools. The other teachers who participated in the study and whose classes were observed, as was mentioned before, provided information about the students in short conversations during class breaks.

All the interviews were carried out in a very friendly atmosphere. More than interviews they were "normal conversations" (Alasuutari, 1995: 87), between a relative newcomer to Australia and the longer-term arrivals, the participants who talked about their varied experiences as immigrants or as children from immigrant parents. The students talked about the language they speak at home and at school, their relationships with their parents and peers, their dreams and ambitions for the future and their experiences of their school, teachers and peers. The parents talked about their life in their home countries and the reasons for emigrating to Australia, the places where they have worked, the difficulties they have faced in Australia, including their difficulties due to English language issues, the relationships with their friends and compatriots and their impressions about their children's schooling. The teachers talked concerning their relationships with the students and their parents, the way children behave in the classroom and how they perceived them in relation to the rest of the students in the various English, Mathematics and Science classes.

In the process of collecting data I moved from the position of outsider to the position of insider (Atkinson, 1990). As the study progressed and the sense of mutual trust consolidated between the participants and myself, I identified myself more and more with the participants and they started to

see me as one of them. Since my own experiences have been somehow similar to the participants' life stories I was situated in a unique position, I was able to explore, understand and interpret their life stories from within. Sometimes, however, it was difficult not to become involved emotionally when they were talking about the prejudice, discrimination and racial abuse some of them have experienced in Australia.

3.3.2 Research Process Stage Two: School and Classroom Contexts

The second stage of the research was intended to enable the collection of data which would add to and throw light on data collected during stage one. Here the objective was to describe interactions, attitudes, behaviour, events and personal accounts within schools. This stage of the research set out to help explain particular school situations by investigating participants in different classroom contexts where their interactions could be recorded. This approach was a response to the purposes of the study which were reflected in the research questions. Some of these questions directed the study to inquire about issues such as how interactions are manifested in classrooms, how students react to such interactions, and how they situated themselves in the process of participating in the lesson.

As part of stage two of the research process, schools had to be contacted again to gain access to classrooms. In the second year of the study, at the beginning of the academic year principals were contacted to get authorisation in order to proceed with the second stage of the research. The deputy principals in each school agreed to contact subject head teachers to ask them to request permission for me to observe the Years Eight, Nine and Ten English,

Mathematics and Science classes of those students interviewed in the first stage of the study.

Only English, Mathematics and Science lessons were chosen for observation, because these subjects are compulsory from Year Seven to Year Ten. In addition, they are crucial in the selection of future subjects in Years Eleven and Twelve, as well as in the choice of a possible future career at the university or at a technical college like TAFE.

English, Mathematics and Science head teachers were contacted personally prior to collecting data. These contacts were made to enable head teachers to understand the purposes and approach of the research, so that they could discuss it with the subject teachers before I met with them. It also enabled me to become at least superficially acquainted with school staff and facilities before meeting the teachers formally.

I was introduced to individual teachers by the subject head teachers. Explanations of research purposes and procedures were given to each teacher. These visits took place during the first school term and lesson observations were carried out in the second school term of 1996 for a period of three weeks for each school.

As this was the second year of the study the research continued when students had already completed the Year level in which they were first interviewed. Of the original twenty two students who were interviewed, Carlota dropped out of school at the end of Year Nine, Zulma was in Year Twelve and not available for observation and Anabel, Rita, Violeta and Noelia had finished their Year Twelve. Braulio and Ivan were at Year Eleven and not available for observation. Gonzalo dropped out of school at

the end of Year Ten. This left a total of thirteen students still involved in the study in the three schools, three in the state coeducational school, five in the boys' school, and five in the girls' school. The following table indicates the number and location of the students who were observed.

Table 3.4: Students Observed

Schools	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Total
Boys' School	Luis Sergio	Damaso Juan	Orlando	5
Girls' School	Helena		Ester Marta Ursula Fernanda	5
State School	Berta	Patricia	Quimera	3
Total Students	4	3	6	13

Classroom observations were carried out to understand how the school and particularly the classroom involvement influenced students' opportunities to learn. It was necessary to observe the students' participation in the lesson and their interactions with their teachers and peers. The observations were focused on the way teachers addressed the students, the way students responded to them, the students' involvement in the lesson and in group activities, and the way students addressed one another.

A letter of negative consent (see Appendix Three) was sent to every student in all the English, Mathematics and Science classes to be observed, to obtain permission for audio and video recording. Only three were sent back. Care was taken that these three students were not audio or video recorded.

The second stage of data collection was facilitated by the first stage of the study, due to the rapport that was built with the participants and the sense of mutual trust that had developed since the first personal contact.

In view of the purposes of stage two of the study it was decided that a range of data collection methods, including field notes, audio recording and video recordings would be used to get first hand data from the lessons. This was also seen as a progressive build up of familiarity with the classroom, and gradual acceptance of my presence, so that the video recordings in week three were less intrusive.

Three procedures were followed to gather data in the three school sites. During the first visit to each class only field notes were taken, on the second week, the classes were audio recorded and the last week the classes were video recorded. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992: 93) lesson observations are influenced principally by observer feelings, (Ely et al., 1991: 123), unrepresentative sampling, and limitations on the amount of data that can be accurately recorded and categorised simultaneously. While it is conceded that observation is necessarily selective and "can never be objective" (Ely et al., 1991: 53), attempts were made in the study to ascertain how bias affected lesson observations. Data collected through field notes and audio recordings were checked against the data gathered in the video recordings.

In the these three sets of observations I adopted the "fly on the wall technique" (Woods, 1986: 36; Ely et al., 1991: 45), observing events as they happened, naturally and as undisturbed by my presence as possible. In the process of taking written field notes, the lessons were observed from the back of the classroom. To get data with the tape recorder, I sat again at the

back of the classroom and a tape recorder was put on the teacher's desk and another one, when it was possible (lessons which took place in the laboratories for example), on the desk of the Spanish-speaking background students; both recorded the whole lesson and teachers' and students' voices were caught clearly in this way. The filming was done from the front of the classrooms, so it was possible to film the teacher's and students' movements, and interactions during the whole lesson.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

In stage one of the study interviews were transcribed and the data was analysed with the assistance of the *Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising* (NUD•IST) Australian computer package. This analysis procedure included describing and interpreting data and creation of coding categories (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). A tree was created with the following coding categories: biographical data (students' and parents' place and date of birth, date of arrival in Australia, occupation); reasons for emigrating to Australia, relationships to others (family members, acquaintances, friends, compatriots, Australians); Reasons for choosing the school where the students were studying; Experiencing (students' and parents' experiences at school, at home at work); Expectations (students' and parents' expectation in relation to their future); and Language (use of English and Spanish by parents and students).

Data analysis in stage two was descriptive and interpretative. This second stage of analysis also included analysis of teachers' ways of conducting their lessons and students' interactions and participation in the class activities.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter the research design and research process of the study have been outlined. The research process was designed to employ two stages of data collection. In the first of these, data were collected using a face-to-face open ended interview. In the second stage, lesson observations, teacher and student interviews were used to gather data in the three schools which participated in the study.

The following three chapters present the analysis of the data collected in the interviews with the students and their families. These chapters present a description of the twenty two students' families who participated in the first stage of the study.

The presentation of the students in Chapters Four, Five and Six is done chronologically on the basis of parents' year of arrival in Australia, starting with the Spanish background students in Chapter Four, followed in Chapter Five with the Chilean background students and finishing with the Uruguayan background students in Chapter Six.

Table 3.5 shows the distribution of the Spanish background students, Table 3.6 the Chilean background students and Table 3.7 the Uruguayan background students respectively. The information provided in this three tables is complemented with the parents' year of arrival in Australia, provided in Tables 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1 at the beginning of Chapters Four, Five and Six respectively.

Table 3.5: Spanish Background Students

Students	Country of Birth	Age of Arrival	Type of School	School Year Interview	School Year Observation
Carlota	Australia	—	Girls	Nine	—
Sergio	"	—	Boys	Seven	Eight
Anabel	"	—	Girls	Twelve	—
Marta	"	—	"	Nine	Ten
Fernanda	"	—	"	"	"
Braulio	"	—	Boys	Ten	—
Damaso	"	—	"	Eight	Nine
Juan	"	—	"	"	"
Rita	"	—	Girls	Twelve	—

Table 3.6: Chilean Background Students

Students	Country of Birth	Age of Arrival	Type of School	School Year. Interview	School Year. Observation
Gonzalo	Brazil	Nine	State.	Ten	—
Violeta	Australia	—	Girls	Twelve	—
Patricia	"	—	State	Eight	Nine
Ester	"	—	Girls	Nine	Ten
Helena	"	—	"	Seven	Eight
Noelia	"	—	"	Twelve	—
Berta	Chile	Two	State	Seven	Eight
Ivan	"	Five	Boys	Ten	—
Luis	"	Three	"	Seven	Eight
Orlando	"	Seven	"	Nine	Ten
Quimera	"	Eleven	State	"	"

Table 3.7: Uruguayan Background Students

Students	Country of Birth	Age of Arrival	Type of School	School Year. Interview	School Year. Observation
Ursula	Australia	—	Girls	Nine	Ten
Zulma	"	—	"	Eleven	—

Data collected in stage two of the research process, in the classrooms, are presented in Chapter Seven in which the students are presented according to their classes, starting by the upper, followed by the intermediate and finalising with the lower stream classes.

El Refugiado

Refugiado soy,
desarraigado de mi alero
yo no vine,
me trajeron.

Lo único que tenía
no lo pude traer:
el pico de las montañas,
el torrente de los ríos,
el murmullo de la selva,
la ráfaga de los vientos.

Lo único que tenía
no lo pude traer:
el sentimiento, las penas,
las iras, las carcajadas,
el olor a gente usada
y una nativa que me amaba.

Lo único que tenía
no lo pude traer.

Igual que en mi tierra
explotado soy aquí,
cambia no más de cara
la miseria de vivir.

Vendo sudor
compro cosas,
cambio suspiros
por cosas,
no tengo amor,
sino cosas.

Lo único que tenía
no lo pude traer.

Creía ser pasajero
pero el tiempo envejeció;
añoraba el regreso,
y el camino se me olvidó.

(Belarmino Sarna, 1992).

Refugee

I am a refugee,
displaced from my shelter
I did not come,
they brought me.

The only thing I had
I could not bring:
the peak of the mountains,
the torrents of the rivers,
the whisper of the jungle,
the current of the wind.

The only thing I had
I could not bring:
the feelings, the grief,
the anger, the laughing,
the smell of old people
and a native woman who loved me.

The only thing I had
I could not bring.

As in my ownland
I am exploited here,
the only thing that changes
is the misery of living.

I sell sweat
I buy things,
I exchange sighs
for things,
I do not have love,
but things.

The only thing I had
I could not bring.

I thought I was a traveller
but the time grew old;
I dreamt about going back,
and I forgot the way.

(My own translation).

CHAPTER FOUR

SPANISH BACKGROUND STUDENTS

This chapter introduces the Spanish background students and their families— that is students from families where one or both parents originally came from Spain. It is closely linked to Chapters Five and Six, which introduce the Chilean and Uruguayan background students respectively. Together these three chapters present some insights into the families and cultural contexts which are so important in the construction and reconstruction of the cultural identity of the students who participated in the study. Like all the students in the study, Spanish background students identify very strongly with their parents' culture. This is the case even though most of the students were born in Australia and some of them are losing their Spanish because the only place they have the opportunity to talk and practise the language is at home.

The information coming from the family stories has been interpreted in the context of the social, economic, historical and political events which were likely to have influenced the families' decisions to emigrate and their experiences as immigrants in Australia. These three chapters contain accounts of the parents' lives since they arrived in Australia and the students' own accounts about their experiences as children of immigrants. The latter are connected to Chapter Seven, *Classroom Challenge*, which details some of the events and incidents in which the students participated in their English, Mathematics and Science classes at school.

To assist in understanding the reasons for the various decisions to migrate to Australia, each of the chapters starts with a brief description of the

historical and political circumstances which took place during the repressive regimes in Spain, Chile and Uruguay respectively at the time when the participants or their parents emigrated. While some families talked more extensively about these events, for others the process seemed to be so painful that they just touched on them briefly and did not want to go into details. They avoided them by mentioning that they emigrated mainly for economic reasons caused by the military regimes. However, most of the families in the study left in times of political and economic uncertainties. As working class people they were the ones who were most likely to suffer the consequences of the repressive military regimes which ruled their countries. In this chapter the focus will be on the eight families where one or both parents came from Spain. Nine children were part of these families— five girls and four boys. The time of arrival of each of the families is shown in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Spanish Background Families' Year of Arrival

Students	1960	1962 ¹	1963 ²	1968 ³	1969 ⁴	1970 ⁵
Carlota	mother ⁶			father		
Sergio		parents				
Anabel/Marta		mother	father			
Fernanda		father	mother			
Braulio			mother		father ⁷	
Juan					mother	father
Damaso					mother	father
Rita						parents

¹ In the financial year 1961-62: 1,831 Spanish-born-people settled permanently in Australia (*Australian Immigration Quarterly Statistical Bulletin*. Vol. 2 N° 20. July 1966).

² In the financial year 1962-63: 4,639 Spanish-born people settled in Australia (ibid).

³ In the financial year 1967-68: 1,386 (ibid. Vol. 3 N° 8, June 1968).

⁴ In the financial year 1969-70: 1,745 (ibid. Vol. 3 N° 16, June 1970).

⁵ In the financial year 1970-71: 1,986 (ibid. Vol. 3 N° 20, June 1971).

⁶ Carlota's mother came from Britain. In the financial year 1959-60: 68,105 British-born-people settled permanently in Australia (Ibid. Vol. 2 N° 16. July, 1965).

⁷ Braulio's father came from Chile. The number of Chile-born-people settling permanently in Australia has been counted since the financial year 1973-74, see Chapter Five. (Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Popular Research, 1995: 4).

The Spanish families left Spain between 1962 and 1970. These were the last years of the military regime of Francisco Franco who ruled the country for thirty six years, from March 1939 until he died in November 1975. In 1969, when Franco's regime officially came to an end he designated Prince Juan Carlos, the grandson of Alfonso XIII, to become his successor and King of Spain. With Juan Carlos on the throne, Spain made the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The first elections were held in 1977 and a new constitution was drafted in 1978. In 1982 Spain made a final break with the past by voting in a socialist government and Felipe Gonzáles became President of the government until May 1996 when José Maria Aznar succeeded him (Almanac, 1997, SBS World Guide, 1997).

Although the parents, who came from Spain, have generally been in Australia for quite some time, most of them speak English with a very strong accent and have had troubles with the grammar and phonetics of the English language. On the other hand, all of the children were born in Australia and speak more English at home than those who were born, for example, in Chile and whose parents also speak more Spanish at home. All of these students attended non-government schools. The boys attended a school for boys and the girls a school for girls. The presentation of the students below has been arranged chronologically, based on Table 4.1.

4.1 Carlota

What struck me most about Carlota during the interviews was the conviction and determination with which she talked. She was a student in the study who has had to come to terms with his triple heritage: born in Australia of Spanish father and British mother. She identified very strongly as Spanish, as did the other eight Spanish students in the study. At the time

of the interview, she was fourteen and in Year Nine. At the end of that academic year she dropped out of school before Year Ten. She was the only student in the study who dropped school. She lived with her parents, Carlos and Carla, and an older brother who was seventeen and finishing his secondary education at another non-government school.

Carlota's father, Carlos, emigrated to Australia at the end of 1968. In Spain, he had worked in the metallurgical industry but he considered that he earned very little money, so he started to consider the possibility of emigrating to Canada or Australia. He chose Australia mainly because he wanted to earn sterling pounds and he thought that in Australia he could be paid in that currency.

At the beginning he said that he felt terribly lonely until he found a job on a tobacco plantation in Queensland, where he worked until 1972. Early in 1973 he moved to NSW and started working in the construction of a new road in the western suburbs of Sydney. His third job in Australia was at the Factory, where he was employed as a unskilled worker for six years, after which in 1979 he set up his own business in the metallurgic sector.

Carlota's father was the only man interviewed who did not marry in Australia to a Spanish or Latin American woman. Carlos met Carlota's mother, Carla, when he was working in the western suburbs of Sydney. She was from Yorkshire and came to Australia in 1960. When Carlos met her, he did not speak a word of English, but they got along and got married at the end of 1973. They had three children: Carlota's oldest brother who was working with his father, another brother who was in Year Twelve at another non-government school and Carlota.

While Carlos said that he managed to learn enough English to communicate with his wife, the English language has been a terrible ordeal for him. After 26 years in Australia he understood and spoke English but he thought that his pronunciation was never going to be like his wife's. For him English was a very difficult language; he had never studied it and had started to read in English only two years before the interview took place.

Although the family spoke English at home, Carlota's mother said that she was always asking her husband, Carlota and her older brother to speak in Spanish in order to practise and improve her own Spanish. So Carlota spoke Spanish at home most of the time and she also spoke Spanish at school.

Hablo siempre español en la escuela para que las demás chicas no entiendan lo que estamos hablando y en casa porque mi padre dice: "si no habla español no come". Algunas veces me olvido que estoy en la clase y le pregunto a la profesora en español, ahí mis compañeras me dicen no!, tienes que hablar en inglés. A algunas profesoras no les importa pero otras se fastidian conmigo y me tiran de la clase.

(I always speak Spanish at school, so the rest of the girls cannot understand what we are talking about, and at home because my father says: "if you do not speak Spanish you will not eat". Sometimes I forget I am in the class and I ask the teacher in Spanish, then my peers say no!, you have to speak in English. Some teachers do not care but others get angry with me and tell me to leave the room).

Carlota's father rents films spoken in Spanish and the whole family watches them almost every day. When I visited them in their home, they were watching an American movie, without subtitles and dubbed in Spanish. They said they rented those films from a specialised video shop which had large number of movies translated into Spanish. Carlos considered that watching those movies helped the children and his wife improve their Spanish. For Carlos it was very important that his children spoke Spanish.

He commented that Carlota's older brother spoke it better than she did. Both children have studied Spanish in the Saturday School of languages and have also learnt the language in their yearly trips to Spain and with their father at home.

Being Spanish is very important to Carlota and she finds it very irritating to be called Australian. She compared the freedom which she experienced in Spain, with the constraints imposed on her by her parents when she was in Australia. She said that her parents were always worried about what might happen to her when she has contact with people from other ethnic groups and because of that she considered that her parents over protect her. As a result she said that she felt locked up in Australia. In comparison she said that when she has visited Spain several times, her parents were not worried and she really enjoyed her holidays and the freedom there.

Me siento encerrada porque no puedo salir, en cambio cuando he estado en España de vacaciones puedo salir y regresar a la hora que quería, puedo ir a cualquier lugar sin que mis padres se importen. Ellos dicen no hay problema, está en casa, esta con nuestra gente.

(I feel locked up because I cannot get out, instead when I have been in Spain on holidays I can get out and come back at any time, I can go anywhere without my parents being worried. They say there is no problem, she is at home, she is with our people).

Carlota's mother was a full time "house wife" because her husband did not want her to work. Carlos said that it was not necessary for her to work because she had everything without working. As Carla had more time, she used to go to the school when parents were called and for the parent-teacher interviews. Carlota's father never went with her because he said that he had no time due to his job. Carlota's mother also helped in the school canteen on a voluntary basis.

As was the case for most of the parents in the study, Carlota's parents chose non-government schools for their children because they considered that these schools impose more discipline on the children. However, they said that they were concerned with their daughter Carlota because the school did not improve their daughter's behaviour.

In particular, Carlota's parents were not very happy with their daughter's plan to be a hairdresser. According to them she was wasting her time at school because she did not like studying; the only subject she really liked was Spanish. In turn, Carlota said that her parents wanted her to work and earn money. Carlota's parents declared that she was a difficult child but they thought that there was a solution to that problem:

¡Que se case con un buen marido!, un chico al que le guste estudiar y que tenga interés en progresar, y trabajar un chico como su hermano.

(That she marries a good husband!, a boy who likes studying and has interest in progressing and working, a boy like her brother).

On the other hand Carlota's parents expected Carlota's older brother to go to the university. Unfortunately he wanted to study marine biology in Brisbane and his parents were worried about this idea because it was going to be very difficult to afford it. They said that they were not in a position to spend fourteen or fifteen thousand a year on their son's studies in Queensland.

Despite being born in Australia and having a British mother, Carlota seems to be one of the strongest of the students in her protestation about being Spanish and her readiness to accuse others of racism. Carlota said that at school she did not like any subject because of her teachers, she considered that they were racists.

Los maestros son muy racistas y no me dan ganas de estudiar con maestros así, si le contamos a los profesores que ellos son racistas, nos meten en más problemas. Un día me enojé con el profesor de inglés porque él dijo Uds. los “wogs” son todos iguales y yo le dije que él sólo consideraba a las australianas y él se enojo y me mando fuera de sa la sala.

(The teachers are very racist and I don't feel like studying with that kind of teacher, if we tell the teachers that they are racist, they get us into more problems. One day I got angry with the English teacher because he said you wogs are all the same and I told him that he only considered the Australians and he got angry and sent me out of the room).

Given Carlota's negative attitudes to school, and strong desire to be a hairdresser, it was not a surprise to find that Carlota was no longer studying when I came to observe students in the schools in the following year. Carlota finished Year Nine and dropped out of school. When the school phoned Carlota's home to find out why she did not return to the school at the beginning of the academic year, Carlota's parents told the deputy principal that she had started to work as an assistant in a hairdresser's.

4.2 Sergio

Sergio was a very talkative boy who started to talk to me before any question was asked in the interview. He was thirteen, at the time of the interview, and in Year Seven. He lived with his parents, Sandra and Simon, and a sixteen-year-old sister who was finishing her secondary education at another non-government school.

Sergio's parents came to Australia with their own parents in 1963. Both were little children when they emigrated, Simon was six years old and Sandra five. Sergio's father was from Madrid and his mother was from Galicia. According to Sergio's parents, both parental and maternal

grandparents had very little education, they were almost illiterate, they did not even finish their primary education in Spain. They were very poor and emigrated to Australia in the search of a better economic future.

Ten years ago Sergio's father had almost all his relatives in Australia. Since then they have started to go back so that only his parents and his sister remain in Australia. The other relatives had returned because they were not happy here and they missed Spain too much. As Simon says:

Ellos realmente odiaron haber sido transplantados desde su hogar en su tierra natal a este extraño país de Australia. Cuando las personas son adultas, es muy difícil, es como tener que transplantar un árbol con todas sus raíces.

(They actually hated being transplanted from their home in the home land to this strange country of Australia. When persons are adults, it is very difficult, it is like having to transplant a tree with all its roots attached).

Both Sergio's parents are Australian citizens but they still regard themselves as Spanish. Sergio's mother identified herself as Spanish and said that she missed Spain. However, she also said that when she was in Spain, and they had visited their home country three times, she missed Australia. They thought the Australian way of life was too quiet in comparison to the Spanish one.

Sergio's mother said that she worked in the home full time because she liked taking care of her two children and her husband. Sergio's father first worked for TELECOM Australia (now TELSTRA Corporation Limited) and later for the Factory as an electrical technician. He also worked in his own business, with two partners in the electronics area for five years until the business closed down. He was unemployed at the time of the interview.

Sergio's parents both did their primary and secondary education in Australia. When Sergio's father was sixteen he finished his secondary school. Because he did not want to continue studying, he followed his parents' advice and went to TAFE to study electronic engineering. However, he said that he wanted Sergio to go to university.

Sergio said that had not thought about a future career yet but he said that he wanted to continue studying. He said that his parents were always talking about how important it is to study, because without studying and training it is much more difficult to get a job.

Sergio's father studied in both public and non-government schools and from this experience he came to the conclusion that non-government schools impose more discipline on the students than public schools. This was the main reason that Sergio's parents decided to enrol their two children in non-government schools.

Sergio's parents both spoke English at home but Sergio's father was always looking for an opportunity to speak Spanish because he liked speaking the language, so he was very pleased to be interviewed in his home and in Spanish. Sergio's mother said that it was easier for her to speak English but she commented that she had to speak Spanish with her parents and her husband's parents.

Both Sergio's parents went to the school parent-teacher interviews and talked to those teachers who asked them to do so. Normally they did not interact with the other parents, but Sergio's mother said that she had met a few mothers when she had been helping in the canteen. In the primary school she knew Sergio's teachers and she used to go to the school almost

every day to pick up Sergio. But in the secondary school Sandra considered that it was practically impossible to know all Sergio's teachers because there were too many.

When Sergio was three he attended preschool where he did so well, the teachers recommended that his parents enrol him in kindergarten. At four he started to go to kindergarten but there he had to repeat the Year because he was too young to go to Year One. Sergio remembered this incident and his first comment in the interview was about it. He said that due to that he was a year behind, he should be in Year Eight instead of Year Seven. Sergio also compared his English classes at the primary and secondary school and made the following comment:

I didn't like English last year at the primary school; it was too boring. Now I like it because it is more interesting, we are doing drama and writing a story at the same time.

Sergio was studying Spanish on Saturdays in the neighbourhood school and he also commented that he studied Spanish at the primary school. However, the whole interview with Sergio was conducted in English, and Sergio said that he spoke English at home. When he visited his grandparents, however, he had to speak Spanish because they did not speak English.

I cannot express myself that good but I understand it all most of the time; it is harder to express myself in Spanish, but with some of my relatives I have to speak Spanish.

Although Sergio felt more confident talking in English than in Spanish he said that he identified first as Spanish and then as Australian.

I am Spanish because my parents are Spanish as well as all my relatives who live in Spain. I am Australian because I was born in Australia.

4.3 Sisters Anabel and Marta

Anabel and Marta are sisters and live with their parents, Mercedes and Alan. When they were interviewed, Anabel was eighteen and Marta fourteen. Anabel was in Year Twelve and Marta in Year Nine. Both sisters were, as most of the students in the study, very much aware of their cultural identity and the complexity it represents for them. Anabel in particular referred to this issue and talked about her dilemma.

The sisters' mother, Mercedes, arrived in Australia in 1962 with her parents, when she was six years old. Their father, Alan, arrived from Spain as a child, in 1963. Mercedes and Alan met in the Spanish club, where their parents used to take them for dances and parties. After a year of being engaged they got married in 1976. Both parents have been back to Spain several times, Mercedes for the first time when she was fifteen and then again in 1976 for her honeymoon. Alan returned two years ago to attend his mother's funeral. Anabel and Marta have not yet visited Spain and are very anxious to do so. Anabel is going first when she finishes her Year Twelve and in three years time Marta will do the same.

Both parents identify very strongly as Spanish and have participated very actively in the Spanish club. Alan was the president of the club for several years. Neither parent has Australian citizenship. Mercedes took out Australian citizenship when she finished her high school, so that she could work in the Commonwealth Bank, a government agency. When she married, her father-in-law, who was always afraid of being deported and leaving some members of his family in Australia, persuaded Mercedes to cancel her Australian citizenship.

Que si hay algún problema a todos nos mandan para España y tú te quedas aquí sin nosotros, sin tu familia.

(If there is any trouble they will send us back to Spain and you will have to stay here without us, without your family).

Even when she had Australian citizenship, she said that she never voted nor felt like an Australian. Like the other parents, in the study, Mercedes took out Australian citizenship not because of commitment but because of convenience.

Alan worked in his own business in the metallurgic field, Mercedes worked as secretary for a doctor. Although Alan thought that it was not necessary for his wife to be in paid work because he could afford to have her at home without working, Mercedes said that she liked working and spent most of the day outside the home.

The family spoke both English and Spanish at home. Both parents said that the language of the conversation depended on the occasion and who they and their daughters were talking to. The girls added that they could switch easily from one language to the other, for example, when their Spanish relatives visited they spoke only in Spanish. Marta referred to her grandparents and said:

Mis abuelos, cuando hablo español con ellos se ponen muy contentos y orgullosos.

(My grandparents when I talk to them in Spanish, they get so happy and proud).

However, both sisters commented that their parents spoke in Spanish when they were happy and talkative, but when they got angry and wanted to quarrel they started to talk in English; they were switching all the time from one language to the other.

Both sisters claimed Spanish as their first language. They said that they spoke Spanish with their Spanish and Latin American friends at school, so that the rest of their classmates could not understand the theme of their conversations. Anabel said that she remembered when she went to the primary school she could not speak English. She was a child with limited access to English models outside school (Gibbons cited in Derewianka 1992: 286), because at that time she was living with her grandparents who only spoke to her in Spanish. She said that when she was distressed, she would always speak Spanish. Six years later, she laughed when she remembered her last day at her primary school.

En el año seis, era el último día de clases y mi trabajo era vaciar los papeleros en el cubo grande de basura y como yo era bajita me tuve que subir encima de una cerca y cuando yo estaba vaciando el papelerero una chica me empujó adentro, ahí yo comencé a gritar y pedir ayuda en español y unos chicos que hablaban español me ayudaron a salir.

(In Year Six, it was the last day of school and my work was to empty the waste paper basket and I was short I have to climb a fence and when I was emptying the basket a girl pushed me down into it, there I started to cry and asked for help in Spanish and some boys who spoke Spanish helped me to get out).

Marta and Anabel were proud of speaking Spanish, and when they had the opportunity they showed it off, especially at the Spanish club when they talked to the old Spanish ladies who attended the club. Both were studying Spanish. The older daughter, Anabel, was doing a one year Spanish language course at the local university in order to sit for the "Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera" (DELE)⁸. This Certificate of proficiency in Spanish language allows students from non-Spanish speaking countries to study at Spanish universities. Marta attended Spanish classes run by the Spanish local community. She said she liked attending those classes very

⁸ Certificate of Spanish as a Foreign Language.

much. As she had never been to Spain and was very eager to do so, she said that she often asked her Spanish teacher a lot questions about Spain.

Both Anabel and Marta identified themselves primarily as Spanish and they were very proud of their Spanish origin and the way their parents had passed the Spanish tradition to them. As Anabel said:

Me gusta como ellos me han enseñado a ser española y quiero hacer lo mismo con mis hijos.

(I like the way they have taught me to be Spanish and I want to do the same with my own children).

Whereas Marta said that when someone referred to her as Australian she responded that she was Spanish, Anabel was less certain about her identity. For her,

Es muy difícil porque no sé lo que te debes de llamar: española, australiana o qué, es como que estás en medio de los dos, en casa casi siempre hablo en español, entonces en casa me llamo española, pero como vivo en Australia y nací en Australia, entonces soy Australiana; es muy difícil.

(It is very difficult because I don't know what you should be called: Spanish, Australian or what? it is like being in the middle of both, at home I always speak in Spanish, then I called myself Spanish, but as I live in Australia and I was born in Australia, then I'm Australian; it is very difficult).

Like her sister, she was also thinking of travelling to Spain and making full use of her Spanish passport. Anabel said that she wanted to feel what it would be like to be staying with her many Spanish relatives in Spain. That future trip however, presented a problem for Anabel because she had a lot of relatives in two different Spanish cities: Algeciras and Asturias, her father's and mother's home lands respectively. Relatives in both cities would want her to stay the whole holiday period with them so that, as she

said, unfortunately, there would not be enough time to enjoy the company of all her relatives.

Mercedes and Alan preferred a non-government school for their daughters because they believed like many of the other families in the study, that in this kind of school, discipline was stricter than in a public school. In addition, they thought that at the end of secondary school, there were more possibilities for finding work for those students who came from a reputable non-government school.

Anabel was doing the basic level of English but she liked it because she was not studying Shakespeare. According to her studying things like Shakespeare's literature was a waste of time because she said that she would never use that kind of knowledge in a future job.

From the subjects Anabel was doing in her Year Twelve, the one she liked most was Biology because,

Me gusta aprender de mi cuerpo, como fui hecha y cosas así y biología me ayuda a entender eso.

(I like learning about my body, how I was made and things like that and Biology helps me to understand that).

Another of Anabel's favourite subjects was Religion and it was not because she was a devoted Catholic,

me gusta religión no porque sea muy católica, en la clase nos dejan expresarnos y no sólo aprender la biblia y esas cosas, por ejemplo la semana pasada yo escribí una canción y como yo toco la guitarra la pude cantar enfrente de la clase y eso tiene que ver mucho conmigo porque yo me expreso en canciones.

(I like religion not because I'm very Catholic, in the class they allow us to express ourselves and not only to learn the bible and those things, for instance last week, I wrote a song and as I

play the guitar I could sing it in front of the class and that has a lot to do with me because I express myself through songs).

At the time of the interview Anabel belonged to a Christian group which met every Sunday. Anabel and her Australian and Spanish Christian friends organised excursions, outings and other activities where members had the opportunity to express themselves through singing.

Anabel had always wanted to be a primary school teacher and in this her parents had always encouraged her.

Quiero ser profesora de niños pequeños de cinco a doce años, ahora mismo estoy enseñando español a varios chicos en le barrio.

(I want to be a teacher for small children, from five to twelve years of age, right now I am tutoring several children in Spanish in the neighbourhood).

The year following the interview Anabel was successful in gaining access to the local university. Anabel said that she was very happy and her parents were very proud of her because she has been able to fulfil and achieve her desire and ambition to pursue her Bachelor of Education.

Marta said that she did not like the school where she was studying because, according to her, the girls were very fond of quarrelling and fighting, and too often they called each other names such as "wog" and "skippy". She also believed that some of the teachers picked on those girls identified as wogs.

El año pasado mi compañeras australianas al lado mío estaban hablando y la profesora pensó que era yo y me sacó de la clase sólo porque yo era "wog".

(Last year my Australian peers next to me were talking and the teacher thought it was me and took me out of the class just because I was wog).

Marta favourite subject was Mathematics because that year she said that she was not having the difficulties she had had in Year Eight. She thought it was due to the new teacher who gave more homework and did not stop until everybody understood the topics discussed in class. Marta also liked English but she disliked computer studies because the teacher gave too much homework and she did not have enough time to be working at home just in front of the computer.

4.4 Fernanda

Fernanda was fourteen and, at the time of the interview, was in Year Nine. She, like most of the students in the study, did not like being called Australian. She lived with her parents, Sebastian and Silvia, and two younger sisters who were studying at a primary non-government school.

Fernanda's parents left Spain with their own parents. Sebastian was from Córdoba and her mother, Silvia, was from Pamplona. Sebastian emigrated to Australia in 1962 with his parents when he was twelve years old and Sylvia when she was three years old in 1963.

Like many of the Spanish parents interviewed, Sylvia and Sebastian met in the Spanish club, where they used to go dancing with their parents. They got married after a year of engagement. Fernanda's father like all of the other Spanish husbands interviewed, with the exception of Carlota's father, married Spanish women whom they had met in Australia.

Although Fernanda's parents had completed their secondary education in Australia, both he and his wife had serious trouble with the English language. Fernanda's father completed his primary school in Spain and

when he came to the high school in Australia the English language was a major problem for him. He said that he did not understand anything for a year. Since then it has been very difficult for him to learn English, because as he said:

Esta lengua inglesa se escribe de una manera y se pronuncia de otra, ha sido muy difícil para mí.

(This English language is written in one way and it is pronounced in another, it has always been very difficult for me).

Fernanda's father finished Year Ten in 1965, when he was fifteen and since then he has been working at the Factory for twenty nine years doing the same job. At the time of the interview he was in his early forties and was looking forward to his retirement. Fernanda's father was one of the few fathers interviewed who did not have a business of his own.

Fernanda's mother worked as a secretary for a health insurance company until Fernanda was born in the second year of her marriage. Since then she has worked at home as a housewife. In the interview she described to me how she liked having everything prepared for her three daughters and her husband when they came back home from school and work respectively.

Fernanda's parents had chosen non-government schools for their three daughters principally because of what they perceived to be the stricter discipline imposed on the children in a non-government school. Sylvia had attended the same school where her daughter Fernanda was now studying. Fernanda's mother said that she believed that the school was not so strict as it was when she was studying. Sylvia also thought that children were better treated in a non-government school than in a state coeducational school. For Fernanda's father the fact that the girls wore a uniform, especially after

class, was very important; he thought that girls tended to behave well when they were wearing a uniform which could be easily identified. Both Fernanda's parents were happy with the education their daughter, Fernanda, was receiving and they had no complaints. They thought their daughter was not brilliant and they did not ask her to try harder.

Fernanda's mother said that she was the one who used to go to the school for the parent-teacher interviews, although her husband had sometimes also attended. In addition, Sylvia had been involved in the preparations for International Night, a celebration which takes place in spring once a year and where the girls show off their traditional costumes and cuisine.

