Muslim Women in Wellington:

Discursive Construction of Religious Identity in Personal Narratives.

by

Brie Jessen

A thesis
submitted to Victoria University of Wellington
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Linguistics

Victoria University of Wellington
2009

❧ *Abstract* ☙

Using a social constructionist framework this thesis investigates the construction of Muslim women's religious identity through an analysis of the discursive and linguistic features of their narratives.

Muslim identity in the west is increasingly becoming a research focus for the social sciences and sociological and anthropological research on Muslim identity has much to offer sociolinguistics. Similarly, sociolinguistic research on ethnicity in narrative can also contribute to understanding the position of Muslim women.

Following a review of the relevant research, the methods of data collection, transcription and analysis are described. An ethnographic approach, combined with small group discussions, was used to elicit data from eight Muslim women in the Wellington region.

The women's narratives are analysed with a focus on the linguistic and discursive strategies used in identity construction. Three different dimensions of identity were identified: (i) comparative identity contrasts Muslim/Islamic identity with the West, constructing the self in opposition to the 'other'; (ii) Islamic identity is constructed on an intellectual/philosophical level, asking 'who am I within my religion, and how do I relate to the wider concept of Islam?'; (iii) Muslim identity focuses on the practical/physical level, integrating the guidelines and rituals of Islam into daily life; it asks 'how do I go about my everyday life as a Muslim?'. Patterns and similarities, as well as differences between narratives in each category are identified and discussed with particular reference to the discursive and linguistic features, which characterise each. In addition, attention is paid to the linguistic and discursive devices used to express Muslim identity through the subversion of societal discourses. Finally, suggestions for further research are presented.

for the women
with gratitude for your inspiration, participation
and gentle guidance on this journey

❦ *Acknowledgements* ❧

to my parents

who gave me wings

to Zaan

who helped me believe in myself

to Hinda

who opened my eyes

to Zeenah

who guided my sight

to Allison, Julie, Ray and Meredith

who pushed me to take flight

to Janet

who truly helped me to soar

to Steph

who flew with me

❧ *Table of Contents* ☙

❧ *List of Illustrations* ☙

One: Introduction
Beginning the Journey

It takes two to tango, we have to present ourselves in a way which ..... is in accordance to Islam [and] engage in dialogue because if people haven't got a basic understanding of Islam, how can we just impose it on them? It can't be a 'them' and an 'us' attitude, we have to work together.

(Zaara INT04)

Muslims have had a presence in the west for many hundreds of years but have, for the most part, remained largely ignored, yet on September 11 2001 they were thrown into the spotlight by the media, and still remain there almost a decade later. The increased attention given to Muslims, particularly Muslim minorities living in the west, has not only come from the media, and subsequently the wider public, but also from the academic sphere. Academic interest has been wide ranging, covering most aspects of life and Islamic practice for Muslims. As yet however there has been minimal research conducted within the field of sociolinguistics. Much of the research that has been carried out in the social sciences focuses on investigating and describing the practices of Muslims in their spiritual and everyday lives, and considering how this contributes to their identities. Their patterns of language use have for the most part, been ignored (Bhimji 2005). Given that language is such an integral part of identity construction, we should be asking the question 'why?'

Existing research suggests that Islam plays a vital role in the overall identity of Muslims, and that for most, religious identity is valued more highly, and thus emphasised more, than ethnic identity. This is particularly true of Muslim communities in the western world (Marranci 2008). It is often argued, and rightly so, that identity is especially important for minority groups under pressure from the cultural influences of the majority. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2005) suggest that migration often sends individuals deeper into their culture or religion, as a way to hold on to identity in a society and country very different to their own.

This thesis is exploratory in nature; it aims to provide insight into the way Muslim women living in Wellington create their religious identity in narrative, by investigating the way in which linguistic and discursive features are utilised by Muslim women in the construction of identity. In doing so, it contributes to our knowledge of an under-researched area of sociolinguistics, and identifies further issues for investigation. By enabling these women to have their voices heard, and giving them the opportunity to take an active role in the research, this thesis contributes to breaking down some of the cultural challenges facing Muslim women in New Zealand.

Motivation for Research

An important aspect, which drives my interest in researching Muslim women and their identity, is my own personal experience as both a teacher aide and a tutor for Muslim refugee students. I have many connections with the community and a number of Muslim friends, and I am constantly struck by the intricate nature of these women's identities and the way they handle themselves in the face of adverse stereotypes and assumptions that are widespread in the media.

Muslim women are a growing subsection of New Zealand society, particularly in Wellington. They are often stereotyped and negatively portrayed in western media and their diverse backgrounds and complex sense of identity are often overlooked. The biggest barriers these women face to integrating and participating successfully in New Zealand society are the misconceptions, stereotypes and lack of knowledge about them in the wider society. As New Zealand grows, and continues to welcome more migrants to the country, increasing numbers of Muslim women are entering schools, universities and workplaces (Statistics New Zealand Census 2006). My intent in carrying out this research is not only to contribute to the body of work which investigates issues of identity and language but also to challenge stereotypes which see Muslim women as oppressed, and I hope that in allowing their voices to be heard, these stereotypes will begin to change.

Structure of Thesis

This initial chapter is the beginning of my research journey and outlines my motivation for conducting the research, the structure for this thesis and provides a brief overview of the Muslim community in New Zealand.

Following on from this, chapters two and three offer an overview of the relevant literature. Looking at relevant theoretical frameworks and the results of similar studies, these chapters define the path of my research and articulate the basis from which I began my investigation. In addition these chapters situate my own research within the wider context of sociolinguistics, narrative, and identity.

The fourth chapter focuses on methodological issues, detailing how I set out to investigate the discursive construction of religious identity in narrative for Muslim women. It introduces the participants and the Kilbirnie Mosque as the site of ethnographic observation, and discusses some of the key methodological challenges I faced in conducting this research at both a practical and ethical level.

Chapters five and six provide an overview and analysis of the qualitative results of my study. Chapter five examines the narratives in topic groupings, giving a broad analysis of the complete data set. Breaking the narratives into three categories which focus on different aspects of identity, this chapter analyses the similarities across narratives within an individual category, and from this considers how these themes relate to identity construction for the participants. The categories are as follows; *comparative identity* comprises the way in which the participants (and other Muslims) interact with the western world, covering topics ranging from cultural comparisons and discussion, to culture shock and lived experience; *Islamic identity* encompasses those narratives which focus on religious ideals, Islamic philosophy and its application in daily life, as well as narratives about rediscovering Islam for one's self; *Muslim identity* focuses on the individual level, looking at the daily actions, rituals and rules

that govern life as a Muslim women; it covers topics from hijab[1], to Eid[2], Ramadan[3], and Hajj[4].

Chapter six considers the narratives from a different perspective, looking across categories at three narratives and examines in more detail the way in which identity is expressed through the subversion of societal discourses. By looking at the way three different women construct their identities, this chapter investigates the way the participants subvert western feminist and contemporary discourses, which are typically used to oppress them to strengthen their identity constructions. This chapter focuses specifically on the way linguistic and discursive features are utilised in the expression of this, while also considering these findings in light of current literature. Because of the limited amount of literature on religious identity in discourse, I contrast my findings with sociolinguistic research that focuses on ethnic identity – an area which has close parallels with religious identity – as well as sociological and religious studies research and discussion which focuses on Islamic identity in the west.

Finally chapter seven completes the journey, drawing together the discussion of the previous chapters. This chapter provides some final thoughts on the construction of religious identity for Muslim women in Wellington in narrative, and suggests further research possibilities. To conclude, chapter seven highlights the relevance of this research for the wider Wellington community as well as the Muslim community in particular.

---

[1] Hijab here refers to the Islamic modest dress, which is loose fitting and covers all of the body save the hands, feet and face. This includes wearing a headscarf.

[2] Id-ul-Fitr is one of two main Islamic holy days (both known as Eid or Id). In this thesis I take the term Eid to be synonymous with Id-ul-Fitr, the holy day that celebrates the end of Ramadan.

[3] Ramadan is the month in which Muslims fast, believing it to be the month in which the Qur'an was first revealed.

[4] Hajj is the pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah that Muslims are obliged to make at least once during their lifetime.

Research Questions

The specific research questions which form the basis of this research project are as follows:

How are linguistic and discursive features used by Muslim women in the Wellington region to construct a religious identity in narratives?

How do these differ between women who spent their teenage years in New Zealand (women who arrived in New Zealand before age 12) and migrant women who arrived in New Zealand as adults?

Approach of the Thesis

At the outset of this thesis, it is necessary to provide some further discussion of the approach taken in this research.

Ideological Assumptions

The basic underlying premise of this research is the belief that religious identity is an area worthy of sociolinguistic inquiry. Although religion has been the object of study in many other social sciences, it has remained largely disregarded by sociolinguistics (Jule 2005). Indeed, it is difficult to find references to the subject which predate 2005. Throughout the research process I often found myself justifying not only my own interest in the topic as a non-Muslim woman, but also justifying the location of the topic within the field of sociolinguistics. Jule (2005; 2007) and Fishman (2005) both argue that there is a clear place for the study of religious identity within sociolinguistics, suggesting that in many ways it differs little from core topics in sociolinguistics such as ethnic identity and gender.

Changing population demographics as a result of migration have meant that many western countries are now faced with diverse religious, as well as ethnic, populations. Jule suggests that it is impossible to consider the wider state of world affairs or the human condition without considering the role religion has to play in this, and how it both affects and influences human behaviour (2005: 1). Religion is intricately interwoven into the fabric of daily life, and so has an important role to play in the formation, negotiation and maintenance of identity. Religion is connected with both

culture and ethnicity and "the ways we live with religion as a cultural discourse and how gender, language and religion intersect in various yet shared ways around the world" are thus important areas of investigation for sociolinguistic research (Jule 2005: 2). Indeed, Jule suggests that "the way we speak and what we say work to construct and maintain our identities – identities located in a variety of contexts, including … a religious one" (2007: 4).

Although not everyone agrees that religion is an important facet of identity, for many people, particularly those of minority religions, it is as salient as ethnicity or gender is for the non-religious. For those who remain unconvinced that religion has a place within sociolinguistics, I hope that this thesis will go some way to showing that religious identity, much like ethnic identity, can indeed be a rewarding subject of sociolinguistic inquiry.

Overview of the Muslim community in New Zealand

The Muslim community in New Zealand is a small but growing community, which is incredibly diverse in constitution. Between 2001 and 2006 the Muslim community in New Zealand increased by 52 per cent; and the latest census figures now place the number of Muslims in New Zealand at over 36,000 (Statistics New Zealand 2006), although Kolig and Shepard (2006) suggest that in actual fact this number could be as high 50,000. Regardless of the exact figure, it is clear that the community is rapidly expanding. Although sizeable, however, it still constitutes only around 1 per cent of the total population of New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2006). Shepard points out that it is not just in recent years that the community has grown, rather it has been steadily increasing since the mid 1970s and since 1976 the community has increased thirty-fold (2006: 9). Although there are records of Muslims living in New Zealand since 1874 (Census 1874 in Shepard 2006: 9), the community remained under 100 until after World War Two, and it was only in the 1960s and 70s that a change in immigration policy and events in Fiji saw an influx of Fijian Indian and South Asian Muslims arrive in New Zealand. This community was originally centred around Auckland, but in the last two decades has spread to other main centres in New Zealand. Auckland is today still home to the largest Muslim community. However

sizable communities exist in most other main cities in New Zealand; the largest of these (outside of Auckland) is in Wellington. The 2006 census reports around 2,200 Muslims are currently living in Wellington city (Statistics New Zealand 2006), a figure which is around 6 per cent of the total Muslim population of New Zealand.

The New Zealand Muslim community began in the early twentieth century with a small number of Indians and has since grown to include over forty different nationalities (Shepard 2006: 8). This diversity covers a large number of nationalities stretching from Morocco in the West, to Turkey and the Balkans in the North, to Malaysia, the Philippines and Fiji in the East, and sub-Saharan Africa in the South (Konig and Shepard 2006: 2). Since 1993 the Muslim community has grown to include an increasing number of Somali refugees who have a strong ethnic identity and thus form a very distinct group within the Muslim community (Shepard 2006:37). Konig and Shepard (2006) point out that the Muslim community has, over the years, welcomed refugees from a number of countries including Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia.

Only around 23% of Muslims residing in New Zealand in 2001 were born in the country. 54% of the total Muslim community are male, and, although this is still a majority, it is considerably lower than the census figures from previous years, which showed an overwhelming majority of Muslims were men. The average age of the community is younger than the New Zealand national average; 57% of Muslims are under thirty years of age. (Shepard 2006: 12). Large numbers of the community are unskilled or semi-skilled labourers, however there are also increasing numbers of Muslims in professional jobs, many of whom are high achievers in their fields, particularly within the fields of medicine and science (Shepard 2006: 12). Most of the Muslims who are raised in New Zealand go on to tertiary study and subsequently get good jobs (Shepard 2006: 12). Shepard points out that the "ways in which children and young people respond to conflicting pressures for conformity to kiwi norms, Islamic norms and family expectations, and indeed the degree to which these conflict in practice, vary so much from group to group and individual to individual that generalisation is impossible" (2006: 15).

Unlike some situations in Europe, New Zealand schools have been accommodating towards Muslim students' needs, in terms of uniform, space and time for salat (formal daily prayer) and jummah (Friday prayer), and regarding matters of diet (specifically halal food) (Shepard 2006: 14). While the wider public in New Zealand are tolerant of diversity, many New Zealanders have little experience with Muslims, and so often hold negative stereotypes based on overseas media which tend to focus on violence and extremism (Shepard 2006:15). Despite this, there has been minimal violence towards the community and the little that has occurred has been condemned by members of a variety of communities outside the Muslim community.

Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced the topic of my thesis and given a summary of the structure of the thesis. I have briefly outlined some of the core ideological assumptions that I make, and presented a brief overview of the Muslim community in New Zealand. In the next chapter, I go on to discuss the relevant literature, highlighting in particular the key theoretical concepts, which have shaped this research.

Two: Literature Review: Theoretical Concepts
Finding the path

This chapter and the following chapter offer an overview of relevant research, exploring the intersection of religion, narrative and identity from a sociolinguistic perspective, focusing in particular on Muslim identity. By considering current sociolinguistic understanding of identity, research into the sociolinguistic interplay of religious identity and discourse, and the way women interact with ethnicity and discourse to create their own identities, as well as key theoretical frameworks and concepts, this review aims to provide a background and scope in which to position my own research. Because there has been minimal research into the way discourse interacts with religion in society, this literature review also looks at a similar field, narrative and ethnic identity, considering key findings and how these may have relevant parallels to religious identity.

The literature review is split into two chapters. This chapter focuses on the theoretical concepts that inform and help to shape this study, while the next chapter considers recent sociolinguistic and anthropological research, which has contributed to the development of this research project. This chapter begins by discussing the core beliefs that underpin social constructionism, considering how these have contributed to current theories of identity. This chapter then goes on to discuss perceptions of identity theory in sociolinguistics and ultimately articulates the understanding of identity utilised in this research project. The Communities of Practice concept is introduced, as a way of defining the community I am researching. Theoretical perspectives on narrative and the construction of identity within narratives are presented towards the end of this chapter, providing an overview and critical analysis of narrative theory. Finally, a summary is provided commenting briefly on the salience of these concepts in this research project and the way in which they have informed the development of this project. Throughout the two chapters, reference is made to the way in which core concepts have been utilised in this study and how this has influenced the analysis.

Identity and Language

In recent years Social Constructionist theories of identity have become very influential in the field of sociolinguistics; these theories critique earlier structuralist approaches to identity, and suggest that identity is fluid rather than absolute. This section explores current approaches to identity and language, contrasting these with earlier approaches, and briefly explores the theoretical background from which these approaches emerge.

