LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: 
UNEXPLORED ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL 
COMMUNICATION

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Social inclusion policy in Australia has largely ignored key issues of communication for linguistic minorities, across communities and with the mainstream community. In the (now disbanded) Social Inclusion Board’s reports (e.g., Social Inclusion Unit, 2009), the emphasis is on the economic aspects of inclusion, while little attention has been paid to questions of language and culture. Assimilatory aspects of policy are foregrounded, and language is mainly mentioned in relation to the provision of classes in English as a Second Language. There is some recognition of linguistic diversity but the implications of this for inclusion and intercultural communication are not developed. Australian society can now be characterised as super-diverse, containing numerous ethnic groups each with multiple and different affiliations. We argue that a social inclusion policy that supports such linguistic and cultural diversity needs an evidence-based approach to the role of language and we evaluate existing policy approaches to linguistic and cultural diversity in Australia to assess whether inclusion is construed primarily in terms of enhancing intercultural communication, or of assimilation to the mainstream.

KEY WORDS: super-diversity, language policy, Sudanese migrants, multilingual Melbourne, Arabic

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘social inclusion’ came to prominence in Europe in the 1990s as part of a focus on social cohesion in increasingly diverse communities, particularly in contexts of what we now call super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007). Policy makers were concerned with ensuring that all sectors of the community, particularly marginalised groups, had access to the support and services needed to allow them to function effectively in society. From this perspective, ‘social inclusion’ is seen as a top-down process, a sphere within which decisions made by government (at whatever level) will enable inclusion for (groups of) citizens. This model will tend to produce outcomes in which inclusion is viewed as normative, as assimilation to a mainstream. Decisions about what an individual can be included in are made on this normative basis and are not negotiable by those who are to be included. In this paper, we would like to explore an alternative perspective on social inclusion; one which assumes that individuals have a desire (or even a need) to be included and will therefore take actions on their own to ensure that they feel included in some social sphere, whether that is a
normatively defined mainstream or not. We will suggest that when a society is super-diverse, or is moving towards being characterised in that way, the realm of small-scale, bottom-up social inclusion processes is an area where sociolinguistic research can make important contributions to improving understanding of the phenomena and to improving policy.

Social cohesion is the sense of involvement or attachment to a group or community. The notion of social cohesion has been operationalised in research under the aegis of the Scanlon Foundation under five core domains: belonging, worth, social justice, participation, and acceptance and rejection (Markus, 2013, p. 1). Social inclusion is a widely used but poorly defined term, though participation in employment lies at the heart, but it also extends to subjective feelings of belonging (Piller & Takahashi, 2011, p. 373). Social inclusion is concerned with participation (or rejection), and for social well-being, inclusion is generally considered important in the domains of ‘employment, citizenship, education, health and governance’ (Piller, 2012, p. 286). In Australia, these issues have until recently been addressed at government level by the Social Inclusion Board. Social inclusion has been an increasingly important concept in policy development in recent decades, with a focus principally on economic well-being and on access to employment. However the role played by language knowledge and skills in managing social inclusion is rarely mentioned in the policy documents, or in the research literature. Piller (2012) noted the ‘relative lack of attention to the ways in which linguistic identities, linguistic proficiencies and language ideologies mediate social inclusion’ (p. 281).

In this paper, insights from the linguistic study of super-diverse communities are used to highlight this neglected dimension of public policy, bearing in mind Piller’s (2012, p. 287) view that the question of language is how it may contribute to the primary goal of alleviation of poverty through social inclusion. She explored barriers to employment in Australia for those with limited English proficiency, and concluded that this may be a pretext for racial discrimination (Piller, 2012, p. 291). Piller and Takahashi (2011) identified ways in which language and social inclusion are related:

> Language mediates access to key social inclusion sites such as employment, education or health. Second, a sense of belonging is negotiated through language and often tied to specific competencies. There is a widespread assumption that it is language proficiency levels that mediate social inclusion and that linguistic assimilation is the high road to social inclusion. (p. 372)

However, they go on to argue that language ideologies shape these effects. Here we will widen the discussion by looking at some examples from the current situation in Melbourne, Australia. People from many different places of origin live in this city (Sharifian & Musgrave, 2013) with complex patterns of linguistic behaviour in evidence both in intercommunity and intra-community interaction. Examples from the Sudanese and
Vietnamese communities in Melbourne will be used to illustrate our points about the nature of social inclusion and the role that language plays in mediating and enacting the process.