Fernanda's parents said that they spoke English at home eighty per cent of the time and Fernanda's mother declared that she felt very comfortable speaking this language, although she said that she spoke Spanish with her parents and her husband's parents. She would have liked to have studied Spanish systematically but when she was at school, Spanish was not offered as a subject. Fernanda and her sisters were studying Spanish in the evening after school. Fernanda's parents thought it was important for them to speak another language, because they believed it would be helpful for the girls when they were looking for work in the future.

It was interesting to notice, during the interview, how easily Fernanda switched several times from Spanish into English and vice versa. Fernanda said she spoke English and Spanish at home; with her father Fernanda spoke more Spanish and with her mother she spoke more English. As well as attending Spanish school in the evenings she was studying Spanish by correspondence and Italian at school because Spanish was not offered as part

of the curriculum. At school she always talked in Spanish with her Spanish-speaking background peers, especially her Uruguayan friend Ursula (6.1).

Fernanda said that she was hoping to go to Spain when she finished Year Twelve. Like the other students in the study, Fernanda identified herself as Spanish and did not like being called Australian, and besides she said that most of her friends were “wogs”. Talking about this in the interview she said in English:

When somebody calls me wog, if they are wog as well, I don't care but if it's someone else, I really turn round and say something back. When we are in a group of only wogs we call each other wog.

It seemed that the word wog was used as way of self-identification by the children in the study as well as a way of derogative naming by those who interacted with them in the school.

Fernanda was keen on finishing Year Twelve and obtaining her HSC. She believed that with the HSC she could find a well paid job, she said that “after all, completing Year Twelve means getting a job more easily than just with a school certificate and where you can earn good money”. Fernanda said she was doing well in Mathematics but not in English; she considered that Mathematics was more important than English, “English is just reading and comprehension”. At home she studied more Mathematics than English, she disliked Mathematics because of the teacher. Fernanda said that “the teacher rushes from one exercise into another without giving enough time to copy them from the board”.

4.5 Braulio

Braulio, at the time of the interview, was fifteen, and in Year Ten. He was the second student in the study who has had to come to terms with his triple heritage: born in Australia of Chilean father and Spanish mother. He lived with his parents, Agata and Alfonso, a twenty-year-old brother, who was studying mechanical engineering at TAFE and a younger sister, who was also at a non-government school.

Braulio's mother, Agata was born in the southern Spanish city of Algeciras. She came to Australia with her own parents and her older brother in 1963. Agata's parents could not adapt to their new life in the new country so they decided after two years to return to Spain. Agata and her brother studied English in Australia, and as both liked the country, when their parents left, they decided to stay for good. Braulio's parents met at the beginning of 1970, when Agata was interpreting⁹ for Alfredo, and at the end of the same year they were married.

Braulio's father, Alfredo, emigrated alone to Australia in November 1969. He was at the University of Chile doing his first year in the Faculty of Engineering but at that time the universities in Chile were the focus of political turmoil. Following his father's advice, Alfredo decided to come to Australia in order to continue his studies. A year later he was married and responsible for a family. As this point he said that he gave up his studies and started to work as a driver.

⁹ In Australia in the early seventies interpreters without formal qualifications used to be hired by banks. National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) was initially established in 1977 by the Commonwealth Government. On 1 July 1983 NAATI was re-established as an independent body, jointly funded by the Commonwealth, the States and the Territories. (NAATI. Candidates' Manual, 1995: 1).

Braulio's father has travelled back only once to Santiago at the end of 1973 when he spent six months with his parents and two younger brothers. He has not travelled to Chile since that visit, but he says he would like to spend some holidays in Santiago with his wife and children and the rest of the family. Alfredo telephones his parents regularly because he says there is not enough time to sit down and write a letter.

One of the consequences of the Spanish emigrating first to Australia was that the relationships with later arrivals, that is Spanish speakers from the Americas, mirrored a whole set of politics which goes back to colonial invasions. Braulio said that sometimes when their parents quarrel they draw on this discourse of colonialism and invasion. After twenty four years of marriage Agata still remembers what Alfredo told her when he proposed marriage and she accepted him:

Los españoles conquistaron Chile pero yo te conquisté a ti

(The Spaniards conquered Chile but I conquered you).

These words of Alfredo's words are full of historical allusion. They refer to Christopher Columbus's voyages that took place in the last decade of the fifteenth century, when he "discovered" America and Spanish "conquerors" spread their power across the Indian nations of that time. Alfredo's mother said that her husband's words also represent, to a certain extent, a triumph of a Chilean over the Spanish men, because as Agata explained when the first Chileans started to arrive in the early seventies they were called Spanish and the Chileans were not very happy with that. She also remarked that in the seventies when Chilean and Spanish people got together some Spanish used to remark that the Spanish "conquered" America. Such remarks points out the conflict that there was in the 1970s between both groups.

Braulio's father was a lorry driver. He had his own truck but after an accident he decided not to work any more on his own and took a job at the Factory, the major industry in the district. Alfredo used to start working at three in the morning and finish at three in the afternoon, so that he had very little time to talk to his children because when they arrived from school he was resting, or sleeping. Nevertheless, he added that sometimes it was possible to have dinner with the whole family and to ask the children about the school.

Braulio's parents are Australian citizens, but Braulio's father describes himself as totally Chilean; he said that he had always felt an immigrant.

No importa cuanto tiempo tú estés en este país, veinte, veinticinco, treinta, cincuenta años, la sociedad australiana nunca te aceptará; tú siempre serás un inmigrante y te tratarán como inferior.

(It does not matter how long you stay in this country, twenty, twenty five, thirty, fifty years, the Australian society would never accept you; you will always be an immigrant and will be treated as an inferior).

Braulio's parents placed his older brother in a public primary school but they withdrew him because of what they described as a lack of discipline. They moved him to a non-government one and since then their three children have been studying in non-government schools. Their choice was also founded on the belief that it was much easier to get a job for school leavers who had finished their secondary education in a reputable non-government school.

Braulio's parents said that they spoke English at home because they decided it would help their three children with English. This followed the trouble Braulio's older brother had with the language when he started school because his parents spoke only Spanish with him. Braulio was one of those

interviewed who because he did not answer the first questions in Spanish, the rest of the interview continued in English.

Braulio identified himself as Chilean and Spanish and, he said: "on paper I'm Australian but in blood I'm Chilean and Spanish". At school when some of his peers called him "wog", he said that he did not pay attention, that for him "it was just kidding".

The family often went to the Spanish club where Braulio's sister danced flamenco, his mother was active in various committees and his father liked to eat paella, talked in Spanish and danced to Spanish and Latin American music.

Braulio said that at school he liked Mechanics. He added that he liked car Mechanics best:

Actually I love mechanics, in holidays, you know, I help my father to build up engines and I fixed my own engine.

Braulio also liked English in spite of the fact that "my English teacher hates me, every lesson she is angry at me". The subject Braulio disliked was Science: "just the animals, I don't like nature and all that".

Braulio was very keen on finishing high school because his father had promised to go with him to Chile at the end of Year Twelve. Braulio had never been to Chile and all he knew about the country had been through the stories his father and his older brother, who travelled there some years ago, had told him.

4.6 Damaso

Damaso was fourteen and in Year Eight at the time of the interview. He seemed to be a quiet boy and his teachers and parents attributed his quietness and apparent apathy to his asthma. He lived with his parents, Daniel and Dorotea, and an older brother who was seventeen and was studying technical drawing at TAFE.

Damaso's mother, Dorotea, emigrated to Australia with her mother and sisters, in 1969. She said that it was very hard for them at the beginning, they found that everything was different and Dorotea cried for six months. Dorotea's brothers had arrived in Australia three years before in 1966. At the time, Dorotea's family was living in Brazil, where they spent five years in the city of São Paulo. When her father died Dorotea and her mother joined her brothers in Australia. Her brothers arranged everything in relation to the trip through the Catholic Mission. However Dorotea said that she and her family had to pay back the price of their tickets. She added that they did not receive any economic help either from the Australian government or the Catholic Mission.

Damaso's mother said that she started to work in Australia when she was fourteen because she had to help her family. At the time her English was very poor and it was very difficult for her to express herself. She learned the language in her job, talking to her work mates and by attending classes at nights. Now she said she enjoyed reading in English and hardly ever uses her bilingual dictionary. Dorotea, in a mixture of shame and pride, that is almost apologetically, described how as a full-time housewife she worked at home all day long every single hour of the day.

Damaso's father, Daniel, was a welder in Spain and came to Australia as a contract worker in 1970. Damaso's parents met in 1973 in the Spanish club and got married in 1974. They had just finished paying off their house, at the time of the interview. As Damaso's mother declared "finally, after twenty two years of partnership with a bank". Dorotea said that she was very happy now that she could save some money, perhaps even take a trip to Spain in the not too distant future.

Damaso's parents spent most of their free time at home, and when they went out they visited their relatives and Spanish friends. They spoke Spanish at home but when they spoke with their children, the boys sometimes answered in English. For Damaso's mother that was a real pity because she said that she saw how the children were losing the language. They did not go to the Spanish school because they said it was too much work to attend the normal school during the day and the Spanish one in the evening.

Damaso's mother had stopped going to the school to help in the canteen since her arthritis started to get worse, but she attended the parent-teacher interviews. From her point of view these were very unsatisfactory. In the ten minutes of talking with her son's teachers there was no opportunity to really communicate with them and discuss her son's situation at the school.

Te dan diez minutos y el profesor te apura porque están todos los padres esperando afuera, no hay tiempo de dialogar o exponer tu punto de vista, especialmente cuando el inglés te cuesta un poquito.

(They give you ten minutes and the teacher hurries you up because all the parents are waiting outside, there is no time to build a dialogue and expose your point of view, especially when English is a little difficult for you).

During the interview Damaso preferred to talk in English, he said that he felt more comfortable speaking in English because he was in Australia. But, like the other Spanish students, he said that he considered himself Spanish. He liked reading the sport sections in the Spanish newspapers and magazines that his parents frequently bought. At school Damaso said he talked in Spanish to his Spanish-speaking background peers when they played soccer, particularly when they wanted to take up strategic positions, so the rest of the players could not understand.

Damaso admits that it is because of soccer that he likes to go to the school. When talking about the subjects he was studying in Year Eight, Damaso disliked Science because he said it was too hard, he was studying atoms. He also disliked English, he said "I study for the tests but when they come, they are a bit hard". He commented that he had troubles with written comprehension. The subject he liked was Mathematics because he said "I'm good at Mathematics". Damaso liked all his teachers but he preferred male teachers because, according to him "they sometimes explain better and impose more respect". This comment will be taken up again in Chapter Seven, *Classroom Challenge*, where the comments of teachers referring to the different attitudes some students have towards female and male teachers are documented.

4.7 Juan

Juan was fourteen and, at the time of the interview, in Year Eight, he lived with his mother, Julia, and a twenty-three-year old brother who was working for a removal company. Juan and Damaso are cousins. Juan's parents were the only Spanish parents in the study who were separated.

Juan's mother, Julia, was from Madrid and she arrived in Australia in October 1969 when she was twenty years old. She came with her parents and six brothers and sisters. One of her younger sisters is Dorotea, Damaso's mother (4.5). Like her sister, Julia had never gone back to Spain. At this point in her life, she had lived more in Australia than in Spain and if she travelled to Spain she would do so, with her Australian passport.

When Juan's mother arrived in Australia, she and her family went to live in a working class suburb on the outskirts of the Metropolis, she commented on her house:

Una choza de fibra de vidrio que parecía un iglú con bien poco aislamiento, pocas ventanas y sin tela para las moscas.

(A small fibreglass hut which looked like an Eskimo igloo with very little insulation, few windows and no fly screens).

Juan's mother said that during those first years in Australia she felt like going back to Spain but her mother would not allow her to do so. As a way of making Julia feel better, her mother used to take her to dances held in the Spanish club. As happened to most of the other Spanish women in the study, it was at one of these dances that Julia met Juan's father, a Spanish born man.

When Juan's parents married, Juan's mother said that she thought that her social life would improve but it got worse. She commented that her husband controlled her life for sixteen years, and during her marriage the language spoken at home with her husband was only Spanish. She was separated from her husband, at the time of the interview, and she said that since her separation and divorce she had more opportunities to practise English. She had stopped feeling ashamed to talk with her neighbours, and she felt confident when she went, for example, to the doctor alone and did

not need an interpreter to explain her symptoms. She said she could read with the help of a dictionary but she could not write in English. Juan's mother said that she has never studied English. Her English is from television. In any case she explained that she was not interested in learning to write in English, she thought that she would never work in a place where English was required.

Juan's family lived in a house owned by the Department of Housing Commission and she said that she was a full time "house mother" taking care of her two boys. Juan's older brother helped his mother to make ends meet. At the time of the interview he was giving his mother a hundred dollars a week. Juan's mother thought that for him it was cheaper to live with her than living on his own paying a full rent and board.

Since their divorce, Julia said that her ex-husband had hardly ever seen the children. Julia commented that it was she who decided, by herself, what was the best for her children. She put them in a non-government school because she considered the discipline was stricter than in a public one, and where she was contacted when the children were having troubles at school.

Julia said that although Juan was not good at studying, she would like him, at least, to finish his high school, find an occupation and marry. She said that her sons' future is her future. She was waiting for him to turn eighteen so that he could work in a security company belonging to one of her brothers. Juan's aspirations matched his mother's; he wanted to finish his Year Twelve, be a security guard and work with one of his uncles.

Juan understood the first questions in Spanish but he answered them in English, so the rest of the interview was carried out in English. Juan said

however that he had a lot of friends but his best ones were those who spoke Spanish, like his cousin Damaso. When they played soccer together, they communicated in Spanish so the rest of the players would not know their strategies during the game. Juan was very fond of soccer which he played at the school and in the neighbourhood club.

Juan used to study Spanish when he was at primary school but he said that now that he was at high school he had no time to do so because the teachers gave him too much homework. Juan felt sometimes like playing truant but he was very afraid of his mother: "Mum kills me if I do that, a lot of boys do that but she does not me want to do that". Juan also said he liked all the subjects, especially History, and he commented that he liked the way the teachers explained the topics.

4.8 Rita

At the time of the interview, Rita was eighteen and in Year Twelve. She, like the other Spanish students who have travelled to Spain, commented about the freedom of action and movement she enjoyed in Spain. She lived with her parents, Rafael and Rosalia. Her older sister, who had studied technology and communications at the local university, used to live with the family until she got married the year before the interview, and moved to Sydney, where she was working and living with her husband, an Australian-born man of Greek background.

Rita's parents, Rafael and Rosalia, were the only Spanish parents in the study who came to Australia as a married couple. They were married in their home town, Extremadura, in Spain. In 1970 they emigrated to Australia from Germany, where Rafael worked for a year. Rafael said that in

Germany he was earning very good money, but unfortunately the German winter was affecting Rita's mother health, so they made up their minds to come to Australia and its milder weather.

Although Rita's father was an Australian citizen he has always thought of going back to Spain. He saw himself as only being in Australia because of the economic circumstances. He has been on holidays in Spain three times and every time he was there he said he found it very difficult to come back to Australia.

Rita's father said that when he arrived in Australia he studied English for a year, and in that time learned enough to find a job in the Factory. He commented that after twenty five years in Australia he still has troubles with the written language. There are always words that he does not understand and he has to ask for their meaning.

Rafael and Rosalia chose a non-government school for their daughters because they were Catholic and they thought that the children should follow their parents' religion. They preferred a non-government school because it kept parents informed about the problems students had at school. Rafael and Rosalia thought that it was very important to know what was happening with their daughters at school. Rita's mother went to the school to the parent-teacher interviews, twice or three times a year; Rita's father went with her when his job allowed him to do so.

Rita's parents always spoke Spanish at home; they only spoke English when they were visited by somebody who did not speak Spanish. Rita's father said that the older daughter had no trouble at all when answering in Spanish but

the younger one, Rita, had some minor problems when dealing with the language.

Rita and her sisters had gone to Spanish classes at night and Rita's father said that sometimes it was not easy for them, especially when they were completing Year Eleven. But Rita's father said that he encouraged them to study Spanish, because he believed culture came with language.

Como padre tienes que enseñar a tus hijos tu cultura y si no enseñas la lengua, la cultura no va detrás; eso es lo más importante: enseñar a tus hijos lo que es tuyo, lo que tú sabes.

(As a father you have to teach your culture to your children and if you do not teach the language, the culture does not follow; that is the most important thing: to teach your children what is yours, what you know).

Besides, he also believed that another language was important, it made things easier for children, in the future, when they spoke a second language. Rita was also doing the "Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera" (DELE) with her friend Anabel (4.3).

Rita had been to Spain twice, the first time when she was only four years old and she was taken by her parents to be shown to the rest of the family in Europe. The second time she was thirteen and really enjoyed her holidays in the company of her cousins and the rest of her Spanish relatives. She said that in Spain young people stayed late at night in the streets playing and talking and in Australia it was quite the opposite.

Lo que más me llamó la atención fue la libertad que tienes y no tienes que volver a casa temprano y mis padres no tenían miedo porque yo andaba con mis primos y sus amigos; en cambio aquí en Australia mis padres tienen miedo de que yo salga en la noche porque dicen que hay gente de muchas nacionalidades y es muy peligroso.

(What amazed me was the freedom you have, you do not have to come home early and my parents were not afraid because I was with my cousins and their friends; on the contrary, here in Australia my parents are afraid for my safety if I get out at night because they say that in Australia there are too many people from different nationalities and that is very dangerous).

At school Rita's favourite subject was Computers. She liked the teacher a lot, and she said that the teacher made the students happy as she taught and spent a lot of time with the students who did not understand new instructions. Another subject Rita liked was English but, as she said, unfortunately she changed teachers every two weeks when she started a new unit. Rita also liked Mathematics but she considered the teacher sometimes was too strict. Rita disliked Legal Studies because the teacher was always telling her to stop talking when she talked with her Italian friend who sat next to her.

4.9 Conclusion

Where I expected that the Spanish families would present a different scenario from the Chilean and Uruguayan families because they have been in Australia longer, this was not the case. The Spanish parents who emigrated as young children have experienced the same discrimination and prejudice, the same racism and the same isolation their children in the study are facing now at school. These Spanish families seemed to be very close and both parents and students identified very strongly as Spanish and also as wogs. The students keep constantly referring to themselves in relation to their wogness. It seems that the students feel comfortable when they are called wogs by another wog, as though by appropriating the term for themselves they can reduce the sting. They feel offended, however, when an Anglo-Australian refers to them in the same way.

For most of the parents, Spanish is the main language of communication from which they derive little benefit in the wider Australian society. For the students, on the other hand, it seems to represent an advantage from which they seem to profit. It seems it is rewarding for them to speak English without an accent and at the same time speak Spanish and communicate with their parents, grandparents, relatives and friends in Australia and Spain. It seems that the fact of identifying as Spanish and wog makes them more able to bear the constant pressure they experience in the contexts in which they interact outside the family.

These Spanish-Australian students seem in some ways to be able to play with their cultural identity and they seem able to negotiate, some better than others, their positions in the different contexts in which they interact. They talked about the complexity of living and studying in Australia. Those who have travelled to Spain, talked about the freedom they have experienced among their relatives and friends in their parents' Spanish home towns. They have also talked about how once back in Australia their parents assumed over-protective positions because they are, to some extent, afraid of their children coming in contact with people from other backgrounds. On the other hand as will be demonstrated in Chapter Seven *Classroom Challenge* their children liked interacting with their wog friends coming from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Traídos Por La Ruleta

Una mestizo americana que alcanzó la elevada posición de secretaria, contaba cómo se hacía la selección de inmigrantes en la Asociación Nacional de Industria y Comercio.

Se reunió el Consejo Selectivo de Inmigrantes: Hay que traer más mano de obra. Aún no disponemos de robots. Se nos van a parar las fábricas, quién alimenta las máquinas? Los pisos están apelmazados de basura y los sanitarios tapados.

A quién traer? Se escuchan propuestas fundamentadas. Dentro de los tradicionalistas: que hablen inglés sugieren unos.

Si pero que sean blancos, agregan otros.

Que hablen inglés, que sean blancos y además, Cristianos, conceptuaron estos.

Además de hablar inglés, de ser blancos y Cristianos, que compartan los valores de nuestra Civilización Occidental, exigieron aquellos.

No solamente que hablen inglés, que sean blancos y Cristianos, que compartan los valores de nuestra Civilización Occidental, sino que también estén de acuerdo con nuestro régimen parlamentario de Westminster, complementaron los de más allá.

Ah, pues "blanco es, gallina lo pone y frito con sal se come," más "pommies" (ingleses). De ellos ya estamos hartos. Vienen como príncipes, se sienten superiores. No, hay que cambiar. Con los mismos valores, pero de otra parte, enfatizaron los contemporizadores.

Entonces qué, ¿multiculturalismo?, refunfuñaron los tradicionalistas.

Lo importante es que sirvan los intereses económicos de la comunidad, argumentaron los gremios representantes de las Fuerzas Vivas.

Concretando: Qué tal de Irlanda? Enredado, pero hablan el inglés.

Y beben bastante, asintieron los cerveceros.

No, vienen a alborotar a las Uniones, objetaron los capataces de la Industria.

Son republicanos, católicos y revoltosos, observaron los monárquicos.

No hubo acuerdo.

De la India, ¿qué tal? Con acento, pero hablan inglés.

Y no practican la violencia. Si les pegan en una mejilla, ponen las nalgas, como Gandhi, adujeron las Fuerzas del Orden.

Pero no son Cristianos, refutaron los clérigos.

Y no son blancos, agregaron los racistas.

Pero es gente muy sana, hasta en la comida, entusiasmados apoyaban los verduleros.

No, de ninguna manera, los hindúes como vegetarianos que son, no consumen carne estancarían nuestros negocios, rechazaron los carniceros.

No hubo acuerdo.

Bueno traer árabes, entonces. Algunos entienden inglés.

Sí, son buenos ahorradores, subirían los depósitos, asintieron los banqueros.

No, son demasiado tacaños, no consumen nada, reprochaban los comerciantes.

Pero les gusta el almíbar más que a las abejas, salvarían nuestra industria en ruinas, clamaron los azucareros.

Los árabes no son Cristianos, puesto que nunca se les ve en los pubs (cantinas), son musulmanes, protestaron los cerveceros.

Pero fuman lo suficiente para mantener nuestra industria en pie, recalcaron los tabacaleros.

Pero en cambio, no consumen jabón, no se bañan, observaron los productores de detergentes.

Bueno, a nosotros no nos importa que no se bañen, en cierta forma nos conviene, nos preocupa en cambio que, en particular las mujeres hediendo tanto, no usen perfume, recalcan los productores de cosméticos.

No hubo acuerdo. Y los Asiáticos, ¿qué tal? Muchos hablan inglés.

Y son callados, sumisos, caminan sin levantar la cabeza, puntualizaron las Fuerzas del Orden.

Sí, pero no son Cristianos, repusieron los clérigos.

Pero cocinan sabroso y consumen bastante grano, alegaron los arroceros.

No, son muy chicos, necesitan muy poca tela, adujeron los textileros.

Nunca los vemos en las fábricas, apenas llegan se abren un restaurante. Al poco tiempo sus hijos están en la Universidad, para más tarde desalojar a los nuestros de las posiciones relevantes, objetaron los defensores de la anglosajonidad.

Nos conviene mucho los asiáticos, no tendríamos el temor de una invasión del "Demonio Amarillo," puesto que habiendo bastantes aquí no se justificaría, sostuvieron los guardacostas.

No se integran a la comunidad, nunca los vemos en el pub, se mantienen como quiste en cuerpo extraño... y carcomiéndolo, carrasieron los racistas.

No hubo acuerdo. Y ¿qué tal Italianos, ah?

Ya tenemos bastantes. Si sigue creciendo su colonia, les va a dar por traer al Papa, trasladar el Vaticano a King Cross (Cruz del Rey), protestaron los protestantes.

No hubo acuerdo.

Bueno entonces Griegos.

No, ya son muchos. Si siguen viniendo, no va a quedar quien nos sirva en Atenas, chillaron los agentes viajeros.

No hubo acuerdo.

Como último recurso, tendríamos que traer Sudamericanos, ¿les parece? hablan inglés.

No, corrigió uno, español hablan.

Pero si son del sur de América, deben hablar inglés.

No, hay que aclarar, no son del sur de los Estados Unidos, son de la América del Sur, de la parte de abajo. Son colonia del Norte sí, pero no de la parte de él. Y sus amos, ni siquiera les han enseñado el inglés, los mandan a señas.

Pero consumen en abundancia, adujeron los cerveceros.

No ahorran nada, de ellos casi no tenemos depósitos, quisquillosos los banqueros.

No, de ninguna manera, juegan Soccer (fútbol) y no les gusta el Rugby, comentaron las ligas deportivas.

No importa, son buenos consumidores de asado, argumentaron los carniceros.

Carnívoros, sí, hasta antropófagos son, se comen los unos a los otros. Acuérdense del caso de los uruguayos esos accidentados en la Cordillera, asustados se quejaron los de la Liga Protectora de Animales.

Bueno, pero al fin y al cabo, pertenecen a la Civilización Occidental y son Cristianos.

Sí, ¿pero que clase de Cristianos?, se están inclinando hacia la tal "Teología de la Liberación," constituyen un peligro, amonestaron los tradicionalistas.

Ah, ese sí que es argumento definitorio.

Todos rechazaron.

No lográndose la unanimidad requerida respecto a quienes traer, pero teniendo que traer a alguien, entonces optaron por una solución salomónica: La Ruleta. Después de girar largo rato, para despejar toda sospecha de trampa, el índice de una mano peluda que constituía la aguja de la ruleta, fue a detenerse en el color gris que nos habían asignado en el mosaico, para marcar la nación Mestizoamericana. Gracias a la ruleta.

(Belarmnino Sarna, 1992).

Brought By The Roulette

A South-American mestizo¹ woman who reached the high position of secretary, told how immigrants were selected in the National Association of Industry and Commerce.

The Cabinet for Immigrant selection met: More manpower has to be brought. We do not have robots yet. Our factories are going to stop, who feeds the machines? The floors are full of garbage and the toilets are blocked.

Who is going to be brought? Justification proposals are heard. Among the traditionalists: they must speak English someone suggests.

Yes but they must be White, others added.

They must speak English, they must be White and Christians too, someone conceptualised.

As well as speaking English, being White and Christians, they must share the values of our Western Civilisation, someone demanded.

Not only must they speak English, they must be White and they must be Christians, they must share the values of our Western Civilisation, but also they must agree with our Parliamentary Regime of Westminster, the rest of them added.

Ah then!"it is a piece of cake as the saying goes. More "pommies' (English). But we are fed up with those. They come as princes, they feel superior. No, we have to change. With the same values, but somewhere else, the modernists emphasised.

Then what, multiculturalism? the traditionalists strongly complained.

The important thing is that they would be good for the economic interests of the community, the Unions, representatives of the Labour Force.

Becoming more specific: What about from Ireland? They squabble, but they speak English.

And they drink a lot, the beer producers assented.

No, they come to disturb the Unions, the foremen of the industry objected.

¹ Webster's dictionary defines mestizo as "a person of mixed blood; a person of mixed Spanish and Amerindian blood". The Mestizo-Mexicano-Indian History. Available <http://www.wessma.com/-kennylee/archiveARCHIVE/NATIVE%20AMERICAN> (Accessed 22 December 1997).

They are Republican Catholic and agitators, the Monarchists observed.

There was no agreement.

From India, what about that? They have an accent, but they speak English.

And they do not practise violence. If they are beaten on one cheek, they turn the other, as Gandhi did, the police force said.

But they are not Christian, the clergymen complained.

And they are not White, the racists added.

But they are very healthy people, as far as food goes, the greengrocers supported enthusiastically.

No way, the Hindus, vegetarians as they are, do not consume meat, they would stop our businesses the butchers retorted.

There was no agreement.

Well let's bring Arabs, then. Some of them understand English.

Yes, they are good savers, their deposits would rise, the bankers agreed.

No, they are too stingy, they do not consume anything, the merchants demurred.

But they like syrup more than the bees, they would save our industry from ruin, the sugar producers declared.

The Arabs are not Christian, and so they are never seen in the pubs, since they are Muslim, the beer producers protested.

But they smoke enough to keep our industry working, the tobacconists insisted.

But on the other hand they do not use soap, they do not take a bath, the detergent producer observed.

Well, but for us that is not important that they do not take a bath, in a way that benefits us, what worries us instead is that the women stinking so much do not use perfume, the cosmetics producers insisted.

There was no agreement. And the other Asians, what about them? Most of them speak English.

And they are quiet, submissive, walk without raising their heads, the police force pointed out.

Yes, but they are not Christian, the clergymen responded.

But they cook savoury food and consume plenty of grain, the rice producers claimed.

No, they are too short, they need very little fabric, the textile producers complained.

We never see them in the factories, as soon as they arrive they open a restaurant. After a while their children are at the university, so that later they take over the important positions, the defenders of Anglo-Saxon way objected.

The Asians are very convenient for us, we would not have the fear of an invasion by the "Yellow Peril" if there were enough of them here it would not be justified, the coastguards maintained.

They do not integrate with the community, we never see them in the pub, they maintain themselves like tumours in strange body... and eat into it, the racists mumbled.

There was no agreement. And what about Italians, eh?

We already have enough. If their colony continues growing, they are going to think about bringing in the Pope, moving the Vatican to King's Cross, the Protestants protested.

There was no agreement

Well then Greeks.

No, there are already too many. If they continue coming, nobody will remain in Athens to serve us, the travel agents screamed.

There was no agreement.

As a last resource, we would have to bring South-Americans, do you think? they speak English.

No, someone corrected, they speak Spanish.

But if they are from the South of America, they must speak English

No, we have to clarify this, they are not from the South of the United States, they are from South America, from down under. They are a colony from the North yes, but they do not belong to it. And their masters have not even taught them English, they order them by signs.

But they consume a lot, the beer producers proclaimed.

They do not save anything, from them we almost have no deposits, the bankers were uneasy.

No way, they play soccer and they do not like rugby, the sport associations commented.

It does not matter, they are good consumers of roast meat, the butchers argued.

Carnivores, yes, they are even cannibals, they eat one another. Remember the case of the Uruguayans, those who had an accident in the Andes, the animal lovers complained with fear.

Well, but in the end, they belong to the Western Civilisation and they are Christian.

Yes, but what kind of Christian? they are inclining to that so called "Liberation Theology," they are a risk, the traditionalists declared.

Oh, that is a definitive argument.

Every one was rejected.

Without the expected agreement in relation to whom they should bring but having to bring someone, then they opted for a Solomonic solution: The Roulette. After spinning the wheel for a long time, in order to avoid any doubt of cheating, the index finger of a hairy hand which was the arrowhead, stopped on the grey colour which had been chosen to mark the South-American Mestizo nation. Thanks to the roulette.

(My own translation).

CHAPTER FIVE

CHILEAN BACKGROUND STUDENTS

This chapter introduces the Chilean background students and their families. While 1970 was the last year for the Spanish families to emigrate to Australia, it was the first one for the Chilean families. In contrast to the Spanish background students who were all born in Australia, only five of the eleven Chilean background students were born in Australia. The parents of these students arrived between 1970 and 1976. Another five whose parents arrived between 1985 and 1991 were born in Chile, and one was born in Brazil.

The nine Chilean families in the study left Chile between 1970 and 1991. The 1970s was a period of political turmoil which was followed by difficult economic times and political uncertainties. A Marxist, Salvador Allende Gossens, took office after his election to the presidency on September 4, 1970. Dr. Allende was the first President in a non-Communist country freely elected on a Marxist-Leninist platform. Allende's overthrow and death in an army assault on the presidential palace in September 1973 ended a 46-year era of constitutional government in Chile. The takeover was led by a right-wing four-man junta headed by Army Chief of Staff Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, who assumed the office of President in September 1973. Pinochet was inaugurated on March 11, 1981, for an eight-year term as President, at the end of which, according to the Constitution adopted six months earlier, the junta would nominate a civilian as successor. He stepped down in January 1990 in favour of Patricio Aylwin who was elected December 1989 as the head of a 17-party coalition. The presidential election of December 1993

saw the reemergence of a member of the Frei family when Eduardo Frei, the candidate of a centre-left coalition whose father had been president from 1964-70, won (Almanac 1997). However in these almost three decades there has been very little improvement for the Chilean working class people and one of the solutions for some of them has been to emigrate.

Table 5.1 below shows the year of arrival in Australia of the nine Chilean background families.

Table 5.1: Chilean Background Families’ Year of Arrival

Students	1970 ¹	1974 ²	1975 ³	1976	1985 ⁴	1988 ⁵	1991 ⁶
Gonzalo	parents						
Violeta	mother				father		
Patricia		parents					
Ester/Helena			parents				
Noelia				parents			
Berta					parents		
Ivan/Luis					parents		
Orlando						parents	
Quimera							parents

Like the Spanish families, these nine Chilean families are very close and both students and parents identified very strongly as Chileans. In contrast to the Spanish students who all studied in non-government schools, four of these Chilean students studied in a state coeducational school, the another seven in non-government schools.

¹ Numbers of Chile-born-people settling permanently in Australia has been counted since the financial year 1973-74 (Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Popular Research, 1995: 4).
² In the financial year 1974-75: 1,203 Chile-born-people settled in Australia(ibid).
³ In the financial year 1975-76: 1,905 (ibid).
⁴ In the financial year 1985-86: 2,037 (ibid).
⁵ In the financial year 1988-89: 1,358 (ibid).
⁶ In the financial year 1991-92: 244 (ibid).

5.1 Gonzalo

Gonzalo was the only student in the study who did not finish his secondary education at a secondary school; he received his School Certificate and went to TAFE to continue his education. He was, at the time of the interview, sixteen and in Year Ten at the state coeducational school. Gonzalo was born in Brazil. He lived with his mother and his Australian-born older sister. Gonzalo lived in São Paulo until he was nine, before coming to Australia in 1988. Gonzalo started his primary education in Brazil and finished it in Australia.

Gonzalo's parents arrived in Australia for the first time in 1970. Both were in their early twenties and at that stage without children. Gonzalo's parents left their home country because they were young and wanted to travel, to have some adventure. At the beginning of their stay in Australia Mabel was pleasantly surprised. She said that she found everything beautiful and different, but the young couple missed the liveliness of their home country and begun to get bored. They felt isolated, particularly Mabel who with nothing to do after work and no friends to talk to said that she felt, terribly alone.

Mabel began looking for work, she did not speak English but she did not worry about that. She said that she was young, full of life and worked most of the time. She remembered when she was walking from factory to factory saying "am looking for job, am looking for job". "OK, they'd say, fill in this form". She did not understand what was on the form, she only recognised the words: "name" and "date of birth"; that was more than enough. When asked when would she like to start, she said, "now" and almost immediately she was working on an assembly line. She would work for a

while at one place and when she got bored with the job, she would quit and move to another factory saying "am looking for job, am looking for job". She said that in the early seventies it was that easy to get a job in a factory in Australia.

Gonzalo's mother started to lose her enthusiasm for Australia when she started to feel the "racism in her own flesh". In her job she was humiliated several times and she began to feel tired of that treatment. At the same time her English was improving and she started to understand the insults and the names she was called.

Yo trabajaba en silencio pero siempre había alguien que decía alguna cosa y algunas veces me sentía muy deprimida.

(I worked in silence but there always was somebody who said something and sometimes I felt so depressed).

After six years Gonzalo's parents got tired of their robotic life in Australia; Mabel said that they were really bored. Gonzalo's father had a cousin, who always wrote to him, inviting him to go and work with him in Brazil. He had always wanted to go and Mabel, since she was a child, was attracted by the idea of visiting that country, so in 1976 they emigrated to Brazil. They travelled by boat, it was a nice cruise, a second honeymoon as she said.

Mabel recalled how the first two weeks in São Paulo were terrible; it was a crowded and effervescent city. Gonzalo's mother cried for a while and in that moment she missed the quiet small town where she had been living in Australia. However, by the third week she started to feel at home; her neighbours in São Bernardo do Campo were very friendly people, she felt well and wanted to stay forever.

Gonzalo's father got a very good job in the city of Araquara and they bought a house. He worked there for about ten years, until he lost his job in 1987 when the economic situation in Brazil was in crisis and there was a lot of unemployment. He was not the exception. He spent a whole year looking for another job⁷ without success, so they applied to return to Australia, this time from Brazil. Just as Gonzalo's father found a well paid job in Brazil again, they received a letter from the Australian embassy granting new permission to re-enter as migrants. Thus after twelve years in São Paulo, they decided to come back to Australia.