Social Constructionist Research

Drawing on the work of Vivian Burr (1995), Phillips and Jørgensen (2002: 5) propose four key aspects that all Social Constructionist research takes. A Social Constructionist approach takes a critical view of knowledge that is taken for granted; it argues that the way in which we perceive the world is simply one possible perception and so cannot be taken as objective truth (Burr 2003: 2). Reality is made accessible to us through categorisation of the world and so our knowledge of the world is based on these categories. Our reflections of reality are products of the way we categorise the world, or in a discourse approach, they are products of discourse (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002: 5). Social Constructionist approaches postulate that we are, at our core as humans, historical and cultural beings and our views and knowledge of the world are shaped by our own histories and experiences of culture (Burr 2003: 4). In essence, this then means that our worldviews and identities could be different to what they are, but that they take the form they do because of our lived experiences.

A social constructionist approach is open to change and argues that as we develop and are exposed to new things, our identities may begin to change. This suggests that there are links between knowledge, social processes and social actions. Our understanding and knowledge of the world are maintained by social processes and these processes lead to varying social actions. Social Constructionists are particularly interested in language, as it "is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated" (Burr 2003: 4), language being a core aspect of interaction. Burr suggests that through interaction

with others, we are able to develop a shared cultural knowledge, which although not definitive allows us to interpret the world (2003).

By challenging the concept of objective categories, and suggesting that our perception of reality is influenced both by our lived experiences and by dominant discourses and ways of being in society, Social Constructionist research enables researchers to take a critical view of identity and provides the theoretical background within which to investigate the way social processes, of which language is one, shape our identity.

Theories of Identity

There are many aspects, which comprise a person's identity; language, in particular, is a salient tool in the construction of identity. An individual's identity is both presented to the world by and created through language. Indeed, it could be said that the maintenance and creation of social identity occurs principally through language (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982: 7). Tabouret-Keller develops this argument suggesting that 'language acts are acts of identity', postulating a view which reflects the core tenet of sociolinguistic theory of identity (in Omoniyi 2003: 12). Identity is created by the way people position and construct themselves in relation to their social and cultural surroundings (Omoniyi and White 2006: 1), and is influenced by both the perceptions individuals have about the world as well as the perceptions of others. Mendoza-Denton defines identity as "the active negotiation of an individual's relationship with large social constructs" (2001: 475).

Early sociolinguistic research in the 1970s and 1980s by Labov (1972), Gumperz (1982) and others investigated language use in relation to the social constructs of gender, ethnicity and class, later expanding this to include age and sexuality. These studies investigated linguistic identity based on these sociological categories, working on the basis that identity is stable and does not change (Antrim 2007). These theories tended to regard identity as static and fixed, an absolute category in which to locate a group or individual (De Fina 2007; Omoniyi and White 2006). Utilising such a theory means that linguistic features are regarded as identity markers, to be used in

conformity rather than creativity to adhere to a pre-determined identity label. This theory has been identified as having a number of limitations, particularly in research involving young people because of their fluid sense of identity (Rampton 1995), and more recently, sociolinguistic research has employed more dynamic theories, which seek to understand the process and nature of identity rather than describe the markers of a particular identity (De Fina 2007; Omoniyi 2006). These theories are commonly known as Social Constructionist theories, and regard identity as fluid and as a series of processes, which are embedded in social practices and may change over time as wider contextual factors change (Omoniyi and White 2006). Social Constructionist theories hold that although individuals are influenced by the social and cultural context in which they exist, they are also capable of making choices and changes (Block 2006; Sallabank 2006). Identity is affected by factors outside the individual's power; however, individuals have the ability to make deliberate choices about their identities too. Identity is a balance of external factors and the individual's conscious and unconscious reactions to these factors. These theories of the fluidity of identity underpin my research, and form the theoretical justification for this thesis.

Individuals have a range of different facets to their identity, which they perform based on multiple potential roles, and identity is not fixed or static but rather is constantly being created, constructed and negotiated (De Fina 2007; Joseph 2004). De Fina's (2007) idea that identity has a range of different facets enables me, as the researcher, to consider the role religious identity plays for Muslim women living as a minority in New Zealand, and provides the theoretical basis of the analysis in chapter five. De Fina et al (2006) describe identity as a constellation made up of many different aspects, which can be emphasised or deemphasised depending on contextual factors and what the individual wants to portray. In sociolinguistics, this is linked to the use of different linguistic and discursive structures for different functions or roles. Personal identity is both complex and unique; it is stable and changeable and is in a constant state of becoming (Suleiman 2006: 51). Suleiman suggests that some parts of an individual's identity may at times be in conflict with each other yet at other times exist harmoniously (2006: 51). This view highlights the paradoxical nature of identity and the fact that it is subject to change. Suleiman's

position has the potential to help explain the diverse, and seemingly contradictory, language acts an individual is capable of performing.

Communities of Practice

The Communities of Practice (CofP) concept was introduced to sociolinguistics through the study of language and gender by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, and provides a useful framework for analysing the language used by specific types of groups (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992a). A Community of Practice is defined both by its membership, the people who are a part of the community, and by the common practices with which its members engage. (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999: 174). In the process of engaging with a common goal or shared practices, ways of speaking, doing things, beliefs, and values begin to emerge (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 57). A defining feature of Communities of Practice is the creation of groups around a central activity or set of activities in pursuit of a shared goal. This goal need not be measurable or finite, but can be ongoing; this is the case with the Women's Class at Kilbirnie Mosque who work toward the shared goal of being better Muslims. The Women's Class at the Kilbirnie Mosque is an open class for all Muslim women, it runs for an hour every Sunday and one or two women usually take the class, giving a lecture on an aspect of Islam that is pertinent to Muslim women's lives.

Wenger's (1998: 76) original concept of a Community of Practice identified three key parts; mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire of resources, which are open to negotiation and have been collected over time. Mutual engagement involves regular interaction between members of the community. Joint enterprise refers to a process of striving towards a shared goal. It is also important to note that a shared repertoire is not only linguistic but may include other non-linguistic practices such as ways of dressing, routines, gestures, pictures and so on. (Eckert and McConell-Ginet 1992b: 464).

The concept of Communities of Practice is useful for sociolinguistics in that it provides a "framework of definitions", which allows researchers to examine how the process of becoming a member interacts with the way in which members gain control

of the discourse of the community (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999: 175). In order for someone to become a core member of the community, they must gain control of the shared repertoire. It follows from this, then, that there may be differences in membership within communities, and that these differences are based on how well the individual acquires shared discourses and assimilates with the shared goals of the community (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999; Eckert and McConell-Ginet 1992a).

Another advantage of the communities of practice framework is that it provides a way of linking both micro and macro level research. It allows researchers to look at the micro-level linguistic and discursive features of the individual, which are indicative of shared goals and processes in context, whilst also providing a framework for considering the broader patterns and norms of language use within the community. This concept contributes to a detailed theoretical framework for community-based analysis of linguistic features and enables me as the researcher to clearly define my research community. As discussed in greater detail in chapter four, I define my research community, the Women's Class at the Kilbirnie Mosque, as a Community of Practice, with share norms and practices.

Narrative

This section moves from a broad discussion of theoretical frameworks and concepts to focus on one aspect of discourse, the narrative. Narratives are a particularly salient way of communicating identity, and as such have been the focus of much sociolinguistic research. Indeed as Rosenwald and Ochberg put it

how individuals recount their histories – what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between the teller and the audience – all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are a means by which identities may be fashioned.

(Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992: 2)

Ochs and Capps (2001) illustrate the importance of narrative in social research, suggesting that everyday 'flawed' conversational narratives of personal experiences convey more meaning than highly planned and polished narratives, which are more

typical of literature than everyday speech. Narrative is inherently interdisciplinary, extending beyond the field of linguistics into the wider social sciences (Riessman 1993). In 1967, Labov and Waletzky proposed a methodology for the analysis of narratives, identifying core aspects of their structure. Although more recent work has both built on and critiqued this work, Labov and Waletzky's model is still considered to be the predominant method for analysing the structure of narrative.

The next section discusses the structure proposed by Labov and Waletzky, before considering recent methods of analysis, and some of the challenges that contemporary research has raised in response to Labov and Waletzky's approach. It then considers the way in which this research has influenced the definition of narrative used in this study. The second section looks at the way in which identity and narratives relate to one another, and how narrative is utilised as a means of identity expression.

Narrative Structure

Arriving at a precise idea of how to define narrative has always been a contentious issue, though certainly not a recent one. Aristotle provides a simple definition of narrative, stating that stories must have a beginning, middle and an end, while others have suggested that temporal ordering is important (Thornborrow and Coates 2005: 3). Perhaps the most well known and most widely used narrative structure is that of Labov and Waletzky (1967). In their pioneering work on narrative, Labov and Waletzky (1967) identify six key components of narrative structure; the abstract, orientation, complicating event, resolution, evaluation, and the coda; suggesting that these are common to all narratives although not all of these components are necessary and some cultures or groups may omit certain parts entirely (Johnstone 2002: 82; Holmes 1997b). Labov and Waletzky's framework provides a valuable basis for analysis and comparison of narratives between different societal groups. By identifying the core aspects of the narrative, and describing their function within the discourse, Labov and Waletzky have provided a framework, which allows linguists to investigate the ways different groups in different cultures and societies utilise these features when re-telling lived experience. Indeed, even forty years after Labov and

Waletzky first put forward their model for narrative analysis, it is still the dominant framework in use for narrative analyses, not only within sociolinguistics, but also within the social sciences in general (Holmes 1997b).

Although Labov and Waletzky's work is still used as a basis for conducting narrative analysis, more recent research has gone on to develop some of the ideas postulated by Labov and Waletzky. In particular, sociolinguists and discourse analysts have developed the notion of evaluation, realising the significance of this as well as the variation in expression of the evaluation (Holmes 1997b: 93). Coates (1996) and Schiffrin (1996) point out the potential complexity of the evaluation, suggesting that it is more than a simple statement of the narrator's response to the events described in the narrative; that it may be either implicit or explicit, embedded throughout the narrative or isolated in a separate section of the story in a linear fashion.

Labov and Waletzky's work on narratives is not without its problems however, two of which are particularly relevant in the context of my own research. Firstly, Labov and Waletzky's original work largely ignored the contextual factors surrounding narrative and as such provided no way for these to be integrated into an analysis using their framework; and secondly they view narratives as an essentially individualistic means of expression, and do not allow for the possibility of co-construction of narratives. Holmes illustrates the first point using her own research on Māori narratives in which she found that some Māori tend to leave the evaluation implicit (Holmes 1997a; 2005). She argues that without taking into account contextual factors such as knowledge, which is taken as given, and shared histories, cultural discourses and mythologies, it is not possible to fully analyse and interpret the narrative. She postulates that "unpacking the underlying message is often only possible with extensive ethnographic research to supply the necessary contextual detail" (Holmes 1997b: 94). Labov and Waletzky's theory does not overtly include this, focusing instead on what is contained within the narrative itself.

The second point, that Labov and Waletzky's theory makes no allowance for co-construction of narratives, is illustrated by a number of contemporary studies such as

Duranti (1986) and Riessman (1993). These studies show that narratives are often not individual, presented by only one speaker, but may be jointly constructed by participants in conversation. Not only do listeners contribute to the content of the narrative, they may also be involved in negotiating the structure of the narrative (Holmes 1997b: 94). This clearly builds on and develops Labov and Waletzky's original methodology for the analysis of narratives, suggesting that while useful as a basis, it is not the definitive word on analysing narratives.

Georgakopoulou critiques Labov and Waletzky's narrative model, suggesting that although this narrative pattern has come to be regarded as "the endpoint of narrative development and the ideal form in which to cast the richness, depth and profundity of human experience" (2006: 237), it privileges an 'ideal' form of narrative which is highly structured, typically has only one narrator and is detached from the context. She suggests that in fact, most narratives which occur in everyday conversation do not fit this 'ideal' form at all; they may be less polished and less coherent but they have important things to tell us too, particularly regarding the construction of identity (Georgakopoulou 2006: 239). A key aspect of the Labovian narrative structure is that stories are retellings of past events; however recent research (Georgakopoulou 2006; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; Georgakopoulou and De Fina 2008) suggests that projected narratives (i.e. future or hypothetical narratives) are just as common as past event narratives.

Theorising Identity in Narrative

Narratives are a particularly valuable tool for investigating the way in which a person's sense of identity is created and maintained. Thornborrow and Coates articulate this, suggesting that "narrative also has a key role in the location of the emergent self in a social and cultural world" (2005: 8). Mishler (2006) describes narratives as a way of recapturing experience; it is through this recaptured experience that people can build representations about who they are. In telling stories about themselves, people can not only present different experiences and evaluate them; they also establish themselves as members of particular groups, creating a group identity (Bamberg et al. 2007). Schiffrin points out that narrative is a

particularly pervasive form of text within society, that it is how we "construct, interpret and share experience" (1996: 167).

Sociolinguistic studies of narrative have focused predominantly on oral narratives, which recount personal experiences, relying on Labov and Waletzky's pioneering work as a theoretical basis from which to conduct more sophisticated analysis of narrative. While Labov and Waletzky's (1967) work, as described above, has focused on the structure of narratives, it is also important to consider the process that underlies narrative. This process is known as verbalisation and is the method by which we take an experience from our past, and transform it into a linguistically presented description of that experience (Schiffrin 1996: 168). The way in which we go about this is intricately related to our social and cultural backgrounds and the methods through which we situate our stories in the dominant discourses that surround us (Schiffrin 1996: 168). It is clear that narrative is interwoven with socio-cultural contexts and the dominant practices within these contexts. Given that the socio-cultural context in which we live comes to bear in the construction of our identities, it follows that narrative has a key role to play in the construction and maintenance of identity.

There is much scholarship which suggests that narrative language contributes to the way in which we convey our sense of who we are, and that narrative in fact is one way in which we come to have an understanding of our identity as a whole (Schiffrin 1996: 168). Schiffrin postulates that narrative language can assist in this as it "provides a process of subjunctivization" (Schiffrin 1996: 169); it allows us to understand our implicit meanings and also provides multiple points of view of a story. The narrative as a form of discourse is a key way in which the discursive self can emerge. It provides us with a way of re-experiencing reality, and it is through our experiences that we are able to create a sense of who we are, of our identity.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed some of the key theoretical literature which has helped to inform and shape my research. Looking initially at social constructionist

research and theories of identity, this chapter has critically analysed the theoretical basis from which I approach identity, suggesting that it is dynamic and fluid, and intricately related to the context in which the individual exists. Social constructionist theories of identity argue that as we develop, grow and change, our identities may begin to change. These theories take identity to be a process, in a constant state of becoming rather than fixed or static. De Fina et al. (2006) suggest that identity is a constellation of aspects which can be emphasised or deemphasised depending on the context and what the individual wishes to emphasise in a particular situation. Identity is open to manipulation, and a primary means for constructing and manipulating identity is through language (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982; Tabouret-Keller in Omoniyi 2003). Understanding identity to be dynamic and flexible, De Fina et al.'s (2006) concept of identity constellations forms the theoretical basis and justification for exploring religious identity in this thesis.

The second section of this chapter presented the Communities of Practice framework and evaluated its relevance for my own research. The Communities of Practice framework enables me to define my research community based on shared goals and practices, and consider the way these women use language as a group. The remainder of this chapter focused specifically on narrative, first considering narrative structure, before going on to discuss theories of identity in narrative. Labov and Waletzky's theory of narrative structure was outlined, as well as some of the work that has built on this. Some of the major critiques of this approach were also discussed.

In the next chapter I turn to a review of research that focuses on ethnic and religious identity in narrative, before presenting an overview of Muslim identity from a sociological and anthropological perspective.