**A NORMATIVE APPROACH**

In Australia, the importance of building an inclusive society was, under the Labor Government of 2007–2013, addressed by various initiatives, including a Social Inclusion Board charged with advising the federal government on these issues. Since the election in September 2013 the Labor government has been replaced by a conservation Coalition government. On the day the new government was sworn in, 18 September 2013, the Social Inclusion Unit was disbanded. This change in institutional context of social inclusion policy and research in Australia does not reflect a change in the issues at stake. The questions raised in previous work, such as the papers introduced by Piller and Takahashi (2011), and the slightly different questions addressed here remain important and relevant.

The Social Inclusion Board produced a policy document in early 2010, ‘A Stronger, Fairer Australia – a new social inclusion strategy’ which advised the government ‘on ways to achieve better outcomes for the most disadvantaged in our community and to improve the social inclusion in society as a whole’. Key issues mentioned in the policy document are jobs, economic issues and homelessness. Australia’s migration history has produced a highly diverse community, speaking a large number of languages. About 26% of the population numbering some 5.3 million were born overseas, and another 20% of the population are second generation Australians (Markus, 2013, p. 12). Despite this high level of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the population, the 85-page report mentions language only seven times. Furthermore, there are only twelve mentions of culture, and several of these relate to, for example, ‘recovery-oriented culture amongst services’ (Social Inclusion Unit, 2009, p. 49) rather than to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members.

The seven references to language in the social inclusion policy document include three areas in which language is a factor in social inclusion or exclusion. The first area is language development in early childhood (Social Inclusion Unit, 2009, pp. 27–28). Here the concern is with children developing English as a first language. The report claims that ‘there are children in Australia who only speak English, but are reported as not proficient in English. These children are likely to be developmentally vulnerable on all the AEDI (Australian Early Development Index) domains’ (Social Inclusion Unit, 2009, p. 28). No source is given for this claim but we infer that the allusion here is to the disputed, if not discredited notion of semilingualism (Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1978), in this case presumably in relation to bilingual children in Aboriginal communities (see Dixon & Angelo, this volume). Secondly, language is briefly mentioned in relation to encouraging investment in language learning centres in secondary schools. Here the focus is on teaching languages other than English to mainstream English speaking children. The third area in which
language is mentioned, and the only one explicitly addressing the needs of CALD speakers, concerns a project in a Western Sydney primary school developing language (i.e. English), literacy and numeracy skills for ESL learners. Four of the seven mentions of language in the policy document relate to this area.

It is clear from the above that language is considered a very marginal issue in the Social Inclusion policy examined above. Where it is mentioned, the focus is on assimilatory and economic aspects. In general, ‘language’ means English, normatively viewed. Thus it is clear that an ideology of monolingualism informed social inclusion policy (see Clyne, 2005; Piller, 2012; Piller & Takahashi, 2011). Multilingualism is rendered invisible and languages are treated as discrete entities (see Otsuji & Pennycook, 2011; Piller & Takahashi, 2011). There is no explicit mention of home languages other than English. Their existence is implied through a deficit model, where speakers of languages other than English are seen as lacking English skills rather than possessing a set of valued attributes.

Piller (2012, p. 282) has shown that multilingualism is a particularly important factor not only in the exclusion of transnational migrants, but also of whole communities in the global economy. In a discussion of links between language and employment, three key aspects she highlights are the different values attached to languages and varieties in the marketplace, the use of language skill as a criterion for employability, and the ideologies associated with different languages in relation to types of employment (2012, p. 292). She argues that language discrimination can be used to create an underclass to provide cheap labour.

The Social Inclusion document does mention cultural and linguistic diversity in one passage, advocating a strengths-based approach:

respecting, supporting and building on the strengths of individuals, families, communities and culture...Recognising the varied and positive contributions of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will be an important feature of the social inclusion approach. (Social Inclusion Unit, 2009, p. 72)

However, there is no evidence of recognition of the linguistic implications of this. Dixon and Angelo (this volume) have noted a similar reluctance to recognise such implications in the formulation of education policy.

DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

The 2010 policy document emphasises the economic aspects of inclusion (and exclusion; the discourse in this area tends to treat the two as mutually defining complementaries), and as we have shown, questions around language and culture are scarcely present. However, Steinert has suggested that this is a limited and limiting view:
A phenomenology of social exclusion quickly demonstrates that it has different dimensions including political exclusion (via citizenship), economic exclusion (through lack of means), social exclusion (through isolation) and cultural exclusion (through lack of education). In many instances, these dimensions can be viewed as independent: people are excluded on one of the dimensions only and can compensate and counteract this by mobilizing other resources they still have. (Steinert, 2003, p. 4)

While the policy formulations seem to neglect questions of language and culture, such issues are (and have been over time) accorded considerable de facto importance, as can be seen from various examples such as debates over the teaching of English (Snyder, 2008), Indigenous language policy (Dickson, 2010; Simpson, Caffery, McConvell, & Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2009), and community language policies (Clyne, 2005). The policies around social inclusion tend to stress assimilation (e.g., the mention of English as a Second Language classes in the strategy document) and prioritise economic aspects. However, the examples given above suggest that in practice the situation is more complex and language is an important factor in all forms of social inclusion and exclusion.

Social inclusion is sometimes construed as a process of bridging a simple insider/outsider divide, where immigrants are seen as included to the extent that they gain access to the mainstream community. This assumption overlooks the multiple ways in which immigrants may construct networks of solidarity. Successful adaptation to Australia and the chance to ‘achieve a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease, or infirmity’ (Australian Government, 2013) depend in large part on immigrants’ success in becoming part of the social fabric (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010). Piller and Takahashi (2011) have argued that since ‘the question of “inclusion into what” is rarely made explicit, an implicit assumption arises that inclusion is into some mythical mainstream’ (p. 373).

However, social cohesion may depend on multilayered connections: nuclear and extended family ties, links with others who share linguistic and cultural repertoires, and affiliations with wider common interest groups, religious groups or work colleagues; such links may give members of minority groups access to economic and other forms of well-being. Bradshaw, Deumert, and Burridge (2008) noted that Vietnamese job applicants often had problems finding referees who could write English, as their work experience had been largely in Vietnamese-run businesses. This indicates both exclusion from the mainstream employment market, and inclusion in a community-based employment market.

FROM MULTILINGUALISM TO SUPER-DIVERSITY

To understand the linguistic dimensions which might be involved in social inclusion in Australian society we need to explore the nature of the cultural and linguistic diversity


concerned. Australia has experienced successive waves of immigration from a wide range of communities, producing a community which has been characterised as multilingual and multicultural. Work on other immigrant societies, particularly in Europe, has led to the recognition that the term ‘multilingual’ no longer effectively characterises such societies.

Vertovec (2007) described the change in the composition of ethnic minorities in the UK in the preceding decade from large and well-organised groups originating in former colonies to immigrants whom he characterises as ‘new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified’ (p. 1054). This extreme diversity introduces a new level of complexity into social organisation as the new immigrants bring ‘differential immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restrictions of rights, divergent labour market experiences, discrete gender and age profiles, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents’ (p. 1025), with social structure characterised by ‘multiple patterns of differentiation’ (p. 1028).

Vertovec alerts us to the diversity concealed by data such as country of origin, as immigrants may come from complex, multilingual and multiethnic communities. An example of this comes from work on Sudanese immigrants in Australia. Musgrave and Hajek (2010) established the complex multilingual nature of the Sudanese immigrant community in Melbourne, providing evidence of at least forty languages being represented. In more recent work, Musgrave and Hajek (2013) showed that these rich linguistic resources are used in complex ways for varying purposes, and that the richness of early acquired languages is overlaid by further complexity related to factors such as place of origin in Sudan, migration path to Australia and networks in the new location. For example, the north of the former Sudan (now Sudan) is strongly Islamicised and Arabic is the national language, while the south (now the Republic of South Sudan) has had a different colonial and religious history and has rejected Arabic as an official language. But immigrants from South Sudan in Australia are comfortable using a variety of Arabic, Juba Arabic (Miller, 2000; Watson, 1989), as a lingua franca for interaction across language groups. In addition, quite a number of members of this group can also use Modern Standard Arabic (or some localised variety), possibly as a result of education outside of South Sudan, time spent in an Arabic speaking country such as Egypt after leaving Sudan, or both. The complexity of the meanings associated with ‘Arabic’ as a language name for Sudanese in Melbourne can be judged from the following quotation from a community profile:

> It is important, when contracting the services of an Arabic interpreter for a Sudanese person that service providers ask for a Sudanese-Arabic interpreter, otherwise the clients may well be unable to understand either the interviewer or their interpreter. (South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre, 2007, p. 43, our correction)
Vertovec (2007, p. 1048) has argued that we need to take account of ‘plurality of affiliations’ and ‘the fact that “migrant communities” just as the settled population, can “cohere” to different social worlds and communities simultaneously’ (Zetter et al., 2005, as cited in Vertovec, 2007, p. 1049). Blommaert and Rampton (2011) showed how language use is fluid in the new social dynamics. They give the example of a notice of a room to rent posted in an Antwerp shop window, which uses both the simplified Chinese characters of the People’s Republic of China and the traditional characters used in Taiwan, creating links between immigrants of different origins and waves of migration. Blommaert and Rampton (2011) argue that we need to look at ‘the ways in which people take on different linguistic forms, as they align and disaffiliate with different groups at different moments and stages’ (p. 5).