Gonzalo's family was the only family in the study who emigrated twice to Australia. However returning for the second time was neither easy nor simple. They were not immediately accepted by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and had to fully reapply to obtain their visas. Gonzalo's older sister had no trouble re-entering the country because she was born in Australia. They were awarded points for employability, skills, education and age. Five points were missing, and Mabel's aunt, her only relative in Australia, was the life saver. Because of her the family got enough points to emigrate to Australia again in 1988. Gonzalo's parents were granted the missing points through the concessional immigration category, which covered sponsored non-dependent children, brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces of people already living in Australia (1987/88 Immigration Program. Secretariat to the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies. Understanding Emigration, 1987).

This time Gonzalo's parents were not the young couple full of optimism. They were looking, now, not for adventure but for economic security. The

⁷ Social Security in Brazil is paid only the first four months of unemployment. Lei do Seguro-Desemprego. Available http://www.mtb.gov.br/spes/segdp/legi/leis_2.htm#7.998 (Accessed 24 November 1997).

marriage lasted for another year, until they decided to separate. Gonzalo's mother now lives in a house, owned by the of Housing Commission, as a sole parent, with her two children, Gonzalo and his older sister. At the time of the interview Gonzalo's mother was an unemployed Australian citizen. She had been studying painting at TAFE and was living on the dole.

Gonzalo's father was working in a factory and lives de facto with another Chilean woman in Fairfield, a Sydney suburb with a great number of Chilean immigrants. Gonzalo likes visiting his father and going to the celebration of the Chilean festivities in September where he speaks Spanish with his father and the rest of his Chilean friends. Gonzalo also speaks Spanish at home with his mother and sister.

Gonzalo has not travelled to Chile because his mother cannot afford the price of the ticket. He said that his mother did not want to move from the house because she did not want to lose it and she was deeply grateful to the Australian government because it had provided the house, the study funds and the money to live. She said:

Yo vivo practicamente mantenida por el gobierno australiano.

(I live practically provided for by the Australian government).

Gonzalo said that he had always been called wog at school but he never remained silent and always answered back.

Cuando me dicen wog, les digo que es mejor ser wog que tener la desgracia de tener parientes que fueron convictos.

(When they call me wog, I tell them that it is better to be a wog than to have the disgrace of having relatives who were convicts).

At school, Gonzalo's favourite subject was Mathematics because he said that many of his friends were in that class. He also liked Computer Studies. He commented that at home he spent most of the time playing games on his brand new IBM computer. Gonzalo added that he did not like Science because:

Muchas cosas que he aprendido en ciencia, hay una chance en un millón que las use cuando esté más grande, sólo si encontrará un trabajo que tuviese que ver con lo que aprendí.

(Many things that I have learned in Science, there is a chance in a million that I can use them when I get older, only if I found a job related to what I learned).

Gonzalo declared that he was not doing well in any subject because he did not do his homework and he said that his mother was not worried about that, because she said that he would finish his Year Ten anyway. He remarked that his mother had not even gone to school to talk to the teacher when she was called or for the parent-teacher interviews.

Gonzalo and school did not seem to be a good combination. He seemed preoccupied with other matters and not with school work. He said he could not concentrate, especially when he was taking a test.

Tengo problemas al prestar atención porque pienso mucho en otras cosas , pienso en mis parientes en Chile.

(I have problems to concentrating because I think too much about other things, I think about my relatives in Chile).

Finally Gonzalo finished his ordeal at school, received his School Certificate and went to TAFE to do a course in the area of hospitality, which is what he wanted to do.

5.2 Violeta

Violeta was born in Australia. At the time the interview took place, she was seventeen and in Year Twelve at the non-government girls' school. Violeta lived with her mother, an older Chilean-born half sister aged twenty six and an older Australian-born half brother aged twenty three.

Violeta's mother, Valeria, was the only mother in the study who clearly declared that she did not come for political nor economic reasons but for loyalty to her husband. She explained that she did not want to emigrate but came to Australia because of him. Valeria's husband applied to the Australian embassy in Santiago when he was single and received approval to emigrate when they had only been married for less than two years, and as a married man he could not emigrate alone. So, reluctantly, Valeria agreed to emigrate with him. At the time of the interview, Violeta's mother, Valeria, said that she had been in Australia for twenty five years. However, as she commented

Bueno, yo de que estoy en Australia he tratado de "blend" con esta cultura, "very much," yo creo que yo nunca, nunca he podido ser australiana, nunca he podido yo decir OK, éste es mi país, nunca. Aunque me hice australiana, aunque tuve los niños, aunque estuve 25 años en Australia, yo siempre tuve Chile, yo nunca tuve que haber salido de Chile. Yo no tenía eso en mi cabeza porque yo creo como yo no estaba interesada en venir y porque las circunstancias tuve que venirme.

(Well, since I am in Australia I have tried to blend with this culture very much, I think that I never, never have I been able to be Australian, never have I been able to say OK, this is my country, never. Although I became an Australian citizen, although I had the children, although I had been for twenty five years in Australia, I had always Chile, I never had to leave Chile. I did not have that in my mind because I was not interested in coming and because of the circumstances I had to come.

In Chile, Violeta's mother worked in a hospital as an assistant nurse, but most of the time she worked in the biochemistry laboratory, and she studied Biochemistry at the University. In Australia she wanted to work in a hospital but she ended in a factory. Like so many migrants, Valeria had to resort to working at unskilled, low paid work because of her English; her other skills counted for little. In all, she said that she had worked in nine factories. She commented that in the early seventies there was plenty of work in unskilled occupations, so it was very easy to move from factory to factory. In total Valeria had worked in more than fifteen different jobs. She said that she kept moving, always hoping to find something better.

Valeria worked for four years at the Factory. It was the first time that the Factory had hired women and Valeria said that she did not work very hard because the men in the Factory did most of the job for her. She commented that luckily for her in those years men considered that kind of job not suitable for a woman, so they helped her. She was working at a machine which cut steel strips; her job was to measure and weigh them and at the end of the day write down the output of the machine production.

Violeta's half sister was a year and a half old when Valeria and her husband came to Australia. During the second year in Australia Violeta's half brother was born. Valeria's husband worked in Chile as a paramedic but in Australia the only job he could get was at the Factory. After four years in Australia, Valeria's husband died and Valeria was alone, with two young children, without relatives and missing her home country and friends very much.

Six years later, on one 18th September, Chile's national day, Violeta's mother was invited to celebrate in the local club with the Chileans who

lived in the neighbourhood. In that party she met her second husband, Violeta's father, who was in Australia illegally and asked her to marry him. Valeria got married again, this time in order to help a compatriot.

This marriage lasted seven years after which they separated leaving Valeria with three children and no support from Violeta's father who has been unemployed all the time. In Chile he worked in a shoe factory but in Australia he preferred to live on the dole. However he worked for "cash", so legally he could not provide for his family. Valeria described how at this time in her life she constantly asked herself: "What am I doing here in Australia?" While she still regularly asks herself this question, at the time of the interview she was finishing her Bachelor in Social Sciences and hoped to find a well paid job.

A year after the interview, Violeta's mother was in her early fifties and living alone. Her children did not live with her any more: Violeta's half sister worked and lived in Sydney and her half brother also lived in Sydney after he got married. Violeta herself had moved to Sydney to live with her sister. Violeta's mother had a Spanish boyfriend, Juan's father (4.7) with whom she sometimes went out.

Violeta's mother learned her English at high school in Santiago. In Australia soon after her arrival she started to study the language. She could read and translate but she was not comfortable speaking English with Anglo-Australian English speakers.

Violeta studied Spanish on Saturdays, but she stopped when she started Year Twelve. However, she continued to practise at home with her mother and with her many Chilean friends. Violeta also saw her father very often

and went with him to the Chilean club in Fairfield to play table tennis, volleyball and soccer and talk in Spanish with her Chilean friends who lived in Sydney. At school, Spanish was the language used to talk secretly with her Spanish-speaking background peers.

Violeta, her sister and brother had studied in non-government schools because their mother thought non-government schools were safer for children whose parents did not speak English. Valeria put her first daughter in a public primary school where she was teased because of her skin colour.

Mi hija llegaba a la casa y tomaba mucha leche, un día yo le pregunté por qué tomaba tanta leche y ella me respondió para ser blanca y que mis compañeras no me digan cosas en la escuela.

(My daughter used to arrive home and drink plenty of milk, one day I asked her why she drank so much milk and she answered to become white so my classmates at school do not say things to me).

This incident triggered Valeria's decision to move her daughter to a non-government school where there was a greater number of children coming from non-English speaking backgrounds.

At high school Violeta liked all her teachers but she was very disappointed with one of her English teachers because she treated her differently because she was not a native Australian speaker.

No me decía nada, no les preguntaba a las "wogs". Sólo hacía preguntas a las chicas australianas y cuando nosotros decíamos algo no nos tomaba en cuenta.

(She did not say anything to me, she did not ask the wog girls. She only asked questions to the Australian girls and when we said something she did not take us into account).

Violeta's favourite subject was Art because she said she had the possibility to express herself without being questioned about her origin or background. Violeta also liked Mathematics and Biology in spite of the fact that it was hard for her to understand the latter. The subject Violeta disliked was Health and Physical Education because of her peers.

Yo no soy del tipo deportivo y ellas me decían cosas porque a mí no me gustaba hacer deporte

(I'm not the sporty type and my peers said things to me because I did not like practising sports).

Two years before the interview, Violeta travelled to Chile for two weeks, where she spent some time in Santiago and in the south of the country visiting relatives. At the beginning in the Chilean capital Santiago she had some troubles understanding spoken Spanish especially Chilean colloquialisms, but after a couple of days she got accustomed to the speed and could understand almost everything. In Chile, Violeta said that she was Australian and was called with admiration "gringa⁸," but in Australia especially at school she always said that she was Chilean and because of that she had been pejoratively called "wog" too often.

A year after the interview, when Violeta wanted to go to the university to train for a nursing profession her mother was very pleased with that idea. However, she got into a panic when she found out that her daughter, Violeta, was going to become engaged to a thirty-year-old Chilean man who came to Australia as a tourist and wanted to stay in Australia for good. Violeta's mother said that for her it was as if somebody had put a curse on her; her daughter stumbling over the same mistake she made when she married Violeta's father in order to help him stay in Australia.

⁸ The dichotomy between "gringo" and "wog" is discussed in Chapter Eight.

5.3 Patricia

Patricia was thirteen and, at the time of the interview, in Year Eight at the state coeducational school. She was born in Australia and lived with her family — that is her parents, two Chilean-born older brothers, aged twenty six and twenty four respectively, and a nine-year old sister, who was attending a state primary school. Of the five students who were born in Australia Patricia was one of the two who were studying in a state coeducational school.

Patricia's parents, Pamela and Patricio, arrived in Sydney on 25th August 1974. They said that it was a date they could not forget; for them it was like their birthdays. They were in their mid twenties, when Patricia's older brothers were three and five. They referred to the military coup but they commented, as did most of the Chilean families in the study, that they came to Australia in order to improve their precarious economic situation.

Patricia was born when her brothers were in their early teens, and four years later her younger sister increased the family numbers. When Patricia's parents came to Australia they stayed in a hostel in the Metropolis for seven months and then moved to a flat. Finally, the family moved to a house owned by the Housing Commission, where they have lived for twenty one years. At the time of the interview, Patricia's oldest brother had just married and he was spending his honeymoon in Europe with his Italo-Australian wife.

Patricia's father said that he did not finish his secondary school and he could not attend English classes in Sydney because of his work. He worked for two months and then was unemployed for a month until they moved to the

Metropolis where he worked for thirteen years as a delegate in the Factory. At the time of the interview he was working as a Union official. However, he added that when he had studied at school in Chile, he liked the English language very much. He remarked that his knowledge of English helped him to understand and participate a little in the short conversations held at the factory where he worked for the first two months in Sydney. However for Patricia's mother, who attended classes every day, it took two years to overcome the language barriers and start to communicate in English. For her, like many migrant women who did not enter the paid work force outside the home, it was much more difficult (Vasta, 1992).

In her second year in Australia Patricia's mother started to do a sewing course at TAFE, which took four years to finish. The principal aim of this course was to learn how to make clothes for her children. Since then she had stopped studying and had even not attended English courses. She explained that she has become a full-time house wife.

Unlike many of the families in the study Patricia's family seemed to have no apparent expectations that the children would speak Spanish at home. Patricia's parents spoke Spanish to each other and both older brothers spoke Spanish with their mother, while Patricia and her younger sister were more likely to use English when speaking with their mother. Patricia's mother believed it was easier for her daughters to express themselves in English instead of doing it in Spanish. So she had no great expectations that they could speak Spanish to her. The four children spoke more English with their father because, as he said, he was quicker to understand oral English. Patricia's father remarked that his children had never studied Spanish but they could read it without major difficulties.

At the time of the interview, Patricia's oldest brother had just finished his Bachelor of Science and was working in a company which manufactured chemical products for animals. Patricia's second brother finished his course of technical drawing at TAFE and had an apprenticeship in the city council. As mentioned before, Patricia was in Year Eight and her younger sister was attending primary school.

Patricia's father said that he could not attend parent-teacher interviews at her daughter's school because of his job, so Patricia's mother attended those meetings. Patricia's mother also mentioned that she helped in the canteen, but at the beginning it was not easy because some children did not understand her when she was talking in English and mocked her.

Patricia said that sometimes she felt Chilean and sometimes Australian. She added that she would like to visit Chile and her father had promised to take her to Chile at the end of Year Twelve. Patricia said that she had been always curious about visiting Santiago and meeting her Chilean relatives.

Patricia started her interview in Spanish but in the middle of it she switched to English and continued in that way inserting words and expressions in Spanish. She said that she feels better speaking in English rather than in Spanish. Patricia has always studied at public schools. She said she liked her primary school teachers very much because they were always nice to her. She commented that her high school teachers were always rushing from class to class and that it seemed that they were not very interested in the students; she added that she still found it difficult to get to the routine of different teachers and classrooms.

At school Patricia's favourite subjects were Design and Technology, Italian and English. In Design and Technology she was doing sewing, after which she would do cooking. She was studying Italian because Spanish was not offered at the school. She said that "I have learned Spanish at home, my mother has taught me the alphabet and how to say the words." She liked English because "we do funny things like, we have to do interviews but we also have to learn adjectives and those boring things." Patricia did not like Science and Geography classes because "sometimes it gets boring, just boring, I listen to the teacher but I don't like it because it's boring."

5.4 Sisters Ester and Helena

Sisters Ester and Helena were born in Australia. They lived with their parents and a younger brother aged five. When they were interviewed, Ester was fourteen and Helena twelve and both were at the same girls' non-government school, with Ester in Year Nine and Helena in Year Seven. Both sisters are the only students in the study who had begun their education in Australia, studied a whole academic year in Chile and then returned to Australia.

When the sisters' father, Eduardo, was living in Santiago one of his friends wanted to emigrate to Australia, so one day several friends went together to the Australian embassy to apply. In the end, from the group of friends, it was only Eduardo who emigrated. As Braulio's father (4.5) did in 1969 and Violeta's father in 1985 (5.2), Eduardo came alone and single in 1975.

After three years in Australia Eduardo met Estela, a Chilean born woman, who also came with her parents in 1975, six months later than Eduardo.

They met through Chilean friends and at the time of the interview had been married for seventeen years.

Eduardo has always been involved with the Chilean community and the Chilean club. He said that years ago the club established a place of its own, but due to a lack of participation it closed down. As a consequence the club split. Some members hired a venue, in one of the districts of the region and others hired another venue in the Metropolis. The Metropolis club had about two hundred members and their families and, depending on the activities, nearly all of them participated. When there was a dancing party the number could increase to between three hundred and four hundred people attending. For 18th September, Chilean national day, and for Christmas and New Year's Eve, more than five hundred people participated.

Eduardo played soccer for several years in a professional soccer club in Santiago. In Australia he met his Chilean friends every Sunday to play soccer. Eduardo said that this sport activity had been the main vehicle of linking Chilean men and their families in Australia.

Estela and Eduardo said that they spoke Spanish at home with their two daughters and son and their friends who are all Latinos, mainly Argentinians, Chileans and Uruguayans. When Estela and Eduardo got married in 1979, some of their Uruguayan friends acted as witnesses in the wedding ceremony and at the time of the interview they said that they did not have any friends outside the Spanish speaking community.

When Eduardo arrived in Australia he explained that he did not have the opportunity to study English. After eleven hours in Australia he was

working at the Factory in his overalls and boots. He started to work without knowing a single word of English in a repetitive job where there was always an Italian or another Latino who could explain how to do it.

Both, Estela and Eduardo, considered that it was very difficult for a person without education to get a good job. They explained that they chose non-government schools for their children because of the discipline, which they believed was stricter than in a state coeducational school. They said that they always helped their daughters with their homework and their projects. In the last years, however, it had become more difficult, especially with mathematics. They commented that now they felt that the girls were managing quite well with their homework and had said that their daughters wanted to finish their secondary education, and if possible go to the university.

Both parents said that they were always telling their daughters that they wanted to offer the best possible conditions for them to study. In 1993 the whole family travelled to Chile. Eduardo and Estela said that the main objective of that trip was to introduce their daughters to their origins and for them to see how much working class people sacrifice in their home country to study.

Las llevamos a que vivieran en nuestro país; que vieran de adonde nosotros veníamos, el objetivo era que ellas se dieran cuenta y vieran todo el sacrificio que uno había hecho para poder estudiar

(We took them to live in our country; to see where we come from, the aim was make them to realise and see how big a sacrifice we made in order to give them the opportunity to study).

Ester and Helena said that their trip to Santiago was very important, that they loved Santiago, and that it was the "experience of a life time". They

added that the Chileans they met were more friendly than the Australians. In the neighbourhood where they were living in Santiago, everybody knew everybody; in Australia they said that they did not even know who their neighbours were. After their trip to Santiago both sisters felt very proud of being Chilean. They said that they did not like being called Australians just because they were born here. In addition, most of their friends were Chileans and people who spoke Spanish. At home they said that they preferred to speak Spanish though sometimes they would speak English between themselves and with their little brother.

Both sisters spent a whole academic year in a non-government primary school in Santiago. Ester completed Year Seven and Helena Year Five. They said that in Chile it was very difficult because they knew very little Spanish but their parents employed a private tutor who helped them with homework and projects during the first term at school. Helena believed that in Chile students learned more than in Australia.

Allá te enseñan más, lo que estamos estudiando ahora en séptimo me lo enseñaron en quinto.

(Over there they teach you more, what we are studying now in Year Seven I was taught in Year Five).

Both sisters said that they felt, at the beginning in the school in Santiago, a little out of place because everybody was Chilean, except an American girl who was in Year Six. In Chile, as happened with Violeta (5.2), the sisters were called "gringas". Here in Australia they also said that frequently, they been called "wogs". Ester said however, that she was very proud of being a "wog".

Prefiero que me llamen así a que me llamen australiana, en todo mi grupo no hay ningún australiano, entonces somos todos wog, los australianos no se juntan con los que no lo son.

(I prefer to be called like that instead of being called Australian, in my whole group there is not a single Australian, so we are all wogs, the Australians do not mix with those who are not).

On her part Helena said that the Spanish speaking background girls, who were their friends called each other "wogs", as well as girls from other non-Anglo backgrounds. However she added that they felt bad when an Anglo-Australian called them wogs.

Entre nosotras nos llamamos wogs y nos gusta llamarnos así pero cuando una australiano nos llama wog nos sentimos mal.

(Among ourselves we called one another wogs and we like to be called like that but when an Australian calls us wogs we feel bad).

Ester said that she liked all her subjects except English because she was doing a unit called relationships in which they were reading Shakespeare. She did not like the topic and she wanted to change to a another unit but she was not allowed to do so. She also added that she wanted to study something about the United States and Latin America but the only subject about other countries available was Asian studies.

Helena's favourite subject was Design and Technology because she said that she was learning cooking, sewing and knitting. She had already made a wool cap and a hand bag and later she was going to learn to make clothes. She also liked this subject because the teacher was very patient and never shouted at any girl. On the contrary she did not like Mathematics because she said that the teacher was very good at shouting, especially at the "wog girls". Helena also liked English because many of her Spanish-speaking background friends were in that class.

Although Helena said that she did not like studying, she wanted to go on to Year Twelve. She believed that if she were to leave school only with Year

Ten it would be too difficult to find a job. She wanted to change to another school, a non-government coeducational secondary school where a lot of Chilean students attended but her parents did not want to do that because it was too far from home.

5.5 Noelia

Noelia was born in Australia. At the time of the interview, she was seventeen and in Year Twelve at the non-government girl's school. She lived with her parents and a Chilean-born sister aged twenty three. Noelia was the only student who was working in a part-time job and saving to go to Chile at the end of Year Twelve.

Noelia's parents, Nadia and Nataniel, migrated to Australia in 1976. In Santiago their economic situation had been very difficult. After five years of marriage they had not acquired material possessions and it was difficult for them to make ends meet. They did not have their own house to live in, and they were living in a couple of rooms at the house of Noelia's grandmother. They came with a four year old daughter and in the second year in Australia they had their second daughter, Noelia.

Originally Noelia's parents planned to come to Australia to work and make money for a period of four years before returning to Chile. In the third year, however, they decided to stay for good. In 1982, after six years in Australia they returned to their home land for two months to visit relatives and friends but principally to show their home country to their daughters.

Noelia's father, Nataniel, has worked in various jobs. He worked at the Factory as a fitter for thirteen years, then for two years as a sales

representative for a closet and cupboard factory. Finally he started to work as a metal lathe operator for a small company which recycled metal for the Factory.

Noelia's mother, Nadia, said that she had no trouble learning how to write and read the new language, but it was more difficult to start speaking in English. It was not the language itself which was the main problem but the fear of being called names and exposed to ridicule because of her strong accent. Noelia's mother added that she had an extensive vocabulary and could translate easily, but it has been very difficult for her to practise her second language because she stayed at home most of the time. Noelia's father commented that he has had less trouble with the English language, since he had to speak and manage at work.

In their nineteen years in Australia Noelia's parents have usually spoken in Spanish at home. They said that they spoke English about twenty per cent of the time because of their daughters. In turn, Noelia said that she spoke Spanish and English; with her parents she spoke more Spanish and with her sister she spoke more English. Noelia's parents explained that there were few other occasions to practise English at home because they rarely received visitors who speak only English. In spite of this Noelia's parents remarked that they had learned enough English to communicate and they have not depended on their daughters in carrying out their daily activities outside the home.

As Noelia's parents did not have English speaking friends, what they missed most were the people, their relatives and friends in Chile with whom they used to meet frequently and chat for hours. In Australia they

brother aged nineteen and a younger brother aged eleven. Berta was the only student who openly declared that she had been having behavioural troubles with her parents.

Berta's parents, Barbara and Benjamin, arrived in Australia in December 1985. They came with their five children, three daughters, aged twelve, eleven and Berta two, and two sons aged nine and one. Berta's father had studied electrical engineering at the university in Chile. He started at the Catholic University and the second year he changed to the University of Santiago but he could not cope economically with his studies and a family, so they decided to emigrate to Australia. In addition, Berta's grandparents, aunts and uncles had been in Australia since February 1974. Berta's parents, as happened with Patricia's parents, mentioned the military coup but they explained that their own parents left Chile for economic reasons.

Berta's parents were very proud of being Chileans and they said that they identified strongly as such. They had not changed their status of permanent residents because from their point of view there were no more benefits in being an Australian citizen than there were in being a permanent resident.

Berta's father said that he has never liked to study languages and he has always disliked English. For him the English language was a problem especially at work, a barrier difficult to overcome. Once in Australia he started to study electronic engineering at TAFE. He commented that his first term was a terrible ordeal, he only understood what the teacher explained on the blackboard but his interest in electronics was the key that helped him to learn English.

At the time of the interview Berta's father was working for the Factory on a casual basis. He worked from home doing technical drawings, because he had to take care of Berta's oldest brother who suffered an accident and was, at the time, in a wheel chair. Also, twice a week, on Sundays and Thursdays Berta's father preached in a local community church for a Spanish speaking community in the region.

Berta's parents said that they spoke Spanish at home and were worried because their children were losing the language, in spite of the fact that they usually read in Spanish when they read the bible. The children tended to speak in English to each other. This had been of particular concern when they disciplined the children because they answered them back in English. Berta also said that she spoke English with her brothers but with her parents she spoke Spanish, especially with her mother who knew very little English. During the interview Berta answered the first questions in English and then she switched to Spanish for the rest of the conversation.

As mentioned Berta was the only student who spoke about conflicts with her parents. She described how once in Year Six she threatened to tell her teacher if her parents shouted at her again. On that occasion, her father explained to her that in spite of being in Australia, at home her parents gave the orders and not the teacher. Berta's father on his part described how he was concerned that influences outside the home would interfere with the traditional values that they did not want disrupted.

Hemos tratado de asegurar de que esa parte de la mentalidad australiana, de que los niños son independientes no entre en nuestro hogar porque es perjudicial.

(We have tried to ensure that this part of the Australian mentality, that the children are independent, does not enter into our home because it is damaging).

However Berta complained that her parents were sometimes too authoritarian, especially her mother who, according to Berta, was often looking for excuses to shout at her.

Berta's parents said that they chose a public school for their children because they were Protestant and they believed that when boys and girls studied together, the boys learned to respect women. Unfortunately, however, their experiences of Berta's school suggested that this did not happen there. They frequently saw the boys and girls treating one another with little respect and they were very concerned about the way the students were fond of using strong vocabulary, full of "four letter words". Berta, herself, said that she considered it was wrong to say those kind of words in the school.

Berta best friend was a German-Italian-Australian girl called Joanne, who was also in Year Seven at her school. Berta said that she liked her because she was very quiet and did not like quarrelling and fighting. Berta said that with the exception of her Chilean friend, Quimera (5.9), she did not know any other Chilean students in the school.

At school Berta did not like Mathematics because she said that when the teacher explained she did not understand the instructions, and when Berta asked the teacher got angry. Because of that Berta preferred not to ask her teachers if she had problems with her work.

Tengo miedo que se puedan enojar y me puedan gritar, y a mí no me gusta que me griten.

(I am afraid they'll get angry and they'll shout at me, and I don't like to be shouted at).

Berta said that frequently her parents shouted at her at home, and that her mother, as she mentioned before, was very good at doing that.

Mi mamá siempre me grita cuando no hago mi pieza, mi mamá me grita mucho más que los profesores, mi papá no me grita mucho; a mí no me gusta que me griten

(My mum always shouts at me when I don't tidy my bed room, my mum shouts at me much more than the teachers do, my dad does not shout at me too much; I do not like to be shouted at).

Berta liked English because she said that the teacher did not get angry so easily when she made mistakes and she could raise her hand and ask questions.

5.7 Brothers Ivan and Luis

Brothers Luis and Ivan were born in Chile. They lived with their parents and an older brother aged eighteen. When they were interviewed, Ivan was fifteen and Luis twelve and both were at the same boys' non-government school, Ivan in Year Ten and Luis in Year Seven. Both brothers completed their primary education in a coeducational non-government primary school. When Ivan and Luis emigrated with their parents to Australia in 1985 they were aged five and three respectively. Both brothers were the only students who had been studying Spanish continuously since they started their primary education.

The brothers' parents, Cecilia and Danilo, after fifteen years of working as secondary school teachers in Santiago and with three children under ten, started to think about the possibility of following Cecilia's brother, Noelia's father (5.5) to Australia. They finally decided and emigrated to Australia in September 1985.

Ten years later, in the summer of 1993 the whole family went on holidays to Chile for the first time after eight years in Australia. They visited their family, a hundred kilometres south of Santiago, where they were warmly welcomed by all the relatives. During the first two weeks in Santiago Danilo and Cecilia felt like staying in Chile, but after thoughtful consideration they reached the conclusion that in Santiago it would very difficult to get the material possessions they had in Australia.

Ivan and Luis were thirteen and eleven respectively at the time of their visit to Chile. Like the sisters Ester and Helena the boys both talked about how much they enjoyed their neighbourhood friends during the six weeks they spent in Chile. They very much liked the way of living in Santiago. In summer they and their cousins and friends went to bed very late at night after playing in the streets for hours. In contrast, they said, in Australia they had to go to bed early.

When Danilo and Cecilia talked about the English language they expressed different opinions. Danilo said that he did not like English. As a secondary school student he was never interested in the language, and just managed to get a pass mark. On the other hand, Cecilia had no troubles at secondary school with her English language subject but when she arrived in Australia she realised that the English she learned at school was completely different from the English spoken in the streets in Australia. For her it was very difficult to understand and later speak the language.

Cecilia and Danilo said that they spoke Spanish at home. They had tried to speak English but the only result was to make their children laugh at them. Cecilia explained that they arrived too old to learn the language and anyway English would never be their language. They commented that their

children had learned to accept that their parents could speak very little English; they had understood that with their parents they had to speak Spanish. Moreover, Cecilia and Danilo had told their children that speaking Spanish with those who spoke this language was a way of showing respect to them.

Both Cecilia and Danilo had their teacher certificates recognised. Cecilia worked as a Spanish teacher in the Saturday school and Danilo worked as a full time Mathematics teacher in a state coeducational secondary school about fifty kilometres away from home. He commented that it has been very difficult for him, but a group of Chilean teachers, working in the public system, had told him that the animosity, sometimes expressed by the students towards him, had been experienced by all the non-English speaking teachers working in public schools. Anyhow, Danilo explained that what really upset him was that his professionalism was always questioned because of his strong accent. He remarked that frequently he asked himself:

¿Tanto se me nota el acento "wog"?

(Is it so noticeable my wog accent?).

When talking about their sons, Cecilia and Danilo spoke proudly of them. The oldest one was at the local university studying Biotechnology, Ivan was in Year Ten and Luis in Year Seven and both were doing well at school. On the other hand they believed their children were just following the educational system and not fully using their potentialities.

Cecilia and Danilo said that they helped their children with homework and projects, and expected them to study. As teachers, they said that they thought the Australian public system of education did not demand enough from students, and that students did not therefore exploit all their capacities.

They also commented that they considered Australian schools rich in physical facilities but believed the students did not receive enough incentive to study and profit fully from those facilities.

Both brothers said that they like studying Spanish. They had attended the Spanish school on Saturdays. At school they were not studying any language, however they said that they really would like very much to study Spanish at school, especially in Years Eleven and Twelve in order to get a higher score in the HSC. In addition, they said that they were studying Spanish because they thought that they were losing the language and when they went to Santiago it was very difficult to talk to their cousins and the rest of their Chilean relatives.

At school Ivan said that he liked Technical Drawing because he was good at drawing, he also liked Science but he disliked Mathematics. He commented:

No me gustan las matemáticas porque la encuentro fome, la profesora es fome, es fome en una clase hablar sólo de matemáticas, en cambio el año pasado el otro profesor hablaba de otras cosas aparte de matemáticas.

(I don't like Mathematics because I find it boring, the teacher is boring, it is boring in a class to talk only about Mathematics, on the contrary last year the other teacher talked about other things besides Mathematics).

Luis, in Year Seven, was becoming accustomed to the new big school but sometimes missed his previous peers with whom he used to play. He said that the first week he was totally lost looking for the different classrooms. The subject Luis liked most was Art, he liked painting and drawing and the teacher always showed him how to improve his works. Luis disliked Mathematics because he said he was not good at it, and he also thought that it was boring. Although Luis' father was a Mathematics teacher Luis did not like asking him when he did not understand some exercises.

Ivan and Luis explained that they had a lot of acquaintances but their friends were all "wogs" and they felt better with them. As Ivan said:

Todos nuestros amigos son wog y como no son de Australia nos sentimos mejor con ellos.

(All our friends are wog and as they are not from Australia we feel better with them).

5.8 Orlando

Orlando was fourteen and in Year Nine in the non-government boys' school at the time of the interview. He was born in Chile and lived with his parents and an older sister aged twenty. His oldest sister was twenty two and married. She lived with her husband in the same neighbourhood. When Orlando's family emigrated to Australia in 1988, he was seven, his older sister thirteen and the oldest one fifteen. Orlando's parents were the only ones in the study who openly declared that their economic situation was better in Chile than in Australia.

Orlando's mother, Ada, was from the port of Valparaiso and Orlando's father, Abraham, was from Santiago, but they had lived in the north of Chile because of Abraham's job in the mining industry. Abraham said that he had a very good job in Chile but he always wanted to travel to Canada or Australia. Finally, it was one of his wife's brothers who was already in Australia who convinced Orlando's parents to come to Australia.

Orlando's mother, like Violeta's mother (5.2), said that she had never wanted to emigrate, but her husband was very insistent. Five years after Orlando's grandmother died Orlando's father managed to convince his wife and his three children to move to Australia.

Orlando's father did his university studies in Santiago and Orlando's mother finished her secondary school, majoring in accountancy. Orlando's mother, Ada, was never engaged in paid work in Chile whereas Orlando's father, had worked for many years in one of the biggest mining companies in Chile and was earning very good money. After ten years in Australia, and both working, they said that they had not yet reached the standard of living they had in Chile.

Orlando's parents knew Australia through Orlando's uncle, but they said that the image they had in Chile was very different to the reality. One of the biggest barriers was the language. Orlando's parents attended an English course in Santiago, but once they left the airport in Sydney and got in contact with Australian English in their daily routine they realised that they had learned little that was useful to them.

Orlando's parents speak Spanish at home; sometimes they try to speak English in order to help their children, especially the youngest one, Orlando, to practise their English. Despite wanting to, Abraham finds it difficult to help his son Orlando with his school work especially in Mathematics, because the way Orlando was taught at school was different from the way his father learned in Chile. Abraham described how when he tried to explain a mathematics problem to Orlando in primary school, he confused his son by his way of explaining division and multiplications.

For Orlando's mother and sisters, the first years in Australia were very difficult. During the first year his older sister used to have nightmares and used to cry for hours. As Ada explained:

Los primeros años acá en Australia fueron para nosotras una verdadera tortura, la niña menor en medio de la noche despertaba gritando y llorando y no sabía donde estaba.

(The first years here in Australian were for us a real torture, my younger daughter, in the middle of the night used to wake up shouting and crying and she did not know where she was).

Ada said that for Orlando's sister it has been particularly difficult because she was taken out of her circle of relatives and friends. Orlando's parents were concerned about her social life because she had practically no friends. Her only friend was her older sister, who had married some time ago and since then had not much time to share with her.

Orlando, in Chile, spent his first two years of primary school in several non-government schools because his father often moved because of his work. In Australia, Orlando attended first a public school and later a non-government one. Orlando said that his first year at school was very difficult for him because he did not speak English. Then he moved into the non-government school, where he was helped considerably by a Chilean teacher.

Orlando said that he had no major problems with the English language. He was also studying Spanish on Saturdays because he thought he was losing his Spanish. Orlando believed it was an advantage to speak Spanish because, according to him, there was always the possibility of finding a job where Spanish could be used, and the possibility of going back to Chile was always present.

Orlando said that he spoke English and Spanish at home. Usually he spoke English with his sister and Spanish with his parents and with his older sister. Sometimes, however, he said that he spoke English with his parents to help them practise their English.

Orlando's favourite subjects were Art and Geography. He likes Art because he said he was good at painting, drawing and because it was quiet.

No te están enseñando materia, te puedes expresar a través del arte, es tranquilo, te puedes relajar.

(They are not teaching you any content, you can express through the Arts, it is quiet, you can relax).

Orlando's parents wanted him to go to the university to study geology like his father, who was doing his Masters' degree at the local university, but Orlando was very interested in natural science, like his two older sisters who were at the local university pursuing their Bachelors of Science.

5.9 Quimera

Quimera was fifteen and in Year Nine at the state coeducational school at the time of the interview. She was born in Chile and lived with her parents and a younger Australian-born brother aged six. At the time of the interview, her mother was expecting another son. Quimera was the oldest of the students to arrive in Australia. When she emigrated with her parents in June 1991, she was eleven and her younger brother two.