Following on from the preceding chapter, which discussed key theoretical concepts, this chapter focuses on narrative and identity research and comprises four sections. The first looks at a small selection of studies, which have investigated narratives and the construction and representation of ethnic identities. Since there is little published research investigating narratives and religious identity, I examine research on ethnic identity, which I believe is the closest parallel to religious identity for Muslims. The second section discusses the small amount of published research on language and religious identity that is readily available, in particular focusing on two studies, which investigate Muslim women's language use. The third section considers some of the core concepts in the study of gender in narrative. Although there is a great deal that could be included in this section, discussion has been limited to the most salient points as gender is not a core feature of this study, but rather a means of defining the research community. The final section presents sociological and anthropological research on Muslim identity, focusing predominantly on how this is constructed in the west.

Narratives and Ethnic Identity

The area of narrative and ethnic identity is undoubtedly broad and covers a wide range of topics. Because of this, I have chosen to focus on a small number of studies which have the greatest relevance to the topic. This section will consider the findings of studies looking at Pākehā and Māori identity in narratives in New Zealand as this provides a picture of the wider social and ethnic context in which my own research will be situated. I also include some research on migrant identity in narrative, as this is a salient aspect of identity and a key variable for consideration in the construction of identity for Muslim women.

Pākehā and Māori Identity in Narrative

Although New Zealand is increasingly becoming a multicultural society, there has been little research examining how ethnic identity is constructed in narrative. The

little that has been done focuses on the two dominant ethnicities in New Zealand, Māori and Pākehā. Research into the construction and portrayal of ethnic identity through narrative suggests that there are a number of differences in the discursive features used in narrative by Māori and Pākehā (Holmes 1998b; Marra and Holmes 2005). In her research, Holmes (1998a; 1998b) found that the evaluative component was a clear point of difference between the two. For Pākehā it was particularly important that the evaluative component of the narrative was clearly articulated and made explicit; Māori on the other hand showed a preference for implicit evaluation in many cases leaving any explicit evaluation out altogether (Holmes 1998b; Holmes 1997a). Holmes further comments that for Pākehā, ethnicity appears not to be a concern, and seems to be unmarked and is not mentioned in narratives, while Māori ethnicity appears to be a salient background feature in all of the Māori narratives (Holmes 1998b). In Holmes' data, it seems that as Pākehā is the dominant ethnicity in New Zealand, Māori narratives often explicitly contrast Māori lifestyles and ways of doing things with Pākehā lifestyles (Holmes 1998a). This suggests that Māori are keenly aware of the salience of Pākehā norms in society and, even in their narratives, seek to position themselves in opposition to this, actively creating their ethnic identity through discursive practices in discourse.

These findings depict one possible set of discursive norms in New Zealand society for the expression of ethnic identity through narrative. This is particularly useful for my research as it provides an overview of the communicative setting in which Muslim women in New Zealand exist. The findings show that Māori as a significant minority in New Zealand actively create their identities in juxtaposition to Pākehā norms; these findings may be indicative of similar processes for other minority groups in New Zealand, including Muslim women.

 The next section considers migrant identity, an aspect which is salient for Muslim women in New Zealand, who contrast with the relatively settled Māori and Pākehā populations.

Migrant Identity in Narrative

Much of the recent sociolinguistic inquiry into the relationship between ethnicity and language has looked at ethnicity in terms of collective community language use (Fernandez and Clyne 2007; Rampton 1995); less commonly researched, however, is the relationship between ethnicity and language on a personal level. Research conducted into the interface between language and ethnicity is varied and spans a wide range of cultures and incorporates a large number of languages. In the UK there has been much investigation into well-established ethnic communities using participants who are UK-born to immigrant parents (Rampton 1995: Hewitt 1992). While it is tempting to generalise the findings of such studies to include migrant communities, doing so overlooks the unique linguistic and discursive pressures on these communities.

Research into migrant identity in discourse and narrative suggests that the presentation of self identity for migrants is a process which is both difficult and unsettling (Baynham 2006: 376). Migration poses challenges to an individual's sense of self, and research has indicated that this is clearly manifest in discursive practices (Baynham 2006; Kryzanowski and Wodak 2008). Based on the findings of their study of ethnic minority migrants in Europe, Kryzanowski and Wodak suggest that discourse and narrative enable migrants to recontextualise the sense of 'inbetweeness' that they encounter on a daily basis (2008: 113), and that it is through this that they are able to express identity. Identity for migrants is not fixed or static, but rather is "inherently ambivalent and constantly subject to ... continuous change" (Kryzanowski and Wodak 2008: 115). The discursive construction of this continuously changing identity highlights the 'otherness' of migrants, focusing on differences and juxtapositions, constantly comparing the self to the host community (Kryzanowski and Wodak 2008). Similarly, Baynham suggests that when individuals create their identities through language, that which they are not is just as important as that which they are in defining a sense of self (2006: 395). Although it is easy to consider migrant narratives to be narratives of acculturation, to do so fails to acknowledge the inherent intricate nature of identity in a multi-cultural setting. It is perhaps more appropriate to consider migrant identity as a process of layering, whereby identities

may interact with and strengthen each other, creating a hybrid and complex identity, which, through the utilisation of discursive practices, specifically those of juxtaposition and belonging, situate the individual within their social context.

The research on migrant identity is particularly salient for my own research, as it reflects one of the key variables I planned to investigate. Baynham's work, as well as that of Kryzanowski and Wodak, show that belonging and juxtaposition are important concepts for migrants and that these are expressed discursively, through grammatical and lexical constructions, at times highlighting differences and at other times focusing on similarities. Most of the members of the Muslim community in New Zealand are migrants or the children of migrants; thus the issues raised in these two studies are significant aspects to consider.

The next section looks at research investigating language and religious identity, which although intrinsically related to ethnic identity, differs in many ways.

Language and Religious Identity

The study of language and religious identity within sociolinguistics is a new field of investigation; indeed, it is difficult to find published material that predates 2005. The research presented below articulates some of the key arguments for the inclusion of language and religion within sociolinguistic enquiry as articulated by Jule (2005) and Fishman (2006). I then look at some of the key findings in the small number of studies that have looked at Muslim women and their language use.

There has been minimal consideration of religion as a core part of identity within sociolinguistic research (Jule 2005; Omoniyi and Fishman 2006); in fact Jule points out that despite the well established position of religion within fields such as anthropology and sociology, religion has not yet been considered suitable as a focus for linguistic research (2005: 2). Fishman presents the case for the inclusion of religious groups as a focus of sociolinguistic research suggesting that religious identity is in many respects similar to other types of identity, such as ethnic, gender and group membership (2006: 13). He calls attention to the fact that just as ethnic group

membership can be an important factor in language use, so too can religious group membership. Fishman suggests that the language variety of religion always "functions within a larger multivarietal repertoire" and that although they may vary over time, religious language varieties are more stable than other varieties (Fishman 2006: 14). He suggests that for members of a particular religious community, their religious variety of language is likely to have more impact on its secular counterpart than the secular does on the religious (2006: 15). This view of religious varieties of language clearly shows influence both from Fishman's own work with Jewish communities, and current theories of identity. It suggests that religious language, just like identity, is complex and hybrid; that there is no strict and clear separation of religious life from the secular and that this spills over into language. Fishman argues that this can be studied and analysed in precisely the same way as ethnic identity, and that it is, in fact, for many communities, a more appropriate way of considering language use and identity.

Language and Muslim Identity

Due to the post 9-11 attention given to Islam, scholars are increasingly beginning to investigate the diversity of members of the Islamic faith. Despite this increased attention, there has been little thought given to the linguistic practices of Muslims in the west (Bhimji 2005: 204). In her research on the way in which British Muslim women assert themselves in cyberspace, Bhimji found that particular lexical and phrasal items acted as salient markers of Islamic identity (2005). Young women made frequent use of Islamic words and phrases that made explicit reference to Allah ('God') even when discussing secular topics (2005: 204). She also noted that the women customarily referred to each other as 'sister' (2005), thereby creating a sense of wider community through language. Bhimji postulates that young Muslim women are self-identifying as religious, assertive, knowledgeable, young, female and Islamic by utilising language to create hybrid complex identities that incorporate many aspects and cannot be simply defined.

Research on Senegalese Muslim migrant women in the USA suggests that perception of what it means to be Muslim and practice Islam vary between different age groups

and that these differing perceptions are manifest in part, in the use of linguistic resources (Collier 2005: 223). Collier found that the older immigrant women in her study were resistant to learning English despite being surrounded by it on a daily basis. She suggests that this is a reflection of their resistance to the culture of the country they have migrated to (Collier 2005).

Both of these articles focus on Muslim women; however, they investigate very different groups, making it difficult to draw parallels between the studies. Bhimji focuses on the way language is used to create a specifically religious identity by young Islamic women online, researching from a standpoint congruent with that suggested by Jule in her argument for the inclusion of religion as an area of study within sociolinguistics. Collier, on the other hand, takes a position similar to that of Fishman, using 'Muslim' as a way of defining community for research. In my own research, I take the position that both Bhimji and Jule take in their research focusing on religious identity in language. Bhimji's research, in particular, presents interesting areas for further research particularly as online communication and social networking are increasingly becoming salient aspects of social interaction for many young people in the west.

Although there has been very little research focusing on language and religion in sociolinguistics, and still less on Muslim identity, the research explored in this section provides a foundation on which to base further investigation. Jule argues that for many people religion is a core aspect of their being, and to ignore this is to ignore a fundamental part of the self. Fishman suggests that religious groups can and should be investigated and researched in much the same way as other community-based groups have been within sociolinguistics. These points both serve to validate and justify the basis of my research, providing a way in which it can be located within the field of sociolinguistics. Bhimji's and Collier's articles raise interesting points to consider regarding the relationship between language and religious identity. Bhimji in particular, focusing on religious identity, rather than ethnic identity, draws useful conclusions regarding the hybridity of identity for Muslim women in the west, which are highly pertinent to my own research.

The following section focuses on another key, though less salient, aspect of identity, looking at the way gender identity is portrayed through language and narratives. As this aspect is not a core focus of my research, the discussion in the following section outlines several key issues only briefly.

Language, Gender and Identity in Narratives

There has been a great deal of research carried out which has investigated a wide range of issues relating to gender and identity in language. Although my research focuses specifically on women, gender and identity is not my focus but rather is a way of defining a group. I am not contrasting women's identity with men's, nor am I focusing specifically on constructions of gender roles or identities. However, it is important to be aware of the salience of gender roles in society, as well as in Islam, and the way in which these are expressed through language. Holmes (1997) investigated story telling in New Zealand men's and women's talk, looking at how both gender and ethnic contrasts were realised through the use of narratives in everyday talk. Quoting James and Saville-Smith (1989: 6) she suggests that New Zealand culture is formed based on overt structures of masculinity and femininity (Holmes, 1998a), and that these pervasive gender roles still carry much influence in society. Holmes (1998a) finds in her analysis that women often construct their identities around particular gendered roles, most often traditional ones, such as mother, daughter and wife. Narratives tend to be focused around things which have salience in everyday life, a trend which is evidenced in Holmes' data. The women's narratives focus on relationships and people, which Holmes suggests reinforces the importance of family and friendships (1998a: 28). Despite this, Holmes comments that even in the more conservative narratives there are elements of the subversion of gender roles, and the celebration of "women's power and autonomy"(Holmes 1998a: 29), suggesting that gender categories are not fixed but open to negotiation, even in societies which have traditional gender roles, and that language is a key way of achieving this.

Holmes' comments about the importance of traditional roles are particularly relevant to consider in relation to the way women construct identity in Islam. As a religion which is often said to reinforce traditional gender roles, Islam has been seen to be in opposition to western feminism. However contemporary research on Islam, in particular research focused on young women in the west, suggests that women are beginning to challenge and subvert traditional roles and notions of power. The following section looks at Muslim identity, focusing on two aspects: how Muslim identity is theoretically constructed; and research into Muslim identity in the west and the key findings of this research.

Muslim Identity

Research into Muslim identity in the west from a sociological or anthropological standpoint is minimal. The research that has been conducted is often unpublished in student research papers and theses, making it difficult to obtain. In recent years however, congruent with the increasing profile of Muslims in the west, there have been more books published about Muslims and their identity in western countries, although these focus mainly on Muslims in Europe or in the USA and Canada.

Constructing Muslim Identity

Since the late 1980s anthropologists have begun to regard Islam as an important marker of identity (Marranci 2008: 10). Marranci points out that the concept of identity is a crucial component in the negotiation of religious values and western values for Muslims. Where western values are often at odds with traditional Islamic values, "fluid, hybrid, multiple identities" which are both controlled and influenced by cultural processes allow Muslims in the west to negotiate difficult processes of integration and assimilation (Marranci 2008: 10).

Marranci (2008: 57) argues that it is not sufficient to reduce Islam to the same category as national or ethnic identity; that Islam is much more complex than this. In a view that fits very well with discourse analysis, Marranci (2008: 15) postulates that Islam does not shape Muslims, but rather it is Muslims "who through discourses, practices, beliefs and actions, make Islam." In defining precisely who is a Muslim, she

argues that a Muslim is not someone who dresses a certain way, believes a certain set of things, or chooses not to eat certain food; she suggests that a Muslim is someone who feels that they are a Muslim (Marranci 2008).

Muslims in the Western World

Muslim communities in western countries are very diverse in various respects. Many Muslims are well educated, work in respected professions and tend to have a good command of the host country's language, while others, labourers, asylum seekers and refugees, in particular, may lack proficiency in their host country's language (Smith 2002: 9). Access to the host country's language opens the door to education and employment, and without it people tend to remain isolated and insular (Smith 2002: 9); language proficiency is thus an important tool for Muslim individuals in western host countries.

Muslim Women in the Western World

In recent years there has been an exponential growth in the number of Muslim women arriving in western countries (Marranci 2008: 123). These women are often highly visible as minorities; and, in Europe, have been the subject of many public debates because of their distinctive headscarves. This high visibility has not been such an issue within New Zealand, and the intense debates and resulting bans over headscarves in France, Germany and now the Netherlands have not reached New Zealand. Marranci points out that within Islam, women play a unique role in the family dynamic, particularly in migrant families (2008: 123); they become the propagators of the cultural traditions of the family. This role means that often older migrant women may appear very traditional because it is their belief that they must pass on their family's cultural traditions.

Generational Differences in Identity for Muslims in the Western World

Particularly in continental Europe, Muslim identity is constructed as 'other', as foreign compared to a relatively homogenous European Christian majority (Smith 2002: 14). This identity of the 'other', which she suggests belongs mainly to the older first generation migrants, is contrasted with the new Muslim youth who are

confident in their identity as citizens of their parents' host country (Smith 2002: 14). Smith suggests that young Muslims are actively taking a role in creating a uniquely European or American Islamic community (2002: 15). They are developing an Islam, which represents them, and in the process are helping to develop positive relations with their adopted country. In contrast to the typical western assumption that commitment to religious values will soften over time, and commitment to tradition will weaken, young Muslims are showing that this is not the case as they negotiate and mediate different aspects of their identities. Smith (2002) suggests that younger generations of Muslims in western countries are deciding for themselves which parts of Islam they want to continue to maintain, and which they do not. Although this is surely a controversial conception, it is indicative of a difference between Muslims who migrated to a western country as adults and younger generations who have grown up in western countries, a distinction incorporated into the design of my research.

Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed relevant narrative and identity research which has informed the development of this research project. Religious identity (particularly in narrative) is an under researched area of sociolinguistics and consequently there is little published material available. Because of this I have opted to include some considerations of ethnic identity in narrative, believing that there are a number of parallels which can be drawn with religious identity, particularly for Muslims living as a minority in western countries. I have given an overview and critical analysis of the key findings of Bhimji's (2006) and Collier's (2006) research, both of which investigate Muslim women's language use (although from different approaches), highlighting the relevance of these findings for my own research.