SUPER-DIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA

A traditional multilingual view of Australian society might show large, discrete, homogeneous ethnolinguistic groups as existing in the community, moving into the mainstream in the second generation, and ultimately assimilating. However data such as those provided by Sharifian and Musgrave (2013), who have discussed the current situation in Melbourne in some detail, show that ethnolinguistic diversity in Australia is far more complex than this.

The 2011 Australian Census shows that in Melbourne, for example, there are 2,652,595 speakers whose primary language is English, while 1,161,615 speakers use another language at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). These figures do not count speakers of languages other than English who do not use that language at home, either because they live alone, with a speaker of another language, or in a mainstream retirement community, or because they are second or later generation speakers of their heritage language (see Kipp, Clyne, & Pauwels, 1995). Respondents from greater Melbourne listed 220 specific countries of birth outside Australia, and of these, nine places of origin contributed one percent or more of Melbourne’s population (England, India, China, Italy, New Zealand, Vietnam, Greece, Sri Lanka and Malaysia). A further 20 countries of origin contributed more than 10,000 inhabitants (or more than 0.3% of the population).

The multilingual make-up of several nations is reflected in migrant communities in Melbourne. Evidence from fieldwork (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Musgrave & Hajek, 2010, 2013) shows that for most of these groups the relationship between place of origin and language used at home is not a simple one-to-one mapping, but rather there are many-to-many mappings. For example, Musgrave and Hajek (2010) identified at least forty languages from Sudan which have speakers in Melbourne (e.g., Dinka, Acholi, Lotuko, Lopit). Therefore it is not possible to make an inference from country of origin to language spoken. As previously mentioned, one of the languages used by people originating from Sudan is Arabic, yet only a small proportion of Arabic speakers in Melbourne were born in Sudan.
The total number of people giving Sudan as their birthplace in 2011 was 5,372, while the number of people using Arabic as a home language was 33,302. Similar points can be made about speakers of Mandarin and Cantonese.

THE INTERNAL DIFFERENTIATION OF MIGRANT GROUPS IN A SUPER-DIVERSE SOCIETY

Even migrant groups who share a region of origin and a language may exhibit internal differentiation. Various sub-groups may have different motivations and different expectations about their place in Australian society and culture, leading to different service needs (in terms of the provision of health, welfare and other services viewed from the perspective of inclusion). There is a linguistic dimension to such differentiation. For example, Vietnamese immigrants to Melbourne who arrived in the 1970s came predominantly from the south of the country, arriving as refugees by boat. Those who arrived later came from a unified Vietnam, some from the north, the old enemy of the earlier arrivals. This has resulted in tensions over dialect choice in formal situations such as language teaching and broadcast news (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Nguyen, 1997).

TRANSNATIONAL CONNECTIONS IN A SUPER-DIVERSE SOCIETY

The possibilities for a continuing connection between immigrant communities and their source community are radically different today compared to previous times. An Italian leaving their native country to settle in Australia in around 1950 would have been aware that the cost of travelling between the two countries was such that a return journey must have seemed almost unimaginable. International telephone calls were unheard of for ordinary people, and it would be quite likely that either the emigrant or their family remaining in Italy or both would have had poor literacy, making even communication by letter problematic. Iuliano and Baldassar (2008, p. 3) used Cohen’s (1997, p. 58) term ‘proletarian diaspora’ to characterise Italian migrants to Australia, suggesting that in many cases they had ‘limited education, high rates of illiteracy, and, even after several decades of settlement, limited English language skills’. Today, the cost of international travel is much less prohibitive, and modern communication technologies make maintaining regular contact with a homeland easy and affordable. Aside from the various Voice Over Internet Protocol services (such as Skype), there is a competitive market in prepaid phone cards with advertising targeted at specific national groups.