Quimera's father, Jaime, was brought up in a family of five brothers and seven sisters. Quimera had uncles and aunts in the USA, one in Australia and the rest in Chile. Jaime had worked as a plumber in Chile but he described the family as merely surviving due to his low income. Jaime said that they were finding it so difficult to make ends meet, that he decided to join his brother, who had emigrated to Australia in the early seventies. Like Berta's and Patricia's parents, Quimera's parents referred to the Chilean military coup but they said that they did not want to talk about it. Jaime also commented that his brother left Chile for economic reasons.

Quimera's parents talked about how they have worked hard to improve their economic situation. In Australia they have material possessions that they never dreamt of in Chile. Quimera's mother, Jacqueline, chose to stay at home and said that she was very happy being a full time house wife with her children and a husband to take care of. Quimera's father wanted to get his gold license to work as a plumber but he said that since that takes too much time and study, he had decided to continue working as a cleaner in the evenings and in the day did some plumbing for Chilean acquaintances.

For Quimera's parents the English language has been one of their biggest barriers. They said it prevented them from interacting with English speaking people when carrying out their daily routine outside home. And for Quimera's father, in particular, it had been a difficult obstacle to overcome when looking for a job.

The first year in Australia was a major ordeal but Quimera's uncle helped them by acting as an interpreter and assisting them with the procedures involved in settling down and enrolling in language classes. Quimera's father studied English for a year and later did other courses. He said that he understood more now and spent much of his spare time watching a lot of television. He said that in that way he could listen to people speaking English without the embarrassment of saying I do not understand.

After four years in Australia Quimera's parents were still permanent residents although they have often thought about the possibility of becoming Australian citizens. They believed however that if they became Australian citizens and their children grew up in this country it would be very difficult for them to go back to Chile.

Quimera's parents belonged to a Protestant community church where they attended both services on Thursdays and Sundays. It was a small church whose minister was Berta's father (5.6) and the services were in Spanish. Quimera's parents said that their friends were all from the church. They explained that the church had become a place where Spanish speaking Protestant worshippers, mainly from Central and South America, and their families met and connected.

At home Spanish was always spoken, primarily because Quimera's mother did not understand much English. She said that she had no time to study with a husband and her children to take care of. Later, in the interview she commented that she was not really interested in studying English.

Quimera's parents had their daughter studying in a public school because they could not afford to pay for a non-government one. However they said that they were concerned about her development because she was getting shyer than when she was in Chile. Quimera's father commented on an incident in which Quimera was involved when she was in Year Eight.

Quimera tuvo un altercado con un chico y este le tiro el pelo y le dio un combo. El profesor no aviso a nadie y sólo supimos cuando Quimera llegó a casa en la tarde. Al otro día yo fui a la escuela y pedi hablar con el profesor y ellos me inventaron excusas diciendo que el profesor no estaba, cuando volvi a casa pedi hablar con él por teléfono y también me dieron la misma disculpa

(Quimera had an argument with a boy and he pulled her hair and hit her with his fist. The teacher did not tell anybody and we only found out when Quimera arrived home in the afternoon. Next day I went to the school and asked to talk to the teacher but they invented excuses saying that the teacher was not at the school, when I came back home I asked to talk to him on the phone but again they gave me the same excuse).

For them, discipline was essential and they considered that public schools suffered from a deficiency of discipline. They thought that Chilean schools, in general, were much stricter than those in Australia and that helped teachers and students to respect every one.

Nevertheless, Quimera's parents had tried to help their daughter with her homework and projects, but with Quimera now in Year Nine there was much that her parents did not understand. Therefore, they had advised her not to be afraid to ask her teachers when she did not understand, otherwise she would have to look for answers somewhere else and that was much more difficult.

When Quimera arrived in Australia she went to Year Six to a public school for a period of six months and then she went to Year Seven. For her the movement from her primary school in Valparaíso to the primary school in the Metropolis was very difficult; the main ordeal was the language because she did not speak English.

Me sentaba en la sala sin saber nada, no conocía a nadie, no hablaba la lengua, sólo los miraba a todos sin entender nada, después vino una profesora que también no hablaba español y me sacó de la clase, me sacaba por una hora, yo le tenía que entender, ella no entendía español, yo no entendía inglés; fue muy difícil.

(I sat in the classroom without knowing anything, I didn't know anybody, I didn't speak the language, I only looked at everyone without understanding anything, later a teacher came but she didn't speak Spanish either, and she took me out of the class, she used to take me out for an hour, I had to understand her, she didn't understand Spanish and I didn't understand English; it was very difficult).

Quimera said that she had problems with understanding the written language in Mathematics and in expressing her ideas in English. On the other hand she enjoyed Computer Science because she found it very useful

and she was learning fairly quickly how to operate the Claris Works software, the one used at her school. In addition the students behaved far better in Computer classes than in most of the other classes.

Quimera also commented on how much she missed her family and friends who lived in Chile, she wrote to them frequently in order to know what was going on in her neighbourhood and to tell them about Australia.

5.10 Conclusion

Like the eight Spanish families, these nine Chilean families seemed to be very close and both parents and students were very proud of their Chilean ancestry. When these Chilean parents came to Australia they joined the labour force as unskilled workers. Even those who had credentials but were lacking in English had to do unskilled work in the production lines of factories. After years in Australia some of them started their own businesses, a few others were able to study and get work in accordance with their qualifications.

Like the Spanish-Australians, these Chilean-Australian students were living in two worlds which required a constant negotiation of their cultural identities in relation to home and school. They experienced what it meant to be considered different in the school and in the wider mainstream Australian society, but they were profiting in some ways. They had their secret codes at school and liked feeling Chileans in their homes where they celebrated their otherness with parents, relatives and friends. These positive feelings were reinforced if they had had the opportunity to return to Chile for a visit. Like the Spanish background students, those who have travelled to their parents' home countries, described how much they enjoyed the

freedom of movement and the warm welcome they received from relatives and friends.

Australian and Chilean born students alike talked in Spanish with their parents. The later comers still faced some difficulties with their English at school, however as Quimera said she had learned English in spite of her school, teachers and peers. Both non-government and state schools provided little assistance with English as a second language, as will be shown in Chapter Seven.

Los Nuevos Invasores

Un mestizo escuchaba a unos canguros discutir, tratando de ponerse de acuerdo a dónde iban a comer. Saltaban las sugerencias:

¿Un plato chino?

No le ponen mucho dulce, es impasable.

Bueno, ¿qué tal uno libanés?

Oh no, es demasiado seca la comida, se me queda atrancada en la garganta.

Entonces, a ver... ¿un plato hindú?

No, la semana pasada estuvimos en un restaurante hindú y todavía me arde le esófago del picante tan fuerte.

Ah, ya, entonces vamos a un restaurante italiano.

Descartado, la comida italiana es pura masa, no quiero subir más de peso.

Ah, no me la van a rechazar, una buena comida francesa.

No, de ninguna manera, es a la base de papa y queso, muy desabrida, y además, los franceses me caen mal.

Bueno, todos hemos sugerido y todos hemos rechazado. ¿Quién tiene algo exótico en materia de comida?

A ver, déjenme pensar. Mmm, ya sé, ¿qué tal una comida de los mestizos, esos que se llaman latinos y americanos?

No, la probé el otro día y la encontré demasiado primitiva.

Yo también la saboreé y antes que primitiva, me pareció excesivamente pobre.

Mientras tanto, el mestizo que los escuchaba se acordaba de sus hambrunas, de lo poco agradable que son el mico, la iguana, la anguila. Y percibía al momento el aroma del Sancocho, de la Cazuela, las Guatitas, del Puchero, etc., se le escurrían las babas.

Continuaba la discusión:

Y el resto que opina?

Hace mucha hambre, vamos a este McDonald's del frente.

Todos de acuerdo.

(Belarmino Sarna, 1992).

The New Invaders

A mestizo man listened to some Kangaroos arguing, they were trying to agree where to go to eat. The suggestions sprang up:

A Chinese dish?

No, it is too sweet , it is inedible.

Well, what about a Lebanese one?

Oh no, the meal is too dry, it gets stuck in my throat

Then, let's see... an Indian dish?

No, last week we went to an Indian restaurant and my oesophagus is still burning because of the strong chilli

Ah, OK., then let's go to an Italian restaurant.

No way, Italian food is pure dough, I don't want to put on weight.

Ah, you won't say no to a good French meal.

No, no way, it is based on potato and cheese, very unsavoury and besides, I don't like French people.

Well, we've all made suggestions and we've rejected them all. Who has something exotic in relation to meals?

Let's see, let me think. Mm, I know what about a meal from the mestizos, those who are called Latin and American?

No, I tasted some the other day and I found it too primitive.

I tasted it too and not just primitive, I found it excessively basic.

Meanwhile, the mestizo man, who was listening, remembered his hunger, how he had to eat monkey, iguana and eel. And he perceived immediately the smell of the "Sancocho", of the "Cazuela", the "Guatitas", the "Puchero," (mouthwatering typical Latin American dishes) etc., which made him salivate.

The discussion continued:

And the others what do you think?

We are too hungry, let's go to that MacDonald's over there. Everybody agreed.

(My own Translation).

CHAPTER SIX

URUGUAYAN BACKGROUND STUDENTS

This chapter completes the presentation of the students and their families with the introduction of the two Uruguayan background students and their families. Both families emigrated to Australia in the first half of the seventies.

In Uruguay, three months before the military coup in Chile, the military who suppressed the Uruguayan urban guerrilla (Tupamarus) in 1971-72 ousted the Uruguayan civilian government in June 1973 (The SBS World Guide 1997). The two Uruguayan families who participated in the study, referred in their interviews to the political events which took place at that time. Both families left Uruguay during the first years of the military regime: Ursula's parents and her oldest brother left the country the same year of the coup d'état in 1973¹ and Zulma's parents and her oldest brother did so during the third year of the military dictatorship in 1976².

The military dictatorship ruled the country for twelve years until it permitted election of a civilian government in November 1984 and relinquished power in March 1985, when Julio María Sanguinetti, the president elect took office. His government implied a return to democratic traditions and fostered a process of national reconciliation beginning with a wide spread political amnesty, but there were no new radical economic

¹ In the financial year 1973-74: 1175 Uruguayan-born-people settled permanently in Australia (Australian Immigration. Consolidated Statistics N° 12. 1982).

² In the financial year 1976-77: 586 Uruguayan-born-people settled permanently in Australia (Australian Immigration. Quarterly Statistical Summary. Vol. 3 N° 36. June 1997).

policies. Luis Lacalle became president in March 1990, becoming the first Blanco Party member to assume that office in twenty three years. The president's continuous attempts in 1993 at economic reform met much resistance from the opposition as well as from some within its own party, which itself lacked a majority in congress. In 1994 Julio María Sanguinetti became president again. According to the Uruguayan parents the situation in Uruguay has not changed economically and that has been crucial in their decision to stay in Australia.

Similar to the Spanish background students, these two Uruguayan background female students were also born in Australia and they were both studying at the same non-government school for girls.

6.1 Ursula

Ursula was fourteen and lived with her family: father, mother, two older brothers and her oldest brother's fiancée. At the time of the interview, she was in Year Nine. Ursula was a student who seemed to be very confident about herself and enjoyed everything she did at school.

Ursula's parents, Cristobal and Cintia, said that in the early seventies they were a young married couple who wanted to improve their economic situation and leave their home country which was in a great political and economic turmoil.

La situación política y económica, fue muy difícil en Montevideo; no me considero un, ¿cómo se llama? un refugiado político, simplemente un trabajador que busca un horizonte.

(The political and economic situation, it was very difficult in Montevideo; I don't consider myself a, what's it called? a political refugee, just a worker who looks for a horizon).

One of their friends, who emigrated to Canada, wrote back to said that he was earning good money. He encouraged Ursula's parents to emigrate but not to Canada because it was too cold. Following their friend's advice, Cristobal and Cecilia decided on Australia, arriving in Sydney in November 1973 with a nine-months-old son, Ursula's oldest brother.

In Uruguay Ursula's father used to work as a welder in the port of Montevideo, repairing ships. In Australia his job had been making welded joints in a factory. The family lived the first two years in Sydney and Cristobal was happily working until the factory, where he was working in 1975, closed down. Ursula's father said that at that time it was difficult to find work in another factory in the state capital city.

When they travelled from Sydney to the Metropolis by train they really liked the region, with its breathtaking scenery. So in the middle of 1975 they moved to the Metropolis. At the end of that year Ursula's father began work as a welder at the Factory, where he continued to work until 1979. At that time, he said, there more than thirty thousand workers employed in the Factory, whereas at the time of the interview, there were no more than eight thousand. Cristobal worked four years and then began to work with contractors and subcontractors inside and outside the Factory, working most of the time outside the Factory.

Ursula's father could not finish his primary school in Uruguay because he started to work very young. However, Ursula's mother finished her secondary school and had worked as a secretary in the Uruguayan capital, Montevideo, before they came to Australia. At the beginning, Ursula's parents said that they wanted to stay in Australia for a period of no more

than four years, work hard, make money and go back to their home land. However, when they realised that in Australia it was easier than in Uruguay to accumulate material possessions they decided to stay. After twenty two years in Australia and despite his Australian citizenship, Ursula's father declared that he still felt totally Uruguayan,

somos uruguayos de corazón

(We're Uruguayans at heart).

Whilst Ursula's parents spoke Spanish at home, their children spoke English, especially with their mother because Cintia understood more spoken English than their father. Ursula's twenty three-year-old brother speaks Spanish too, but he preferred to speak English because of his Scottish-Australian fiancée. He finished his secondary education at a non-government school and since then he has done several courses at the local technical college (TAFE). At the time of the interview he wanted to enrol again and do social work.

Ursula's parents had chosen non-government schools for their children mainly because of the discipline; they thought non-government schools controlled the students more effectively than public schools. Although they themselves were not Catholic, Cristobal and Cecilia commented that Catholicism was the only religion they accepted.

Ursula said that she liked speaking Spanish with her father because ever since she was a little girl he had often told her Uruguayan folk tales and stories. In 1985 when Ursula was four years old she travelled with her mother for six weeks to Uruguay. This trip gave her the opportunity to improve her Spanish, her mother described how she even learned to sing some tangos with traditional Uruguayan lyrics.

At the time of the interview Ursula attended Spanish lessons every Saturday morning from eight thirty to ten thirty at the local primary school. She said that she enjoyed these classes and commented that her favourite friends were those who were studying Spanish with her. She described enthusiastically how she and her friends on Saturdays talked and played before, during and after classes. It was very clear from her voice that she felt better with those peers than with the ones at the non-government school where she was studying.

En la escuela particular la mayoría de las chicas son muy individualistas y solo se juntan entre sus propios grupos.

(In the non-government school the majority of the girls are too individualistic and they only gather in their own groups).

Ursula's father said that he did not have time to go to the school for the parent-teacher interviews. Her mother said that she was the one who took care of the education of their daughter, went to the parent-teacher interviews and also helped her with her homework and even went with her to the library when Ursula had to do a project.

Ursula was a very talkative and extrovert girl, who liked to talk in Spanish. When she saw me in the school corridors she happily greeted me in Spanish and commented on the main activities of the day. It was nice to talk to her, she always had a smiling face and seemed to be full of a contagious energy.

At school Ursula said that she liked those classes where she could participate actively. She mentioned that her favourite class in Year Nine was Geography.

Muchos profesores no te dejan hablar, ellos quieren hablar todo el tiempo, pero el profesor de geografía te deja hablar y dar tu opinión, por eso me gustan las clases de geografía.

(Many teachers don't allow you to speak, they want to talk all the time, but the geography teacher allows you to speak and give your opinion, because of that I like geography classes).

On the other hand, she said that she disliked her Year Nine Mathematics classes because she had trouble in understanding the teacher's explanations. As a result she needed additional help from one of her brothers' friends who tutored her once a week. Ursula also added that she disliked her Year Nine English classes.

En la clase no hay muchas chicas australianas, es un grupo de "ethnic" people y muchas veces él te trata como si tú no eres nada, muchas veces dice que tú no te sacas buenas notas porque eres esto o lo otro.

(In the class there are not many Australian girls, it is a group of ethnic people and many times he treats you as though you were nothing, many times he says you don't get good marks because you are this or that).

Ursula's parents said that they have always supported their daughter's future ambition of working with animals. Ursula described how she had always liked animals; she had two dogs, a cat and a bird at home. Ursula was hoping to study a career related to animals at the local TAFE, as an animal tender or some similar occupation. She explained that she did not want to go to the university and do a Bachelor in Veterinary Science because, according to her, it took too much time and there was too much study involved. In addition she also expected her marks to be not high enough to go to the university.

On the other hand, Ursula definitely wanted to finish her Year Twelve, because she had seen how difficult it was for her oldest brother, who only got his school certificate, to find work. Now he was seriously thinking of completing his secondary education by doing Years Eleven and Twelve at the local TAFE.

6.2 Zulma

Zulma was seventeen and in Year Eleven at the time of the interview. Zulma lived with her father and mother, who, like Ursula's parents, were also forced to leave Uruguay in the seventies by the military regime and the precarious economic situation. As Zulma's father declared:

La dictadura militar y la mala situación económica fueron las razones que nos hicieron salir de Uruguay y venir aquí.

(The military dictatorship and the bad economic situation were the reasons for leaving Uruguay and coming here).

Zulma's parents, Alicia and Alfredo, did not come from the Uruguayan capital but from a small town in the interior of the country. However, they were living in Montevideo when they decided to emigrate to Australia in April 1976.

Similar to Ursula's parents they arrived with a son, a four year old boy, Zulma's elder brother. Zulma's parents said that they felt very fortunate to be living in Australia. One drawback, or sadness was their separation from their loved ones, because unfortunately none of their relatives had wanted to emigrate after them. To compensate for this they were pleased that the place where they were living near the Metropolis, was similar in weather to their Uruguayan small home town. However they still did not have any other relatives in Australia at the time of the interview.

Zulma was born in September 1978 at the Metropolis hospital. Zulma's elder brother was in his early twenties and had moved to live and work in Sydney. where he was studying at TAFE. He had wanted to study at university but his tertiary entrance score was too low. As a result, he was

currently studying pathology and hoping in the near future to try again to enter the university and do his Bachelor of Science.

For Zulma's parents the non-government school represented the Catholic values they were used to in their home country and so they believed that their children would be, in a way, protected from the new and unfamiliar influences.

Cuando llegamos acá todo para nosotros era diferente, todo raro, nos parecía que lo mejor sería colocar a nuestro hijo en una escuela particular porque que iba a estar más protegido.

(When we arrived here everything for us was different, everything weird, we thought the best for our son was to put him in a non-government school because he would be more protected).

With Zulma they did the same, so that both brother and sister have completed their primary and secondary education in non-government schools.

Zulma's mother worked when she was living in Montevideo; sewing for a small tailoring business. Although Alicia said that she had liked work, when they arrived in Australia her husband said that it was not necessary for her to "sacrifice" herself working outside the home. Alicia commented that her husband considered that paid work for a wife who has a working husband was not necessary.

Trabajar me gusta, pero él (su marido) dice que no vale la pena sacrificarme trabajando fuera de casa.

(I like working, but he (her husband) says that it is not worth the sacrifice to work outside the home).

Thus, Alicia worked full time at home and she commented on how she had everything ready for her husband and children when they arrived in the

evening. In this way she said that she felt important because to some extent her husband and her son and daughter depended on her. Sometimes, during the rest of the day Alicia spent her free time visiting her Uruguayan, Argentinian and Chilean female friends who lived in the neighbourhood.

Neither Zulma's mother nor Zulma's father had the opportunity of finishing their primary education because they started to work very young. Their main difficulty in their nineteen years in Australia has been the English language and they were still fighting to master it. When they were living in the hostel Alfredo studied English for only the first two weeks. Alicia has been studying for years but she confessed that she still finds the language too difficult. Alicia said that she went, for instance, to the doctor alone and was able to describe her symptoms without the help of an interpreter; for her that was very important. However, Zulma's parents saw their main trouble with the language has been pronunciation and grammar.

Generally it was Zulma's mother who went to the school to parent-teacher interviews. Although she had participated in the canteen, especially when her children were at primary school, she said that she had never participated in other activities or had contact with other parents at the school.

Zulma's parents wanted the best for their two children. They said they would be very happy if Zulma went to the university, but they say that they had never put pressure on their children. They thought it was up to them to decide what to do. As it was their decision, they did not try to influence them. Although Zulma was eager to finish Year Twelve and do something different than just studying, she had not made up her mind in relation to her future studies.

Zulma has visited Uruguay three times in order to see all her relatives who live in Canelones, Montevideo and Paysandú. Her last visit was for Christmas on an eight week holiday when she said enthusiastically that she had a wonderful time with her family. In Uruguay she experienced the Latino friendship that she has not felt in Australia; in Montevideo she integrated very easily into the community in her relatives' neighbourhood.

Los uruguayos son más amistosos y eso se siente en la piel, hay más comunidad y aquí en Australia no hay nada de eso

(Uruguayan are more friendly and you feel that under your skin, there is more community and here in Australia there is not anything like that).

Zulma said that she was born in Australia but she had always felt Uruguayan and if the Uruguayan economic situation were similar to the one in Australia she said that she would go to live in Uruguay.

Zulma's parents spoke Spanish at home all the time, but they said they had been greatly inconvenienced by their daughter answering half in English half in Spanish. Although it was a real mixture they could communicate anyway. Alfredo rented movies in Spanish and Zulma loved watching comedies; her favourite ones were Mexican, especially the Mexican actor Mario Moreno (Cantinflas). She also read the Spanish newspapers her father bought regularly. Zulma studied Spanish for four years in the Saturday School, but for the year of the interview, she did not attend those classes because she was too busy with Year Eleven. She was studying Italian at school because Spanish was not taught at her secondary school.

Zulma had no trouble at all in expressing herself in Spanish. However, Zulma said that she felt more confident talking in English because she said

that she had been studying the language at school in Australia and knew the English grammar better than the Spanish one.

Zulma said that she liked being in Year Eleven because some teachers treated her as an adult unlike the previous years when most of the teachers were always telling her what to do. In Year Eleven, she said, she was aware that the responsibility was hers and she wanted to finish her secondary school with good marks. Zulma said that she liked studying but she talked about how busy she was in Year Eleven. Her favourite subject was Art because she received good marks and enjoyed the classes a lot. She also commented that she had good marks in Geography and Italian. However, she said that she disliked Mathematics because there was too much work to do and although her English teacher had told her to do upper stream English she had always been in intermediate English in order to have more time to study Mathematics.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter the voices of the two Uruguayan female students and their parents have told us how both families left their beloved home country because of the political and economic situation they were facing in the first half of the seventies. As with the Spanish and the Chileans, these families seemed to be very close. They also have a strong connection with their home country. Both girls were born in Australia but speak the Spanish language and they are very concerned to maintain it. These girls have visited Uruguay and they strongly identify themselves as Uruguayan. As with the Spanish and Chilean students these girls enjoyed the friendship they developed in their parents' home neighbourhood in their parents' home country.

As far as the reasons for choosing a non-government school, for Ursula's parents it represented discipline, as it did for most of the parents in the study who chose this kind of school, and for Zulma's parents it meant protection. Both students showed great interest in finishing their secondary education. Zulma was not sure about her future studies and Ursula revealed that she would like to continue her education in the local technical college.

Their parents shared their daughters' future aspirations and declared that they did not put any extra pressure on the girls, allowing them to take their own decisions in relation to future studies or a professional career.

This chapter finishes the trilogy of the students' home contexts. Students and parents have talked about their lives and experiences as immigrants and children of immigrants in Australia. Their comments and opinions have provided some insights into their families and cultural contexts which dynamically help these participants to constantly construct and reconstruct their cultures identities. In next chapter I will give some insights into the students' school and classroom contexts.

Be Happy

When people are teasing you
and you are feeling down
just pick yourself up
and smile, don't frown.

If you are from Russia
or China or some place bad
If people tease you
don't cut or get mad.

Just be happy—don't be sad
Don't be angry—just be glad.

If people tease you about where you come from
Forget about them, just leave them alone
You don't have to tease them back
just because they are Russian, Indian, or Black.

(School boy, cited in Rizvi, 1993).

Sé Feliz

Cuando la gente se burla de ti
y te sientes deprimido
sé fuerte
y sonríe, no frunzas el seño.

Si eres de Rusia
o China o de algún otro lugar
Si la gente se burla de ti
no insultes ni te enojés.

Sé feliz solamente—no te entristezcas
No te enojés—sólo se complaciente.

Si la gente se burla de ti debido a tu lugar de origen
Ignóralos, y déjalos solos
No tienes que burlarte también tú de ellos
sólo porque ellos son rusos, hindúes, or negros.

(My own Translation).

CHAPTER SEVEN

C L A S S R O O M C H A L L E N G E

Chapters Four, Five and Six showed family interactions and relationships in the home milieu where students constantly construct aspects of their cultural identity. The main focus of the present chapter is to show how the teaching practices observed in the classroom settings and the relationships between teachers, parents, students and peers contribute to the construction of students' cultural identity at school. Also it explores some of those factors which might work to assist or discourage students' learning and success in the school context.

This chapter presents an analysis of data gathered about the school context through classroom descriptions (field notes, audio and video tapes) and conversations with students, teachers and parents. Of the twenty two students interviewed in 1995 (see Chapters Four, Five and Six), by 1996, the third year of the study, four students had finished school: Anabel, Rita, Violeta and Noelia; one was in Year Twelve: Zulma; two were in Year Eleven: Braulio and Ivan; and two had left school: Carlota and Gonzalo. Thirteen students remained as participants in the second stage of the study. They were observed in their English, Mathematics and Science classes in Years Eight, Nine and Ten. The chapter also offers a physical description of the classrooms and schools where the lessons took place and describes and interprets a number of incidents observed during lessons.

In total thirty five classes were observed and Table 7.1 shows the distribution of these classes with the thirteen students observed in the three schools.

Table 7.1: Classes Observed (Upper, Intermediate and Lower Streams)

Upper Stream

Subjects	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Total
English	Luis			1
Maths	Luis		Ester	2
Science				
Total	2		1	3

Intermediate Stream

Subjects	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
English	Sergio Helena		Orlando Ester Marta/Ursula ¹	5
Maths	Helena	Damaso	Orlando Marta	4
Science	Luis Sergio	Juan Damaso	Orlando Marta	6
Total	5	3	7	15

Lower Stream

Subjects	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
English	Berta	Juan/Damaso ² Patricia	Fernanda Quimera	5
Maths	Sergio Berta	Juan Patricia	Fernanda/Ursula ³ Quimera	6
Science	Helena Berta	Patricia	Ester Fernanda/Ursula ⁴ Quimera	6
Total	5	5	7	17

Total Classes	12	8	15	35
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¹ Marta and Ursula were in the same Intermediate Stream English class Year Ten.

² Juan and Damaso were in the same Lower Stream English class Year Nine.

³ Fernanda and Ursula were in the same Lower Stream Mathematics class Year Ten.

⁴ Fernanda and Ursula were in the same Lower Stream Science class Year Ten.

7.1 The Physical Context

It is accepted that the second stage of the study included only one state coeducational school and only two non-government schools and that generalisations are not possible. It is also understood that there is an infinite variety of state coeducational schools in New South Wales in different socio-economic areas of the state and so their situations may differ markedly one from the other. On the other hand the experiences of Spanish speaking students within these classes and schools act as instances which serve to demonstrate how individual students negotiate their identities and engage with pedagogical contexts in a variety of secondary classrooms. They provide insights into those contexts which work to facilitate learning and those which work against it.

One of the first differences that came to my attention, and was noticeable from the first visit, was the physical contrast between the state coeducational school and the two non-government schools which participated in the study. The general appearance of the non-government schools was one of order and tidiness, very different from the one in the state coeducational school in which classrooms, teachers' rooms, corridors, gardens and yards looked unkempt. In contrast, the spaces of the non-government schools looked much cleaner and better maintained.

For an outside observer one of the most striking differences was the physical appearance and environment inside the classrooms in the non-government schools as compared to those of the state coeducational school. Classrooms in both non-government schools were similar: there were religious images and portraits in every classroom, a cross in every room and in the girls' school, in some of the rooms there were also Virgin Mary portraits and

vases with fresh flowers. All the classrooms in both non-government schools were very clean and looked very well maintained. The windows had clean glass, blinds clean and working properly and the carpeted rooms were very well vacuumed. In some classrooms including the Science laboratories there were shelves and cupboards which were also clean and tidy, with books and bottles, and laboratory instruments, neatly arranged. When there were other posters, besides the religious ones, they were properly hung or stuck to the walls. In general, the classrooms provided a clean and homelike atmosphere, indeed some of the rooms looked very cosy and comfortable.

In contrast, in the state coeducational school the situation was very different. The rooms which were observed were dirty: old desks, some of them broken and full of dust were located at the back of some classrooms. The blinds in almost every room were broken or torn. The walls were dirty and patches of paint were missing in those spots where posters had been removed. In some of the rooms old shelves full of old books were accumulating dust. Some of the rooms looked like old work sheds instead of classrooms.

When the students dropped something on the floor they did not bother to pick it up and put it in the waste paper basket unless the teacher insisted on it. The Science laboratories were the exception. They were much cleaner and tidier and most of them remained locked between classes. However, some of the laboratory instruments that students used were misplaced, on the wrong shelf or drawer. In general, as an observer, I found the environment of the state coeducational school classrooms depressing and I could not help but feel some pity for those who had to study and work there.

7.2 The Teachers

Thirty four teachers consented to participate: six women and seven men in the boys' school, ten women and two men in the girls' school, and seven women and two men in the state coeducational school. Most of the teachers were willing to have me sit in their lessons, observe, audio and eventually videotape their classes although there were a few teachers in the three schools who did not allow me to videotape their lessons. Interviews were held with eleven teachers (see Chapter Three, Table 3.3 Participants Interviewed). However, others were not very informative when talking about their students and only provided, in short conversations, a few details about their students' attitudes and behaviour in the classroom as well as their perceptions of the students.

In both non-government schools there were no ESL specialist teachers. The participant teachers said that when they detected a problem they tried to work on an individual basis and talked to the class English teacher to help these students. In the state coeducational school there was one ESL specialist for the whole school, whose responsibility was to help new arrival students. She said that she worked only with these students during their first year at school. Her job was to accompany these students to some of their classes, once or twice a week, and help them to understand the class teacher's explanations and read instructions in the text books.

New immigrant students continue to arrive every day in Australia, however the multicultural policy does not appear to be providing necessary responses to the English needs these students present, needs which have been demonstrated since the policies were first formulated twenty years ago. This situation seems to have worsened since the Campbell Reports, starting

with the substantial cuts to the Commonwealth ESL program in the 1986 budget, "further damaging the levels of provision and prejudicing the outcomes for many students" (Lo Bianco, 1988: 32). The New South Wales Multicultural Education Plan 1993-1997⁵ does not seem to have made any impact on the schools in the study including the plan aimed to expand Community Languages by 1997. None of the three schools in the study, for instance, were offering Spanish so that some of the Spanish-speaking background students were studying Italian or French.

There were other general differences between the schools and the teachers in the schools. The teachers in the boys' school said that the students showed more respect towards male teachers than female ones. Some of the female teachers commented that this attitude was particularly obvious in Years Eleven and Twelve. Some of the male teachers said that some NESB⁶ students' behaviour in relation to their female teachers was a cultural reflection of what happened in their homes where the mother played a secondary role, mainly attending to the needs of the father and the rest of the family. These teachers interpreted this as the students seeing their mother's role of less importance than their father's one; thus when they had a female teacher in a position of authority, they found it difficult to obey and respect her. In the girls' school teachers said that they noted no difference in the level of respect showed by the girls towards female or male teachers. In the state coeducational school some of the female teachers noted that they had real difficulties in controlling the class; male teachers, on the other hand said that they had no troubles in managing their classes. This may also been due to the male teachers unwillingness to acknowledge any difficulties and/or due to their more directed and authoritarian teaching style.

⁵ The plan strategies are detailed in Chapter Two, section 2.3.1 Multicultural Education.

⁶ Teachers used this term to refer to the students coming from homes where languages other than English were spoken. As was said in Chapter One, I prefer to use the term LBOTE.

Some of the following themes these students talked about are probably typical of any student, any adolescent. The themes they talked about are not always concerning prejudice, discrimination, ethnocentrism or racism. What is important here is how these typical themes intercept with their specific cultural experiences: being adolescents, and being students from a Language Background other than English (LBOTE) who are living in two worlds, their homes and the mainstream Australian society.

This has impacted differently on the students, depending on the way students renegotiate and reconstruct their interactions with parents and teachers. As it will be shown in this chapter, some of the aspirations, hopes and ambitions expressed by the participants in Chapters Four, Five and Six are strongly connected to what happens inside the classrooms.

The English, Mathematics and Science lessons observed in the three schools at upper, intermediate and lower stream levels were very much teacher-centred. In addition, it was easier for the teacher and the students to carry out their daily routines in the upper and intermediate stream classes.

In the non-government schools, students rarely spoke without the teacher's authorisation. In contrast in the state coeducational school, where the three female students observed were in lower stream classes, it was almost impossible for the teacher, in some classes, to carry out any activity without constantly interrupting the lesson, shouting and telling the students to behave. In the non-government schools some students also tended to misbehave but it was much easier for the teachers to control them and go on with the class routine.

7.3 The English, Mathematics and Science Classes

Table 7.2: Students Distribution by Class

Levels		Upper Stream Classes			Intermediate Stream Classes			Lower Stream Classes		
Subjects		Eng	Math	Sci	Eng	Math	Sci	Eng	Math	Sci
Boys, School	Year									
Sergio	8				√		√		√	
Luis	8	√	√				√			
Damaso	9					√	√	√		
Juan	9						√	√	√	
Alberto	10				√	√	√			
Girls' School										
Helena	8				√	√				√
Marta	10				√	√	√			
Fernanda	10							√	√	√
Ester	10		√		√					√
Ursula	10				√				√	√
State School										
Berta	8							√	√	√
Patricia	9							√	√	√
Quimera	10							√	√	√

There were three possible ways of organising and presenting the following data about the classes observed. The first one was to organise the data by students, following the order given in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The second one was to organise the data by schools. However, what became obvious from an analysis of the classroom data were the differences in the experiences of students in the advanced as compared to the lower stream classes. What counts in this chapter then are not the schools, nor specifically the students only, but the interactions of the students, their peers and their teachers in the different classes in which they took part. Thus, it was decided

that the best way of keeping the richness and the complexity of the classroom environment was to organise and present the data by classes and by levels.

The three following sections: upper, intermediate, and lower stream classes are presented in that order to make clear the important differences amongst these classes and the way this difference affects and influences students' participation, involvement, and above all their own perceptions which helped them to position themselves in relation to their peers and teachers inside the class environment. The labels upper, intermediate and lower classes were given by the teachers when they referred to their classes. The headings with the names of the students followed by numbers in brackets do not follow the same order of Chapters Four, Five and Six; the references in brackets help with the reading of the chapter and they identify students in relation to the previous chapters.

7.3.1 Upper Stream Classes

All the students interviewed in upper stream classes were studying Mathematics or English in the two non-government schools. In the state coeducational school, none of the students in the study was in an upper stream classes. Thus, it was not possible to make a comparison between these classes in the three schools. This in itself raises questions as to why there were no representatives in upper streams, and reinforces the question of the difficulties many LBOTE students have in succeeding in the school system. Is it a coincidence that the advanced students were in the non-government schools? Given the description of the ways in which the state school dealt with LBOTE students it might be suggested that the parents' perceptions that LBOTE students do better in non-government schools

could be borne out — though there is insufficient evidence from the study to confirm this.

7.3.1.1 English and Mathematics Classes

In the boys’ and girls’ schools, the English and Mathematics lessons observed showed very little difference in relation to the general environment of the classroom. The nine classes observed had primarily a very teacher-centred routine, in which the main purpose was transmission, of knowledge. This is similar to what Delamont (cited Barnes, 1986) has called “cold” subjects, in other words forms of teaching content which she claims have as their main purpose the regurgitation of knowledge and which discourage students from thinking. In general terms the girls were observed to be more well behaved than the boys and the general environment in the class at the girls’ school was quieter than the six classes observed at the boys’ school.

Table 7.3: Upper Stream Classes Observed

Subjects	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
English	Luis			1
Maths	Luis		Ester	2
Science				
Total Classes	2		1	3

The classes observed in Mathematics and English involved two Chilean students, a boy, Luis and a girl, Ester. Luis and Ester at the time of the observation were doing Year Eight and Ten respectively. Luis was observed in three English and three Mathematics classes and Ester in three

Mathematics classes. The following table provides the distribution of the two Chilean students and their classes.