The research on narrative and identity, both religious and ethnic, has helped to focus my study and provide examples of analysis. Holmes' (1997; 1998a; 1998b) and Marra and Holmes' (2005) provide a context in which to situate my own research. Their suggestions that Pākehā narratives are unmarked and do not tend to use contrastive devices in the construction of identity raise some interesting points of comparison for

my own data, and suggest that that Muslim women's narrative may be decidedly marked. Baynham's (2006) and Kryzanowski and Wodak's (2008) work on migrant identity in narrative highlights the use of contrastive identity and juxtaposition indicating that many migrants actively construct themselves as the 'other'. This is congruent with Holmes' work, which points out that many Māori, in creating their identity contrast themselves with the dominant Pākehā majority.

Having situated my own research project within the field, the next chapter addresses methodology, presenting some of the key issues and challenges that I faced in the research process. It also provides an overview of the research methods used in the collection and analysis of data.

Setting Out to Discover

This chapter describes the purpose and design of the methodology used in this thesis, and discusses some of the key methodological issues that affected the data collection and analysis process. This chapter begins by considering the research questions that I set out to answer, then moves on to discuss the research approach used in this project. The next section explores in further detail the discussion group process. I then briefly describe my participant sample and the recruitment of the sample. Methodological issues around the recording, transcription and analysis of data are presented towards the end of this chapter, and I end with a brief discussion of some of the important ethical and cultural considerations which have influenced the development of this research project.

Research Questions

The specific research questions, which form the basis of this research project, are as follows:

How are linguistic and discursive features used by Muslim women in the Wellington region to construct a religious identity in narratives?

How do these differ between women who spent their teenage years in New Zealand (women who arrived in New Zealand before age 12) and migrant women who arrived in New Zealand as adults?

Research Approach

In order to answer the research questions, audio-recorded data was required. There is very little literature about the discursive construction of religious identity, so minimal guidance was available on how best to gather data for the project. Because of this, I chose to work closely with the community in an approach which worked well for the community, the participants, and myself as the researcher. I take an ethnographic approach in this research project, focusing on the community, but also acknowledging the role I play within the community and the effect my presence has. Eckert describes ethnography as "a process of mutual sense-making among all

participants in the ethnography" (2000: 76), a view which reflects my research approach in working with the Muslim community. Because my research is based on data obtained from human subjects, the design of the methodology was closely guided by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Guidelines.

Audio data was gathered from eight participants spread across four discussion groups, providing a total of 37 narratives. These discussion groups were informal and relatively unstructured. The women were given the opportunity to talk about anything they wished so long as it related to the broader topic of being Muslim in New Zealand. Realising that this was unlikely to initiate spontaneous discussion, particularly when the women were not close friends, I created a semi-structured list of topics to feed into the discussion if required (Stewart 2007).

In all of the discussion groups, I asked the women to introduce themselves, in order to obtain key biographical data; I modelled this for the participants myself, including name, age, ethnicity, where I grew up and my occupation. In some situations, the introductions initiated discussion, but in most cases, I introduced topics to initiate discussion (Stewart 2007: 95). This worked particularly well, and topics were wide ranging, covering subjects such as Hajj[5], Ramadan[6], wearing a headscarf for the first time, as well as more controversial issues like the hijab ban in France, and media perceptions of Muslim women and hijab. The more controversial questions, contrary to what I had anticipated, were actually the most effective at eliciting strong identity statements. The narratives elicited as a result of the discussion groups were supported by four months of ethnographic observation at the Muslim Women's Class every Sunday.

---

[5] Hajj is the pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah that Muslims are obliged to make at least once during their lifetime.

[6] Ramadan is the month in which Muslims fast, believing it to be the month in which the Qur'an was first revealed.

Pilot Discussion Group

To ensure that I was conducting the discussion groups in a way that was culturally appropriate for the women participating, while still obtaining useful data for the research project, I conducted a pilot discussion group early in the research process. The participants were mother and adult daughter, and both are confident, educated women who are well respected in the Muslim community. The daughter Mohaddisa[7] is a good friend of mine, and was also my initial point of contact with the Muslim community in Wellington; because of this, I felt that she was in a good position to provide honest feedback about the organisation of the group discussions. The feedback was useful in refining my study, particularly regarding the discussion topics. Contrary to my expectations, feedback from the pilot discussion group suggested that wearing hijab is a salient issue for many women, and therefore is something they are often very keen to talk about. In particular the pilot discussion group indicated that for many women their hijab narratives were inextricably interlinked with their life narratives and identities.

Topics

The list of possible topics that could be introduced into the group discussion was compiled based on wide background reading. In order to ask salient questions that would elicit useful responses I spent time reading Muslim women's blogs and other social media as part of my ethnographic research. This helped me to keep up-to-date with current Muslim news, while giving me insight into the way women responded to issues that were important to them. In addition to this I talked with Muslim friends about the topics I should include, and read as widely as possible about the experiences of Muslim women.

Figure 4.1 on the following page summarises the full range of topics covered in the discussions. The topics are arranged by the degree to which they were shared between discussion groups. Topics within the circle occurred in at least two discussion groups, while those outside the circle were only discussed in one

---

[7] All participant names referred to in this thesis are pseudonyms.

discussion group. The closer to the centre of the circle a topic is the more universal it was. Those topics, which were introduced by the interviewer (or were identified prior to the discussion group as being potential topics), are marked with an asterisk.
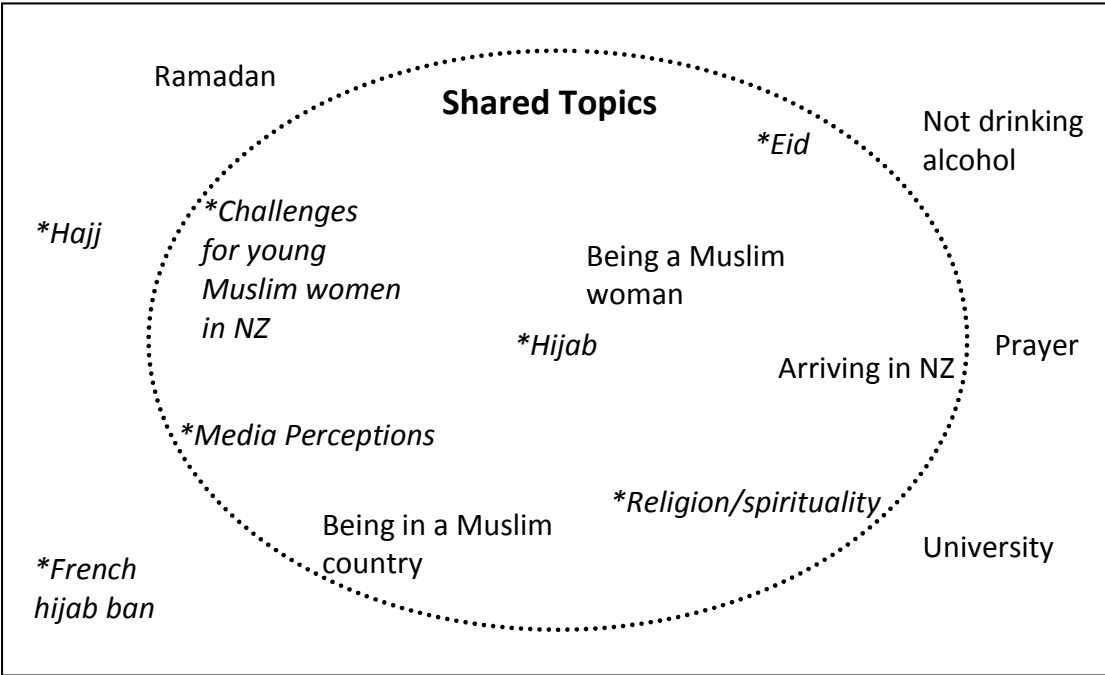
Figure 4.1 Discussion Group Shared Topics

Out of 14 topics, only six were not shared with at least one other discussion group. Interestingly, two thirds of the topics that were not shared were participant initiated topics, while only about a third of shared topics were participant initiated. This suggests that as the interviewer, I had considerable impact on the topics discussed. However, I do not believe that this was a significant issue as the topics were tested during a pilot discussion group and I consulted several Muslim women in the process. In table 4.1 below is a list of all the topics covered and the discussion groups these came up in (those which were pre-identified as topics for discussion are in italics).

Topic	Discussion Group
Hijab	1, 2, 3, 4
Being a Muslim woman	2, 3, 4
Arriving in New Zealand	2, 4
Religion/spirituality	3, 4
Media perceptions	3, 4
Challenges for young Muslim women in NZ	3, 4
Being in a Muslim country	1, 4
Eid	1, 2
Hajj	1
Not drinking alcohol	3
French hijab ban	4
Ramadan	2
Prayer	2
University	3

Table 4.1 Discussion Group Topics

The Discussion Group Process

Data was collected through an informal conversational situation in small discussion groups. Rather than conduct a formal interview, the women were paired up so that two or three women spoke to each other about their experiences of being Muslim. I was present during all of the discussion groups, for several reasons; partly in order to ensure that the women stayed on topic, and used English throughout the interview, but also because I was strongly recommended by senior members of the Muslim community that it was important that I was there to answer any questions the participants may have had. They also believed that it would be beneficial for me to hear the narratives in person and see the women telling these stories as it gives me greater understanding of the meaning in the story.

Due to time constraints and the participants' wishes, the original plan to have only two women per group did not always work. The number of participants in each group is listed below in table 4.2.

Group	Number
One	2
Two	1
Three	2
Four	4

Table 4.2 Group Discussion Numbers of Participants

The group discussions were conducted in a range of locations depending on where the participants felt most comfortable. The participants were able to specify the location of their group discussion; usually this was in a place convenient for them. Locations for each of the interviews are given in table 4.3 below.

Group	Location
One	Participants' home
Two	University Staff Café
Three	Kilbirnie Mosque
Four	Kilbirnie Mosque

Table 4.3 Group Discussion Locations

As outlined above the group discussions were recorded in a range of settings. All of these were relatively informal. Most were conducted sitting around the table with the voice recorder in the middle; participants were often eating food or had hot drinks, which helped to create a more relaxed atmosphere. The discussions ranged between 20 and 40 minutes. Although participants were told they would only be required to participate in a 20 minute discussion many of the discussion groups ran longer because the women were so engaged with the topics.

The Sample of Women

A total of nine women participated in the discussion groups; however I have only used the narratives of eight women. The other participant had to be dropped from the study because she only gave one minimal narrative in English and one that was in Arabic translated by another member of the discussion group[8]. Originally I had

---

[8] Throughout this thesis where I refer to those who took part in the study, I do not include this woman.

planned to have 20 participants. But as I began to conduct the discussion groups I realised that it would be difficult to find 20 women who were willing and had the time to participate. I also discovered that I was managing to elicit considerably more narratives from each participant than I had expected, with each participant giving me an average of 4.5 narratives, providing a total of 37 narratives. This data set provided a satisfactory basis for addressing the research questions.

Participants were self-identified Muslim women ranging in age from 19 to 60. All participants were university educated, most having completed at least a bachelor's degree, while one was a current undergraduate student. All participants spoke good English, many to native-speaker levels; half of the participants were first language speakers of English. The participants came from a range of ethnic backgrounds, all of which are minority ethnicities in New Zealand. All had been raised in Muslim families where faith was an important part of daily life. Almost all participants wore hijab (Islamic modest dress that is loose and covers all of the body save the hands, face and feet) in their everyday life. The majority of the participants were married, and some were mothers. Two participants were grandmothers. Further biographical details are attached as Appendix One.

The participants fall into one of two different groups, (1) those who spent their formative teenage years in New Zealand, and (2) those who spent their teenage years in a Muslim country as shown in Table 4.4. The groups are even in size, each with four participants, though the first group has a younger average age than the second. The six participants who were not born in a western country all arrived as migrants or as the children of migrants rather than as refugees.

Born in NZ/Arrived as children	Migrants
Mohaddisa	Naveda
Zaara	Husniya
Khadra	Najibah
Habibah	Lashirah

Table 4.4 Participant Groups

Locating the Participants

As I am not a member of the Muslim community I faced a number of challenges in finding participants willing to take part in my research. The participants were recruited from the Islamic women's class at the Kilbirnie Mosque. By using existing social contacts that I had developed from tutoring refugee students and from a small project I conducted at honours level in an approach similar to that of Rampton (1995) and Mendoza-Denton (2008), I was easily accepted into the community and was allowed to participate in the class and talk quite freely with the women about my research. Adopting a Community of Practice framework to define the community around the Women's Class at the mosque (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2007), I was able to identify a group which, although diverse in many respects, shared core religious and spiritual values and formed a cohesive group suitable for research. Participants were invited to participate in the research during the class, and were able to choose the other person who took part in the discussion group as well as when and where their discussion groups would take place. Allowing this degree of freedom and flexibility made it much easier to attract potential participants, although I found the most effective way of recruiting participants to be word of mouth and peer validation (Stewart et al. 2007).

Recording and Transcribing the Data

Recordings were made using an Olympus VN-2100PC digital voice recorder and Sony compressor microphone. The digital voice recorder looks like a small mobile phone, making it unobtrusive and easy for the participants to ignore. The quality of both the microphone and voice recorder was tested before use, and was found to be very satisfactory. The microphone was able to pick up voices clearly up to three metres away. The only disadvantage to the recording equipment used was that the microphone had to be switched on underneath as well as plugged in to the voice recorder. In one of the groups the microphone was not turned on, and therefore didn't record. Fortunately this was discovered after 10 minutes and the participant graciously offered to repeat the earlier discussion, although this discussion was rather brief and of poorer quality as a result.

Key excerpts from the recordings were transcribed and I told the women that they could see these transcripts and make any comments or request any parts to be omitted if they wished to. Only one of the nine women who took part in this study asked to see the transcript; she did not make any comments or changes but was simply interested in what a sociolinguistic transcription looked like, and which parts of the conversation I was interested in analysing. Transcription took place over an extended period of time, which overlapped with the data collection period. Before transcribing the interviews, I listened to each of the recordings and created an outline of the discussion. This outline noted outside interruptions to the conversation (i.e. phone, children, people coming in to the room), which participant was speaking and when the topic changed. I also marked possible narratives. At this preliminary stage narratives were identified using a minimal definition that a narrative must have two temporally ordered clauses consisting of a complicating action and a resolution (Thornborrow and Coates 2005: 4). Once I was confident that an excerpt could be clearly identified as a narrative, it was transcribed. For practical reasons I have not transcribed any of the discussion groups in their entirety; this was mainly due to time constraints.

Data was transcribed using the standard conventions of the Wellington Corpus of New Zealand English (Vine et al. 2002); all transcripts use standard English spelling in order to make them easy to read and as widely accessible to people as possible (Cameron 2001: 41). Transcripts were marked for question intonation, lexical emphasis, simultaneous speech, pauses, and incomplete sentences as well as paralinguistic features such as laughter. Interruptions were transcribed; however, non-lexical interviewer feedback (i.e. 'hmm') indicating agreement and understanding was not. This decision was made deliberately to make it easier to read the transcribed narratives and was justified by the fact that audience feedback was not an aspect of the analysis.

Analysing the Data

After transcription, I undertook a detailed analysis of each narrative, identifying salient discursive and linguistic features in the text and making notes on the effect of

each of these. Once I had done this for all 37 narratives, I then identified the features that were most common and compared and contrasted the way in which the participants had utilised language in their identity construction.

The narratives have been analysed in several different ways. I have considered how the complete set of narratives for each participant utilises language in the construction of their individual identity (Barkhuizen 2009). The narratives have been compared with each other in three categories, comparative identity, Islamic identity, and Muslim identity, identifying common features narratives of a particular category share in a thematic analysis (Menard-Warwick 2005), and I have looked at selected narratives and investigated how societal discourses are subverted in order to strengthen the identities of the participants.

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

My research project has been developed in accordance with Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Policy, and I have obtained ethical approval to conduct this research. A copy of the ethics approval is attached as Appendix Two. All participants received an information sheet outlining the research project's aims and what was involved if they chose to participate. Participants were also asked to sign a consent form; samples of both are attached as Appendix Three. Because the Muslim community in Wellington is small, all participants were given pseudonyms and where necessary key biographical details have been changed to protect the participants' identities.