Recent immigrants report a high degree of connection with their homeland communities, through cheap flights, regular phone contacts, social media, Skype, SMS and email, as well as regular use of the Internet as a source of homeland news (Markus, 2013, pp. 46–48). They also report a lack of engagement with Australian news. These developments have changed attitudes to and motivations for language maintenance, which is now often seen as essential in allowing
younger community members to participate fully in these transnational connections. As one of the Sudanese participants in a study by Hatoss and Sheely (2009) states:

My language is very important to me, because it is our language and we take English to be our second language and we like to keep our own language because we have got our parents back over there. We like to have contact with our parents and we like to keep our culture and use the language together.

Thus new technologies offer means and motive for language maintenance on a scale unimagined in earlier generations, reinforcing links between migrants and their local and source communities.

SUPERDIVERSE SOCIETIES AND SOCIAL POLICY

Vertovec (2007) discussed the implications of super-diversity for social policy, and observed that there are clear consequences for social inclusion. When so much diversity exists within a polity, it becomes increasingly unlikely that any single policy approach will be effective for all those that it might hope to reach. As Zetter et al. (2006) noted, cohesion and separateness can coexist and ‘many minority communities seem to manage these multiple identities quite comfortably’ (p. 18). Such observations already suggest a degree of autonomy in minority communities which is not recognised in the social inclusion model; we should expect to find linguistic manifestations of this phenomenon also. In the following section, we revisit the idea of social inclusion and its linguistic correlates from this shifted perspective.

INCLUSION FROM THE BOTTOM UP

We have suggested that the idea of social inclusion which was promoted through agencies such as the Australian Social Inclusion Board is normative; in addition, it is something which is imposed from above and leaves little if any room for agency on the part of social actors. Otsuji and Pennycook (2011, p. 414) proposed that we move beyond the narrow confines of economic perspectives and ask: ‘Inclusion into what?’ They observe that ‘a social inclusion agenda presents an often unarticulated vision of an employed, English-speaking, civic society into which excluded people need to be integrated, or at least included’ (2011, p. 414). This is a limiting position even where the excluded groups can be seen as more or less homogeneous, and people have always found ways to actively include themselves in social processes. But in a society which is, or is becoming, super-diverse, such activity and the processes to which it leads will be more complex. Social processes are enacted with language, and the evidence of these actions is therefore visible to and of interest to us as sociolinguists. However we need a more nuanced view of inclusion for such investigation.

Crisp (2010) distinguished two dimensions of inclusion: belonging and connectedness. Belonging involves becoming an insider within a group, organisation or a somewhat less
structured network of people with common attributes or beliefs (i.e. a community of practice), while connectedness relates more to participation in societal organisations or social networks. While network diagrams may show patterns of connectedness, belonging is more nuanced. Belonging has identity implications and needs discursive analysis to tease out. The focus of social inclusion policy is on connectedness, but this ignores the fundamental importance of belonging which has been emphasised by various schools of social psychology (Fiske, 2009; Maslow, 1975) and in theories of personality (DeWall, Deckman, Pond, & Bonser, 2011). Both connectedness and belonging require the deployment of linguistic resources, but the extent to which these different dimensions of inclusion are supported by government policy varies.

Connectedness has been well supported by government policy in Australia in a number of areas. Interpreter services are available to those who need them for encounters with the medical and legal systems and some other government functions (Bradshaw et al., 2008), and a wide range of government documents are made available in numerous languages. English classes for new arrivals also can be included as a part of the support available for this dimension of inclusion. Support for the belonging dimension as it relates to activities in community languages is less obvious. The activities of ethnolinguistic groups are supported by government organisations, and the Special Broadcasting Service provides access to news and entertainment in various languages: these media resources give access to homeland news in native languages (belonging) as well as access to Australian news in community languages (connectedness).

Support for belonging to be enacted through the use of English is more problematic, and recent research has emphasised the difficulties which new arrivals may experience in forming English-based networks (Butorac, this issue; Major, Terraschke, Major, & Setijadi, this issue; Yates, 2011).

It is also helpful to shift from a nominal form, ‘inclusion’ to a verbal framing of ‘include’ and to focus on a process or series of processes in which people construct identity through performing ‘acts of identity’ (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985), in relation to imagined communities (Anderson, 2006). This shift allows the examination of the participant roles associated with the process of inclusion:

i. Who or what includes whom?

ii. In what?

iii. How and why does this happen?

iv. Using which language or languages?