Luis (5.7)

In the boys' school students were asked to sit in alphabetical order but the teachers sometimes changed the position of some students so that they could see the board. This was the case for Luis who was moved to the front from his seat in the back rows by his English teacher because being rather small for his age, he had trouble seeing the board over the heads of his twenty six peers. In one of the Mathematics classes observed Luis arrived late. He sat himself at the back of the room and disappeared among his thirty one peers. The teacher asked him to pull his chair to the front. When Luis sat in his new position he received a kind of welcome from his nearby peers. He seemed very comfortable in both classes and looked as happy and busy as the other boys in the class.

Luis' classes took place in the same very sunny, well lit, neat and clean classroom. The red carpet matched the red sweater the boys were wearing as part of their uniform. There was a portrait of the Virgin Mary on the left side of the white board and a wooden cross on the right side, and above the middle of board there was a clock. The teacher's desk was in front, to the right of the board. There was not a single piece of rubbish on the floor. When a pupil dropped some paper, he immediately got up and put it inside the waste paper basket located next to the door, without being prompted by the teacher. The desks were arranged in six columns of five rows. Luis sat in the front row of the first column, next to the door and distant from the teacher's desk. The other twenty six boys were evenly distributed leaving only three empty desks.

Luis seemed to like being in the classes observed. He participated actively and when he had the opportunity he talked to his peers and when he was asked by the teachers he provided the answers. From the observations it seemed that Luis did not feel isolated in the classes. On the contrary, he seemed to be well integrated into the atmosphere of involvement in the classes and none of his peers manifested any kind of negative attitude towards him. This was confirmed by Luis' own comments and the teacher's observations.

The English teacher seemed not to give attention to any of the students in particular and answered the many questions raised by the students. For example, they asked for explanations and meanings of unknown words and questions about grammar. In the three classes observed there did not seem to be apparent tension or stress which would inhibit the students' interactions.

Luis' English teacher was very familiar with his family background. When asked in the interview about her estimation of Luis' capacity in English, she located Luis towards the bottom of the class. At the same time she suggested that Luis was a bright child but that his English skills were lower than other children. She said that Luis was as able as the other boys to do his homework and class exercises. Luis' English teacher said that she was aware of the difficulties NESB students faced when they were located in lower streamed classes and where, most of the time, they did not get the opportunities to develop their potential.

The English teacher thought that if Luis had been dropped to a lower class he would do less work because he could be caught up in behavioural problems of other students and also he himself might behave differently.

The teacher said that sometimes he forgot to do his homework so she asked his parents to pay special attention to English homework and Luis' parents agreed to check and encourage their son to do his homework.

Luis had a lot in his favour with an encouraging and supportive teacher and protective and encouraging parents. The English teacher had talked to Luis' parents at parent-teacher interviews and they had agreed that he had to concentrate more in the class, because he rushed from one piece of work to another instead of concentrating on the quality of the work. Luis' parents recognised that their son was always rushing. They said that even at home he was always trying to do too many things at the same time. They said that they were happy with the teacher's attitude and appreciated the consideration that she had for Luis' needs.

According to the teacher, the conversation with his parents was very productive. Both his parents were teachers and understood the situation their son was passing through as a student who spent his early years in a non-English speaking background environment (Gibbons, in Derewianka 1992: 286). They were also concerned that because they spoke Spanish at home Luis' studies of English could have been affected.

In Luis' case his parents and the English teacher agreed on a common strategy to help Luis to improve, particularly his writing skills. They agreed to work together to help Luis overcome his problems in English. Luis was seen by his teacher as a student with potential and so she supported his remaining in the upper stream class.

Luis seemed to be responding to this support, encouragement and concern. He said that he was working at home and in the class in order to improve

his English. Luis said that he appreciated the way the teacher and his parents were helping him. Luis' mother was a teacher of Spanish at a Saturday School in the region and Luis said that his mother helped him especially with grammar. Luis said that he liked English classes because they were always different with different activities and he had the possibility of expressing himself, for instance, by writing poems. The teacher kept up a constant flow of work which did not allow the students to concentrate on other activities such as teasing or disturbing.

Luis' English teacher had also worked part-time in another non-government school and she had in the past worked in state coeducational schools. In spite of it being a compulsory class, she found ways to provide incentives and help for her students. She commented that she worked with a system of bonus marks and every student was engaged in a specific activity inside the common core of the class.

Luis' English classes were a little noisier than the other classes observed in the boys' school; however it was not difficult at all for the teacher to bring the students to silence when it was necessary. Actually, in the three lessons observed the students looked happy and interested in the activities. It was a "productive" noise, as opposed to the noise and disturbance observed in the lower stream classes in both non-government and state coeducational schools.

On the basis of my own observations, the English teacher's comments and Luis' own remarks, he seemed to be totally accepted by his peers and his teacher. He was given the opportunity to be in that class and he was responding, according to his teacher and parents, to the challenge of improving his performance in English. According to the teacher he had

never been afraid of participating in any activity. On the contrary, he volunteered several times to carry out specific duties, such as organising a poetry exhibition in which every student was asked to write a poem.

Luis said that he knew that he was different from his peers; he understood that he had a Chilean background and said that he was very proud of it. Luis added that nobody in class had said anything to him in relation to his accent or his background. He also said that he was aware that neither his English teacher nor his peers were trying to diminish his achievements, quite the contrary.

Luis' experiences in his Mathematics class were similar to those in English. The Mathematics class was a mixture of upper and intermediate stream students, and the teacher placed Luis at the bottom of the class of thirty one students. However he also said that Luis was a good student, especially when he came to areas like algebra and abstract ideas but his basics such as tables were not as good. He suggested that although Luis would be likely to be placed in intermediate stream Mathematics in Year Nine, in Year Ten he could be in an upper stream Mathematics class if he continued his progress.

Luis sat in the same place in the front row each time. There were some different boys from the ones who were in the English class and Luis seemed to get along well with these Mathematics peers too. When the teacher was at the board Luis had the opportunity to talk to his peers as he did in the English classes, and as there was no other student in the class who spoke Spanish, Luis spoke only in English. He also followed the teacher's explanation and corrections of the exercises on the board. When Luis was asked he answered promptly and his peers listened in silence to his answers as they did when any other student was responding to the teacher's

questions. As was the case in English, Luis seemed to fit well with his Mathematics peers.

The Mathematics teacher started his class routines by very quickly correcting the exercises which were assigned as homework and the boys seemed to follow him without difficulty. When Luis was asked specific questions he always had the right answer. The Mathematics class was much quieter than the English one and the teacher did not provide many opportunities for the students to talk or engage in activities other than correcting the homework and class exercises. The teacher positioned himself in front of the room and explained the exercises as he wrote them on the board. Students only intervened when they were asked to. However, they seemed to enjoy the class and showed interest in the exercises. Luis, as in English, said that he was very pleased with the way the teacher worked the exercises. He said he liked the pace the teacher set for the class.

As was the case in English, Luis also had some assistance from his father who was a Mathematics teacher. When there was something Luis did not understand with the homework he asked his father. However his father said that he never helped Luis with the homework itself. Instead he said that he taught Luis with different and more difficult exercises than the ones in the homework but not as often as he thought he should.

The Mathematics teacher had spoken to Luis' parents in the parent-teacher interview and they agreed that Luis was continuing his progress. Again, as it happened in English, the Mathematics teacher and Luis' parents agreed on Luis' weaknesses and strengths and together they were engaged in helping him to progress in the subject.

Ester (5.4)

Like the Mathematics classroom in the boys' school, Ester's room was also very well lit, sunny, neat and clean, but it was much smaller. The teacher's desk was in front, by the middle of the board. As was the case for the boys' Mathematics class, there was not a single piece of paper on the floor. There were twenty eight girls in the class and Ester sat in the middle of the room next to the back wall. As in the boys' school the girls were also asked, in some classes, to sit in alphabetical order and keep that seat for the whole term.

Cazden (1988) points out that classrooms are among the most crowded human environments and Ester's classroom was indeed crowded because the room was very small. There was so little space to move around, that it seemed the twenty eight girls, the teacher and I were squashed up like sardines in a tin.

As was the case for Luis' lessons, these lessons were also teacher-centred. The teacher moved in the little space that was available between the first row of desks and the wall where the board was located and did all her talking from there. The lessons were very quiet except when, in one of the classes observed, the teacher returned a test and the girls manifested their happiness or discontent with the marks given to them.

Like Luis' Mathematics classes, the teacher spent much of the time going through the homework exercises. In the first class observed the teacher spent most of the class time on the exercises in the test. She went through them one by one correcting them on the board. When time was running out, she only worked through those where the girls did very poorly. The

other two lessons observed were carried out in the same way, mainly through correcting the exercises which were given as homework. The girls rarely participated verbally in the lesson; they quickly checked their answers to the test and their answers to the homework.

As the classroom was very small the voice of the teacher easily covered all the room and the girls remained very still in their seats listening to the teacher. Ester like the other girls remained silent except when it was possible to exchange a few words with the students near her. She sat at the back of the room following the teacher's explanations of the exercises on the board.

When the class finished it was possible to overhear some of the girls commenting that it was a relief to leave the small room. There were no other girls who spoke Spanish in the class. As Ester left the classroom she talked animatedly in English to her peers on their way to the school canteen. Ester seemed to get along very well with all the rest of the class. This was confirmed by the teacher's comment that she was very friendly and good at talking to her peers outside the classroom.

Talking to the Mathematics teacher after class, she said that Ester was an average student who was trying to catch up to the rest of the group after being absent for nearly a month with chickenpox. Ester confirmed that she liked Mathematics but she was very busy those days trying to catch up, after her illness. Ester's parents said that if their daughter did not catch up quickly they would hire a tutor for her. Ester said that she was having problems in understanding the exercises the teacher gave her to do, but added that the teacher had been very helpful in explaining some exercises to her. Ester's parents had not talked to the teacher because when the parent-teacher interview took place Ester was at home sick and her Mathematics teacher

did not ask them to come and talk with her. However in one of the classes observed the teacher said that she wanted to talk to all the parents in the next parent-teacher interview.

As with Luis, Ester seemed to accept and be accepted by her peers. Also their three teachers did not seem to show any kind of preferences towards any group or individual students in the classes observed. What seemed to count was the students' achievements, parents' and teachers' concerns and expectations.

While Luis and Ester seemed to get on well with most members of their classes, when it came to choosing friends and partners to share non classroom activities in the school they preferred, as they declared in Chapter Five, "wog" students to the Anglo-Australian students. They also said that they only interacted with "wog" young people, like them, outside the school when they went to parties or discotheques or when they just wandered around town, sometimes window shopping, in the centre of the city. As Ester said:

En todo mi grupo no hay ningún australiano, entonces somos todos wog, los australianos no se juntan con los que no lo son.

(In my whole group there is not a single Australian, so we are all wogs, the Australians do not mix with those who are not like them).

7.3.2 Intermediate Stream Classes

In the boys' and girls' schools, the intermediate English, Mathematics and Science lessons observed showed only slight differences in relation to the level of student participation; they were again very much teacher-centred. The girls behaved better than the boys and their classes were less noisy than

the boys’ classes. Nine of the students in the study were in intermediate stream classes: four were Spanish students — Sergio, Marta, Damaso and Juan; four were Chilean — Ester, Helena, Luis and Orlando; and one Uruguayan — Ursula. Since two of the students were in the same class, fifteen classes in all were observed. The following table provides the distribution of these nine students and their classes.

Table 7.4: Intermediate Stream Classes Observed

Subjects	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
English	Sergio Helena		Orlando Ester Marta/Ursula ⁷	5
Maths	Helena	Damaso	Orlando Marta	4
Science	Luis Sergio	Juan Damaso	Orlando Marta	6
Total Classes	5	3	7	15

7.3.2.1 English Classes

Sergio (4.2)

Sergio’s classroom was similar to the one in which Luis had English and Mathematics. The same carpet, the same religious ornaments. The only major difference was that the desks were not symmetrically arranged, there were eleven columns of desks, some of them with only two rows. Sergio sat always in the second row of the first column, next to the windows, and sat sideways facing into the classroom. This position allowed him to talk with his peers behind and next to him.

⁷ Marta and Ursula were in the same Intermediate Stream English class Year Ten.

In Sergio's Year Eight English lessons the teacher was following the text book page by page and she asked individual boys to read out the definitions of words such as alliteration, metaphor, personification and simile. In one of the classes observed, the teacher asked the boys to write down in the notebooks three or four definitions. Sergio seemed not at all interested in the activity. In the three lessons observed, he was never asked to read nor did he volunteer to do it. There were no other students who spoke Spanish in the class. In the lessons observed Sergio talked in English several times to his peers when there was an opportunity to do so.

The English teacher said, in the interview, that Sergio's class was a mixed ability class in which Sergio was part of the middle range. She said that Sergio was very much the typical Year Eight boy who had a lot of interests that did not correspond to what they had been doing in class. She went on to say that she thought that Sergio seemed to enjoy the class and seemed to participate in the activities reasonably well.

His reading abilities prevent him from often having a go and reading aloud in class and things like that but he can read aloud quite fluently, but he doesn't have faith in his own abilities to do so. I don't believe in forcing a child to do something that they don't feel confident in doing. I think this does more harm than good.

The teacher said that Sergio behaved quite well, similar to a lot of the other boys in that group. The teacher thought that Sergio had the ability to do better but it depended on his attitude. The teacher saw him only as a typical fourteen year old boy who was busy with other things and doing those other things that seemed more interesting to him than studying. According to the teacher Sergio wrote English with some confidence, but he tended to rush and finish things fast.

The English teacher said that she had talked to Sergio's parents in the parent-teacher interview, but it was a short and fast conversation and they did not have the time to discuss Sergio's situation in detail. Like some of the parents in the study Sergio's parents were also frustrated by the shortness of the parent-teacher interviews. The teacher said that Sergio's parents were very supportive. They agreed with her however on Sergio's lack of concentration when he did his homework and class exercises. Like the teacher, they expected Sergio would change and pay more attention as he grew older.

Sergio's parents were surprised with the teacher's comments about Sergio's lack of confidence in reading aloud. Both said that Sergio was very good at talking in English and thought that he had few difficulties in expressing himself orally. When I asked Sergio about this Sergio said that he did not like reading aloud because as he liked reading very quickly he was afraid of making mistakes and being corrected in front of the class. He said that he liked his peers and was not afraid of what they would say but he insisted that he did not like to be corrected in front of the whole class.

Helena (5.4)

Sergio's and Helena's classes were very similar in relation to the level of discipline imposed by both teachers in their respective classes. However the boys tended to be noisier than the girls and there were more instances in which the teacher had to intervene in order to tell the boys to behave and reduce the level of their voices.

Helena's classroom, similar to Ester's classroom, was also ornamented with a portrait of the Virgin Mary and a cross in the middle of the wall above the

board. The desks in her classroom were arranged in a more conventional way with five columns of two desks in six rows. Helena sat in the first row next to the door and when she and her peer sitting next to her had the opportunity, they exchanged a few words.

In the three English classes observed the girls had more opportunity than the boys to express themselves and give their opinions. For instance, in one of these classes they began by discussing a film the girls had seen during the previous class. However this opportunity did not last long. After a short discussion the teacher asked the girls to answer some specific questions on a written handout. She waited by her desk for about fifteen minutes. Then she asked individual girls to read out their answers. In none of the lessons observed was Helena asked, nor did she volunteer, to express an opinion. Helena said sometimes she felt like being asked but the teacher always asked the same girls to answer questions. The only words she said in English during class were those she used to exchange a couple of short sentences with one of her peers.

Helena said that she did not participate in the lessons because the teacher never asked her to do so. She said that she was a little afraid of being in an embarrassing situation if she gave a wrong answer, so she preferred to remain silent and study for the test. She said that she liked the class but the teacher was always asking the same girls. According to Helena, (see Chapter Five), she wanted to study in another school where more Chilean students went. She believed that perhaps in that school teachers would pay more attention to her.

According to the teacher, Helena was located a little above the year average, she was thirty first out of the seventy one girls in her stream. In her last test she received 62%, just above the average of 59%. The teacher said that:

Helena is very, very quiet in class. She never speaks unless she's asked to. I think that she, Helena, gives me the impression that she is timid and shy by nature and I don't know whether she feels intimidated by the way I conduct my classes or whether she is like that in every class, I don't know.

Helena's English teacher had not discussed Helena's progress or behaviour with her parents. The teacher said that she had not talked to Helena's parents because she considered it was not necessary and they had not approached her in the parent-teacher interview. The parents on the other hand said that they did not meet with the teacher because, like their daughter, Helena, who was waiting for the teacher to ask her to participate, her parents were waiting for the teacher to call them to talk to her. As they were not called they presumed that everything was fine with Helena. Helena's parents believed that teachers only called the parents of those students who had behavioural troubles and misbehaved in class.

From the teachers' point of view, Sergio and Helena seemed to have few problems with their peers and their levels of participation and involvement with them and their teachers. According to their teachers, their behaviour and attitude was a consequence of their personalities. However in the case of Helena she said that sometimes she felt ignored by the teacher, she personally believed that her feelings and attitudes could be more considered in a school where other students like her were studying. She referred specifically to other Chilean students with whom she could develop a friendship which would encourage her to actively participate in the classroom activities.

Orlando (5.8)

Orlando's English Year Ten classroom at the boys' school was a large and pleasant room. There were seventeen boys in his class and in the lessons observed he always sat in the first row near the door, in front of two Asian⁸ boys. There were no other students who spoke Spanish in the class. During the three lessons observed, Orlando frequently talked to them and another Asian boy sitting next to him. The desks in Orlando's classroom were distributed unevenly across the room. There were three big groups, one group sat at the back of the room, another in the corner opposite to the door and the other one next to the door. Orlando said that the boys at the back and on the other side of the room were very good at distracting and interrupting the lessons. In one of the classes observed one of these boys was asked by the teacher to leave the room and wait outside for about twenty minutes. This was the only time this happened in the observations; in other instances the teachers limited their discipline to admonishing the students.

The three of Orlando's English classes observed were devoted to the novel *Tomorrow When The War Began* by John Marsden. In one of these classes the boys were asked to continue with their reading of the novel. Several times the teacher had to intervene in order to ask some of the boys to stop telling jokes and laughing. Orlando did not participate in the joking and laughing. Although he and his three Asian partners talked a lot during the lesson the teacher only asked them once to concentrate on their reading. Orlando and his partners talked quietly and tried to ignore the boys who were making a disturbance in the middle of the room. Orlando said that he

⁸ These students were Korean and Vietnamese. However, Orlando and the teacher referred to them as Asian; this situation was repeated in other classes in the three schools with those students who had "Asian" facial features; they were labelled Asians by teachers and peers.

liked his Asian peers because they were quiet and that in spite of their talking they always managed to finish their exercises on time.

In the short conversation held with Orlando's English teacher, she said that Orlando was a hard working average student who had some troubles in writing his essays. She added that he was not a trouble maker but sometimes he tended to talk too much with his nearest peers. However, according to her, he was interested in the lesson and always did his homework and exercises.

Orlando's parents said that they had not talked to his son's teacher but they were trying to help him to improve his English. They were considering the possibility of hiring a private tutor to help Orlando with his written English and they commented that they had tried to speak more English at home in order not to confuse Orlando with Spanish. Orlando, on the contrary, wanted their parents to speak more Spanish with him because he wanted to go to Chile and be able to understand and speak Spanish with his relatives and friends. Orlando's wish to improve his Spanish is a clear indicator of his cultural identity construction.

There was a big difference between the boys' and the girls' English classes. Orlando's classes were very noisy and some of the boys seemed particularly eager to create situations of disturbance which made the teacher raise her voice several times in order to be able to carry out the class. In contrast, the girls' classes were very quiet and the girls behaved very well. Their teachers had no trouble at all in conducting the classes.

Ester (5.4)

Ester's English Year Ten classes were held in the same small classroom as her Mathematics classes and Ester sat in the same place. The rest of the girls sat evenly distributed in the room.

In Ester's three English classes observed, the theme was Gothic literature. In one of these classes the teacher delivered a lecture on the topic and she made references to films like "Dracula" and "Interview with the Vampire". The girls looked very interested in the topic, especially when they talked about the actors who played the main characters in the movies. Ester participated very little in the lesson but instead she copied notes from one of her peers' notebooks, catching up on the themes discussed in the classes she missed due to her chickenpox. Ester said that it was more important for her to catch up than participate in the lesson.

In a short conversation with Ester's teacher after one of the classes, she described Ester as an average student who was falling behind because she had missed so many classes because of her chickenpox and it had been difficult for her to catch up with the rest of the class. As was the case with Ester's Mathematics teacher, her parents had not talked to her daughter's English teacher.

Ester said that she was doing her best in order to catch up, but there were too many things to do in every subject in order to make up for her absences. In relation to English, she said that there were too many things to read in order to prepare an oral presentation on Gothic literature.

Ester said that she liked her English classes because the teacher usually brought films to the classes in order to make the themes clearer. According to Ester that was a very good teaching technique because she got more interested in the topic and when she talked about the film with her family she referred to the teacher's comments.

Marta (4.4) and Ursula (6.1)

Marta and Ursula were both in another English Year Ten class in which there were twenty six girls. Their classroom like Ester's was decorated with religious ornaments and there was a small table in the corner opposite to the door with a portrait of the Virgin Mary and a couple of bunches of flowers in a small vase. Their classroom was also small and very crowded. Marta sat in the second row in the middle of the room behind Ursula, who sat in the first row. However, Marta and Ursula had very little opportunity to talk because the teacher's desk was in front of theirs and the teacher stood in front of them for the whole class.

Marta's and Ursula's three English classes observed were, as for the other classes, teacher-centred. Their teacher did most of the talking in all the classes. One particular incident stood out in one of the lessons observed. The teacher had defined the terms irony and sarcasm in the following way: "Irony occurs when the writer says one thing but clearly believes the opposite of what she/he says. It is a form of sarcasm; a tongue-in-cheek way of saying something in order to ridicule or condemn". Later she distributed to the class photocopies of the following poem by Steve Turner, and read it aloud to the girls.

THEY HAD IT COMING

The South East Asians,
they were made to cry,
Look at their eyes all
narrowed up and ready to bawl.

Black Africans:
Obesity wouldn't suit them.
There's a grace about their
slenderness.
Their children would be naked
without a covering of flies.

Indians are perfect for begging
in ragged clothes
and falling dead on the streets
without too much sensation.
There are so many of them
that death is no longer a problem.

Middle Easterners, South Americans,
they were made to look anguished,
the mother crying to God,
the children just crying.
Earthquakes provide opportunity
for this.

White Westerners were made to laugh
in fast cars with beautiful friends.
They were made to drink and spend money.
Do not disturb the balance of nature.

As soon as the teacher finished her reading the girls including Marta and Ursula started to make comments saying the poem was racist. The teacher asked the girls to read it again. The girls did so but still it was difficult for many of them to see irony and not racism. They said, "It isn't ironic it is racist", but the teacher said, "If irony is lost on you I can't make you see it". Ursula asked, "Miss, how can you realise the poem is an irony if you don't know?" The teacher said, "The only way to find an answer, the irony may be lost on some people, if you are desperate and you can't see it, maybe the

irony is lost, but by the time you're told it is there, I'd be trying to look for it".

Ursula said that she understood her teacher's answer but later she said that, when she was in Year Nine her English teacher was not ironic but racist in her comments.

La profesora cuando se refería a los emigrantes varias veces usaba la palabra "wog" y decia que los "ethnic people" eran mal agradecidos.

(The teacher when she referred to the immigrants several times used the word wog and she said that the ethnic people were ungrateful).

Ursula said she liked English Year Ten because her teacher offered the students the opportunity to participate. However, as other students who are "uncomfortable when their own ethnic groups are discussed in the classroom" (Banks, 1994: 300), Ursula did not like talking too much about themes like racism and migration because she felt as if everybody was speaking only of those girls who, like her, were wogs.

Siempre que hablan de inmigrantes y racismo en la clase siento como si estuvieran hablando de mi familia y de mi misma. A veces parece que no hubiera otra cosa de que hablar si no de "wogs" para allá y "wogs" para acá.

(When they talk about immigrants and racism in the class I feel like they were talking about my family and me myself. Sometimes it seems there was no other thing to talk about but of wogs over here, wogs over there).

In one of the short conversations between classes the teacher said that Marta and Ursula were average students, Marta being quieter than Ursula who liked participating and was always asking questions. Marta's parents had not gone to the parent-teacher interview because as they said, they had no time because of their jobs. Ursula's mother went to the interview but she did not

talk to her daughter's English teacher. Marta's and Ursula's parents said that were satisfied with their daughters' progress at school. They agreed that their daughters were working according to their capacities.

Marta said she liked the English class. However, she commented that some of her peers who seemed to be friendly inside the class when they are in the school yard, looked for excuses to call her and her friends "wogs".

Ester, as had happened in her Mathematics classes, seemed to get along well with her English peers. However Orlando, Marta and Ursula seemed to be disturbed because their difference, their "wogness", was too often mentioned in the class context, as was the case for Ursula and the poem, and by their peers as was the case for Orlando and Marta. These last two looked for non-Anglo peers to interact with, for Orlando in the class and for Marta in the school yard. In Orlando's class it was some of the Anglo boys who interrupted the classes with their jokes and laughing and as Orlando said:

Parece que ellos se sienten con el derecho de hacer chistes y reirse en la clase y lo hacen con arrogancia.

(It seems that they (the Anglo students) feel they have the right to make jokes and laugh in the class and they do it with arrogance).

In Marta's and Ursula's classes the Anglo-girls remained silent when their non-Anglo peers were discussing the issue of racism. It seemed that when both Anglo and non-Anglo students had the opportunity to be involved in a conflict situation in these classes, and in the school yard, they used their differences as ammunition. In other words both Anglo and non-Anglo students collected in culturally identified groups and called one another names such as "wog" and "skippy".

7.3.2.2 Mathematics Classes

Helena (5.4)

Helena was the only student doing intermediate Mathematics in Year Eight. Like all the rooms in the girls' school, her classroom was ornamented with a cross, a Virgin Portrait and flowers. The twenty four girls sat in clusters of five and six. Two of the groups looked isolated: a group of four Asian girls sat in the middle of the room and Helena and her two partners sat at desks next to the wall and the door.

The Mathematics classes started by checking homework exercises from the text book, *Mathematics Year 8* by Seveny et al., with the teacher asking some girls to provide their answers orally. The only time Helena was asked, she did not know the answer and the teacher provided the answer herself, continuing with the exercise. The whole class was devoted to resolving the exercises from the text book. As the girls were working on them the teachers moved around the desks checking the girls' progress. Only once did the teacher come to Helena's desk to check her's and her partner's exercises but she never checked the Asian girls' exercises. However, the teacher very often went to other desks. None of these girls participated orally during the whole class. When the teacher turned her back while checking a girl's exercise the rest of the girls talked quietly as did Helena and her two peers.

As was the case with her English teacher, Helena's parents had not talked to her Mathematics teacher. In a short conversation with the teacher, she said that Helena was a very quiet girl who like her sister Ester had missed a lot of classes because of the chickenpox. When Helena was asked about her involvement in the class, Helena said that the teacher never asked her any

questions and only a very few times during the term had she come to her desk to check her homework or exercises.

Similar to what happened in her English class, she said that her Mathematics teacher also asked the same girls. She added that, as it happened in her English classes, she did not like to be asked to give answers in front of the whole class and remained silent. She commented that she did not like Mathematics because in some classes the teacher seemed not to be necessary because the only activity the teacher did was to check the exercise results and that could be done without the teacher because the answers to the exercises were at the back of the text book. She repeated what she said at the end of one of her English lessons and in Chapter Four, that she wanted to study in another school with other Chilean students and where she could receive more attention from the teachers.

Damaso (4.6)

Damaso was completing Year Nine Mathematics; his classroom was similar to Luis' Mathematics classroom, a clean, tidy and comfortable room. Damaso sat in the second row in the middle of the room, surrounded by other boys. However, Damaso looked isolated and he did not talk to any of his peers during the three lessons observed. He always kept his head down, looking at his notebook and at the board.

In the three classes observed, the teacher followed the same routine. He corrected the homework exercises on the board and only a couple of times in each class asked a few boys some questions. Damaso was never asked and as he did not talk to his peers either, he was completely silent in all of the lessons observed. Damaso quietly copied the result of the exercises from the

white board and did not even laugh when his peers at the back several times farted noisily and laughed for a while. The teacher heard the farting and the laughing but did not react and the students returned to the silent routine of copying from the board.

In the brief conversation with the teacher during one of the morning tea breaks, Damaso's teacher said that he was a below average student who remained very quiet in classes. Damaso's mother said that the teacher told her the boy was doing fine but needed to study more. She also commented, as reported in Chapter Four, that she considered that the time allocated in the parent-teacher interview was too short and there was no time to talk in detail about her son.

Damaso talked about his concerns about participating in the class or being called to the board. He said that he did not like his peers and was avoiding situations where he might feel embarrassed. He said that sometimes when a "wog" student made mistakes some of the Anglo boys in the class laughed at him.

At the beginning of the year a boy had troubles in pronouncing some numbers and the skippies laughed at him, and the teacher had to intervene telling them to stop.

This was different from his Mathematics classes Year Eight, where he said that he had participated in the class because the teacher encouraged him to do it. In his Mathematics Year Nine, he insisted that he preferred to be quiet. In addition he said that he did not like the class, because the teacher spent most of the time correcting exercises.

Orlando (5.8)

Orlando's Year Ten Mathematics class was in the same classroom as his English classes. In contrast to his position in the English class in one of the front desks, in the Mathematics class he sat in the middle of the room close to the window but still next to the same Asian boys with whom he sat in the English class. Orlando said that he sat here because this time the boys who often disturbed the class in English did not take up that space. He said that the male teacher was firmer and stricter than the English teacher and he did not allow jokes or laughing in his class. His impressions seemed to confirm the comments from the four teachers about the different ways some of the boys behaved in front of female and male teachers. As happened in English Orlando talked to his Asian partners but more quietly and less often.

Orlando's Mathematics teacher was also Luis' Mathematics teacher. Both classes were very similar, with the pace of Orlando's class slower. As was the case for the English class, his parents had not talked to his Mathematics teacher.

Orlando's teacher said in the interview that he was very bright and mature and in the top ten of the class. He added that Orlando's Mathematics was very strong and that he was a very hard working student with a lot of potential. Orlando's family said that they were very interested in his progress at school. The teacher also noted that Orlando sat in the same place with the same Asian peers, who are also at the top of the class and with whom he had worked as a team since the beginning of the term. His teacher said that he had not talked to Orlando's parents because he had not detected any trouble. However the teacher added that Orlando was a bit shy and

reserved and if he had a problem the teacher was not sure that Orlando would let him know.

Orlando said that he liked his Mathematics class and was working hard in order to be in upper stream Mathematics in Year Eleven and Twelve. He added that he liked the teacher because he did not allow the students to misbehave, distract and interrupt the class. Orlando also said that he hoped to go to the local university where his father was pursuing his Masters in Geology.

Marta (4.3)

In Marta's Mathematics class there were twenty three girls and Marta sat on the right side of the room, in the third row next to the corridor which divided the room in two halves. There was a small clothes hanger at the rear of the middle of the room, where the girls hung their jackets and hats. As the girls were seated in separated desks it was difficult for them to talk and when they did so the teacher immediately said "You are wasting your time, there is plenty to learn". As it happened with Damaso in his Year Nine Mathematics class, Marta also looked isolated in the middle of her peers. In the three classes observed Marta did not talk to any of her peers and when the classes finished she left the room alone.

The Mathematics teacher was a nun who started her class with a prayer which all the girls repeated after her in a loud voice. She started the classwork by correcting the exercises which were given as homework. She asked all the girls to read the questions in chorus, sometimes asking the girls to read the mathematical equations twice. Then she used an overhead transparency to clarify the topics she was talking about and to write down

some exercises for the girls to solve. After five minutes of working at her desk the teacher started again with the routine of asking the girls to read the questions and answers in unison. This routine was repeated in the three classes observed.

In a brief conversation Marta's teacher said that she had not talked with Marta's parents because Marta was doing fine in the class. She said that Marta was a quiet and responsible girl who always did her homework and did not misbehave in class. Marta's parents said that as the teacher did not contact them and Marta said to them that she had no troubles in the class, they did not ask to talk to the teacher in the parent-teacher interview.

Marta said that she liked the class but she considered that the classes were too repetitive and that the teacher did not change her routine, most of the time correcting exercises. She also said that when a girl made a mistake the teacher called attention to her loudly in front of the whole group and because of that, after class, some of the Anglo girls mocked other students especially those girls who were wogs.

Una de las chicas chinas tiene problemas con la letra r y las "aussies" casi siempre se rien de ella y la "ching-chongan" en el patio.

(One of the Chinese girls has troubles with the sound /r/ and the Aussies very often laughed at her and ching-chong her in the yard).

Helena, Damaso, Orlando and Marta shared similar experiences in relation to some of their Anglo peers. When they were asked about how they felt among their peers, they said that they felt that their difference was targeted when they made mistakes in front of the whole class,

cuando uno se equivoca ellos dicen que es porque nosotros somos "wogs".

(When one makes a mistake they (the Anglo) say that it is because we are wogs).

They also considered that some of their Anglo peers were not as much interested and involved as they were themselves in the lessons, when the teachers were not strict enough to control the class. Also they thought that some of their Anglo peers involved themselves too often in activities which distracted the normal flow of the classes.

7.3.2.3 Science Classes

Luis (5.7)

Luis and Sergio were both in Year Eight Intermediate Science but in different classes. Both classes took place in two different Science laboratories. As was the case with the classrooms, the Science laboratories were ornamented with religious icons, mainly on the front wall and with Science posters on the other three walls of the room. Like the rest of the classrooms the laboratories were spotless.

In Luis' class there were twenty eight students and Luis sat in the second left row of the laboratory, with one boy on his right and two on his left. Luis seemed to enjoy the activities. In one of the classes he was one of the first to go to the front bench and collect the instruments for the experiment the teacher asked them to carry out. Luis and his partners were also the first to finish it.

In a brief conversation, the teacher said that Luis was a quiet but bright boy who was in the top group of the class and seemed very interested in the

subject. The teacher commented that it was not necessary to talk to Luis' parents because he was a student who caused no trouble at all.

Luis' s parents had high aspirations for him, they wanted him to be in the top of the class and in upper stream Science in Year Eleven and Twelve. Luis knew that and shared his parents' ambitions. He said that he wanted to go to the university and he knew that the students who were in upper stream classes had more possibilities.

Contrary to Luis' English and Mathematics classes where he looked very confident, in his Science class he and his two peers, one Macedonian and one Italian, two very small boys, looked very timid among the rest of their peers. The teacher said that she asked them to sit together in one of the front rows because they were so small and the rest of the boys, sometimes, tried to bully them. Luis commented that in his Science class there were boys who seemed to be only interested in making jokes and laughing in the class. He also said that this was one of the reasons he wanted to move to an upper level in his Year Nine. He also added that sometimes he and his two peers were mocked by their Anglo peers when they correctly finished the experiments before the rest of the class.

Sergio (4.2)

In Sergio's class there were twenty nine boys and he sat in the second row of the laboratory. In one of the classes observed the teacher was using a dummy to teach the digestive system. Sergio was one of the few students who asked a couple of questions, the rest of the boys remained in complete silence, except for two boys in the middle of the room who insisted in talking to each other until the teacher admonished them.

It seemed that some of the students demanded more from the teachers because they knew that their parents were paying for their education. In one of the classes observed when the teacher was trying to encourage the boys to ask questions, one boy asked a question to which the teacher did not know the answer. When the teacher said, "You expect me to get all the answers, but I don't have all the answers" one of the boys responded, "We pay you", to which the teacher in turn responded "You don't pay me enough". It seems that in non-government schools where parents are paying for the education of their children, both parents and students expect the best from teachers.

The teacher said, in a brief conversation, that Sergio was an above average student who was always one of the first to ask and answer questions, and who did all his homework and showed a genuine interest in the subject. The teacher commented that he did not ask Sergio's parents to talk to him in the parent-teacher interview because Sergio had no troubles with the subject. Sergio's parents talked about how they had helped him with his Science projects. Sergio's mother was very proud because one of Sergio's projects about the coal industry was selected as the best in the school.