As a non-Muslim woman, conducting research in an Islamic community, one of the biggest cultural issues I faced was how to dress. Most of the participants wear hijab (Islamic modest dress, often involving a headscarf for women) whenever they leave their house, and all wear hijab (including a headscarf) at the mosque. I knew from previous visits to the mosque that if I did not wear a headscarf to the mosque I would be the only woman with an uncovered head, and that this would most likely mean that I would be identified as an outsider or, as was the case during prior visits, asked if I was lost. This might suggest that the most logical and culturally appropriate thing

to do was to wear a headscarf, however this did raise some ethical issues. For all visits to the mosque I did wear a headscarf and loose fitting clothing that conformed to Islamic requirements. In doing this I was frequently mistaken for being Muslim, and constantly found myself having to explain that I was not Muslim but was simply interested in researching and learning about the community. Initially this caused me a great deal of anxiety, because, understandably, it is not possible to tell absolutely everyone you see that you are not Muslim, and I worried that rather than being culturally sensitive I was being ethically deceptive. Having talked this over with other researchers in my department and some of my Muslim friends, I came to realise that this was in fact not such a salient issue, and that as long I did not actually lie to anyone, and corrected anyone who asked me, my behaviour was appropriate. Being open about myself, gave the community the opportunity to question me, and in doing so engage with the research project (Mendoza-Denton 2008: 44).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology utilised during this research project. I began by identifying the research questions, which are the foundation of my research. Small discussion groups enabled the participants to interact with other Muslim women and participate in a process of mutual sense-making. Possible discussion topics were formulated based on my reading of Muslim women's blogs and other social media; these were introduced into the discussion as required. Participants were located through the network of the Muslim women's class at the Kilbirnie Mosque and most recordings took place at this venue as well. Audio recordings of the discussion groups were made using a digital voice recorder and were later transcribed using the standard conventions of the Wellington Corpus of New Zealand English (Vine et al. 2002).

The next chapter begins the analysis section, presenting the participants and their narratives. I discuss the way the narratives can be categorised into three different groups based on the type of identity constructed in each. I analyse these categories, focusing on the similarities between narratives in each group, and the differences between the three categories.

The Narrated Identity

Personal narrative simultaneously is born out of experience and gives shape to experience. In this sense, narrative and self are inseparable. Self is ... understood to be an unfolding reflective awareness of being-in-the-world, including a sense of one's past and future. We come to know ourselves as we use narrative to apprehend experiences and navigate relationships with others.

Ochs and Capps (1996: 20)

Identity is inherently complex; it is linked with our sense of self, others' perceptions of us, and is strongly influenced by our lived experiences. If we take De Fina et al.'s (2006) view that identity is a constellation of aspects, of sub-identities even, which we emphasis or de-emphasise based on context, we can postulate that for some individuals, religion makes a significant contribution to their holistic sense of identity, but that it is only one aspect amongst many. Narrative is a process of understanding, exploring and explaining; it gives us an opportunity to discover who we are as people in the community, and how our lived experiences have combined to make our individual identity unique. As Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison once said, "Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created". When narratives reach out to connect to a pre-existing identity, they construct an identity which is dynamic, fluid and constantly evolving. Personal narrative arises out of our lived experiences and in the process of becoming shapes our sense of identity, our sense of self, as Ochs and Capps (1996) eloquently put it. Narrative helps us to understand our own identities and gives us a means by which to share ourselves with others.

For many of my participants, it was clear this was not an opportunity that had presented itself before. Some of them were uncertain and shy, their narratives hesitant and thoughtful, others seemed to relish the opportunity this research afforded, eloquently talking about the way their religion helped to define their sense

of self. In the process of analysing the data, I came to notice many patterns, one of the most interesting of which was the type of religious identity the women constructed. It seemed to me that religious identity for my participants was not always uniform, and certainly not the same for every participant. Instead I found three main ways in which identity was expressed; firstly, through comparison with practices and values attributed to the 'west'[9]; secondly through exploration of the philosophical and intellectual side of Islam and the way this connects to the participants' daily lives; and finally in the way they integrate the rituals and rules of Islam into their lives, in short, how they go about their daily lives as Muslims. The narratives are grouped by identity type, and I analyse the narratives in these groups focusing on the similarities within each group, and the differences between groups.

Defining Narrative

There are many definitions of narrative currently in use, even just within the field of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. In order to identify those elements of my audio-recordings that are narrative, I needed a definition, which would allow me to define and identify narratives in my data set. I wanted the definition to be broad, in order to ensure all potentially relevant data was included. Based on my reading I identified the definitions of narratives and other key points from four different authors and compared these to find the common elements (Table 5.1).

---

[9] I use the term 'west' in inverted commas, because although it is a commonly used term, it is difficult to define. As it is used in this thesis and by the participants themselves, I take it to refer to the non-Muslim characteristically English speaking world in which the participants currently reside.

Aristotle	Thornborrow and Coates	Labov	Georgakopoulou and De Fina
All narratives must have a beginning, middle and end	All narratives must have a temporally ordered sequence of at least two events. Narratives are usually in the past.	Canonical narratives have: (Abstract) Orientation Complicating Action Evaluation Resolution Coda	Narratives are talk-in-social-interaction. The context of a narrative is a dynamic notion of social space. Narratives as small stories → these do not have to follow traditional Labovian structure. Narratives need not necessarily be in the past.

Table 5.1 Narrative Definitions

Beginning with Aristotle's basic definition of narrative, incorporating the ideas of Thornborrow and Coates (2005), and considering several of the critiques of standard narrative definitions that Georgakopoulou and De Fina (2008) make, I arrived at my own definition of narrative:

Narratives capture moments of experience, whether past, present or hypothetical. They typically have a beginning, middle and end; and are constructed as a temporally ordered sequence of events.

This definition is simple allowing me to easily separate narratives from non-narratives, and at the same time flexible enough that I can incorporate brief narratives (De Fina and Georgakopoulou refer to these as 'small stories') which may not fit a standard Labovian structure. By including in my definition the idea that narratives capture moments of experience, which are not necessarily past (in contrast with Thornborrow and Coates' idea of a canonical narrative), I can look at future and hypothetical narratives in my data, which often contain strong statements of identity.

Although the Labovian structure is considered by many to be the standard in narrative analysis, I find this structure is too limiting for my own data and it would, if I were to apply it as my definition of narrative, dramatically reduce the number of usable narratives I have. Not all narratives have all the components Labov mentions;

in some of my narratives it is difficult to identify a clear complicating action and/or resolution, and this in itself is interesting. Often the clearest statements of identity are encoded in small moments of recaptured experience or the expression of future desires and plans; these moments, though not fully expressed narratives, often take narrative form and I wanted my definition to be comprehensive enough to encompass these moments. I have compared my narratives to the Labovian structure, because I think there is much this structure can tell us; however I also feel it is important to step outside this framework and consider the narratives in other ways.

Participants' Individual Identities

My participants are all unique women, and although they share many characteristics, not least of which are gender and religion, they construct their identities in many different ways. In Appendix One, there are brief profiles of each participant, which provide detailed biographical data. I do not suggest that what I present is the definitive identity for each woman; rather it is my perception of her identity, of who she is as constructed through her narratives. Indeed, in another situation, any of these women may present themselves as someone very different. What you see here are eight different women, sharing a common religion. They are strong, articulate, feminist, hesitant, intelligent, witty and thoughtful. They are mothers, daughters, scientists, teachers, but above all people.

Narratives by Identity Type

In the course of analysing my data, it became apparent that there were some clear patterns of identity construction emerging. These patterns are based on the topics of the narratives, and the type of religious identity constructed. De Fina et al. (2006) describe identity as a constellation of different aspects; based on the findings of my research, I suggest that not only is religious identity part of the identity constellation for my participants; religious identity itself is made up of different aspects. From my narratives I have identified three different types of religious identity, all of which, I believe, contribute to the construction of religious identity for Muslim women in this study; comparative identity, Islamic identity and Muslim identity. However, the ways these are utilised and emphasised or deemphasised vary between individuals. These

three aspects are explained in detail at the beginning of each of the following sections, and are followed by an analysis of the shared linguistic and discursive features, which are used to construct the identity. At the end of this section I compare all three types of religious identity, and consider how they relate to each other to create collective Muslim religious identity for the women in my research.

Comparative Identity

Comparative identity is an identity based on contrast. It focuses on the way participants contrast their lives as Muslim women with their experience of the 'west' (the non-Muslim typically English speaking world, consisting of the UK, North America, Australia and New Zealand). This identity often constructs the self as different in some way, indexing an identity of being the 'other'.

Comparative identity was the least indexed type of religious identity for all of the women. Seven out of 37 narratives had this type of identity construction, and one participant, Lashirah, constructed a comparative identity in all three of her narratives. The fact that this identity is not frequently indexed within the data set, suggests that most of my participants do not create their identity solely by contrasting themselves with non-Muslims. There are a number of linguistic and discursive features, which the comparative identity narratives share. This section analyses these features and considers how they contribute to the construction of comparative identity. In particular, I focus on pronouns, the discursive juxtaposition of ideas, lexical choices, contrastive conjunctions and how these contribute to 'othering'.

Comparative identity narratives typically use pronouns to contrast Muslim women as a group with non-Muslims. Most of the participants use the first person plural pronoun 'we' to refer to themselves and other Muslim women, although this reference is often understood implicitly. This creates a sense of belonging and solidarity, and is fitting with the Community of Practice approach taken in this thesis; in fact it supports the idea that Muslim women form a community with shared values

and practices. The excerpt below provides an example of the way first person plural pronouns are used (lines 13 and 14)[10].

11:         I think that they

12:         – they try to make a scene like where

13:         you know we're all oppressed

14:         and you know the men rule us

(INT03-N14: Hb[11])[12]

Building on the discussion of the use of first person plural pronouns to create a sense of belonging, this example also illustrates how 'we' is contrasted to create a sense of difference. In lines 11 and 12 Habibah uses the third person plural pronoun 'they' to give voice to a different group. In this case who 'they' refers to is not made explicit but implies 'the (western) media', something which Habibah expects her audience to understand implicitly. The use of the third person plural pronoun 'they' creates social distance between the two groups; it reinforces the contrasting opinions, and contributes to a sense of othering.

The discursive juxtaposition of ideas is another important marker of comparative identity. Most of the narratives explicitly contrast Muslim beliefs, values and ways of doing things with non-Muslim practices, and often this contrast is made explicit through the way ideas are discursively placed in relation to one another. When making such a contrast, the participants tend to introduce the non-Muslim point of view first, before going on to counter this with their point of view, not explicitly saying that their point of view is better, but certainly implying that they prefer the Muslim point of view. The following example about women's rights in Islam illustrates this.

7:         I mean just look at the constitution of US for instance

8:         – not until 60 years back that they actually recognised blacks and

---

[10] The numbering used in the excerpts reflects the position in the narratives from which these excerpts have been taken.

[11] The first part of the labelling system indicates which number interview the data was taken from (INT04), the second part (N14) indicates the position of the narrative in the interview and the final letters reference the participant.

[12] Transcription conventions are attached as Appendix Five.

	women as humans
9:	I mean how insane is that?
10:	and this is talking 14 hundred years back
11:	when we were as women given the right to inheritance
12:	right to you know express our opinion
13:	right to own property right to –
14:	you now + far ahead of the times [laughter]

<div align="right">(INT03-N15: Nv)</div>

In line seven Naveda introduces her topic, explicitly naming what she is contrasting, and in line eight presents further explanation. She then gives an evaluation of this in line nine, before presenting a Muslim view of women's rights. The juxtaposition of ideas parallels the two concepts introduced and highlights the differences between them. In addition to foregrounding the difference, the juxtaposition also serves to convey the narrator's response to the ideas she presents. It is interesting to note that in all cases where the women directly contrast non-Muslim and Muslim, they always present the non-Muslim view first, and then follow this up with the Muslim point of view. This suggests that they are positioning themselves in the wider context in which they find themselves as a minority religious community in New Zealand, and then articulating their identity, saying this is who I am in relation to my surroundings.

Although the following example displays the non-Muslim/Muslim contrast, it does not implicitly encode a preference for the Muslim view. Rather, it simply juxtaposes the two different cultures, highlighting the differences but refraining from judgement. In line ten where the author provides an evaluation of the situation she has just described, she is simply observing and commenting on her own response to the situation.

5: was to be able to walk through a mall

6: and have all these really American companies everywhere

7: you know like everything you see here

8: but then everyone in the mall is like in burqas

9: and like crisp white jellabiyas with the Arabian headdress

10: and it was just so strange [laughs]

<div align="right">(INT01-N04: Md)</div>

This example also illustrates the use of contrastive conjunctions in constructing a comparative identity. In line eight Mohaddisa introduces the contrasting idea using the coordinating conjunction 'but'. This conjunction is typically used when introducing a new clause, which contradicts or in some way contrasts with the preceding clause. The use of this coordinating conjunction reinforces the fact that Mohaddisa does not claim that either culture is better. Coordinating conjunctions are used when two ideas are independent and well balanced, as is the case in the excerpt above. Most of the narratives in the comparative identity section use coordinating conjunctions rather than subordinating conjunctions, which set up a dependant relationship between two clauses. This reflects the way the participants evaluate non-Muslim and Muslim culture. Although they seem to implicitly convey a preference for Muslim culture, they stop short of making negative comments about non-Muslim culture, being careful to appear respectful of cultural differences.

Another important way that comparative identity is indexed is through the use of lexical items, particularly those with strong emotive content. The choice of lexical items can have a dramatic effect on the way identity is constructed and conveyed in narrative; the participants appear to be aware of this, and use it for dramatic effect in their narratives. In some cases, the participants have chosen words that have strong associations attached to them, such as 'terrorist'. In the following example the narrator uses several lexical items which serve to highlight her own emotions in the situation and at the same time create social distance between her and the non-Muslim culture she is referring to:

2:      When I come here

3:      it was very very big inconvenience +

4:      because sometimes I'm –

5:      people look at us like stranger.

6:      but after + long time staying here

7:      it doesn't seem very uncomfortable here anymore.

(INT02-N04: Ls)

In particular her use of 'big inconvenience' in line three, 'stranger' in line five, and 'uncomfortable' in line seven, highlight her emotional response to the situation. All

are words with slightly negative meanings, and this reinforces her difference and sense of being the other.

Comparative identity is an identity based on contrasting the Muslim self with the non-Muslim world, or being the 'other'. In my data it is the least indexed type of identity and is marked mainly through the use of pronouns, contrastive conjunctions, lexical choices and the discursive juxtaposition of ideas. The use of first person plural pronouns when talking about Muslim women reinforces the conceptualisation of my research community as a Community of Practice, showing belonging and solidarity. First person plural pronouns also contrast with third person plural pronouns in many of the women's narratives, overtly conveying a sense of separation and distance, reinforcing a sense of othering. The discursive juxtaposition of ideas marks non-Muslim and Muslim ideas, serving to highlight the differences as well as implicitly portray a preference for Muslim points of view. Contrastive constructions are often utilised to reinforce the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas and portray a sense of othering. Lexical choices overtly convey the participants' response, especially those lexical items which have strong emotive content. They also serve to reinforce the women's sense of being the other.

For these women, comparative identity allows them to assert their point of difference, something which they appear to be inherently proud of. In choosing to highlight their differences, whether negatively or positively, they are asserting themselves, acknowledging their difference but also demonstrating the importance of this difference in the creation of their identity as Muslim women. Some of the participants in this research project actively choose to convey themselves through comparison in order to express a sense of being different, which although not always a comfortable feeling, has nonetheless helped to define them as individuals and assert their own identities.

Islamic Identity

Islamic identity is constructed on an intellectual and philosophical level. The narratives that construct an Islamic identity ask 'who am I within my religion?' and 'how do I relate to the wider concept of Islam?' Islamic identity encompasses those narratives which focus on religious ideals, Islamic philosophy and its application in daily life, as well as narratives about rediscovering Islam for one's self.