Processes of inclusion involve communication between diverse groups. These communicative processes include static aspects, such as dependence on a shared understanding of key cultural
Musgrave and Hajek (2013) documented some examples of this in relation to the social networks of people from Sudan living in Melbourne. Their case studies show people with rich linguistic repertoires who use different elements from those repertoires to enact different relationships in complex and dynamic ways. As mentioned previously, varieties of Arabic are generally part of the repertoire, and the deployment of these resources is especially interesting. Most immigrants from South Sudan are Christians; therefore Arabic has no significance to them as a language of religion. Also, imposition of Arabic as an official language was one symbol of the long conflict between the northern-based government and the southern part of Sudan. Therefore, we might expect that people from South Sudan might be reluctant to use this language, but this is not the case. We note as especially interesting the fact that Arabic is used in Christian worship by members of this group; the desire to include and to be included in social processes outweighs any negative connotation which the Arabic language might hold.

As might be expected in a situation tending towards super-diversity, there are limits to these processes of bottom-up inclusion and problems arise concerning language. Musgrave and Hajek (2013) noted that Arabic is one of the languages used in activities which encompass the whole community of people in Melbourne originating from Sudan, but maintaining knowledge of Arabic in the next generation is problematic (as is maintenance of mother tongues). The following quotation from a girl from a family from the Nuba region indicates some of the issues faced by young people in the Sudanese community in relation to both mother tongue maintenance and Arabic maintenance:

I don’t speak my family’s language. I can understand it a bit but I can’t speak it. So when my grandmother phones I can’t talk to her…In Sudan I learnt Arabic and we speak Arabic at home, but I can’t read and write it. (South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre, 2007, p. 43)

Focus group data from South Sudanese Christians (Bradshaw et al., 2008) shows that this group want the possibility of Arabic language maintenance for the second generation, but are not willing to extend their inclusory processes to the point where their children could learn Arabic in classes associated with mosques.

When the notion of social inclusion is problematised, we can examine the participant roles associated with the process of inclusion in such cases: who or what includes whom, how and why this happens, and how new arrivals such as these people from South Sudan construct new identities in their new setting. Factors shaping this include the associations between language and identity for African migrants in Australia; the importance of heritage languages for cultural values, language maintenance and language shift in different domains; the role of
languages acquired in the diaspora; the interaction between language behaviour and social inclusion; and the role of government organisations and societal institutions in the language choices of individuals and communities.

The Scanlon Foundation research investigated identity constructs of immigrants and found that people claimed multiple identities. Those who had been in Australia longer were more likely to see themselves as ‘Australian’, but also are more likely to see themselves as individuals: ‘a majority indicate identification with the land of their birth, the land in which they have chosen to settle, with their local communities, as world citizens – and as individuals’ (Markus, 2013, p. 53).

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

In Piller’s (2012) view, ‘the central challenge for multilingualism and social inclusion research will be to write language into the social inclusion agenda and to contribute to the cause of social justice in ways that are meaningful outside the academy’ (p. 293). It is important to ‘account both for the complexity of social inclusion as well as its complex intersections with language’ (Piller & Takahashi, 2011, p. 374). We wholeheartedly endorse these views, and suggest that the evidentiary basis for a linguistically informed social inclusion policy should focus on the immediate and the local. Much of our discussion in this paper draws on research on immigrant groups, which are important for language and social inclusion, but we must not neglect other groups, such as speakers of Indigenous languages and speakers of non-standard varieties of English. Research must also acknowledge the complexity of inclusion as a process (or better, a set of processes) carried out by social agents, rather than viewing it as an inevitable assimilation to the norms of the mainstream. To this end, researchers should consider aspects of inclusion, such as the difference between connectedness and belonging, and not overlook participation in social processes beyond the mainstream. We need to examine ‘the daily habits of perhaps quite banal intercultural interaction’ (Sandercock, 2003, as cited by Vertovec, 2007, p. 1045); ‘what’s “lived” and expressed in the everyday (itself understood as layered and multi-scalar)’ (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, pp. 11–12).

**REFERENCES**


Butorac, D. (this volume). ‘Like a fish not in water’: How language and race mediate the social and economic inclusion of women migrants to Australia.


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**ENDNOTES**


iii This text was previously on the website of the Social Inclusion Board. It was reproduced widely and is still accessible at, for example, [http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv45843](http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv45843).

iv The Strategic Research Priorities document also includes the following text relevant to social inclusion:

Maximise social and economic participation in society. Research will identify strategies to maximise social and economic participation, particularly in relation to key life stages, intergenerational disparities and socioeconomic disadvantage’ (Australian Government, 2013).

v See, for example, [http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/languages/index.htm](http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/languages/index.htm), which shows the range of languages supported for a local government area.