Sergio said that he liked Science and the way the teacher conducted the class. When he was asked why he was less talkative in Science in comparison to English where he talked a lot, he responded that his English teacher was not as strong as his Science teacher who was quick to reprimand the boys. He commented that in his Science class he liked participating because if he made a mistake he would not be called names by his peers because the teacher would not allow it.

Juan (4.7)

Juan's Year Nine Science class had twenty five students. Juan sat alone in the second row next to the wall opposite the entrance door with the other three double benches in this column each occupied by a single boy. The rest of the boys sat in pairs in the benches located on the right side and in the middle of the room. Juan and the boy in front of him as well as the three behind him looked isolated from the rest of the class. Juan said that he liked sitting alone because he did not want to be caught talking in class. He added that as he was not fond of playing rugby, they sometimes teased him in class because of that.

Juan's teacher said in the interview that Juan's class was a mixed ability class and he located Juan near the bottom of the whole group of students. He commented that he had known Juan since Year Seven. According to him Juan was a quiet boy who had trouble trying to conceptualise scientific concepts. The teacher thought Juan's situation was due to the fact that he was a little slow with his English reading and his comprehension. The teacher said that he did not know how much time Juan spent at home studying and in preparation. The teacher believed that he did not receive enough encouragement at home to do his work and was probably left alone.

Juan's teacher asked Juan's mother several times to come to the school to speak to him but she had never come. He also said that Juan had always behaved well. The teacher added that Juan always had a "very queer look on his face" when he had tried to understand what was being explained to him. The teacher went on to say that he had tried different ways to present the questions to him but no matter what he tried, his efforts were unsuccessful. The teacher's comments seemed to confirm what was claimed by Juan's

mother in Chapter Four. She said that she knew that Juan was not good at studying. Both Juan and his mother were just waiting for him to finish high school so that he could join his relatives' security company.

Damaso (4.6)

Damaso's Science Year Nine classes also took place in a Science laboratory. There were twenty five boys in his class and Damaso, in the classes observed, always sat in the back in the farthest corner. Damaso, as was the case in his Mathematics classes, looked physically isolated from the rest of the class. In the Science class he did however have a peer to whom he could talk. Whenever it was possible, they had short conversations and laughed together.

It seemed difficult for Damaso to concentrate in classes. He spent most of the time biting his pen and making drawings in his notebook, however when the teacher ordered the boys to copy down from the white board he did it immediately in a mechanical way, then continued with his drawings. Like the Mathematics classes discussed earlier, Damaso's Science teacher spent most of the classes correcting homework and class exercises following the text book.

The teacher's remarks, made in a short conversation after one the classes, were similar to those from Damaso's Mathematics teacher. In his Science class, Damaso was well below the average of the rest of the class. The teacher thought that Damaso had troubles keeping concentration, although the teacher added that Damaso was not a trouble maker and behaved well in class. The teacher said that he had talked to Damaso's mother on the parent-teacher night and they had agreed that Damaso needed to study and

concentrate more on the activities in class as well when doing his homework.

Damaso explained his lack of participation in Science in the same terms as his Mathematics class. In a way he felt isolated and marginalised. He said that in both classes he did not like to get involved because some of his Anglo peers were too sarcastic in their comments when one of the wog boys committed mistakes and the whole class took notice of them. He said:

I preferred to be ignored in the class because when a boy makes a mistake in the pronunciation the Australians keep on repeating the word to him.

Orlando (5.8)

Orlando in his Year Ten Science class sat to the right side of the Science laboratory, with the same Asian boys he sat with in his English and Mathematics classes. Orlando's teacher was also Damaso's teacher and his Year Nine and Year Ten Science classes were very similar. His routine was the same in both classes; he spent most of the time correcting homework and class exercises, following the text books.

Orlando's teacher said, in a brief conversation between classes, that Orlando was a good student who was near the top of the class and seemed very interested in the subject. The teacher commented that it had not been necessary to talk with Orlando's parents at the parent-teacher interview because he was not a trouble maker and did not have trouble understanding the content of the lessons. Orlando's parents were very happy with his behaviour and, as they said in Chapter Five, they were aware of Orlando's special interest in Science, perhaps because his two older sisters were pursuing their Bachelors of Science at the local university. Orlando

commented that he liked Science and was thinking about a university career in the area of Science and Geology in order to make his parents happy.

As Orlando said, he sat next to his Asian peers because they were good friends and liked working together. In addition they helped one another and when they were in a group they were not distracted in class by some of their Anglo peers, who made jokes in the class.

Marta (4.3)

Marta was the only girl in the study who was doing Intermediate Science in Year Ten. Her class took place in a Science laboratory very similar to the Science laboratories in the boys' non-government school, a room, like the rest of the classrooms in her school, ornamented with religious icons. There were seventeen girls in the class who sat in the first three rows of benches. Marta always sat in the last right row. She looked isolated because there were no other girls around her, except for another student with whom she carried out an experiment in one of the classes observed and to whom she often talked during the other classes.

Marta's Science classes were very dynamic in comparison to the Science classes observed at the boys' school. In one of the classes the teacher asked the girls to work in groups and Marta worked with the girl seated next to her and another girl. She seemed very interested in the activity and was always taking the initiative in relation to the carrying out of the experiment. In another class the teacher asked the girls to work in pairs and Marta again worked with the girl next to her. The teacher wrote some instructions on the board and the girls were asked to carry out the instructions step by step.

Marta and her peer worked and talked and they seemed to enjoy the activity. However the two girls rarely exchanged words with the other girls in the class. Marta said that she liked her Science class because the teacher often asked the girls to carry out experiments. When Marta was asked about how she felt in relation to her peers, she said that her Italian-Australian peer was the only girl she liked to work with because she was as hard working as her, and most of all because she was also a wog girl like her.

Cuando tengo que hacer trabajo de grupo no me gusta trabajar con las "Australians", me gusta trabajar con Sofia, ella es una chica italiana que le gusta estudiar como a mí y nos llevamos bastante bien.

(When I have to work in a group I don't like working with the Australians, I like working with Sofia, an Italian girl who likes studying like me and we get along very well).

I only had a brief conversation with Marta's Science teacher. She indicated that she had not spoken to Marta's parents. She had not asked them to come to the school and talk to her because Marta was "a nice girl" and a good student. From the point of view of Marta's parents they had nothing specific to discuss with the teacher in the interview.

There seem to be a number of themes which are suggested by the analysis of classroom observations in the advanced and intermediate classes. Helena, Orlando, Ester, Marta, Damaso, Luis and Juan showed a similar concern in relation to some of their Anglo peers. They expressed their concern about participating in their classes because of their peers' reactions. This situation together with the environment of distraction in some of their classes made them group with other, as they said, wog students. Rather than an overt situation of conflict, it was their inner fears, fuelled to some extent by actual or anticipated derogatory comments, which made them feel different from their Anglo peers. It was a constant and latent perspective of their otherness

being exposed in public, that made them participate as little as possible in the classroom activities. Sergio and Helena the only two students at the intermediate level who sometimes participated in their lessons did so because their teachers managed the classes in such a way to provide a safe environment.

7.3.3 Lower Stream Classes

Ten students were observed in the lower stream classes. Four of these, Sergio, Juan, Fernanda and Damaso were Spanish background students, five, Patricia, Ester, Helena, Berta and Quimera were Chilean and one, Ursula, Uruguayan. The following table provides the distribution of the ten students and their classes.

Table 7.5: Lower Stream Classes Observed

Subjects	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	
English	Berta	Juan/Damaso ⁹ Patricia	Fernanda Quimera	5
Maths	Sergio Berta	Juan Patricia	Fernanda/Ursula ¹⁰ Quimera	6
Science	Helena Berta	Patricia	Ester Fernanda/Ursula ¹¹ Quimera	6
Total Classes	5	5	7	17

Differences were particularly noticeable between the environment of the classes in the non-government and state coeducational schools, however all the lessons observed were very much teacher-centred and showed only slight differences in relation to the level of student participation.

⁹ Juan and Damaso were in the same Lower Stream English class Year Nine.
¹⁰ Fernanda and Ursula were in the same Lower Stream Mathematics class Year Ten.
¹¹ Fernanda and Ursula were in the same Lower Stream Science class Year Ten.

7.3.3.1 English Classes

Berta (5.6)

Berta was the only girl doing English in Year Eight at the state coeducational school. Berta's classroom was a big room with very high walls. There was a set of windows painted white instead of having blinds in the wall separating the room from the corridor. The teacher's desk was located at the front corner opposite to the door. At the back of the room there was a number of broken desks accumulating dust. Walls were covered with different kind of posters, most of them film posters, arranged unevenly and sometimes one over the other. There was no clock nor any icons in the room. Next to the door there were two shelves full of old novels, note books and text books.

There were twenty four students in the class, eleven boys and thirteen girls. The students were permitted to sit anywhere, but most of the time they sat in the same places for the whole term. In Berta's class, they sat forming separate groups of boys and girls. Berta sat right in the middle of the room, with three girls on her right and a girl on her left next to a boy.

In every one of the classes observed the teacher started the activities by returning the note books to the students. She threw all the note books to each student. Those at the back of the room sometimes found it difficult to catch their note books and they fell on the floor. When this happened another student picked up the books and threw them at the students at the back, sometimes very strongly. It was like projectiles crossing the room. For about five minutes pandemonium reigned in the classroom until the teacher finished the distribution of the note books. Berta felt particularly embarrassed about this situation and she said to me "Disculpe" "Sorry".

When she said that I myself felt particularly shocked, I realised that in a way she identified with the class and her peers and was ashamed because of the whole situation.

In one of the classes observed, after a couple of shouts of “silence” the teacher asked the students to stop the pandemonium to begin the lesson. They were reading the novel *Space Demons* by Gillian Rubenstein, continuing from a previous lesson in which a chapter of the book had been read. At one point in the lesson, the teacher said, “Yesterday we saw the solution to the game¹²”. At that point Berta told the teacher that she had missed the previous class and did not have the handout. The teacher replied “You should get it”. Berta appeared not to like the answer and sat quiet for about five minutes. Berta said later that she was expecting the teacher to provide her with the handout with the topic discussed in the previous class. Berta exchanged a short conversation with the partner at her right, an Iranian girl, from whom she started to copy the solution to the game mentioned above in her note book

From the other activities in the lesson it seemed that the topic had to do with “self esteem” and that the teacher had chosen that book to deal with the topic. The teacher continued the lesson by writing a definition of the word self-esteem on the green board: “Self esteem is how we feel about ourselves. It is often combined with the way we view our bodies and personalities”. One of the boys asked if “self-esteem is the same as background, nationality” the teacher answered, “Yes it is part of it” but this was not followed up. The rest of the class was devoted to a discussion about Mario, the main character of the novel and his self-esteem. Finally the teacher asked the class to write down comments about their own self-esteem. From the readings some of

¹² The teacher was referring to a word game that was distributed in a handout during the previous class.

the students did before the end of the class, it was possible to see how almost all of them referred to aspects of their family background, like country of origin and language spoken at home, however the teacher did not discuss any of these as the main characteristics of their self esteem.

The class was often interrupted by a few of the boys who seemed especially keen on creating a distraction, a few girls also joined the fun. After all of their names were written down on the board under a caption which read "Ten minutes detention", they remained quiet for a while. But boys and girls soon began talking and joking again so that the teacher had to shout at them several times.

Several boys and girls who were interrupting the class were asked to read their paragraphs about their self-esteem. The Asian girls, Berta, her near partners and other girls who remained silent during the lesson were never asked. It seemed the teacher used the reading activity as a way of penalising those students who were creating troubles. As a result however those students who behaved well in class rarely had an opportunity to participate in this way.

Berta who was quoted in Chapter Five as saying that she was really scared of being shouted at, said that she did not like English in Year Eight because the teacher shouted too much. This was in contrast to her Year Seven English, where she liked the subject because she asked questions and the teacher did not get angry. Berta commented that she only talked in class to her Iranian peer because she was quiet, she added that they did not get involved in the jokes and laughing because the boys always found a way of insulting the girls especially those girls who were not Anglo. She also said that she was

afraid of getting into trouble because she was afraid of her parents being called to the school.

Berta's English teacher had not talked to Berta's parents, she had not asked them to come to the school because Berta was a quiet girl who did not create troubles. She said that sometimes Berta talked too much in class, but that was nothing compared to how some of the other students behaved. Berta's parents said that from their point of view Berta was behaving well in school and because of that they had not been called to the parent-teacher interview. In any case Berta's parents said that they did not go to the interview because that day they did not have time.

According to the English teacher Berta was an average student with literacy problems, who was in the lower English level. Berta also attended literacy classes, where she was taught how to form sentences and elaborate paragraphs. However Berta said that she had learned very little in these classes because the teacher only gave the correct answers without explaining in details how to get those answers.

I had the opportunity to observe one these classes taught by a specialist ESL teacher. At the beginning of the class the girls were asked to drag their chairs over and sit in a circle. The teacher asked every student to read a short paragraph from a photocopy she had distributed. All the students, both those whose first language was and was not English, had serious trouble with the process of reading. The teacher did not correct any of the students. Berta had a lot of trouble when she read and, as was the case with the rest of the class, she was not corrected either. The second activity was to invent a story, from a sentence the teacher wrote on the board. This activity took a long time to be completed, each student was asked to provide a sentence

giving a sequence to the story. They were asked to read their sentences and then the teacher checked the twenty three students one by one. She explained some of the mistakes to the students and asked them to rewrite their sentences. Berta did not have time to finish her sentence when it was her time to read, so she did not read it. When the teacher corrected her she was playing with her rubber, which had a big Chilean flag on both sides. When I asked Berta about her rubber with the flag she said that she was very proud of being Chilean and wanted every one to know that. In the lessons observed, Berta spent most of the time playing with her rubber. In the last activity the teacher distributed a newspaper photocopy with the following two articles: *Girls are going Berserk and Kids turn Violent in Court*. She gave the students ten minutes to read the articles but unfortunately the bell rang after five minutes and the class was dismissed.

This ESL class was very similar to the other class, very teacher-centred. The students tended to behave well because, as Berta said, the teacher had a reputation for being strict. The students had very little opportunity to participate orally in the class, the main activity was reading and answering true false and multiple answers questions in the handout distributed at the beginning of the lesson. The ESL teacher did not attend any of Berta's other classes that were observed.

Juan (4.7) and Damaso (4.6)

Juan's and Damaso's English Year Nine classroom was, like the other classrooms at the boys' school, an attractive and comfortable room located on the first floor of one of the several buildings which comprised the school premises. There were fourteen boys in the class, all the boys sat on the left side of the room leaving seventeen empty seats at the back and at the right

of the room. Juan sat in the second row and his cousin Damaso sat in the third row next to him. They talked frequently, most of the time in English, but also from time to time using a couple of words in Spanish accompanied by laughing.

The boys were reading the book *People Might Hear you* by Robin Klein. In one of the classes observed the teacher was asking questions about the plot. Juan was asked once but not Damaso who remained silent as the other students gave their answers. The teacher, as was the case in the other classes observed, only asked four or five boys who were sitting in the middle of the room to respond to questions. Then the teacher asked the students to start reading the next chapter; she asked some students to read aloud as the rest of the class followed the reading. This time neither Juan nor Damaso were asked to read. When the boys read the teacher corrected the pronunciation of some words. The teacher spent most of the class reading and explaining. At the end of the lesson she asked the boys to write half a page on one of the topics treated in the chapter they had been reading.

In the interview the English teacher said that Juan presented severe learning difficulties and when she talked to Juan's mother, both agreed that this had been an ongoing problem throughout high school. The teacher said, "He usually doesn't do his homework, it's a struggle. Juan is what I call a reluctant student". As Juan's mother was reported as saying in Chapter Four, the only thing she wanted was that Juan would finish his secondary education and start working in his uncle's security company.

In relation to Damaso, the English teacher referred to Damaso as a bright boy and she was wondering if he had been falling behind because of his asthma problem. The teacher said he did not have severe learning difficulties. The

teacher had spoken to his mother in the parent teacher-interview and both were aware of the problems Damaso was facing at home and at school in relation to concentration and willingness to do his homework. Damaso's mother and his English teacher had discussed the situation, however Damaso's mother did not feel like demanding too much from her son because he had asthma. She was afraid of worsening his condition because of the tension he might have had at school, and said that she was pushing but not to the limits.

Juan and Damaso shared similar attitudes in relation to their English class. Like his experiences in Mathematics class, Damaso, said that he was almost never asked by the teacher to participate and he himself did not like reading in front of the class or going to the board because he was afraid of being involved in a situation when the teacher would correct him in front of the whole class. He added that some Anglo boys sometimes made bigger mistakes than the "wog" boys but these boys mocked them anyway in the playground. Juan's attitude towards the class was also one of not getting involved. In his case he said that he was bothered by his Anglo peers outside the class when they were playing soccer.

They say we should play Aussie rules because we are in Australia and that soccer is a wog game¹³.

Patricia (5.3)

Patricia's English classes took place in a classroom in the state coeducational school which looked somewhat better than Berta's classroom. This time there were no empty desks at the back of the room and there was only one shelf full of old books next to the teacher's desk. There were twenty eight

¹³ Soccer a wog game is the main theme in the film *The Heartbreak Kid* (1993), directed by Michael Jenkins, about a Greek secondary school student.

Patricia said, as described in Chapter Five, that she preferred English in Year Eight because the classes were more interesting than just reading novels. She also said that in her Year Eight there were more girls in the class and the boys were less disturbing than in her Year Nine class. She added that some of the boys were very rude sometimes with the girls. She commented that she always did her homework and class exercises but she did not want to be asked in front of the whole class because, according to her, some of the boys did not like the girls showing that they knew more than the boys. She referred to a particular group of Anglo boys who sat at the back of the room and were always laughing at the girls.

I held a short conversation with Patricia's teacher, who said that Patricia was never behind in her work and that she was a good student, near the top of the group. He believed that in Year Ten Patricia could be doing intermediate stream English. The teacher added that he had not talked to Patricia's parents because she was a quiet girl who did not create any kind of trouble. Patricia's parents said that she liked studying and at home they always asked her and her younger sister to do their homework before watching TV. They added that they were very happy with Patricia because she was a good girl who was never in trouble at school.

Amongst the intermediate and particularly the lower stream students the assumption by both parents and teachers that parents need only be involved in interviews if students are a problem in class was widespread. Neither the teachers nor the parents believed that it was necessary to talk about issues other than behaviour, such as students' academic weaknesses and strengths and ways of elaborating strategies to develop students' potential.

Fernanda (4.4)

There were only six girls in Fernanda's English Year Ten class in the girls' school. It was a small group in a classroom with twenty six empty desks. The six girls sat in a group around the teacher. Fernanda's three English classes observed were very similar. In one of them the teacher distributed a photocopy with a passage about choosing a future career and she asked every girl to read aloud. Some of the girls had troubles when reading aloud and the teacher corrected single sound pronunciation and intonation. When Fernanda read she made no mistakes but she did not receive any single word of encouragement.

In a short conversation the teacher said that Fernanda was one of the best of the group but it seemed she was not very much interested in the subject and in moving to the next level. The teacher said that she talked to Fernanda's mother and both agreed that Fernanda had a lot of other interests outside school that were taking up her time. However for Fernanda's mother this was not a problem. She said that she considered that it was normal for a girl of her age to be interested in a number of activities at the same time and she added that her daughter liked participating in all kinds of activities in and outside the school. From Fernanda's point of view she was not much interested in English because she considered that English was not very important. She added that the class was easy for her and she did not want to move to an intermediate class because she would have to study more. However, she added that sometimes it took too long for her peers to complete the class exercises and she got bored because the teacher, most of the time, waited for all the girls to finish the exercises. Fernanda also commented that she felt comfortable with her five peers in her class because

only two of the girls were Anglo but they were very nice and they did not quarrel or get cranky during the lessons or in the school yard.

In this non-government school, lower stream students seemed to receive more attention because the classes were small and they have more opportunity to participate in the lessons. This is in comparison to lower stream classes in the state coeducational school. Moreover the problems with the boys' behaviour was not replicated here. For Fernanda this seemed to be a safer environment than Berta, Patricia and Quimera's classes..

Quimera (5.9)

Quimera's Year Ten English class at the state coeducational school was very different from Patricia's all too quiet class. There were twenty five students in Quimera's class, thirteen boys and twelve girls. Quimera sat in the third right row at the back of the room next to the wall. This classroom had its windows stuck closed and the teacher kept the door closed, making the atmosphere very hot and without fresh air. This room however was much cleaner than the other rooms observed in the school.

In the first two classes observed the students were very noisy and the teacher had to shout all the time to give instructions and try to calm down some of the students, mainly the boys. Quimera looked a little afraid of the situation and tried to hide herself behind the girl in front of her. At one point when the teacher was shouting very loudly she said to me, "They don't let her teach, she is just trying to teach". I noticed that the teacher was very embarrassed because she could not control the class; she excused them to me by saying that they were behaving that way, because the class took place around midday and the students were hungry. At the beginning of the

third class she told the students that she had prepared some material to be worked on in the computer room and she asked the whole class to move to that room. The students looked a bit surprised and followed their teacher to the computer room. There it was much easier for the teacher to control the class because the students started to play games on the computers instead of making jokes or laughing. The computer room was by far the cleanest room in the school, probably because it was kept locked when it was not in use.

Quimera's parents said that they had not been asked to talk to her English teacher. They were happy because they interpreted this as meaning that Quimera was not a problem in class. The teacher said that Quimera was an average student in that group who was struggling with her written English. Quimera's parents were reported in Chapter Five, as saying they were doing their best but it was difficult for them to help their daughter with homework and projects because of their own limitations. However, they encouraged her to ask her teacher during the class. Quimera said that her oral English had improved a lot since she arrived in Australia in 1991, yet she recognised that she had problems with her written English. She commented that she had only two years to finish school and start looking for a job.

Lo único que quiero es terminar el año doce y comenzar a buscar un trabajo, sé que si no termino el año doce será muy difícil encontrar empleo.

(The only thing I want is to finish Year Twelve and start looking for a job, I know that if I do not finish Year Twelve it will be very difficult to find work).

7.3.3.2 Mathematics Classes

Sergio (4.2)

Like the rest of the classrooms in the boys' school Sergio's Mathematics Year Eight classroom was spotless and with plenty of fresh air. In Sergio's class there were thirteen boys. Sergio sat in the middle of the class. Sergio seemed to feel comfortable in this class; he moved around and interacted with most of the other students.

In one of the classes observed the teacher, who was not the regular teacher, brought a box full of plastic little pieces to be assembled and asked the boys to build up a triangular prism. As Sergio worked on his prism he often talked to another student, an Italian boy. Sergio was one of the first to finish and then he started to walk around the room asking for a sharpener. It seemed he got bored waiting for everyone else to finish, most of the time he yawned and talked to his peers. The boys seemed to be more interested in playing with their pieces rather than following the teacher's instructions. From my position as observer the main purpose of the activity was to keep the boys busy rather than teach geometry. In conversation later the teacher agreed but she added that when the kids were concentrating on a particular activity they tended to behave well and it was easier to control them.

The teacher was a replacement teacher because the regular teacher was sick. Sergio said that he preferred his male Mathematics teacher to the substituting teacher because he was more dynamic in conducting the class.

Berta (5.6)

Berta's Year Eight Mathematics classroom at the state coeducational school was a very high room with no blinds and when the sun light entered into the room it was difficult to see the green board from some desks. There were twenty six students in the class, fourteen boys and twelve girls. Berta sat in the second row, second column, next to the door. Although Berta and her Maltese peer sat in the middle of other students they looked isolated in the classroom. They only interacted with each other and did not participate in the jokes and laughter of the other students.

Berta's and Sergio's Mathematics classes were similar in the content and way of conducting the exercises by the teacher. The first involved the manipulation of geometrical pieces and the other the matching of geometrical pieces. In Sergio's class the teacher brought small plastic pieces to assemble, in Berta's class her teacher distributed two photocopies with several geometrical designs on them. The students were asked first to match the geometrical figures with the definitions presented in another photocopy. Then the students were asked to cut two big designs printed in the photocopy and fold them accordingly.

Berta's teacher had just left university and had started teaching only six months ago and she was only teaching lower level classes. According to the teacher Berta was very quiet and rarely asked questions and was struggling with the work, and most of the time did not do her homework. The teacher had never talked to Berta's parents because they did not come to the parent-teacher interview.

Berta said that she liked her Mathematics teacher because she did not shout at the students as her English teacher did. Where she only talked to the Iranian student in her English class, in her Mathematics class she only talked to her Maltese peer. The reasons were the same, however; Berta said that her Mathematics peer was also quiet and friendly and did not get involved in the jokes and laughing created by some of the students, especially the boys. However she said that in her Mathematics class the boys were not as rude as the boys in her English class and only one or two had called her wog.

Juan (4.7)

Juan's Year Nine Mathematics classroom in the boys' school was very similar to his English classroom, a clean well lit and neat room. In Juan's class there were eighteen boys. Juan looked isolated in his position and during the three lessons observed he only talked a couple of times with his peer behind him and these short exchanges were not initiated by Juan. Juan said that like his English class, he had no friends in the class and did not like or want to be involved in jokes.

Juan's Mathematics classes were very similar to the Mathematics classes mentioned before, in which the teachers followed identical routines, mainly correcting homework and class exercises. Juan's teacher sometimes used the board to explain in detail difficult exercises and the boys copied the answers in their notebooks. Like the other classes the level of student verbal participation was almost nil.

In a short conversation after one of the classes, Juan's teacher located him academically around the middle of his class. He said that Juan seemed to be

doing only the necessary effort to do his homework and class exercises, and did not seem interested in improving himself in Mathematics. However the teacher said that Juan was a quiet boy who behaved in class and because of this he did not ask Juan's parents to see him for a parent-teacher interview. Juan's mother was not particularly concerned about his Mathematic achievements since she did not see him as continuing studying after high school but working for his uncle's security company.

Patricia (5.3)

Patricia's Year Nine Mathematics classes at the state coeducational school was in a room with no blinds and the sunlight, as happened in the other classrooms, made it difficult to read from the board. Patricia's classroom had a couple of old shelves with old books at the bottom and near the door, and the desks were untidily organised around the room. The twenty two students, ten boys and twelve girls, sat forming three main groups of boys and girls. The girls in front of Patricia were tall and Patricia seemed to be hiding herself behind them. In the three lessons observed she often talked to the same peer, the female "wog" student who had sat next to her in English. Both girls seemed to get along quite well, however sometimes they were caught talking by the teacher who asked them to be quiet.

In general terms the class was very noisy but the teacher seemed not to be bothered by that. She proceeded with lesson, sometimes raising her voice, but there was always a constant noise as a background to her voice. She provided the girls with photocopies and asked them to carry out the exercises written on them, while she sat at her desk and corrected notebooks and tests. Every now and then she got up from her desk and walked around the room watching the students working, and answering the few questions

students asked her when she was near them. The three classes observed followed the same routine.

Patricia's teacher said, in the interview, that she was very timid but talkative. The teacher defined Patricia as a hard working student near the top of her group. She said that she had not talked to Patricia's parents because they did not come to the parent-teacher interview. From Patricia's parents' point of view that meant that their daughter had no troubles in Mathematics.

Patricia said that in the Mathematics class the boys were generally not as rude as some of the boys in her English class. However as was the case in English, in Mathematics, while she also always did her homework and class exercises, she did not want to be asked to solve exercises in front of the whole class. She added that some of the Anglo girls sometimes called the wog girls names but the teacher had intervened and had asked the girls not to do that, explaining to them that all students were equal.

Fernanda (4.4) and Ursula (6.1)

In Fernanda's and Ursula's Year Ten Mathematics class in the girls' school there were thirty one desks in the room but only ten girls in the class. They sat forming two groups, one of seven and one of two girls and another girl sat alone. Fernanda sat next to her friend Ursula in the group of seven girls in the last row on the left side of the classroom. One Asian girl sat alone in the last row separated from the girls by an empty row. Everyone seemed to ignore her; she worked all the time on the exercises in her textbook, and she never said a single word. In contrast Fernanda, Ursula and the other students in the group chatted most of the time during the whole hour. This

happened in the first class observed when the teacher in charge of the class was substituting because the class teacher was attending a meeting outside the school. This teacher limited herself to distribute a worksheet with some exercises and asked the girls to complete them. The only time she spoke was to ask the girls to reduce the level of their voices.

The second and third classes observed were somewhat different. This time it was the class teacher who conducted the lesson and she interacted more with the girls. The teacher provided some problems on the white board and asked the girls to solve them. After fifteen minutes of individual work, she checked the exercises individually but she spent most of her time with the seven girls at the back of the classroom.

The teacher explained that the girls were distributed in groups because they presented different levels of understanding and levels of progress. She said that the Asian girl was very clever but had problems with her English, the two Anglo girls were doing fine and were working very hard in order to go to another level. The group of seven girls had trouble understanding the mathematical processes in the textbook, and she had to give them direct guidance. According to the teacher all of these seven girls came from homes where English was not the main language.

The teacher said that Fernanda was one of the brightest girls in the group but she did not pay too much attention in class. Ursula on the other hand was an average student who sometimes had troubles completing her homework and class exercises. The teacher said that she talked to Fernanda's and Ursula's mothers and that they were aware of their daughters' situation in Mathematics. Neither Fernanda's or Ursula's mothers were too concerned with their daughters lack of progress. They said they were more

concerned with the students' development as teenagers. Fernanda's mother added:

Es importante que mi hija estudie pero ella no debe descuidar sus amigos y entretenerse como cualquier otro adolescente.

(It is important that my daughter study but she must not neglect her friends and should enjoy herself as any other adolescent).

Fernanda said that she was very comfortable in Mathematics, as she was in English. She insisted that in another level she would have to study more. She commented that Mathematics was not so boring as English because she was with Ursula and both used to talk in Spanish when it was possible. She added that she did not care about the Anglo girls in the class and that these girls did not talk to anybody else in the class. Ursula also said that she liked the class because she was with Fernanda. She added that the girls with whom she worked in the group of seven were all "wog" like her and that made it easier for them to interact because none of them criticised or called each other names.

Quimera (5.9)

Quimera's lower Mathematics class in the state coeducational school took place in a ground floor classroom which was sometimes very noisy because it was near to one of the entrances to the building and a lot of students passed by talking and sometimes making faces at the students inside the room. Quimera sat in the front row next to the door with another girl behind her. All the students looked very isolated. This class was even worse than Quimera's English class in relation to the distraction created by some of the students, boys and girls. The teacher spent a great deal of time shouting at them and asking for silence. In one of the classes observed one of the boys

next to the window spat through the window. All the class noticed because it was done very noisily. The teacher asked him to leave the room for ten minutes. Quimera looked very frightened and asked her teacher for the card to go to the toilet. She returned after several minutes, looking a little better. Quimera said that some of the boys were very rude and that this situation was normal and sometimes the teacher did not do or say anything to them. The students argued with the teacher when she asked for silence or when she made comments about their behaviour. Quimera said that,

a veces me da pena la profesora que hace todo lo que puede
pero no consigue controlar la clase.

(Sometimes I feel pity for the teacher who does all she can but
she can not control the class).

According to the teacher the students in that stream did not have the motivation and the ability to do Mathematics. She said that they found the subject very difficult. The teacher said that she had met Quimera in Year Nine. Quimera's teacher had never met her parents because they had never come to the parent teacher-interview. She added that Quimera lacked concentration when doing the exercises. Quimera had asked the teacher not to expose her in front of the whole class, thus the teacher did not ask her to read answers aloud or to go to the board. Quimera said that she preferred to be ignored and when she was in that class she always wanted it to finish as soon as possible. She was also afraid of being called "bloody wog" by some of the boys who sometimes became very aggressive and abused the girls especially those who they knew were not Anglo.

7.3.3.3 Science Classes

Helena (5.4)

Helena's Year Eight Science class in the girls' school had twenty two students. She sat at the back in the right side of the room, next to a couple of Pacific Islander girls. For most of the class, the teacher located herself in between the board and her desk. In the three classes observed Helena was always quiet and did not participate verbally in the lessons. In one of these classes, the teacher asked some girls to read out definitions from a paper distributed a couple of classes ago. Helena was not asked and she did not participate at all in this activity; she remained silently looking at her notebook.

The next activity was an experiment initiated by writing down the instructions on the board. The girls copied instructions in their notebooks and talked quietly. Sometimes it was possible to hear one of their voices louder than the rest, but in general they worked quietly. Helena joined her two partners at the Science bench and started to participate in the activity. She smiled as she tried to stick cups onto the balloon. Helena's partner continued to blow up the balloon and it exploded making the girls laugh for a couple of seconds. Helena and her partner did not try with another balloon. Instead they sat down and started to talk quietly, it seemed they were not very interested in the activity.

Helana's progress in Science was also hampered by the time away with chicken pox. Helena commented that as was the case with her partner next to her they were almost never asked by the teacher, so she and her two Pacific Islander peers did not participate verbally in the lessons.

Berta (5.6)

In Berta's Year Eight Science laboratory in the state coeducational school there were two sets of benches with the twenty eight students, fourteen boys and fourteen girls, sitting separately. Almost all the boys sat on one side and the girls on the other side, with the exception of four boys who sat at the first bench in the left side of the room in front of the rest of the girls. Berta sat in the middle of two other girls, one of whom was the Iranian girl she sat with in her Mathematics class.

In the three classes observed the students were asked to carry out experiments. Berta worked with her two peers, with whom she seemed to get along well. In some instances the whole class got very noisy in their conversations and the teacher raised his voice asking them to be quiet. The students responded by reducing the level of noise; it seemed they expected the teacher to do that, and the teacher knew that. He said that shouting was the only way of keeping them calm.

In his interview, Berta's teacher said that she had some problems in writing extensive passages. He said that she got lost and when following long instructions written in the book, was a bit slower than the rest of the students who were better in English. However she had achieved good results in the chemistry tests. The teacher knew that she spoke Spanish at home. According to the teacher there were only about five or six children coming from NESB, he said that there might have been more but he was not sure. He worked part time at the school and attended only when he had classes. The only contact he had with the students was during the class, so that he did not know Berta very well. He had never talked to Berta's parents

not even in the parent-teacher interview. He said that Berta always did her homework, and that since she was very quiet it would have been an advantage for her to be in a better group next year.

Berta said that she did not like the teacher shouting, however she added that some of the students talked and laughed too much and the teacher had no other solution. Berta said that she always worked with her Iranian and Italian peers. As was the case in her Mathematics classes Berta said that when the teacher was outside the room, some boys called the other students, mainly the girls, wogs.

Patricia (5.3)

In Patricia's Year Nine Science class at the state coeducational school, there were twenty five students, fourteen boys and eleven girls. They sat in the twelve benches, in pairs, and in contrast to Berta's Science class and most of the other classes observed boys and girls mixed in the classroom. However there were students who looked isolated from the rest of the class. In the front desk next to the door two Vietnamese boys sat alone and another Asian girl sat alone on one of the last benches of the room. Patricia sat next to the same students as she did in the Mathematics and English classes.

Patricia's Science teacher did not want to be interviewed about the students but he did say that he had never met her parents. Patricia said like her English and Mathematics classes she did not like to get involved with her peers except those girls who sat next to her. She added that her Science teacher did not say anything when some students called other students by names so that she preferred to remain silent and avoid embarrassing situations.

Ester (5.4)

There were twenty one girls in Ester's Year Ten Science class at the girls' school. In all the classes observed the teacher did most of the talking, limiting himself to ask questions of some of the girls who sat in the front rows. The rest of the girls did not participate verbally in the class and just worked on their notebooks following the instructions written on the board.

In one of these classes the girls spent the whole lesson watching a film on the Apollo thirteen. At the end of the class, in a rush, the teacher distributed a sheet and went through the answers very quickly, then he told the girls they could leave the room. It seemed that he miscalculated the timing and was not able to carry out the activities he prepared for that class. In another of the classes observed the teacher wrote several figures on the board and asked the girls to convert them into a graphic. As the girls worked on the task some of them talked and when the teacher asked them to work in silence, they did so and continued working, without comments.

In contrast to Ester's upper stream Mathematics and intermediate stream English classes, where she seemed to get along well with her peers, in her Science class she only talked to the two students next to her, and the three of them looked isolated from the rest of the class. They worked in silence and when they could, they talked for a while but in such quiet voices that the teacher did not notice them talking.

As was the case in Ester's Mathematics and English classes, her Science teacher had not talked to her parents. However the teacher said, in a short conversation, that Ester was a very quiet girl who had to work hard in order to catch up with the rest of the class after being at home with chickenpox.