Islamic identity is the second most indexed type of identity in my data set. Out of a total of 37 narratives, 12 construct an Islamic identity; these narratives were by six participants, with only two women having no narratives that constructed an Islamic identity. Three of the participants constructed an Islamic identity in a third of their narratives, and a further two constructed an Islamic identity in over half of their narratives. This suggests that, while still not the most commonly constructed type of identity for my participants, Islamic identity plays an important role in the construction of their religious identity, though the extent to which this is important varies between individuals.

There are two very clear patterns, which began to emerge in the course of the analysis of this type of identity, focused around the relationship between structure and topic, and the way a uniquely Islamic identity is created. The first pattern, which I have termed **type A** for ease of analysis, is narrative which is recounted experience and deals with Islam as its main topic. These narratives of recounted experience focus on specific incidents where religious philosophy, Islamic discourses or cultural practices are referred to, usually as part of the event being described. The second pattern, **type B**, recounts moments of experience in a different way, focusing on thoughts and feelings about Islam. Rather than describing a specific situation, *type B* Islamic identity narratives generalise experience and refer to a hypothetical situation. *Type A* and *type B* are distinguished in a number of ways; at the surface level, they are structurally very different, and the subject of the narratives differs too. *Type B* narratives in my data set appear to be characterised by the use of the generic second person pronoun 'you', while *type A* narratives are more likely to use first and third

person pronouns. *Type A* and *type B* also contrast through the types of lexical items used.

Type A narratives tend not to use the generic 'you' pronoun. The generic 'you' pronoun is typically used to refer to an unspecified person, similar to the use of generic 'one', which is often considered to be more old-fashioned. The structure of the *type B* narratives pattern in distinctive ways; the narratives canonically begin with a hypothetical situation, which is marked as such by the frequency of the generic 'you' pronoun. The hypothetical narrative outlines a possible action or feeling one may have and then the complications this may lead to. The following example demonstrates this.

1: Hb   it's interesting now sort of looking back
2:          you think aww you know
3:          the western countries and Muslims in western countries
4:          but you sort of go back home
5:          and ++ the Muslims there are so
6:          – probably worse than the ones here [laughing] : actually :
7:          umm + I think when you're + born a Muslim
8:          you kinda take – take advantage of it
9: Nv   /mmm you don't look after it\
10: Hb   /you don't – you sort of kind of\ get to the stage
11:         where you blindly believe things
12:         umm + you don't question it

(INT03-N10: Hb)

In lines one to eight Habibah describes one of the differences between being in a western country and being in a Muslim country. It is clear from the dialogue that follows that these are emotions that Habibah herself has experienced, but by putting them into a hypothetical situation she is able to talk about the impact of these views, without revealing too much of herself. In lines 10 to 12 she describes the effect of taking advantage of one's heritage as a Muslim. Typically at this point in the narratives the women will switch back to first person pronouns (usually singular, but sometimes plural) to provide a potential resolution to the action, as well as to give their evaluation of the narrative, as in the example below.

21:	and you're like why am I so concerned about this little thing
22:	if you look at the bigger picture
23:	and the consequence of that
24:	so you – all your actions will have results
25:	and I
26:	– it perfectly –
27:	- I mean nothing makes more sense to me
28:	than good should be rewarded with good
29:	and bad should be rewarded with bad
30:	how can one person
31:	that's lived their whole life being nice to everybody
32:	and + + being – being a good human being
33:	and the other one being a bad human being
34:	– killing people
35:	– things like that
36:	– have the same end
37:	it just + would never make sense to me

<div align="center">(INT03-N12: Nv)</div>

In lines 21 to 24 Naveda is constructing a hypothetical identity, as can be seen through her use of the generic pronoun, but in lines 25 to 37 she provides her response to the hypothetical narrative she describes. In doing so she switches to first person pronouns, marking a shift in the way she is participating in the narrative. She moves from simply narrating an event, which she is not part of, to being an active participant, giving her own personal insights and response to the narrative, highlighting the story's relevance in the discourse situation, as well as its relevance in her own identity constructions.

Instances of the generic 'you' pronoun in *type A* narratives account for only 2.9% of total pronoun usage, as shown in Graph 5.1. This contrasts dramatically with *type B* narratives in which generic 'you' pronouns account for 40.7% of all pronouns used[13].

---

[13] All instances of 'you' in the pragmatic particle 'you know' have been excluded from this count. Likewise instances of 'it' have not been included. The total count of pronouns only includes pronouns which refer to people as this is where the main distinction between *type A* and *type B* is seen.
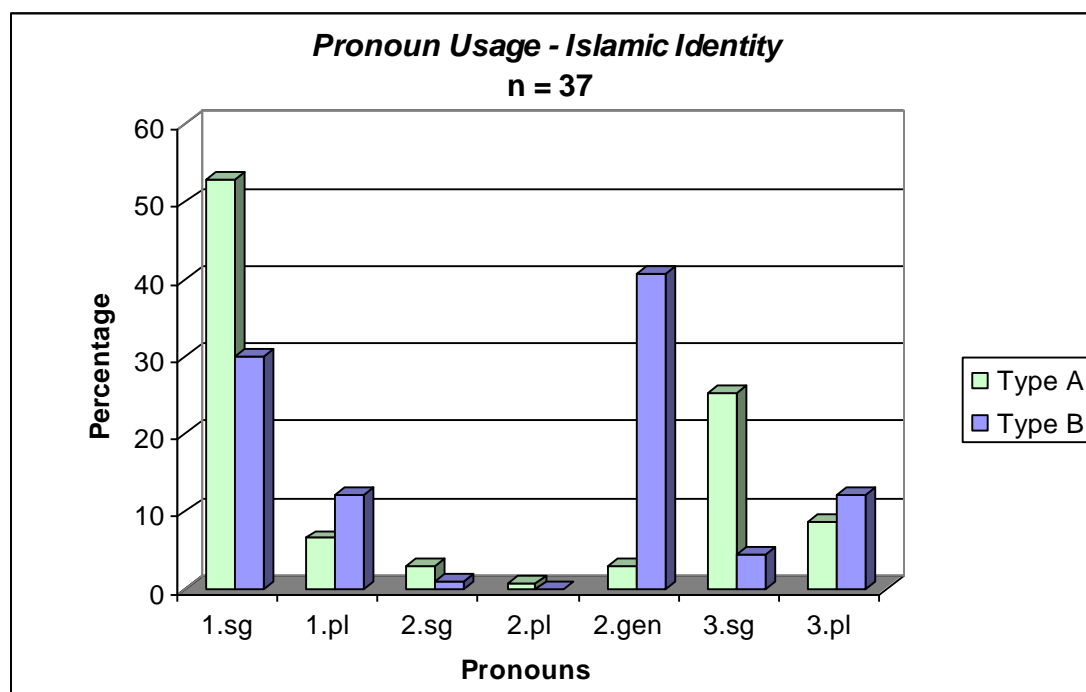
Graph 5.1 Pronoun Usage – Islamic Identity[14]

As shown in graph 5.1, the *type A* narratives have a higher occurrence of 1st person singular pronouns, but also of 3rd person singular pronouns than *type B* narratives. This indicates the different functions of the two narratives: *type A* narratives focus on retelling experiences which have an Islamic theme. These are actual events that the narrator has directly experienced, so it makes sense that these narratives have a higher number of 1st and 3rd person singular pronouns. The use of these pronouns suggests that identity is being constructed through the retelling of a specific experience.

Type B narratives are characterised in the data set by a high level of generic 'you' pronouns, 40.7% of the total pronoun usage. This supports my suggestion that these narratives are constructing hypothetical situations. The generic pronoun 'you' refers to an unspecified person who may at some point feel the way suggested by the participants in their hypothetical narratives.

---

[14] The total count of pronouns includes only pronouns which refer to people, it does not include non-human referents or pragmatic particles in order to make the comparison clearer.

The use of the generic pronoun 'you' constructs a hypothetical person who experiences different events and feels emotions that contribute to the underlying goal or intent of the narrative, but also allows the narrator to distance herself from the story and the feelings and actions she is describing. At the same time it enables the narrator to discuss Islam on a philosophical level, without referring to specific events. In doing this, the women demonstrate their understanding of Islamic philosophy and spirituality, constructing themselves as knowledgeable, confident and well educated.

A further important feature which Islamic identity narratives share is the specific lexical features they draw on. Overall, they tend to use more specific lexical items related to Islam than the other identity types. The lexical items indexed relate to religion but are not especially technical Arabic words[15]; 'Islam', 'Qu'ran', and 'Allah' are the main Islamic words that are referenced in the narratives, although one of the participants does quote a passage from the Qu'ran in Arabic first before translating it. Interestingly, non-religion-specific words such as 'faith', and 'god' frequently appear in the data, as in the example below.

L13:	but when you do it for god
L14:	and you ++
L15:	- you –
L16:	you – really like umm
L17:	- you took care of what god looks at you
L18:	how god perceive you
L19:	that for me will not change
L20:	because whatever you do
L21:	like if you do it for god
L22:	god will see you
L23:	and god will appreciate you

(INT04-N09: Nj)

---

[15] Classical Arabic is the language of the Qu'ran and Islamic prayer, and is widely believed to be the only true language for salat (Muslim daily prayer) or dua'a (supplication). Similarly the classical Arabic text of the Qu'ran is held to be the only language in which there is absolute truth to the Qu'ran because this is the language it was revealed to the Prophet in.

There are some examples of Arabic words being used more extensively in the *type A* narrative set, but all tokens of this are from one speaker, two examples are given below.

L31:   In general everything is going good alhamdulillah[16]

                                                    (INT04-N04: Hs)

L56:   and Allah Subhanahu wa-ta'ala will judge me[17]

                                                    (INT04-N05: Hs)

While the words 'faith', 'Islam', 'Allah' and 'god' (interestingly all nouns or proper names) characterise *type A* narratives, *type B* narratives are characterised by verbs which reference the idea of striving for knowledge and understanding. They often make use of verbs such as 'searching', 'find', 'studying', 'questioning' and 'reading'. The following example demonstrates how these verbs are used.

17:        – it took a lot of umm + searching through

18:        when I was on my own in the US

19:        a lot of studying a lot of reading a lot of meeting other people

20:        and umm ++ you know things starting making sense

21:        as she said rediscover Islam being a Muslim

                                                    (INT03-N11: Nv)

The use of these verbs reinforces the type of Islamic identity being created by the participants. In most of the *type B* narratives, the women construct themselves as Islamic women who are thoughtful, intelligent and willing to question their own beliefs; they talk about struggling to come to terms with but ultimately embracing their Islamic identity and actively take charge of their spirituality. *Type A* narratives construct a religious identity that conveys the women's respect for and devotion to Allah. The women portray themselves as well educated in their religion with a deep respect and reverence for the stories and values of Islam.

---

[16] Alhamdulillah contains the root word Allah, or 'God' in English, and literally means 'with God's blessing'.

[17] Subhanahu wa-ta'ala means 'glorious and exalted is he (Allah)', this is a formulaic expression that many Muslims ritually say every time the say 'Allah'. This is seen as an act of reverence and devotion to Allah.

Islamic identity is constructed on a philosophical and intellectual basis. It focuses on the way individuals interact with their religion at a wider conceptual level, and is the second most indexed type in my data set. Although it is not the most commonly referenced identity in the data, it appears that Islamic identity is a salient part of the construction of religious identity for many of my participants.

In summary, two patterns of narrative occur in the Islamic identity data. *Type A* narratives are recounted experiences of specific events which have Islam as their core topic. This type is characterised by higher use of first person singular pronouns and third person pronouns than *type B*, and typically uses lexical items that draw on Islamic religious concepts such as 'Allah', 'faith' and 'God'. *Type B* narratives usually construct hypothetical situations, which are characterised by the high number of generic 'you' pronouns. The hypothetical narratives are usually followed by an evaluation where the participant expresses her own response and illustrates the relevance of this in the construction of her own identity.

The two narrative types suggest that Islamic identity is being constructed in at least two different ways by the participants. In *type A* narratives, Islamic identity tends to be constructed on a religious level, the participants construct themselves as women who are knowledgeable about Islam and have a deep reverence for their religion. Their focus appears to be on portraying their knowledge. *Type B* narratives, in addition to carrying out many of the same identity functions as *type A* narratives also convey the way the narrator has questioned, thought about, and come to terms with their religion, fully embracing Islam in an active way. The discussion of the Islamic identity narratives gives weight to my earlier suggestion that religious identity is made up of many parts, and, as De Fina et al. (2006) suggest, is a small part of a larger constellation of different aspects of identity.

Muslim Identity

Muslim identity is constructed on a personal level. It focuses on the individual, looking at the daily actions, rituals and rules that govern life as a Muslim woman. On a practical level, it deals with integrating the guidelines and rituals of Islam into daily

life. Muslim identity asks 'how do I go about my everyday life as a Muslim?' Muslim identity narratives are stories of doing and being everyday, of calling oneself a Muslim and finding out how to live that identity daily. The narratives in this section are varied and diverse, reflecting the daily lives and the personalities of the participants. Muslim identity is the most indexed form of identity, with 18 narratives in the data set. All of the women except for one have at least one Muslim identity narrative, suggesting this is a core part of religious identity for the participants in my research.

The narratives in this section fit loosely into two patterns in terms of their structure and focus; they either relate single past events that deal with daily life as a Muslim, or they talk about recurring rituals and practices in the women's lives. The first pattern fits the canonical Labovian description of narrative, in that it describes a single event in the past then provides an evaluation/coda, which provides the narrator's response and links it back to the discourse situation (Labov and Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972). The following excerpt provides an example of this.

54: Md	it was pretty tough doing it without our family
55:	but umm it was fun
56:	and we did it again when my mum came back
57:	and of course that brought an even bigger crowd in
58:	cause they were back [laughs]
59:	but then we got student job search in again [laughs]
60: Int	to do all the hard jobs?
61: Md	yeah
62:	that's right
63:	but we paid her well
64:	and yeah +
65:	it was good
66:	yeah +
67:	it was a fun day [laughs]
68:	and now
69:	– now we're kind of establishing the same routine
70:	for our kids so they know what Eid's all about now
71:	and we try to make it something really special for them
72:	coz we + don't really do much of a birthday thing or a

| 73: | – obviously we don't do Christmas things |
| 74: | so this is like their big day of the year |

<div align="center">(INT01-N06: Md)</div>

In this example you see the last half of Mohaddisa's narrative where she finishes her description of the past event and provides her response, then links it with the current discourse situation.

The second type of pattern that Muslim identity narratives can fit into is the discussion of recurring rituals or practices, which help to construct and maintain the women's identity as Muslims. These narratives are less common, often occurring as small sub-sections of a larger narrative. However, there are several examples of longer narratives, which construct identity in this way. In the narrative below Khadra is talking about her family's traditions surrounding Eid, the three excerpts below taken from her narrative at different points illustrate the structure of this pattern of narratives.

(1)

72:	and we actually decorate the house
73:	you know like put balloons and streamers [laughs]
74:	everything that you would do for a party you actually do
75:	we bag up lollies for the kids who come
76:	and um give them a little bag or things like that which is nice

(2)

79:	– we give presents to the kids on this
80:	- on Eid day as well
81:	that's our main gift giving day and uh –
82:	we found to do that in a country where it's not all around us
83:	umm was an important thing to do
84:	you know for our children

(3)

101:	that's the whole thing really + about being in a country ++ that
102:	– that you know
103:	- in a non-Muslim country
104:	– you have to make your
105:	- all your Islamic practices for yourself and

106:        – and as a community if you can.

107:        so it's a good example of that

Muslim identity narratives tend to be characterised by their focus on lived experience. All the narratives of this type deal with past events or ongoing actions and practices; this is marked, in particular, by tense. Most of the narratives that construct a Muslim identity use the simple past tense. The simple past tense is used to describe an event that has been completed in the past and consequently tends to be used in those narratives, which describe a specific event which has salience in the daily construction of Muslim identity for the participants. There are a number of narratives which fit this description, often they are about the women's first experience of wearing a headscarf. An example of this is given below.

18:        I found that the first time I wore it in my flat

19:        I felt really awkward

20:        and umm [laughs nervously] just sort of ran down the stairs

21:        and ran out to the –

22:        you know it was like a five minute walk to the mosque

23:        and felt really self conscious

In this example Habibah is describing the first time she wore her hijab while she was away at university. She describes the event in the simple past tense, before later providing an evaluation in the present tense.

33:        I'm quite open with it

34:        I like to tell people I'm Muslim

35:        and umm + don't mind if people ask me questions about it

The contrasting tenses indicate the way Habibah responds to the past event she describes; the simple past tense creates a sense of distance between the event itself and the way she responds to it now, which is expressed in the present tense.

The simple present tense is also used to mark Muslim identity. Used to indicate repeated actions, the participants often use the simple present tense when describing ritual actions that are recur. For example, narratives focused around Eid

rituals and traditions are often described using the simple present tense. In the following example, Khadra describes the way her family usually celebrate Eid. This portion of the narrative follows a description in the simple past of her experience of Eid living in Dubai.

27:        – what we've developed <u>here</u> is a sort of a – uhh

28:        – a pattern of what we do +

29:        which is we <u>have</u> a nice family day

30:        but we also umm we open our home

31:        and after people have gone to the prayers at the mosque

32:        they come to our house

33:        + and we have an open house

34:        and people just come in waves [laughs]

<div align="center">(INT01-N05: Kh)</div>

Khadra is describing specific actions that happen at Eid, the use of the simple present tense indicates that this description is not an isolated event, but rather one that recurs. In using the simple present tense to indicate the recurring nature of the event, Khadra is highlighting the importance of this in her life, and the construction of her identity as a Muslim woman. She constructs herself as someone who speaks with authority about Eid traditions, and demonstrates her knowledge of the rules and rituals which contribute to Muslim identity.

The narratives in this section are confident assertions of personal identity. Through their lived experience, the women explore the way they integrate Islam into their daily lives and how this contributes to identity. Their confidence in their own Muslim identity and the way they view this is portrayed through their use of pronouns.

3:        but I can't see her being happy

4:        for me being like this

5:        for –

6:        uhh restricting myself from doing the bad things

7:        from umm + like + socialising not in an Islamic way

8:        for me that's the true happiness

<div align="center">(INT04-N08: Nj)</div>

In this excerpt, Najibah is talking about a Muslim friend who goes clubbing and regularly drinks alcohol (both things which most Muslims abstain from). She

emphasises the importance for her own Muslim identity in abstaining from such things. The salience of this and the link back to her own identity is clearly marked through the use of the first person singular pronoun in both the nominative and accusative positions, as seen in lines 3, 4 and 8. The first person singular reflexive pronoun is also used in line 6, emphasising the salience of the concepts for her identity construction. In using the first person pronoun in this way the participants actively take control of their narratives and focus the attention on themselves as individuals. In this narrative, for example, Najibah appears at first to be talking about the experiences of another girl, but through her skilful positioning and use of pronouns the emphasis is shifted to Najibah and how the situation contributes to her sense of identity.

An interesting feature of the Muslim identity narratives is that they tend to display a higher degree of humour than other narratives in the data set. Many of the women make jokes about themselves in the course of their narratives, suggesting their ease and comfort with the topics they are talking about. This also suggests confidence in the identity being constructed. Below are several examples of the participants' use of humour in constructing a Muslim identity.

7:         she thought that I – I wear this because + umm

8:         I am not allowed to get married with guys [laughter]

9:         I can't – I can't even like fell in love guys [laughs]

(INT01-N04: Nj)

13:        she – she thought that umm I'm bald [laughter]

(INT01-N04: Nj)

In the two examples above Najibah is describing a time when a girl in her German class asked her about her headscarf. In joking about the sort of thing her classmate thought about her, Najibah constructs herself as someone comfortable in her own skin. Many of the women explicitly say in their narratives that wearing hijab is not a big deal for them and Najibah conveys this in her narrative.

9:         I sort of didn't know what I was doing [laughs] …

10:        so I would just put this umm + cloth over my head…

11:        and it'd be falling off

12:        and I'd try and pin it up

13:	and things like that

In this excerpt Naveda is describing her first attempts at trying to wear a headscarf. By joking about this she demonstrates how comfortable she is with the topic, and that this narrative of being a hijab-wearer is part of her everyday life, as well as being something she is reminded of every time she leaves the house. Given its salience in her life it is unsurprising to find Naveda joking about such things.

28:	– just because you're not wearing one you're
29:	– you're not a proper Muslim
30:	and they sort of try to say
31:	ahh those other ones [dissolves into laughter]
32:	and you're like umm but +

This excerpt is part of a narrative where Habibah is describing her indignation at people's positive reactions to the fact that she does not wear a hijab all the time. She jokes about their responses at first, before becoming more serious later in the narrative. Her use of humour here serves to highlight how ridiculous she finds their responses.

3:	like with the alcohol side of things
4:	– living in Dunedin for five years [laughs]

This final excerpt of humour in the Muslim identity narratives is part of a longer narrative by Habibah about not drinking while living in Dunedin, a New Zealand university town known for its drinking culture. Habibah knows her audience will be aware of the stereotype of Dunedin students as well as the fact that Islam prohibits drinking alcohol, and she plays on this in line four. The humour is left implicit, contrasting Dunedin with Muslim culture where drinking is forbidden. She constructs herself as a woman who can confidently deal with the responses she receives.

As the most frequently indexed identity type in the data set Muslim identity narratives are varied and diverse. They are not universally marked by any specific features, but rather share a general tendency to focus on past events. In addition

there are also notable patterns of pronoun usage and verb tense, which reinforce the tendency to focus on past events, and emphasise the individuals' role in these events. The women also use humour to convey their sense of ease with the role of Islam in their daily lives. The Muslim identity narratives construct strong, articulate identities, which convey the participants' sense of self. They are stories of doing and being, of taking control of their lives; they are stories of daily life in which the women portray themselves as thoughtful, witty, intelligent and independent individuals.

Summary and Comparison

Three main types of religious identity are referenced in the data set. The types of religious identity in the narratives pattern in various ways as described in the subsections above, and are for the most part quite distinct from one another, although they share underlying features such as structure. Each of the identity types makes use of linguistic and discursive features in the creation and presentation of the self in different ways. As diverse as each identity type is, together they make a cohesive set, complementing each other and assisting in the creation of religious identity. In this section, I will provide a brief summary of each identity type and the key findings from my analysis, before a discussion of the way these relate to and complement each other.

The first identity type, comparative identity, focuses on how the individual presents herself in contrast with the non-Muslim world. Participants creating this type of identity make use of contrasting pronouns, in particular contrasting first person plural with third person plural, not only suggesting a shared identity as 'us' Muslims, but also creating distance towards non-Muslims, so contributing to a sense of othering. In addition to this, comparative identity narratives make use of contrastive conjunctions and discursive juxtaposition to highlight difference. The participants who index this identity type appear to do so deliberately in order to emphasise that they are different and proud of being so. Whether highlighting their differences positively or negatively, the women are asserting themselves and demonstrating the salience of their sense of being different in the construction of their identity.

The second identity type, Islamic identity, looks at the way the individual relates to the wider concept of Islam in an intellectual and philosophical way. There are two main structural types of narrative in this identity type. The first draws on recounted experiences of specific events that focus on Islam as their core topic. The second type constructs hypothetical situations, then provides an evaluation where the participant expresses her own response and illustrates the relevance of this in the construction of her identity. The first type of narrative tends to be characterised by high use of first person singular pronouns and third person pronouns. In addition to this, these narratives use lexical items, which draw on Islamic concepts. The second type is characterised by a high number of generic 'you' pronouns. These two types of identity suggest that Islamic identity is constructed in slightly different ways by the participants. Some construct Islamic identity on a religious level, emphasising their knowledge of Islam and their deep reverence for and devotion to their religion, while others go beyond this, expressing the fact that the narrator has questioned her religion and in doing so come to appreciate it in a different way.

The third and final type of identity, Muslim identity, is the most frequently indexed identity type and because of this frequency, I believe forms the core of religious identity for Muslims. It focuses on the way the participants incorporate Islamic practices into their daily lives, on how they live their lives as Muslim women. The narratives are varied and diverse and in a sense the category functions as the default for the narratives that do not quite fit into the other two categories. These narratives tend to focus on past events and regular ritual actions. Because of this, tense plays an important role in these narratives. In addition there is a high level of first person singular pronoun usage, emphasising the individual and her lived experience. Humour also plays a role in the Muslim identity narratives and the women seem to use this to reinforce their identity construction and their confidence.

De Fina et al. (2006) argue that identity is a constellation of different aspects, and at the beginning of this section I suggested that religious identity, in addition to being an important aspect in the identity construction of my participants, was itself made up of several different aspects. Although my data set is small, and this research

project only exploratory in nature, I believe that the results support this idea. I suggest that in particular my participants rely on three aspects of religious identity as described above in order to portray themselves as Muslim women. These three different types of identity are interrelated and, it would appear, valuable in the construction of religious identity for the participants in my study as Muslim women living as a religious minority in New Zealand.

Conclusion

This chapter gave a detailed analysis of the narratives by breaking them into three identity types, and discussing the linguistic and discursive features particular to each type. I concluded this chapter with a brief discussion and summary of the analysis.

The next chapter concludes the analysis section. It focuses on the way the participants use their narratives to subvert and challenge stereotypes of Muslim women, in the process constructing themselves as confident, articulate women. Drawing on feminist and popular western societal discourses as well as their Islamic knowledge, the women create an alternative narrative of their experience as Muslim women.

Constructing Identity through Subverted Discourses

In chapter five, I presented an overview of the analysis of the types of identity present in my data and the linguistic and discursive features characteristic of these types. I suggested that there are three distinct types of religious identity constructed in the narratives and that these three types pattern in clear and distinctive ways. Building on the wide scale overview presented in chapter five, which analysed all 37 narratives, chapter six presents an in-depth analysis of three narratives that represent a larger group, focusing on the ways the women subvert normative discourses to create their own sense of identity (Menard-Warwick 2005).

In the first two narratives, the participants draw on western feminist discourses of oppression and societal stereotypes of young western women, subverting these to create a sense of identity as Muslim women who are well educated, intelligent, feminist, and most importantly, free to make their own choices about their lives. In short, they construct their identity as women who are not oppressed. The three narratives also deal with the idea of oppression and make use of subversive discourse to subvert norms. Rather than draw on feminist discourses and stereotypes of western females, the third narrative subverts conventional Islamic and religious discourses, which focus on tradition and blindly following the faith you are born to. In subverting these discourses the participant draws on the discourses of the young adults who have grown up in a media and technology saturated era and who are beginning to question knowledge which is taken for granted; she draws on contemporary discourses to question the blind faith of her ancestors, before ultimately using these discourses as a reason to believe.

The three narratives are produced by different participants who share a number of common characteristics. The participants are all in the 25-30 age bracket placing them in what some social commentators might term the 'Generation Y' group.

Whether a social label such as this is applied to the group or not, it is clear that they share a number of qualities, and have grown up in a rapidly globalising world. The participants also share similar cultural backgrounds; all are of Indian subcontinent heritage; two are Indian, one by descent and one by birth, the other is Sri Lankan. The participants all completed their tertiary education in western countries, either the UK, the USA or New Zealand, and have learnt English from a young age or as a first language. One of the main differences in the backgrounds of these three women is the age that they arrived in New Zealand or another Western country. Zaara was born and raised in the UK and has spent all of her life in Western countries, Habibah arrived in New Zealand at age seven from an urban city in her home country, while Naveda did not come to the west until she was 18 as an undergraduate student.

The narratives analysed in this chapter all focus on different aspects of life that are salient for these Muslim women. Naveda discusses her experiences wearing hijab, Zaara talks about the importance of authenticity in finding happiness, and Habibah talks about her need to question the religious practices her parents and grandparents take for granted.

Naveda – 'Being a hijabi'

This narrative focuses on Naveda's experience wearing a hijab (or being a 'hijabi', as she phrases it)[18]; it is a long narrative, one of the longest in the data set at over 90 lines of text. This narrative takes place at the beginning of the discussion and is the first narrative that Naveda shares. It is participant initiated and is a response to another woman's question. She starts the narrative by describing her first attempts to wear the hijab and her reasons for wanting to do so. She describes how difficult she found it at first because no one else in her family wears hijab, and then goes on to contrast wearing the hijab in New Zealand with her experiences wearing it as an undergraduate student in the US. She then explains her personal attitude towards wearing the headscarf, focusing in particular on her response to what other people

---

[18] Naveda uses the term hijab in this narrative to refer to a headscarf.

might think. She concludes the narrative by discussing other people's response to her work in a scientific field and the ways that hijab affects this.

At the beginning of her narrative, Naveda constructs a slightly hesitant, uncertain identity, as in the excerpt below.

8:      umm + but umm +

9:      I sort of didn't know what I was doing [laughs]

10:     so I would just put this umm + cloth over my head

11:     and it'd be falling off

12:     and I'd try and pin it up

13:     and things like that

14:     but it wasn't like –

15:     like nobody in my family did it +

16:     so I didn't exactly know how to do it

Her tentativeness is expressed through pauses (lines eight, ten and 16) and hedges, such as 'and things like that' in line 13, 'sort of' in line nine and 'exactly' in line 16. Her use of these hesitancy markers suggests that she is trying to convey to her audience the type of emotions she felt when she first started wearing a headscarf. In a sense, she could be seen to be indexing a younger version of herself, one who is still unsure about wearing hijab. In the later part of the narrative, when Naveda discusses her attitudes towards hijab, she creates a much more confident identity than in the earlier part of her narrative, and this is mainly conveyed through the absence of uncertainty markers in her speech. She implicitly constructs herself as a feminist by referencing a common feminist discourse that women should be valued for their intelligence and not their beauty (Wolf 1991), and this can be seen in the excerpt below.

65:     I always appreciate people [laughs] talking when they're talking to me

66:     to actually listen to what I'm saying

67:     and look at me as an individual

68:     and try and understand what my point of view is

69:     instead of you know like checking me out [laughs] like a chick

70:     [laughs] I mean that's the extreme

71:     but you know what I'm saying

72:     so I would rather let that not come in between my conversation at all

73:     and I think this helps a lot

74:        because it just takes away your focus

75:        from the physicality of the person

76:        and let's your individuality your thoughts

77:        and your – you know + ideas come forward

Lines 65 to 71 in particular highlight this; she contrasts intelligence and looks suggesting that people value her for what she has to say rather than the way she looks, and implicitly suggesting that this is the case because she wears a hijab. The contrast between looks and intelligence is made explicit through both the discursive positioning of ideas, as well as by contrasting the verb 'check me out' in line 69 with 'listen' in line 66 and 'understand' in line 68. In line 71 where she says 'but you know what I'm saying', Naveda appeals to her audience for shared understanding, and acknowledgment that they understand and agree with the contrast she has made. Particularly interesting is the way she negotiates her identity through feminist discourses. A common feminist argument against hijab is that since Islam dictates that women must cover their bodies to preserve their modesty, a woman who covers her hair (and/or her face) as well as the rest of her body must therefore believe that she is immodest and that her value as a woman is only equal to that of her body (Chesler 2009). This discourse, though it sounds extreme, is not so uncommon in western media, and indeed, it is a view shared by a number of western feminist academics, particularly by second wave feminists. Given this discourse, it is very interesting that Naveda draws on a related discourse about the importance of intelligence over beauty to explain her own reasons for wearing a headscarf.