Ester said that, in contrast to what happened in her Mathematics and English classes where the girls seemed less interested in talking and sometimes making jokes, in her Science class there were more girls who were very interested in talking and gossiping in and outside the class. She said as she had before that she only interacted with her two peers because they were wog like her. She mentioned that sometime ago before she got chickenpox that a couple of girls had called her “wog” in one of the Science classes.

Fernanda (4.4) and Ursula (6.1)

Fernanda and Ursula were in the same Year Ten Science class at the girls' school. There were ten girls in their class and Fernanda always sat next to Ursula. Ursula and Fernanda spent most of the lesson talking in Spanish but also in English with the students behind them.

Ursula and Fernanda seemed very comfortable in this class. For example in one of the classes observed the teacher was talking about communication, body language and personal space. She asked the girls to stand up in pairs, the first girl walked towards the second girl until the latter said stop, then the distance was measured. When the ten girls finished the activity and measured their personal distance the teacher asked them to tell their distances. Ursula and Fernanda worked together and they were the ones whose distances were the shortest ones. Both girls laughed and talked during the activity. It seemed they got along very well, when they finished the exercise they hugged one each other, and said that was the Latino American way.

In a short conversation the teacher commented that she was always telling Fernanda and Ursula to stop chatting. She said that they were girls who had trouble concentrating in the activities which required silence and thinking. The teacher said that Fernanda's and Ursula's mothers knew that their daughters were working to a minimum. Fernanda and Ursula's mothers said that their daughters were like most of the other girls in the class. Fernanda's mother said that for a teenager girl sometimes it was difficult to devote her time just to study and as it was reported before, she considered that for some teenage girls it was more difficult than for others to think only about school. Ursula's mothers said that her little girl was doing fine and that she got, not excellent, but good marks.

Quimera (5.9)

Quimera was happier in her Year Ten Science class at the state coeducational school than she was in either her English or Mathematics classes. The students were still talkative but the teacher had more success keeping them quiet. Quimera often talked to the female student next to her, a Pacific Islander girl, and she said that this made her feel less isolated. Quimera also said that in her Science class there were only a couple of boys who sometimes called other students wogs.

In the interview the teacher said that Quimera was not doing well. She was at the bottom of the class and her parents had never come to talk to the teacher although she sent several notices asking for their presence at the school.

7.4 Conclusion

As an observer what struck me was the extent to which most of the classes were teacher directed and the low level of student interaction in the lessons. In the upper stream classes the students had the opportunity to get involved in the class and the pace set by the teachers encouraged the students involvement in the lessons. Classes in this level seemed much more productive than classes in the other levels. In these classes teachers and parents were more likely to be in contact and to together develop strategies to help the students.

In most of the intermediate and lower stream classes the situation was very different. It seemed that teachers and students were not very much interested in the activities carried out in the classes. The level of parent participation was also very low due to the fact that in these levels teachers were very much concerned about discipline in the class and how to control the "trouble makers", thus teachers tended to contact the parents of those students who caused behavioural troubles in class. Most of the parents were happy with this situation because they interpreted it (correctly) as indicating that their children were behaving well in class. They themselves did not approach the teachers because there were not behavioural problems to be discussed. In that way teachers, students and parents were perpetuating the practice that when the students behave well there is no reason to sit together and talk about issues other than discipline. On the other hand when parents did come in response to a teacher's request they did not feel the time allocated was sufficient to talk about their children's needs. On the other hand some of the parents did not bother to come at all.

A concern for class management also seemed to lead the teachers to choose disruptive students to respond to questions. In this way participation was seen as a penalty for misbehaving. This meant that when the students were quiet they received little attention. Even in those classes in which most of the students were well behaved, quieter students were less likely to be given the opportunity to be involved and voice their opinions and ideas. The few students who participated in the lessons did so because they somehow felt they were acting in a safe environment due to the teachers' control over those students who called them names in the other classes.

Most of the students in the study chose to assume a position of passivity and withdrawal in the classes, avoiding being exposed to name calling by their peers. When they talked about their friends, they said that they chose their friends from those students who also identified as "wogs".

Renegada

No nos quejemos que mejor tarde que nunca estar en Australia. Ahora se trata de sacarle todo el jugo al país. Disfrutar de sus ventajas. Para no parecer inmigrante, hay que tratar de no hablar en español, hacerse teñir el pelo de rubio. Tendremos que comprar las lentes de color que acaban de salir para aparecer con los ojos azules. Desafortunadamente todavía no hay nada para la piel, pero como me gustaría tenerla blanca.

(Belarmino Sarna, 1992).

A Renegade Woman

We do not complain that it is better to be late than never to be in Australia. Now the idea is to make the best of the country. Enjoy its advantages. In order not to look like immigrants, we must try not to speak Spanish, get our hair tinted blonde. We will have to buy those coloured contact lenses which have just come out so we look as if we have blue eyes. Unfortunately there is nothing yet for our skin, but I really would like to have it white.

(My own translation).

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION THEMES

This chapter is concerned with the overall themes which have permeated the whole study. These themes were always present, explicit and tacitly in the conversations with the students, their parents and their teachers, and in the instances in which I took part as an observer in their homes, schools and classroom. As an interpreter, their feelings are interwoven with my own experiences as a Spanish speaker in Australia. In general terms some of the parents presented an overall picture which portrays them as victims. However, they have managed in different ways to negotiate their places in Australian society.

Participants' construction and reconstruction of their identities is an ongoing process, never ending, never finished and never complete (MacRobbie, 1996; Biskowski, 1995; Hall, 1996 and Bhaba, 1996). Being Chilean, Spanish or Uruguayan and Australian has been a complex and social process (Pujolar, 1996) for the students participating in the research.

However from the students' stories, we can see that they are breaking through. The complexity of their experiences at home and at school can in some ways be seen as enriching. They enjoyed being able to identify themselves in terms of their ethnicity as Chilean, Spanish or Uruguayan. Also some of these students were doing quite well at school and their siblings were going to university.

In other words, they were looking forward to their futures, whereas the parents, in a way, had given up and now believed that the best they could do was to live for and through their children, and they do so by working long hours in low status jobs (Castles et al., 1990) and accumulating material belongings. In this chapter these ideas have been thematised and further developed under the following eight headings: cultural bubble, gringo versus wog, material happiness, frozen time versus freedom, language dependence versus bilingualism, language clusters and secret codes at school, isolation versus friendship, and hopes and aspirations.

8.1 Cultural Bubble

All migrants leave their past behind, although some try to pack it into bundles and boxes - but on the journey something seeps out of the treasured mementos and old photographs, until even their owners fail to recognise them, because it is the fate of the migrants to be stripped of history, to stand naked amidst the scorn of strangers upon whom they see the rich clothing, the brocades of continuity and eyebrows of belonging (Salman Rushdie, 1983: 63).

The study confirmed that identity is an ongoing process (Hall, 1994), and that every individual understands it differently. Thus, the Chilean, Spanish and Uruguayan students and their families who participated in the study had different, but also, very similar experiences in relation to the cultural isolation in which some of them had chosen to live due to the process of "displacement" they were going through (Bammer, 1994). Participants referred to this process in their interviews and it was observed in the schools and classrooms where the students projected themselves as passive or withdrawn in response to the lack of encouragement provided by some of their teachers; in other words children projected and brought into the schools their cultural capital, their relationship to their parents' educational and work experiences (Connell et al., 1983).

These Spanish-speaking background students had lived, since they arrived, or since they were born, in Australia surrounded in their homes by family and folk objects, which had been brought from their parents' home countries by themselves in some cases, by their parents in others or by their relatives who had visited them. The participant families felt the physical dislocation (Bammer, 1994) and reconstituted their past with different icons. The nineteen homes of the students who participated in the study were respectively adorned among other things by bullfighting, *flamenco* and *zarzuela* posters in the Spanish background students' homes; *huaso*, *cueca* and Anden copper engravings in the Chilean background students' homes; and *gaucho*, *pampas* and *Rio de la Plata* photographs in the Uruguayan background students' homes.

However, it was not only posters, pictures, engravings, old photographs, it was also the food and meals, the music and the videos from their home lands which constantly helped the students and their parents not to forget the past. These have been some of the most important elements in the construction and reconstruction of their cultural identities, especially for the parents. Their homes were the places where the parents could talk in Spanish without the feeling of being, as some parents said, looked down upon. At home also the students tried to understand and appreciate their parents' nostalgic feelings towards their lives in their home countries which made their parents constantly reconstitute the past, give sense and understand the world in the new country. By doing this, however, their migranhood is always present and they are always re-departing, they are always recovering the past (Hall, 1992).

For most of the students in the study their home was like a cultural bubble, which has provided both them and their parents with a strong sense of belonging. It was primarily in their home that they constructed and reconstructed their identities as Spanish, Chilean or Uruguayan. In other words the constant process of becoming (Hall, 1986, 1996) for these students started at home.

The security their parents felt at home was challenged when their children talked frequently in English. Students and parents agreed and described how the former spoke more English than Spanish. However, only a few of the students preferred to communicate and express themselves in English in the interviews. Moreover Spanish was often used in conversations at schools and some of the students actively pursued opportunities to improve their Spanish through Spanish school and talk with parents and relatives.

Most of the students' parents, especially their fathers, went to work in factories, no matter what their original qualifications. As part of a minority they were discriminated against in the labour market and relegated to the least attractive jobs (Castles, 1992). Despite spending most of their time amongst English speakers, they described how the degree of interaction with non-Spanish speakers was very low, just basic communication sufficient to carry out their duties. Once or twice a week, the students were taken by their parents to their clubs (Spanish, Chilean and Uruguayan) or to their churches, where the religious services were conducted in Spanish, and where parents had the opportunity to express themselves without being afraid that they might upset someone. The less English the students' parents spoke the greater was their isolation and reliance on home for security.

The isolation which surrounded their parents and some of the students could in part be seen as a matter of choice; most of the parents opted out of participating with the mainstream community. They saw work and school contexts in the Australian society not as places of welcome or acceptance but places where they often experienced discriminatory, ethnocentric and racist attitudes, in other words places where they felt dominated and where they became aware that their own culture was perceived in terms of inferiority (Bhabha, 1994).

For the students in particular, the situation was even more complicated. Like most ethnic communities, their families tended "to regard language maintenance as an important tool for cultural enrichment, social access and intergenerational communication" (National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education, NACCME, 1987 cited in Partington and McCuddden, 1993: 121). All of the students in the study spoke Spanish and could communicate and express themselves, but some of them said they felt more confident talking in English. In a way they were breaking through the cultural bubble. They lived in a two-fold reality: at home they were surrounded by Spanish, Chilean or Uruguayan traditions, customs, habits, cuisine and Spanish language; at school and elsewhere outside the home, Australian practices and routines. The English language made them aware of their migranhood, of their wogness and also of their Australianness. At school, their olive skins and for some their accent made them feel different from the rest of the students so they never quite belonged. As Marta (5.3), a Spanish-Australian Twelve Year girl explained in the following statement:

No sé lo que te debes de llamar: española, australiana o qué, es como que estás en medio de los dos, en casa casi siempre hablo en español, entonces en casa me llamo española, pero como vivo en Australia y nací en Australia, entonces soy australiana; es muy difícil.

(I don't know what you should be called: Spanish, Australian or what? it is like being in the middle of both, at home I always speak in Spanish, then I called myself Spanish, but as I live in Australia and I was born in Australia, then I'm Australian; it is very difficult).

The students in the study faced this dilemma every day at home and school and they had to manage in order to cope with the demands imposed on them by their parents, teachers and peers. However, all the students in the study, even those born in Australia, identified very strongly with their home culture. They constructed their identities in and through those multifaceted social interactions formed at home and school, but which could be said to have historical and political dimensions (Pujolar, 1996).

The students understood that they had to respect their parents and their decisions. A Chilean girl said:

Yo sé que mis padres quieren lo mejor para mí, pero a veces es difícil entenderlos cuando, por ejemplo, quieren que llegue a casa a medianoche cuando la fiesta está en lo mejor.

(I know that my parents want the best for me, but sometimes it is difficult to understand them when, for example, they want me to arrive home at midnight when the party is at its best).

They realised they were living in a situation in which they had to learn to negotiate a cultural identity different from that of their parents and at the

same time they were proud of their parents just as they were - wogs in Australia who spoke Spanish and English with strong accent - and who were in Australia mainly because of the material advantages in comparison to their home countries. A Spanish girl said:

Mi familia se vino a Australia porque en España la situación estaba muy mala. Aquí no ha sido fácil para ellos porque no pueden hablar inglés bien. Yo los admiro mucho por que a pesar de todo ellos siempre me incentivan y me hacen sentir bien.

(My family came to Australia because in Spain the situation was very bad. Here it hasn't been easy for them because they can not speak English well. I admire them because in spite of everything they encourage me and make me feel good).

Most of the students came to the conclusion that they were Chilean, Uruguayan or Spanish first and then Australian. They had managed to come to terms with their difference and all its implications. A Chilean-Australian boy said:

Vivir aquí en Australia significa que siempre va a haber alguien que te va decir que tú no eres Australiano.

(To live here in Australia means that always there is going to be somebody who is going to tell you that you're not Australian).

They are living what Bhabha (1990, 1994) calls their hybridity. Their identity has been constructed and reconstructed through what Hall (1996) has defined as a system of similarities and differences. They have identified as Others and were also identified as such by their teachers, peers, friends and families. Some encouraged this identification by speaking and studying Spanish. Even Sergio who does not speak Spanish very much identified himself as Other. In other words their home language was another important element of their cultural identity.

8.2 Gringo versus Wog

Historically immigrants as well as conquerors and invaders have not always been welcome. The origin of the word gringo takes us to the beginning of this century, to the years after the fall of the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz (1877-80 and 1884-1911). These years were marked by bloody political-military strife and trouble with the United States, culminating in a punitive expedition by the US army into northern Mexico, 1916-17 in unsuccessful pursuit of the revolutionary Pancho Villa (Word Almanac, 1997). American soldiers wore green uniforms and people chanted to them: "Green go home! Green go home!" The term "gringo"¹ has come to refer to any American and later to any foreigner visiting Spain and Latin American countries. The word "wog"² also had its origins in the first quarter of this century, when it started to be used by British people as a vulgarly offensive name for foreigner, especially one of Arab extraction (a wog - a westernised oriental gentleman³).

In Australia, with the great numbers of immigrants from Southern Europe following the end of World War II, the word "wog" has been used as a synonym for immigrant. In the mouth of white Anglo-Australians it carries a very strong derogatory and insulting connotation.

Nowadays North-American gringos are not much welcome in most Central American countries due to the political, economic and social upheavals between United States and those countries.

¹ mendosa-grado att. com Available <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~rjsalvad/scmfaq/GRINGO> (Accessed 27 April 1997)

² British slang offensive. A person who does not have a white skin. Oxford Dictionary, Fifth Ed. 1995: 1372.

³ Eric Partridge. A Dictionary of slang and Unconventional English. Eighth Ed. 1984: 1347.

However, tourists and foreigners living or visiting South American countries are called gringos with respect and admiration, especially by working class locals. Speaking a language badly or with an accent means coming from abroad and this confers a high status to the foreign speaker.

In USA, on the contrary, the situation has been rather different, as Ferguson and Heath (1981) point out:

Many Americans regard the use of another language as a sign of inferiority and disadvantage - to be kept hidden in one's own case and educated away in the case of others. They view the study of foreign languages in school as not particularly useful in achieving a good education or preparing for career (xxvii-viii).

This "Americanness" Ferguson and Heath refer to is similar to the Englishness mentioned by Balibar (1991); both express "cultural and differentialist racism".

In Australia, the situation is no different for those who speak another language and who are therefore considered to be in a different and inferior position.

In Australia knowing another language, or being aware of another culture, is a mark of inferiority. In most overseas countries people who speak another language must have studied it, thus are perceived as being superior; in Australia anybody speaking a second language must be a migrant-offspring, thus inferior. (Bosi 1986: 116)

When the students and their parents travelled to their countries of origin they became "gringos" invested with the prestige of speaking another language, coming from a "prosperous" country.

Indeed, the parents and children in the study felt themselves important and exceptionally different when they travelled to their home countries to visit relatives and friends and told them how wonderful it was to live in Australia, "the lucky country". Students and parents said that, when in their home countries, they felt different and privileged because they had emigrated and lived in a "country of the first world" and were able to "speak" English.

Those who had become Australian citizens were first called "gringos" when they arrived at the airport in their home countries. Here however they were sometimes ridiculed when they showed off their Australian passports to the customs and immigration local authorities. As a Chilean father commented:

Nos miran con una sonrisa de mofa y comentan entre ellos:
¡Viene llegando un gringo!

(They look at us with a mock smile and comment between them:
A gringo is arriving!)

However, once at their relatives' and friends' homes and in the neighbourhood, they said that they perceived the deference and concealed envy that their family's members, friends, neighbours and acquaintances showed towards them.

Not all participants had been back to their countries of origin. For those who had travelled, holidays in their home countries presented opportunities to show off and to talk about how well off they were in terms of material possessions in Australia. However for some the stories they told of their lives in Australia were incomplete.

They described how they recreated their lives, how they told stories about how happy and successful they were in Australia (Castles, 1992) In order not to feel ashamed of themselves, the parents did not talk much about the money they got on the dole, the jobs they did as cleaners late in the evenings or at nights, or the many overtime hours they had worked for years in order to get what had made them now materially secure and "citizens of the first world". The students did not talk about the isolation they felt at school and the names they were too often called. These parents and students were thus caught in a fictionalised world; in their home countries they did not want to admit their failures, cutting off the choice of returning. They have become what Bhabha (1994: 271) calls the "unhomely denizens of the contemporary world".

Back in Australia both parents and children once again assumed a defensive position; they became again part of a linguistic minority and had to come

back to their protective bubbles, in that way they emotionally survive in their daily lives outside home and their Spanish-speaking circles. After considering themselves *cabeza de león* a "lion's head" in their home countries, during their holidays, they regarded themselves as *cola de ratón*, a "rat's tail" in Australia (Hertz, 1997). In other words, after spending a holiday of two, three or four weeks in their relatives' neighbourhood and feeling themselves the centre of attention where everybody was interested in knowing about their lives in Australia, once back in Australia they were not gringos any more, they felt important to nobody, except perhaps for some of those who shared their isolation inside their own cultural bubble. Life went on and they had become wogs again.

Like the immigrant students described in many other studies (see for instance Novakovic, 1977; Cowley, 1978; Bochner, 1982; Rizvi, 1985), at school some of the students had faced racist attitudes and discrimination. They had been seen as Others and had also identified themselves as such. However, they were proud of their heritage and their home language had been an advantage. Their parents on the other hand, because of their lack of proficiency in English saw themselves as outsiders in meetings with teachers and non-Spanish speaking parents.

The students, like their parents, had also felt the difference in the way foreigners were treated in their home countries as compared to Australia. They enjoyed the freedom, the sense of belonging, of being amongst people like themselves and the treatment given to them, not only by their relatives, but the whole community in general; they were "gringos" for a while. In contrast to their parents they were better equipped to deal with their wogness in Australia; they could communicate in English and defend themselves against discriminatory, ethnocentric and racist attitudes. To do this they sometimes present an attitude of withdrawal and passivity in order not to get involved in possible situations of conflict or embarrassment (Rattansi, 1996).

8.3 Material Happiness

From the families, in the study, only one (Orlando's) was a middle class family before coming to Australia, the other Spanish-speaking students' parents came to Australia in order to improve their economic condition and the dream of buying a house for their families had been one of the dearest desires in their lives.

Some of them had been, as they say, "lucky enough" to have bought their own houses after being "partners with a bank" for fifteen, twenty or thirty years. Others, the majority of whom could not afford to buy a house, lived in Housing Commission homes and a few others rented from estate agents.

All the students and their families in the study lived in the southern suburbs of the Metropolis where house prices and rents were cheaper and where their clubs and churches were available. As one Chilean father said:

La única posibilidad de comprarse una casa más barata es por acá, allá era imposible, en la Metrópolis todo es más caro, veinte, veintecinco, treinta mil dólares más caro, yo de todo corazón habría comprado por allá pero no se pudo, entonces no nos quedo otra más que comprar por aquí. Tenemos una vista hermosa, es lo único lindo que tenemos, la vista hermosa. Eso sí lo que echa a perder todo es la contaminación de la fábrica; estamos a tres minutos de la fábrica.

(The only possibility of buying a cheaper house is in this area, over there it is impossible, in the Metropolis everything is more expensive, twenty, twenty five, thirty thousands dollars more expensive, I would have bought in that area at the heart but it was impossible, then the only solution was to buy in this area. We have a lovely view, it is the only beautiful thing we have, a lovely view. What spoils all this is the pollution from the factory, we are three minutes distance from the factory).

Practically all the students' fathers interviewed and some of the mothers as well had worked, directly or indirectly, for the Factory. The Factory had been the major employer in the region. As a Spanish father said:

La fabrica ha sido la vaca que da leche para todos en la región.

(The Factory has been the cow which everyone milks in the región).

Some of the fathers were still working at the Factory, at the time of the interview, others had started their own small businesses in the field of steel structures, and others were living on the dole. Those families who had a better standard of living did so because the parents had been working overtime for years, sometimes even sixteen hours a day, like many migrants in Australia (Castles et al., 1990). They often worked so that their children could succeed economically and academically. Some of these students had the potential for succeeding academically. They have siblings at the university and others who are working in the capital city, in well paid jobs who are their role models. Most of those who had finished their secondary education were also starting their professional careers at the university and were facing their futures with some optimism.

On the other hand, when the parents who have been in Australia for more than ten years balanced their length of time in Australia against the material possessions they now possessed, they quite often asked themselves questions like those of one Spanish father who said:

¿Qué hubiera pasado si me hubiera quedado en mi país y hubiera trabajado lo mismo que he trabajado aquí? Como no he tenido otra cosa que hacer, nunca ha habido amigos con los que salir o conversar, lo único que queda es trabajar para no aburrirse y no pensar en nuestra lejana tierra.

(What would have happened if I had stayed in my country and I had worked the same as I have worked here? As I have had nothing else to do; there have never been friends with whom to go out or talk, the only possible thing to do is work in order not to get bored and not to think about our distant land).

Some of the students' parents considered the price they were paying for their material happiness, or the "Australian Dreams" (Castles et al., 1990), too high. For some of them, it was the dream of improving their economic situation and providing a better education for their children, which kept them alive and full of dignity. While these parents might in Australia have had the material possessions they dreamt about in their home countries, they considered themselves to have lost as human beings; they had transformed themselves into working machines. They felt they were leading isolated lives and also felt discriminated against by some of the Anglo-Australians they had contact with. As one Uruguayan father said:

Tengo todas las cosas que siempre quise tener, principalmente un auto. Pero mi vida es tan monotoná, de la casa al trabajo y del trabajo a la casa y cuando salimos al algún lugar siento las miradas raras que nos dan algunas personas, me hacen sentir como bicho raro.

(I have all the things I always wanted to have, especially a car. But my life is very monotonous, from home to work and from work to home and when we go out somewhere I feel the weird looks that some people give to us, they make me feel like a bizarre animal).

Another participant, a Chilean mother said:

Aquí en Australia tenemos de todo, pero nos sentimos parados, lo único que hacemos es trabajar y a veces conversar con otros miembros de la comunidad chilena.

(Here in Australia we have everything, but we feel stuck in a groove, the only thing we do is work and sometimes talk to other members of the Chilean community).

As a result, these desires for material happiness, which were passed to the students, went hand in hand with sense of isolation which made them felt marginalised (Edgerton, 1996) and stereotyped (Castles, 1992).

This situation created in the students and their families a social monotony which was reinforced when they compared their lives in Australia with their lives in their countries of origin.

8.4 Frozen Times versus Freedom

Immigrants as Rushdie (1991) points out root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as material things. This was clearly the case with some of the students in the study and most of their parents who dreamt about their countries of origin and the possibility, although remote, of going back some day to live there. Some of the parents were thinking of going back for good when they reached pension age so they could enjoy their old age and rest in peace in their beloved home country. One Chilean mother said:

Los huesos los dejo en mí país.

(I will leave my bones in my country)

Some of the students said that when their parents met in the Chilean, Uruguayan or Spanish clubs they talked about the good old days they had in their home countries. Sometimes they could not participate in those conversations because they did not know the places and people their parents were talking about.

For their parents talking about their home land put them in a "frozen" space of a remembered past (Rushdie, 1983). On the other hand, for the students, especially those who had not been to their parents' countries of origin, their roots gave them a sense of belonging and at the same time made them aware of the difference. Contrary to their parents, this situation influenced the students in a positive way, and made them stronger at school and in the Australian society as a whole.

It seemed the distance and the time made some of the parents forget their bad moments and they only remembered and talked about the good experiences they had in their respective countries of origin before emigrating to Australia. These memories played an important role in the construction of their identities, in what Hall (1986, 1996) calls the constant process of becoming instead of being. This recovery of the past is very important in the way they have positioned themselves in the Australian society. Most of the parents as well as some of the students who were not born in Australia felt that the only problem in their home countries, as they saw it, was to have been caught in the poverty trap. As one Chilean-Australian girl said:

A pesar de la pobreza eramos felices y nos sentíamos bien entre nuestra gente.

(In spite of the poverty we were happy and felt good among our own people).

When some of the students and their parents met with relatives and friends at their homes or in the clubs, parents especially talked about their lives of ten, twenty or thirty years ago and it was difficult for them to believe and accept when a visitor from their countries of origin told them about the changes that had taken place in their home countries.

Most of those parents who could afford a trip to their homeland realised they had been away too long and too much had changed; it was no longer the country they knew when they were living there.

They realised quickly how they were older when they saw family members, relatives, friends and acquaintances who were difficult to recognise because they too were older. The children also realised that they had grandparents, aunts and cousins in the flesh and not only in dulling memories. For the parents everything had changed, the way of life and the general pace of living were different, conversation topics were no longer interesting. Dreams, ambitions and aspirations had changed as well. They were strangers in their own country, they felt displaced in their homelands. As one Chilean father said:

Es mi país pero no es el mismo que dejé hace veinte años atrás, me siento desubicado, no me acostumbro, ¿qué hacer? No me queda otra que volver a Australia y seguir trabajando.

(It is my country but it is not the same which I left twenty years ago, I feel out of place, I can't get used to it, what can I do? The only thing I can do is to come back to Australia and continue working).

On the other hand the children recalled the visits with positive emotions and feelings. In a way they were in a privileged position. They talked about, for instance, how they enjoyed the freedom in Chile, Spain and Uruguay and how they were able to go out without their parents being worried when they went to parties or came back home late at night. These new sensations had provided them with a sense of belonging and protection, they are aware they are becoming (Hall, 1986, 1996) someone different from their parents. They also recognised that their parents felt safer about their visiting in their home countries than in Australia. One Uruguayan mother said:

Allá están entre nuestra gente, aquí hay gente de tantos lugares que no sabemos lo que pueda pasar a nuestros hijos, no sabemos las intenciones de las otras personas.

(Over there they are among our people, here there are people from so many different places that we don't know what might happen to our children, we don't know other people's intentions).

Most of the students and their parents interviewed had travelled once or twice to their home countries, usually for a fortnight's holiday or for a short visit, especially the parents who had to go to attend the funeral of one of their own parents. Although they realised their home country was not the one they left ten, fifteen or twenty years ago, back in Australia the parents continued keeping alive the frozen memories of their home countries as they were when they left them for the first time. These remembrances were perpetuated, like an old film in which they were the main protagonists. They were the most important elements in providing them with a point of reference. It seemed to me that some of the parents kept reinventing their past in order to have a sense of being someone, of belonging somewhere, of defining themselves (Rushdie, 1991; Hall 1989).

For the students the situation was different; many were born in Australia and those who arrived in Australia as young children had few recollections of their home countries. Most of the students' images of their countries of origin were those their parents had told them about, memories frozen in time. However, when the students travelled to their parents' homelands they discovered that they had an extended family who loved and admired them. Despite having only visited for a short holiday, they described how they felt that they belonged to that community.

For the participants the sense of belonging to a community whose boundaries extend beyond Australia seemed to confer a strong sense of identification with other Spanish-speaking people. Most of the students and parents spoke of the feelings of security they felt among their own people. Their homes, communities, clubs and churches were the places where they felt they belonged in Australia. These institutions played an important role in the development of their identity as Chileans, Uruguayan and Spanish, as wogs in Australia. It was in that situation that students and parents found friends and acquaintances who like themselves had been in Australia for some time. They celebrated their difference, they were able to share memories and values different from the Anglo-Australians but also different from the contemporary values in their homelands. Their reference group tended to be immigrants like themselves rather than those they left behind in their home countries.

The students in the study were negotiating their identities in the Australian society, they were actively involved in creating what Bhabha (1990: 211) calls their hybrid identity. That is to say they were identifying themselves through constant processes of re-articulation and re-contextualisation (Hall, 1996: 393) in relation to Australian society.

8.5 Language Dependence versus Bilingualism

Language, as Varennes (1996) points out, is one of the strongest symbols of community membership and shared culture. In the study students' parents lack of proficiency in English had engendered a sense of isolation and dependency.

This lack played a key role in the construction and reconstruction of their cultural identity (Mead, 1936; Argyle, 1982; Brock and Tulasiewicz, 1985; Bammer, 1994; Coates, 1996; Hall, 1996). In contrast, for the children their bilingualism was a main advantage which has allowed them to interact freely in both their worlds of home and school. Most of the parents talked about how it was difficult for them to express themselves in English. This had made most of them felt isolated and not belonging to the mainstream Australian culture. Most of the time they needed someone else to act as interpreter and, in many instances, the students took on this role, a position which seemed at times to create a situation of conflict within some of the families who participated in the study.

When these Spanish-speaking parents, particularly the fathers talked about the relationship between themselves and their children in their home countries, they referred to the unquestioned authority they held in the household in relation to the family relationships. Decisions were taken, most of the time, without consulting their wives and without the knowledge of their children. The unequal power relationship was taken for granted. Parental authority was rarely questioned by their children. However they saw these relations as having been disrupted with migration to a non-Spanish speaking country because of the parents' lack of proficiency in the English language. As a result of the students' proficiency in English, power relationships in some of the families changed dramatically. Parents' decisions started to be challenged and the children realised their services as translators and interpreters were in high demand by their parents and relatives. One of the Chilean fathers explained:

La mamá llevaba an niño para que le fuera a hacer los trámites importantes en el banco y al médico. Incluso el niño tenía que decirle los problemas de la mamá al médico, adonde fuera tenía que ir el niño, entonces el niño pasaba a ser la persona mas importante de la familia: 'yo sé inglés, mi papá, mi mamá no', entonces el niño primero y la mamá y el papá detrás de él; era como tomar una fotografía, el niño delante y la mamá o el papá detrás.

(The mother took the child with her to the some important business at the bank, and at the doctor's. The child even had to tell the mother's troubles to the doctor. Wherever she went the child had to go, the child became the most important person in the family: 'I know English, but my father and my mother don't', and so the child went first and the mother and the father behind her/him; it was like taking a photograph, the child in front and the mother or the father behind).

As Spiegelman (1991) and Kaplan (1994) noted when the children speak a language different from their parents they tend to confront them in the new language. In this study some of the parents saw how, as their children progressed in English, they became more independent and it was more difficult for them to control and supervise their children's actions and reactions. Some of these parents talked about how they felt helpless in the face of the power of their children's proficiency in English. A Spanish mother declared:

Cuando les llamo la atención sólo me contestan en inglés y cuando les digo que hablen español me dicen que estamos en Australia y que nosotros debemos aprender a hablar inglés.

(When I tell them to behave they only answer to me in English and when I tell them to speak in Spanish they say to me that we are in Australia and we must learn to speak in English).

One of the Chilean parents commented:

Es difícil enseñarles nuestros valores, nuestra cultura y nuestra lengua a nuestros hijos, ellos siempre los cuestionan y dicen que están in Australia, que en la escuela les han enseñado algo diferente.

(It's difficult to teach our values, our culture and our language to our children, they always question them and say they are in Australia, that at the school they have been taught something different).

The parents in the study saw how their children were being influenced by the environment outside home. The potential for conflict between children and parents was imminent, although most of the parents interviewed eventually accepted their children's decisions to speak in English. On the other hand, parents and students were always clashing about the time the students should return home when they went to parties or visited friends. This situation was also part of the process of hybridisation (Bhabha, 1990) they were going through. For example, parents wanted to follow their home countries' customs and the children wanted to emphasise that they were living in Australia.

All the parents interviewed came to Australia with no knowledge of English, except some of the Spanish parents who came as a children themselves. The first years in Australia without understanding English were the most difficult. On landing in Sydney, they lost their independence and autonomy in the making of decisions for themselves and their families. At the beginning it was a relative who, for better or worse, tried to help them in solving problems they had never encountered before.

The satisfaction of even basic needs was transformed into a problem which required reliance on someone who could translate and guide decisions. In that way parents felt displaced (Bammer, 1982) and isolated (Vareness 1996).

Most of the students' fathers started work almost immediately and the mothers stayed at home taking care of the children and the household. There was no time to study English and those who attended courses found themselves lost in a system which was unable to cope with the demands of adult learners who sometimes had little or no education in their home countries. As one Chilean father said:

La gente se aburre porque no entiende. La enseñanza del inglés no puede ser cien por ciento en inglés porque, por ejemplo, el profesor con mimica no me va a decir cual es el presente o pasado de un verbo, la enseñanza del inglés tiene que ser hecha por un profesor que hable inglés y español.

(People get bored because they don't understand. The teaching of English can't be a hundred per cent in English because, for example, the teacher with mime is not going to tell me which is the present or past tense of a verb, the teaching of English has to be done by a teacher who speaks English and Spanish).

Their main concern was to find a job or engage in the welfare system, find a place to live and a school for their children, so that learning English was put aside.

As Iredale and Fox (1994) note, when the students started to learn English at school, they face a situation in which the luckiest ones have ESL classes; others have to struggle to survive in low streamed classes. In this study, some of the students learnt the language well and fast and now have almost no accent. Others were less lucky in the support offered, but they learnt, in spite of their teachers, classmates, and multicultural policies (Kalantzis et

al.1990). Most of the students tried to lose their "wog" accent in order not to be singled out as not Aussies. As one Chilean-Australian girl said:

Yo he aprendido inglés a pesar de todo y lo menos que se te nota el acento lo menos que te molestan.

(I have learned English in spite of everything and the less your accent is noticeable the less you are disturbed).

When students were lucky enough to sit together in the same class, they would often talk in their home language switching to English, for example, when the teacher came closer. Obviously for these children being bilingual was as normal as being monolingual. Speaking a language other than English was an advantage for them; it helped them to create their secret codes and to create their own world. At the same time however it conferred a stigma - a situation where an individual is disqualified from full social acceptance (Goffman, 1974). It separated these students from the rest of the class and made them feel different, and sometimes ignored or discriminated against by their teachers and peers because of their second language and their otherness. In other words, while the students recognised that their accent was a disadvantage and was the main way of identifying them as Others, they were also aware that their mastery of both the English language and their home language had helped them to participate in the social contexts where they interacted.

Contrary to what the students said in interviews about the value of speaking Spanish, as they progressed in English many began to lose their proficiency in Spanish. For the students the fact they were speaking English most of the time affected their mastery of the Spanish language.

Even at home, they talked to their brothers and sisters in English and sometimes answered their parents in English as well. Some of the students had been studying Spanish to prevent themselves losing their language. Unfortunately this happened not at their secondary schools because Spanish was not included in the mainstream curriculum, but at Saturday schools and only once a week.

The parents encouraged their children to talk to them and some of them insisted that their children speak Spanish at home. Language maintenance is essential for cultural enrichment and intergenerational communication (Partington and McCudden, 1993). One father, for instance, made it obligatory for his children to speak in Spanish, especially at meal times and when grandparents, uncles and aunts visited them.

En la mesa tienen que hablar español. Si no hablan español no comen.

(At the table they have to speak Spanish. If they don't speak Spanish they won't eat).

These findings are similar to the preliminary findings of Martin's 1995 study of Spanish families which was discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 29).

8.6 Language Clusters and Secret Codes at School

While the students might be losing their Spanish from their parents' point of view, the home language seemed to be an important element when they interacted with other Spanish-speaking students.

The observations at the school indicated that migrant children when they were not under the direct supervision of a teacher would tend to cluster together according to the language, which was spoken at home. Similar situations were studied by Kalantzis et al. (1990) who referred to the difficult job teachers and schools were facing and the little support available.

During class recesses, groups of students could be heard talking in different languages: English, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Spanish, Portuguese, and so on. The home language provided the vehicle for sharing secret messages and gossiping about other students and teachers without being discovered. Language was in this case more important than nationality and it was a vehicle to promote friendship among students who spoke the same language.

Although in the school yard those students whose first language was not English clustered together in small groups, talking in their own languages, they also formed bigger groups when they were confronted by the white Anglo-Australian children. In defence of the many times they were called "wogs" by the white Anglo-Aussie children, they responded by calling them "skippies".

Inside the classroom most of the students in the study seemed not to be interested in getting involved in the lessons. This is an issue which was discussed extensively in Chapter 2, as it relates to Australia's history of multicultural education and the potential for unequal and racist situations in classrooms (Rizvi, 1986; Kalantzis and Cope 1988; Banks 1992; Partington and McCudden 1993).

Some of the children sat at the back of the room and remained silent throughout the class; they just worked in their notebooks, apparently following the teacher's instructions but interacting very little. Whereas other students had their books checked several times during the lesson, some teachers never approached these children to check their exercises. For some of the students whose first language was not English, especially the newly arrived students, it was like being part of a play in which their part was ignored.

It was evident that the education most of these students were exposed to was by no means a multicultural education, that is, one which seeks equality and the eradication of discrimination (Banks 1993: 25).

When I commented on this issue with the teachers in the non-government schools most of them said that there was not enough time to give personalised attention to every student. In the state school they pointed out the fact that there were not enough ESL teachers in the school to help them with the LBOTE students.

The environments in the state coeducational and non-government schools in the study differed markedly. Students tended to behave better in the non-government schools, teachers were stricter and some of the students seemed to be afraid of them. In contrast, in the state coeducational school, students showed more disrespect towards their teachers.

In the state coeducational school classes were noisier than in the non-government schools and in the low streamed classes some teachers had real trouble in trying to control the class; in some of these classes teachers and students shouted at each other creating a very stressful climate, especially for those students who remained silent and tried not to be involved in the situations created by their peers. As one Year Ten girl said:

Ellos (los alumnos) no la dejan enseñar, ella sólo está tratando de enseñar.

(They (the students) don't let her teach, she is just trying to teach).

The situation was totally different in the upper stream classes at the non-government school where students were much more likely to be involved in the lesson due to the dynamic pace set by the teachers.

Some of the LBOTE girls, who had been put in the low streamed classes, sat together as though looking for protection in numbers. They often remained silent throughout lessons as though they wished to be ignored and not be the centre of attention. They only chatted briefly and from time to time with their peers if there was one sitting next to them. This was likely to be the case for many of the quieter students in class. In every class I observed, they went through a kind of ordeal. As one Chilean girl commented:

Es terrible ver como la pobre profesora trata de hacer la clase y los desordenados no la dejan.

(It is terrible to see how the poor teacher tries to conduct the class and the misbehaving ones don't allow her to do it).

These girls observed how the teacher spent most of the class trying to control the trouble makers and teach at the same time. They seemed to shrink themselves into their seats like snails into their shells, observing keenly

how the class teacher shouted at the boys who answered the teacher back. As one Chilean girl explained:

Cuando estoy en esa clase que quiero que termine lo antes posible.

(When I am in that class I want it finished as quickly as possible).

The situation for some of the parents, when they went to the school meetings and parent-teacher interviews, if they went, was not much different. They said that did not feel like giving their opinions or expressing their points of view and they accepted what the others suggested or decided. One Spanish mother informed to me:

En las reuniones de padres casi no se discute nada, yo escucho y me parece bien porque pienso que las personas que toman las decisiones son personas responsables y yo casi siempre estoy de acuerdo con lo que ellos deciden y cuando no me quedo callada de cualquier manera que puedo decir.

(In the parents' meetings almost nothing is discussed, I listen to and I think it's all right because I think the persons who take the decisions are responsible people and I almost always agree with what they decide and when I do not I remain silent, anyway what can I say).

The Spanish speakers parents in the study had renounced their rights to give their opinions and suggestions about their children's education due to their lack of English and the fear of feeling ridiculous because of their "wog" accent. As their sons and daughters did in the school yard, they formed small groups after the meetings and talked in their home language about the ideas they could not let the other non-Spanish speaking parents know about. A Chilean mother noted:

Es un alivio después de la reunión poder conversar en español, hay tantas cosas que nos gustaría decir, pero en fin es mejor quedarse callada; de cualquier manera no creo que nos den mucha importancia.

(It is a relief after the meeting to be able to talk in Spanish. There are so many things we would like to say, but anyway it is better to remain silent; after all, I don't think they would give us too much importance.)

Obviously, for these parents, the opportunity for real participation in taking decisions in relation to their children's education has always been limited. They saw themselves as different and were seen as such by the Anglo-Australian parents; they were seen as the "wog" parents.

Siento que los otros padres nos miran como si fuéramos de otro planeta.

(I feel that the other parents look at us if we were from another planet.)

8.7 Isolation versus Freedom

The students' mothers were brought up in environments in which the neighbourhood had played a crucial role in their socialisation process. In their home countries, these working class women used to chat for hours with their female neighbours after sending the kids to school and when they were not busy with the household chores. Talking was their favourite pastime, a moment to relax and be relieved of the monotony of everyday life.

Once in Australia this situation changed drastically. At first glance the situation looked promising: there were small fences dividing homes gardens and back yards, the ideal setting for long chats between neighbours. However, because of the language barrier - their neighbours did not speak Spanish and the Spanish speakers did not speak English - further relationships with their neighbours were prevented.

Al principio tenía miedo y ahora tengo vergüenza de hablar con mi vecina, si fuese "wog" como yo no habría problemas porque las dos hablaríamos con acent pero mi vecina es australiana, anglosajona y habla un inglés tan cerrado que prácticamente no le entiendo, así que cuando la veo en el patio no salgo de la casa.

(At the beginning I was afraid and now I feel ashamed of talking with my neighbour, if she were wog like me there would be no problems because we both would talk with an accent but my neighbour is Australian, Anglo-Saxon and she speaks such a mumbled English that I practically do not understand her, so when I see her in the yard I do not go outside).

The solution for some of these mothers was to rent films and TV programs (soaps, comedies, news) from Spain and Latin America or films translated into Spanish, from a couple of specialised video shops located in the region. Most of these women also listened to the three FM radio programs in Spanish which were on air three times a week and read the four newspapers published in Spanish which appeared once or twice a week in the region⁴. Thus, the "ethnic" media in Spanish were for some of these a way of escaping from the enforced solitariness and boredom in which they found themselves in their Australian homes.

For the students' fathers the situation was similar. In their home countries most of them used to go for a beer with their work mates and talk for hours after finishing their work, especially on Fridays, and on weekends they used to go to the stadium to see their favourite soccer teams play or to the race course.

Cuando estaba en Santiago no habia domingo que no iba al estadio o al hipódromo con mi amigos, mo papá, mo hijo y a veces toda la familia. Aquí vivo al lado del hipódromo y no me dan ganas de ir, ¿con quién voy a ir también?

⁴ See Footnotes 5,6,7 and 8 in Chapter One

(When I was in Santiago there was no single Sunday that I didn't go to the race track or to the stadium with my friend, my father and sometimes the whole family. Here I live next to the racetrack and don't feel like going, who am I going to go with anyway?).

These fathers avoided their loneliness by burying themselves in their jobs, sometimes working many hours of overtime. The only benefit for some of them had been an increase in material security for them and their families.

As one Chilean father said:

Yo estoy tranquilo acá, yo vivo de acuerdo, pienso como piensa la gente aquí, me asimilo y por suerte no hemos tenido nunca problemas, nos preocupamos del trabajo y la familia de nosotros y más allá no; lo que si la vida se hace una rutina, muy monótona, en el caso mío, yo hoy día, siempre me pasa, no sé que día de la semana, a veces, estamos viviendo.

(I am quiet here, I live peacefully, I think as people think here, I assimilate and luckily we have never had troubles, we worry about our work and our family, no more than that, what happens is that life becomes a routine, very monotonous; in my case, nowadays, it always happens to me, I don't know what day of the week, sometimes, we are living).

Even in the bosom of their families some of these parents had experienced a sense of loneliness when they talked to their children in Spanish and the students responded to them in English. One Spanish mother commented:

Me da tanta pena cuando a veces quiero conversar con mis hijos, conversar de cosas simples, conversar de todo un poco y ellos me contestan en inglés; siento como si no les interesara conversar conmigo.

(I feel so sad when sometimes I want to talk to my children, talk about trivial things, talk about a little of everything and they respond in English; I feel as if they are not interested in talking to me).

The students at school were also facing the stigma of being perceived differently and feeling the isolation in the school yard and in the classrooms. Many of them had at times been ignored by their teachers and their peers; the only possible inner resource they had found to overcome this negative sentiment had been the ostensible pride of feeling different, of being, in first place a Chilean, Spanish or Uruguayan and in second place a wog. This coincides with Kalantzis' (1992) findings in relation to participation at school; for parents and students it is easier to participate and feel involved when they participate through cultural channels.

The Spanish speaking background students in the study were aware that they had a specific background but at the same time they belonged to a wider group, the non-English speaking background immigrants in Australia. This self-respect allowed them to overcome negative feelings and at the same time to go on with their activities at school. In the process of constructing and reconstructing their own positive identity they, sometimes as a way of defence, needed to diminish the Anglos, calling them 'skippy' or 'convict'. As one Uruguayan girl said:

El echo que seamos de otro país no significa que seamos inferiores, muy por el contrario, hablamos dos idiomas y nosotros no tenemos parientes que fueron convictos.

(The fact of being from another country does not mean that we are inferior, on the contrary, we speak two languages and we do not have relatives who were convicts).

These students discovered their difference was considered their Achilles' heel by their Aussie peers and that it was the first thing they used to express their animosity against them. However, this same feeling had given them the freedom to have friends from various backgrounds and to enrich their social interactions inside and outside the school contexts.

8.8 Hopes and Aspirations

Proficiency in English, the school language, is crucial for immigrant children not only in relation to their success at school and in their future endeavours, but also for the acknowledgement of their background by peers and teachers in order to fully exploit their potential and abilities (Street, 1993). As Cahill and Ewen point out, for high school English language competence is crucial for later success in employment, for unless they have near-native English language proficiency, most will experience difficulty in securing a job (Cahill and Ewen 1993, p.51).

Hartley (1987) has identified the following factors as potential influences on school and occupational outcomes for students whose home language is not English:

- student background factors such as ethnicity, gender, length of time in Australia, parents' occupation, reason for emigration (refugee or otherwise);
- home environment and home influence factors such as parents' aspirations for their children, parents expectations about their children's performance, parents knowledge of schooling, the influence of other family members, use of English in the home;
- school environment factors such as students' attitudes towards school, teachers' understanding of student needs, student experiences of discrimination, the availability of advice on careers and further education; and

- home-school interface factors such as quality and quantity of home-school contact, conflict between cultures of home and school, parental interest in school, parental help with school work, importance of school to parents.

Most of the parents in the study showed that they had high aspirations for their sons and daughters. Sending their children to a university seemed to be the greatest achievement they hoped for their children. Most were working class people in their countries of origin and they believed it would have been very difficult to afford university studies for their children. Their children's success represented their own success. As one Spanish father commented:

Yo siempre le he dicho desde chiquita, lo que me gustaría tener un marco grande, grande con el certificado de la universidad.

(I have always said to her since she was a little girl, what I would like to have is a big, big frame with the certificate from the university).

These parents also wanted their children to become professionals or otherwise to get a "good job". As one Chilean student said:

A mi mamá no le importa mucho que trabajo yo tenga pero siempre que tenga un buen trabajo, un trabajo que se gane bastante y que no te traten mal.

(To my mother it is not important the job I would have but that I would have a good job, a job where you can earn a lot of money and where you wouldn't be badly treated).

Their hopes were not always realised however. Some of the parents in the study were disappointed that their children did not share their aspirations. Carlota for instance wanted to stop studying and leave school before finishing Year Ten in order to find work. As her Spanish father said:

Ella ya sabe, ella quiere ser una peluquera, es una perdida de tiempo, ella no estudia.

(She already knows, she wants to be a hairdresser, it's a waste of time, she doesn't study).

Some parents in the study were afraid that the Australian context would discourage their children going to university; that is, they would prefer to start working to earn just enough to satisfy their basic needs. Those parents who came to Australia with a trade certificate felt particularly disappointed that their children might not aspire to attend university or a technical college where they could get a professional certificate. As one Chilean father commented:

Los emigrantes que vienen pa'ca dicen: me voy por un futuro mejor para mis hijos y muchas veces terminan los hijos peor que los mismos padres en cuanto a educación porque el padre pa'venirse pa'ca tiene que haber tenido un cartoncito y los hijos generalmente terminan trabajando como asistentes por ahí en los shoppings o viviendo del seguro desempleo y está pasando, por lo menos en lo que yo veo, en la comunidad de nosotros son pocos los mocosos que quieren ir a la universidad o que llegan a terminar una carrera.

(The migrants who came here say: I go for a better future for my children and many times they finish worse than the parents in relation to education because the father in order to come here had to have a certificate and the children generally finish working as shop assistant in the shopping centres or living on the dole and what's happening, at least from what I see, in our community there are few youths who want to go to the university or who finish a career).

In addition, some of the students' parents considered that the social system in Australia did not encourage youths to finish their studies or to go to the university. For instance, one Chilean mother said:

Aquí todo es muy fácil para la juventud y el gobierno practicamente los empuja a una vida fácil, viviendo del desempleo y trabajos mal pagados.

(Here everything is too easy for the young people and the government practically encourages them to have an easy life, living on the dole and working in badly paid jobs).

However some of the students' mothers, whose children were in low streamed classes, saw that their children were just engaged in the routine of the school without aspirations and consequently they expected very little from their children. As one Spanish mother said:

A mi me gustaría que fuera el primer ministro de Australia, pero no creo porque no es muy bueno para estudiar y no le interesa el estudio, pero a mi me gustaría que por lo menos acabara el liceo y tuviera un oficio.

(I would like him to be the Prime Minister of Australia, but I don't think so because he is not very good at studying and he is not interested in studying, however I would like him at least to finish the high school and get a trade).

On the other hand some mothers did not have very high expectations for their daughters. This was the case, for instance, for Fernanda and Ursula whose mothers said that they were more concerned with their daughters' development as teenagers than with their academic success. It seemed that some of the parents in the study still considered that girls' academic success was not as important as boys'. Carlota's parents, for instance said that the solution for their daughter when she did not continue studying was to marry a "good" husband, someone like her brother who liked studying and had high aspirations.

8.9 Conclusion

The social context where Spanish-speaking background students constructed their cultural identity was mainly their homes and schools. At home it was their parents and siblings and at school their peers and teachers who helped them, through positive or negative attitudes, to make choices about how to position themselves in relation to the Others in school and in the Australian mainstream society as a whole.

The key element which helped Spanish-speaking background students to negotiate their position in their homes, schools and mainstream Australian society was an awareness of their backgrounds. This sense of 'otherness' was constantly reinforced at home by their parents and siblings and at school by teachers and peers; in other words, it was their Spanishness, Chileanness or Uruguayanness which made them felt unique and different at the same time.

A second language was considered an advantage by these students who used it to share secrets codes and talked about teachers and students in the schools. Spanish, the students' home language seems to play an important but not crucial role in the process of students' identification. Even those who had very little opportunities to practise their Spanish, identified very strongly as Chilean, Spanish and Uruguayan.

Difference and Otherness

The history of society and culture is, in large measure, a history of the struggle with the endlessly complex problems of difference and otherness... . Is difference tolerable?... . The ghettos of Europe, America and South Africa, the walls in Germany (now gone), China, and Korea, and the battlefields throughout the world testify to the urgency of the issue of difference.

(Marck C. Taylor, 1987 cited in Edgerton, 1996: xiii).

Diferencia y "Otrocidad"

La historia de la sociedad y la cultura es, en gran medida, una historia de la lucha con los eternos complejos problemas de diferencia y otrocidad... . ¿Es diferencia tolerable? Los ghettos de Europa, America y Sudafrica, los muros en Alemania (ahora derrubados), China, y Corea, y los campos de batalla a través del mundo testifican la urgencia del problema de diferencia.

(My own Translation).

CHAPTER NINE

F I N A L R E M A R K S

The primary objective of this chapter is to show that, although the study has now reached its conclusions and its final words, it is by no means the final word on those matters of cultural identity I elected to examine. Due to the qualitative approach where specific cases have been focused on, there are certain limitations to the generalisations that can be made. It is possible that the experiences of other Spanish speaking background students in other contexts may be somewhat different. For example, the eight themes developed in Chapter Eight seemed to be significant characteristics of the families in the study. Other families however from countries in Spain or Latin America may have engaged with their immigrant status differently, depending on a range of factors including their time of arrival, their socio-economic status before they came, their level of education and so on.

What is important about this thesis is the way it has shown how the students construct their cultural identity and how others construct that identity for them in the social contexts where the students interact. It has been demonstrated that the subject is in a dynamic constant process of becoming rather than being and identity is constituted within the subject, not outside, yet it is produced in specific historical and institutional sites (Hall, 1986, 1996, Weis, 1997). As well some light has been shed on the concept of cultural hybridity, the process whereby two cultures retain their distinct characteristics and yet form something new (Bhabha, 1996).

The construction and reconstruction of cultural identity thus becomes a dynamic and complex phenomenon, intimately related to social contexts. This process is both self-reflexive and interactional, connected to time, location and culture and, connecting as Bhabha (1996) has pointed out, involving both public and private spheres.

The construction of cultural identity faces structural forces rooted in the Australian society which, depending on economic and political influences, are manifested in expressions of racism and power by the white population against immigrant or Aboriginal peoples.

9.1 The Home Context

I have used the notion of a "cultural bubble" to describe the way in which the parents in the study were often isolated due to their infrequent interactions with the mainstream society. On the other hand, the students were able to benefit in some ways, perhaps many ways, by being able to move in and out of their bubble. Most of the parents in the study experienced prejudice, discrimination and racism in their work places and home became for them the place where they could pull themselves together and feel secure.

For the students in the study the home context had the power of providing them with a sense of belonging and pride. All of the Spanish-speaking background students in the study had close family ties and most used Spanish at home. They celebrated their identities at home, as Spanish Chilean and Uruguayan and felt proud of the way they had been brought up by their parents. Most of them shared with their parents their hopes and aspirations in relation to future studies, careers and jobs. Home provided

security and a strong sense of identification. It was the context where they felt supported and encouraged by their parents and siblings.

According to many writers (Mead, 1936; Argyle, 1982; Brock and Tuleasiewicz, 1985; Deleuze and Guattari, 1992; Bammer, 1994; Coates, 1996) home language is one of the most important elements in identity formation. Home culture also plays a crucial role in the reflexive process of identification and provides a strong sense of belonging, as demonstrated in this study. For example, some of the students born in Australia and who preferred to talk in English, still identified themselves strongly with their home culture and declared that they were first Spanish, Chilean or Uruguayan and then Australians. For the students in the study loyalty to their families and origins was a very important element which intertwined with language and culture had a significant influence on how they defined themselves.

The students' homes in the study provided for them a caring environment in which the students found a position of security. This safe space enabled the students to construct their cultural identity for themselves. Thus they knew that their horizons were wider than those of their parents. They were able to position themselves more comfortably in relation to others in Australia as well as to feel "at home" in their parents' home countries when they visited them.

Home was important because it provided these students with a sense of belonging. It seemed to be the place where the students lay the foundation stone of their dual cultural identity as Spanish-Australians, Chilean-Australians or Uruguayan-Australians.

The material expressions of the participants culture at home tended to be static and the parents seemed to be caught in a "frozen time". The students enjoyed these expression, however, they positioned themselves dynamically in mainstream Australian society.

9.2 The School Context

Harley (1987) has pointed out that the acknowledgment of students' home culture is a potential factor influencing school outcomes. This acknowledgment was rarely evident in the school contexts studied. This together with the lack of communication between parents and school might explain why so many of the students in the study were in the lower stream classes.

As the Spanish families have been in Australia longer, it was anticipated that the Spanish students all whom were born in Australia, and speak more English at home than those who were born, for example, in Chile and whose parents also speak more Spanish at home, would appear to be in a more advantageous position. However, when it came to schooling, none of the Spanish students was in an Advanced class, as was the case for two Chilean students who were doing Advanced English and Mathematics. It seems that the chances of being in an Advanced class result from a combination of factors of which the one which seems to be more important is the level of communication between parents and teachers.

The school and the home contexts seemed to work together to influence the students' chances of academic success. However, at school what seemed to count was the class the students were in. Those two students who were in the upper stream classes seemed to have opportunities for learning and for

support which were not always evident in the lower stream classes. In this way the school cares about the students in the upper stream levels and marginalises the others.

From lesson observations, and the students' and teachers' comments it seemed that for students and teachers in the upper stream classes issues of difference and otherness were less likely to be of concern. For Luis, for instance, the issue of difference or being identified as "wog" were only mentioned in relation to his experiences outside the classroom since the pace of lessons in the advanced classes and the expectations around learning left very little room for the students to engage in non-academic activities, such as causing a disturbance or name calling. The students who were in the upper stream classes also seemed to have more opportunities to become engaged in the learning process and this reflects teacher expectations and the way they follow up students and relate with their parents.

Through the creation of a dynamic environment, the teachers created safe spaces so students could actively participate in lessons without fear of ridicule. However safe spaces were not only created in the advanced classes. A few students in other classes also talked about the importance of a well managed classroom to whether they felt safe to participate or not. Teachers in the upper stream classes demonstrated a greater interest in the students' welfare and worked with parents to provide the best opportunities for developing students' potential and aptitudes. The interactions among students, parents and teachers were constantly being negotiated and reconstructed in the best possible ways.

Ester's case is a clear example of how interactions were negotiated differently, in different academic streams. She was in advanced

Mathematics, Intermediate English and lower stream Science. In her advanced classes she said that she enjoyed the lessons, in her intermediate classes she said she felt different from other students, but mainly because of how other students treated her. In her lower stream Science lessons she said she felt isolated and was called wog by some of her peers. Among the other students in the study, most coped by attempting to become invisible or assuming a defensive position. They preferred to be ignored by their peers and teachers because they thought their difference might be used to embarrass them. As a result they were taken to be docile students and in classrooms where discipline was a major issue, docility could mean being ignored, not only in terms of verbal interaction but also in other forms of attention, including one to one assistance with classroom exercises. This situation suited some of these students who felt very comfortable with this position of passiveness; they did not have to stretch themselves. Where this behaviour concurred with cultural expectations of girls' docile behaviour, as was the case with Fernanda and Ursula, it had the possibility to limit the students' academic potential and aspirations.

In the intermediate and lower stream classes, teachers seemed to be more worried with discipline and control of the class than with students' abilities and achievements. Another consequence of the students' docility or invisibility was that parents rarely discussed their children's progress with teachers. This seemed to be based on a common understanding by most teachers, parents and students that parents were only required to talk to teachers when there was a problem. This situation again suited some of the students and some of the parents who were also likely to be relieved by not having to come up to the school because they did not feel welcome there.

When parents did attend parent-teacher interviews, it was often a frustrating experience for the parents because of the limited opportunity and time they had to discuss the students' situations and because some of them felt out of place in the meetings, mostly because of their limited English. A practice was perpetuated, in which discipline was a key element underpinning relationships between teachers, students and parents. Teachers put much emphasis on management. If the students behaved well the teachers did not contact their parents and as a result the parents believed that their children were doing well at school. This combination of parents' little involvement with the school and the lack of communication between parents and teachers can also help to explain why so many of the students in the study were in the lower streams.

The everyday teaching practices appeared to be serving all students badly at school. The classroom contexts described in Chapter Seven are not very good for anybody. It is a context in which it is very difficult for everyone to succeed and it becomes doubly difficult if students need individual attention and most of the students observed needed individual attention. As an observer from another country I have to be careful about the kind of generalisations I make, but I do have to say that it seems to me that the kind of classroom context I observed seemed to be serving neither the students nor the teachers in terms of learning and teaching practices.

The needs of (LBOTE) students continues to be a crucial issue for schools after two decades of Australian multiculturalism. For example, the NSW 1992 *Multicultural Education Strategic Plan 1993-1997* established a series of aims and strategies in relation to LBOTE students. However this plan does not seem to have made any impact on the schools in the study. For example, the plan aimed to expand Community Languages by 1997, however none of

the three schools in the study was offering Spanish and because of that some of the Spanish-speaking background students were studying one of the two Romance languages offered at their schools, Italian or French, because they presented similarities to Spanish.

A multicultural perspective has been written into the curriculum but it would seem from this study that changes in teachers' attitudes and the ways in which they see difference have not been adequately examined or changed. Prejudice, discrimination, ethnocentrism and racism are still part of many classrooms. The debate of the late 1980s between those who claimed that immigrants have been generally subjected to disadvantage and discrimination and that LBOTE children were not succeeding at school, and those who argued that "ethnic disadvantage" was a myth is now in the late 1990s still very much problematic.

On the other hand, the resources devoted to supporting these students are becoming more and more scarce. For example Iredale and Fox (1994: 70, 77) found that in NSW in 1992 that only 58% and 30.5% of secondary state school and Catholic school students respectively were receiving ESL support. It is not only the deficiencies in ESL support but also the lack of suitably qualified personnel who might be able to break the ice between homes and school

A different kind of person is envisaged whose role would go beyond that of the current Home School Liaison Officers (HSLO)¹. and ESL teachers. Such a person would be a professional who should speak the students' home language and be able to liaise between students, parents, teachers and school

¹ Although there is currently a system of Home School Liaison Officers (HSLO) this does not have sufficient staff or linguistic flexibility to provide this type of facilitation.

staff in the different educational regions of the state. Furthermore the support should be available beyond that currently provided to new arrivals for ongoing liaison with families who have been in the country for several years. Quimera, for instance, received help in English during her first year at school in 1991, but still badly needed help with her English as well as her other difficulties as related in her story (5.10), after five years in Australia assistance however was no longer available.

The evidence in the study suggested that the students were frequently very unhappy with the way teachers dealt with their needs in the classroom, and with the way that they felt isolated in the classroom. Teachers and peers tended to stereotype them and ignore their individual abilities. Their world was expanded in some ways, but because of their appearance, their accents, or their different behaviour, they were still often not accepted.

Despite their difficulties at school the students in the study seemed to consider themselves culturally wealthy. They were able to play with their cultural identity. Their Spanish, Chilean or Uruguayan roots provided them with a sense of belonging and differentiation; they enjoyed being different and at the same time Australians. However, they were also aware that sometimes it was better not to celebrate their difference in front of those who in the mainstream society showed racist and discriminatory attitudes towards them. For these students the school system did not always provide students with spaces and opportunities to make their contribution to the process of learning. These students lived in a unique situation which, contrary to what multicultural policies said about a fair go were not fostering the development of their full potential as Australian citizens. The system made it difficult for them to participate fully in the schooling system and the majority may well finish like their parents on a production line, not

because of their weaknesses and deficiencies but because the Australian education system has not been able to provide the intellectual and professional soil to profit from these citizens in the short and long term future. They are ignored as an intellectual, social and economic resources to be cultivated (Lo Bianco, 1990 cited in Kalantzis et al, 1990). In the 1980s enormous amounts of money have been spent in ad hoc solutions without reaching positive results (Kalantzis et al, 1990). The issue of immigrant students needs to be acknowledged by the mainstream Australian society to recognise that LBOTE students with their specific home language and culture are doing their best to contribute to the richness of this "lucky country".

Strategies might include opportunities through in-service and pre-service education for teachers to undergo a continuous reassessment of their views about teaching students from such diverse cultural backgrounds in Australian schools. Seminars and courses for teachers are required to help to break down the stereotypes which are perpetuating discriminatory and racist attitudes in the Australian population, and to understand the complexities of Australian multiculturalism and the meanings behind the social construction of students' cultural identity. Only when teachers recognise their own deficiencies in dealing with their multicultural population at school and find ways of changing the school climate, can every single student, independent of her/his background have the same chances of participating, and succeeding in the school system. However as Banks points out:

In order to transform the school to bring about educational equality, all the major components of the school must be substantially changed. A focus on any one variable in the school, ... will not implement multicultural education (Banks, 1993: 25).

9.3 Conclusion

The study has given the parents and the students the opportunity to give voice to their own perceptions in relation to the prejudice, discrimination, ethnocentrism and racism they have experienced in the mainstream Australian society.

Most of the teachers' discourse suggests fear, lack of education and little involvement. To this should be added cultural expectations, lack of communication by the teachers, a lack of recognition of the richness of the students' cultural resources and the right to be treated equally, offered the same opportunities and receive the same encouragement and respect independently of the students' backgrounds.

Educational research has rarely been presented from the students' and parents' perspectives but rather from the perspective of the school and teachers. The stories of these Spanish-speaking background students present the other side of the coin to the teachers' perspectives.

The study has provided an insight into a particular population in the 1990s not covered in education before. It confirmed findings from earlier studies of other LBOTE students and has shown that the issue of these students is by no means dead, or resolved. It indicates that with each generation, and in a different economic and social climate from the 1970s and 1980s, we are entering a new phase of civic society and multiculturalism, where the construction of identity is multi-faceted and infinitely complex, where the idea of hybridity and the multiple ways of expressing self is transforming and overtaking old categories of coloniser and colonised. Current and future studies of the children of new groups of migrants who arrive under

government categories of “professional or skilled” need to be made alongside the now “traditional” groups from Europe, and the refugee or family reunion groups. In a postcolonial society, the discourse of cultural superiority is no longer adequate as a form of conceptualising/addressing issues of difference and otherness. What is needed is a vision of acceptance and acknowledgment of the richness each individual has to offer to the society as a whole.

LBOTE students should not see their difference as inferiority. As one Year Ten girl said:

El hecho de que seamos de otro país no significa que seamos inferiores.

(The fact of being from another country does not mean that we are inferior).

Students should not be considered inferior or superior because of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The school system should foster positive attitudes in its multicultural clientele in order to create safe environments in the classrooms, and thus promote better communication between students, teachers and parents.

The experiences of the Spanish-speaking background students in the study in Australian secondary schools in NSW have shown that constructing their cultural identity is an ongoing social process which starts in the context of their homes and continues in the school context, as well as in the spaces in between in mainstream Australian society.

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Appendix One: Consent Letter (Spanish)

Universidad de Wollongong

Una investigación de la interacciones en la sala de clase de estudiantes que provienen de hogares donde se habla español, en el contexto de sus familias, profesores y escuelas.

Febrero, 1995.

Estimado Sr. & Sra. _____

Soy un estudiante de graduación cursando mi doctorado bajo la supervisión de la Dra. Janice Wright y la Dra. Christine Fox en la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad de Wollongong.

Estoy interesado en investigar como los estudiantes provenientes de hogares donde se habla español, se llevan con los requerimientos y demandas de la Escuela Secundaria en Wollongong.

El Director del Colegio donde estudia su hijo(a) está de acuerdo en participar en esta investigación por los próximos dos años. Para realizar mi investigación me gustaría entrevistar a su hijo(a), Ud. y algunos de los profesores de su hijo(a). Puede que también visite las clases para observar la interacción entre el profesor y los estudiantes, tomar notas y grabar.

La participación de su hijo(a) es estrictamente voluntaria. Incluso si Ud. firma esta carta, puede cambiar de parecer en cualquier momento.

Tendré especial cuidado en proteger la privacidad de todas las personas que participen en esta investigación. Una vez que haya recogido grabaciones y trabajos escritos, retiraré cualquier identificación y daré un código a cada alumno. Las grabaciones permanecerán confidenciales. También nadie será identificado en cualquier informe de esta investigación. Puede que publique alguna transcripción de grabaciones y trabajos escritos en alguna publicación, pero no mencionaré ningún nombre en los escritos.

Con las las conclusiones de esta investigación será posible dar sugerencias y recomendaciones para mejorar los resultados de los estudiantes, provenientes de hogares donde se habla español en la escuela secundaria.

Si Ud. tiene alguna pregunta respecto a la conducta de la presente investigación, por favor contacte a la Secretaria del Comité de Etica de Investigación de la Universidad de Wollongong en el teléfono..... .

Si Ud. permite que su hijo(a) paticipe, por favor firme abajo y devuelva esta carta con su hijo(a) a la escuela tan pronto como sea posible. Si Ud. tiene alguna pregunta, en cualquier momento, por favor entre en contacto conmigo (ya sea en inglés o en español) en el teléfono... .

Atentamente

.....
David Alejandro Plaza-Coral
Facultad de Educación
Universidad de Wollongong

...../...../.....
Favor, devolver a Ms./Mr. (Nombre del Profesor)

Appendix Two: Consent Letter (English)



University of Wollongong

An investigation of the classroom interactions of students from Spanish speaking backgrounds in the context of their families, teachers and schools.

February, 1995.

Dear Mr. & Mrs. _____

I am a graduate student pursuing my doctorate under the supervision of Dr. Janice Wright and Dr. Christine Fox in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong.

I am interested in understanding how Spanish-speaking background students deal with the requirements and demands of high schools in Wollongong.

The principal at your child's school has agreed that his school participates in this research for the next two years. In carrying out my research I would like to interview your child, yourself and some of your child's teachers. I may also be visiting the classroom to observe interactions between teacher and students, making notes and recordings and collecting copies of written works at the end of the term.

Your child's participation is strictly on a voluntary basis. Even if you sign this letter below, you may change your mind about participation at any time.

For all the persons who participate in this research, I will be careful to protect their privacy. Once I have collected recordings and written works, I will remove any identifying information and will assign each student a code. Recordings will remain confidential. Also no one will be identified in any reports of this research. I may publish some transcripts of recordings and written samples in research articles, but I will not attach any names to the writings.

The conclusions of this research will provide suggestions and recommendations to improve the outcomes of high school Spanish-speaking background students.

If you have any inquiries regarding the conduct of the research please contact the Secretary of the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on the phone

If you will allow participation, please sign below and return this letter with your child to the school as soon as possible. If you have any questions at any time about the study or participation, please contact me (either in English or Spanish) on the phone

Regards,

.....
David Alejandro Plaza Coral

...../...../.....
Please, return to Ms/Mr. (Teacher's name).

Appendix Three Letter to the Principals



University of Wollongong

6th February, 1995.

Ms./Mr. _____
Principal/Deputy Principal

Dear Madam./Sir.,

I am a graduate student pursuing my Ph.D. under the supervision of Dr. Janice Wright and Dr. Christine Fox in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong.

The title of my research is: An investigation of classroom interactions of students from Spanish speaking backgrounds in the context of their families, teachers and schools.

This study requires me to carry out field work in various secondary schools in Wollongong.

As suggested by Mrs. So-and-So I am writing to you asking for your official consent to carry out part of my field work at your school. Mrs. So-and-So will be willing to be the contact person; this involves identifying the Spanish speaking background girls and arranging a meeting with them. During this meeting I will tell the students about the research and ask them to take the letter of consent to their parents/guardians. If their parents/guardians are willing to participate the students will bring the letter back and return it to Mrs. So-and-So.

Enclosed please,

- The Approval of my Research by The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University;
- The Approval by The South Coast Regional Research Committee NSW Department of School Education;
- The Letter of Consent to be sent to the parents/guardians.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

David Alejandro Plaza Coral.

Appendix Four

Consent Letter (Negative Consent)



University of Wollongong

_____, 1996.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a PhD. Student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong and as part of my research I need to do some classroom observations.

The English, Mathematics and Science teachers at your child's school have agreed to participate in the study for this term. during this period I will be visiting three school to make notes, and sometimes audio and video tapes of your child's class.

The privacy of both the school and the individual will be protected in the project. Once I have collected material I will remove any identifying information. Neither the school/teacher nor individual students will be identified in any reports of this study. The recordings will be viewed only by me and my supervisors named below.

If you do not wish your child to participate in the study, please sign and return the tear-off form at the bottom of this sheet to your child's teacher. Your child's participation is strictly on a voluntary basis and you may withdraw your child's participation at any time.

If you have any question at any time about the study or about your child's involvement, please contact me, David Plaza on the phone ... or Janice Wright on ... or Christine Fox on

Sincerely,

David Plaza

Student's name: _____

Class: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

I do not want _____ to participate in the study
(student's name)

Signed _____ (parents/Guardian).