Although she constructs herself as a feminist, Naveda also deemphasises her gender, suggesting that she prefers to be seen for who she is as a person, rather than be seen simply as a woman. This idea is another common feminist discourse, and is reinforced by the minimal presence of intensifiers and hedges in her narrative, both of which are features often used to index femininity (Holmes 2008). In her narrative, she also draws on a stereotypical young western female identity, which she indexes in line 69 in the phrase 'you know like checking me out like a chick'. Her use of this phrase shows that she has a good understanding of both popular feminist discourses and those, which are stereotypical of young western females, and she makes it clear that

she wants her audience to know and be aware of her knowledge of these discourses. In drawing on these discourses, she is also subverting them, and using them to explain why she wears a hijab and to assist in the construction of her Muslim identity. This subversion is manifest through the discursive positing and juxtaposition of ideas. Naveda also makes the contrast explicit by contrasting lexical items, particularly verbs which are semantically very different.

Zaara – 'Discovering happiness'

In this narrative Zaara focuses on happiness, talking in part about her own feelings of being happy, as well as about a friend's experience of peer pressure and unhappiness. She also talks more generally about happiness and the importance of being your own person. She begins the narrative by describing a time when, as a child, her friend cut off all of her eyelashes because she used to get teased about them. Zaara then goes on to explain how her friend regretted this once she became a teenager and was experimenting with make up. Zaara uses this example to talk briefly about her own feelings of happiness before talking about happiness and authenticity in general, and how important it is to do things because you want to do them, not because others want you to.

In the later part of the narrative Zaara does not really emphasise her gender, but neither does she deemphasise it. She does not make use of typically feminine linguistic features such as pragmatic particles like 'you know', hedging or intensifiers. This is in part I think because she creates an overtly feminine identity in the earlier part of her narrative when she describes herself and her friends learning to use make up as teenagers. It is assumed that the audience understands this to be a performance of femininity and therefore it does not need to be explicitly explained in this later part of the narrative. Her lack of emphasis seems to suggest that in the aspect of her identity that she is indexing, gender is not a salient feature. This lack of emphasis on gender also reinforces the way she is talking about happiness generally, suggesting that happiness is not just a personal or gendered experience, referencing the fact that it is a universal human experience. This idea is made explicit through her use of the generic pronoun 'you', which in a sense could be termed the hypothetical

pronoun 'you' as it refers to both the unidentified population, but also specifically to the individual at the same time, as can be seen in the following example.

26:      and it's like

27:      yeah you do things

28:      and you

29:      - you please people at the time

30:      but they're all gonna move on

31:      and do their own thing

32:      and you're

33:      - and then you're just there

34:      thinking what happened

35:      hang on where's all the appreciation gone

36:      and you're not going to get any encouragement or thanks for it

37:      people move on

In this excerpt Zaara is constructing herself on a reflective or philosophical level, speaking about a hypothetical situation which may be experienced by many people at some point in time. She uses informal language as indicated by her use of phrases such as 'it's like', 'yeah' and 'do their own thing'; these phrases index an informal genre of speech, suggesting that Zaara is very comfortable with the topic and feels confident speaking about it. She is extrapolating out her own experiences and those of her friends and her ideas around happiness to speak about people's behaviour in general. She draws on contemporary discourses of authenticity (Giddens 1991: 186), talking about the importance of being an individual and making your own choices, doing things for yourself not because others want you to.

38:      so umm like you say about happiness

39:      yeah I think I'm a lot happier

40:      than a lot of people are + now ++

41:      that are left behind

42:      because they were never happy

43:      with what other people did

44:      and it always had to be their rules

45:      but they + are lacking + in self appreciation

46:      and appreciation of people around them

47:      and confidence

48:      because they're always looking

49:      for something to express themselves with

50:          and other people to notice them

51:          but that's not there anymore

Zaara also indexes a young feminine identity, specifically that of a teenage girl, contrasting the way a teenager might do things so that others will notice her, and the way Zaara herself feels now about other people's opinions. This contrast is made explicit through the juxtaposition of ideas, and the way she provides an evaluation of the situation she describes. In line 40 she overtly makes this juxtaposition apparent through her use of the temporal marker 'now'. Interesting to note too, is the high frequency of adverbs in the excerpt above. Zaara uses adverbs such as 'never', and 'always', both of which are very absolute, suggesting that she is exaggerating slightly in order to make her contrast more obvious to the audience. She also makes use of first and third person pronouns to make her contrast between herself and the hypothetical unnamed others she talks about more apparent. Contrasting 'I' with 'others', 'them' and 'they' in lines 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, and 50, she uses the contrasting pronouns in order to position herself within the narrative, at the same time distancing herself from the 'others'. Rather than create an identity for herself as the other, by using the first person pronoun at the beginning of the narrative she places emphasis on herself and makes the unnamed people she refers to into the 'other'.

It is interesting that Zaara has chosen to bring this up as part of her experience of being a Muslim. This excerpt implicitly draws on and subverts the discourses of oppression and of being forced to surrender to the will of a patriarchal society, which are commonly used to stereotype her, using the counter-discourses of self autonomy and self confidence. She draws on contemporary discourses of authenticity and experience to subvert the discourses of oppression, which stereotype her (Giddens 1991: 79). In drawing on these, she is not only demonstrating her fluency in these discourses, but also strengthening her own identity as a woman who is not oppressed.

Habibah – 'Questioning faith'

Habibah's narrative focuses on her experience of questioning her faith, and questioning the religion that she was born to. This narrative occurs towards the middle of a longer discussion, and is typical in length for Habibah, and indeed the

data set more generally. She begins the narrative by briefly contrasting Muslims in western countries with Muslims in Muslim countries, suggesting that there are a number of differences between the practices of the two groups. This then leads her into a discussion of the way older generations in her family never questioned the practices they performed in the name of Islam. She contrasts this with her own experience of almost losing faith in the religion before finding it again after having the opportunity to question and explore her faith for herself. She concludes the narrative by generally commenting that people often get frustrated if they are expected to follow something blindly without fully understanding it.

The discourses of Islam are often regarded as being very traditional and essentialist, and in many cases, this view is justified; however this view does not take into account more contemporary scholars who view Islam differently. One of the predominant discourses both *about* Islam and *within* Islam is that Muslims should not question their religion (Manji: 2005). This is a very traditional view and is often associated with older generations of Muslims, especially those who have grown up in Muslim countries (Smith 2002). An extreme version of this discourse is perpetuated by some religious leaders within the religion. More recently, this view is being challenged, particularly by feminist Muslim academics in the west, but also by Muslim women in both western and Muslim countries. This challenge to the discourse of blind faith is likely to be a result of western feminism, increasing intercultural communication and contact as a result of globalisation, as well as a response to fundamentalist Islamic groups such as the Taliban. In the following excerpt Habibah draws on this discourse of blind faith, explaining her own opinion of this.

7:          umm + I think when you're + born a Muslim

8:          you kinda take – take advantage of it

9: Nv   /mmm you don't look after it\

10: Hb   /you don't – you sort of kind of\ get to the stage

11:          where you blindly believe things

12:          umm + you don't question it

13:          and you just pray coz your parents kind of

14:          – I don't know

Her opinion is expressed through lexical items such as 'take advantage' in line 8, 'blindly believe' in line 11 and 'don't question' in line 12. This explicit evaluation of the blind faith discourse, clearly illustrates her disapproval and sense of discomfort with the discourse, and at the same time begins to set up her subversion of this discourse in the construction of her own identity. She begins to draw this discourse into her own life by talking about her grandparents' generation, and the way they perpetuated this discourse in the following example. She makes the contrast between her own identity, and that of her grandparents' generation explicit through her use of the contrasting first person singular and third person plural pronouns. Her use of third person plural pronouns 'they' and 'them' contrast with 'I' and 'me', setting up her grandparents' as the 'other'. In doing this, Habibah distances herself from her grandparents and their way of doing things.

17:      their kind of generation

18:      they just did things

19:      coz you know the previous generation did them

20:      and never questioned it or umm +

21:      things that possibly are not right

22:      just through culture blended with religion

23:      and things that they did

24:      and so ++ I initially –

25:      I found sort of got to a stage

26:      where I kinda gave up on Islam + sort of as a young teenager and things

Towards the end of this excerpt, Habibah more explicitly constructs her own identity talking about her experience of almost giving up on Islam in lines 24 to 26. In these lines, she is showing the effect this discourse had on her as a teenager, but is careful to ensure that this remains implicit and that she does not make the link explicit. She appears to hold back slightly from constructing of her identity through the effects of this discourse, as shown through her use of hedges. In line 25 she uses the hedge 'sort of', and in line 26 uses 'kinda', 'sort of' and 'and things' to negate slightly the force of what she is saying. It is clear to the audience that she does not want to say outright that she gave up on Islam, probably because she is talking with a stranger at the mosque and is unsure of the reaction she may get from her audience.

She goes on later in her narrative to talk about rediscovering Islam, and uses the contemporary discourse of questioning and doubt (Giddens 1991: 3) to subvert the Islamic discourse of blind faith and assert her own identity as a Muslim woman.

31:     and then sort of into my later teens +

32:     sort of then –

33:     that was when I'as sorta questioning it

34:     and started reading and found it

This can be clearly seen in lines 33 and 34, when Habibah explicitly draws on this discourse, using 'questioning' and 'reading' to articulate this. In the excerpt above, she hedges her use of this discourse using 'sort of' or a variation in lines 31 and 33. her use of hedges also emphasises and reflects her search and questioning that she describes in this excerpt. Although it is difficult to know for certain why she is choosing to express her views so tentatively here, I venture to suggest that she is indicating her uncertainty about whether it is culturally appropriate to subvert these discourses of Islam in this way. This is probably influenced by the fact that she is in a discussion group with strangers and does not know how they would react to such statements, and so is choosing to be cautious.

Habibah's identity comes across as relatively confident despite her use of hedges. She draws on contemporary discourses of questioning to subvert a common discourse of Islam. This Islamic discourse of Islam as a religion of blind faith is common not only within the religion, but is also a view held by others outside of the religion, and so whether Habibah feels that this discourse is one she has to deal with in her religion or not, it is still one that is used to stereotype her by non-Muslims. Her subversion of this discourse and her use of contemporary western discourses of doubt and questioning to subvert the discourse of blind faith, strengthens her identity by drawing on the discourses which oppress her to assist in the creation of her identity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the narratives of three different women. The narratives all differ in focus and topic, but share a common element of subverting normative discourses to strengthen expression of a different identity. The three

women portray themselves as confident women who are intelligent, articulate and well versed in popular western culture. They implicitly portray themselves as feminists and children of a postmodern age who question those things which hold them back. They draw on media stereotypes, feminist discourses of oppression and contemporary western discourses of questioning, doubt and dissent to subvert the stereotypes others have of them.

In the final chapter, I draw together the previous chapters, bringing my research journey to a close. I provide some final conclusions, and suggest further areas for sociolinguistic investigation.

Seven: Conclusion

The end of the journey

This chapter concludes my thesis and draws together the discussion from previous chapters, the results and analysis of my data and the literature on Muslim identity. It summarises the main findings of my thesis and links these with my research questions, highlighting the salience of these findings in light of current literature on Muslim identity. Finally directions for further research are suggested.

Summary of Findings

The aim of this research was to find out how Muslim women used linguistic and discursive features to construct a religious identity in narrative. Conducting a small exploratory study using the Women's Class at the Kilbirnie Mosque as a Community of Practice, I gathered data for analysis through small discussion groups. The narratives elicited as a result of the discussion groups were supported by four months of ethnographic observation at the Muslim Women's Class every Sunday.

The research findings are based on a data set of 37 narratives produced by eight women. All of the data was gathered through discussion groups in semi-naturally occurring conversation as detailed in chapter four.

The first part of this thesis presented a detailed overview of the theoretical frameworks and concepts which influenced the design of the project and informed the analysis of the narratives. Narrative analysis and social constructionist theories of identity are the main theoretical frameworks applied to the analysis of the data. An overview of salient research was also given in order to situate my own research in the wider context of sociolinguistic research on narrative and identity.   The methodology utilised in this study was presented in chapter four, while chapter five and six presented the results and analysis of my data, outlining the key findings.

Chapter five took a broad approach to the narratives, considering the whole data set and analysing common patterns of language use. In this chapter I briefly defined narrative, combining the work of Thornborrow and Coates (2005), Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Georgakopoulou and De Fina (2008) with Aristotle's definition of narrative, to create a definition which works with my data. In analysing the data, I draw on De Fina et al.'s (2006) concept of identity as a constellation of different aspects, suggesting that religion is an important aspect of identity for many individuals. As I began to analyse the data, I found clear patterns emerged based around three different types of religious identity that were being indexed. I have termed these three types comparative identity, Islamic identity and Muslim identity respectively.

Comparative identity focuses on creating the self in opposition to the other, highlighting the difference between Muslim and non-Muslim viewpoints. This identity type uses contrasting first and third person pronouns to create social distance between the characters in the narrative. Lexical choices which have strong emotive meaning such as 'terrorist' or 'stranger', as well as contrastive conjunctions also serve to emphasise the participants' sense of othering. The discursive juxtaposition of ideas demarcates a difference between Muslim and non-Muslim points of view, implicitly encoding a preference for Muslim ways of thinking.

Islamic identity emphasises the philosophical and intellectual side of Islam, focusing on the way participants relate as individuals to the wider concept of their religion. There are two very clear patterns which emerge from the narratives that construct an Islamic identity. The first pattern centres on recounted experience that has Islam as its central topic, while the narratives of the second type recount moments of experience by focusing on the thoughts and feelings about Islam. The second pattern generalises experience, creating a hypothetical narrative in which the narrator participates. These two different types of narrative lend support to De Fina et al.'s idea that identity is a constellation of aspects. The main difference between these two types is expressed through pronoun usage. The second type are more likely to use the generic pronoun 'you' than the first type, while the first type make more use

of first person singular pronouns and third person pronouns. Islamic identity narratives also use specific lexical items relating to Islam and religion more than the other identity types.

Muslim identity is constructed on a personal level, centring on the individual and the daily actions, rituals and rules which guide her life. It deals with the way these guidelines and rituals are integrated into the women's daily lives. Some of the narratives in this section describe specific events, while others recount ongoing actions. These are marked by tense, with ongoing events typically using the simple present tense, while past events use the simple past tense. In a number of the narratives, the participants actively make use of these two tenses, contrasting them to express different viewpoints and times in their lives. Pronouns are also utilised in the expression of Muslim identity, but unlike comparative and Islamic identity, do not fall into clear and distinctive patterns. Rather, pronouns are used to assert the individual. Humour plays a key role in the construction of Muslim identity serving to highlight the women's confidence and ease in their own narratives.

The three types of identity I have identified, analysed and explored in this thesis differ from each other in marked ways, but although different, together they form a cohesive set. They complement each other and assist in the creation of religious identity. Just as De Fina et al. (2006) suggest that identity is made of aspects that form a constellation, I suggest that not only is religious identity an important part of that constellation, it too, is made up of different aspects. These aspects can be emphasised, deemphasised, combined, highlighted, ignored or omitted as the individual chooses to highlight different parts of herself. Further support is lent to this in the fact that all the participants except one construct all three types of identity in their narratives.

In chapter six I analysed the narratives from a different perspective, focusing on just three narratives and providing an in depth discussion of the way the participants used subverted discourse to create their identities. The three narratives presented construct confident, articulate identities. The women draw on feminist discourses as

well as Islamic discourses, which are typically used to oppress Muslim women in the media. In talking about and discussing these discourses the three women make use of contrastive pronouns, lexical items that index feminist ideals, stereotypes of western women, and stereotypes of oppression, and the discursive positioning of ideas to counter discourses of oppression. By acknowledging, exploring, discussing, countering and ultimately subverting the discourses that oppress and stereotype them, these three women are showing that they are intelligent, confident and readily able to convey their identities as Muslim women living in the west.

Research Questions

At the beginning of this thesis I set out two research questions which formed the basis of this research project. They are:

How are linguistic and discursive features used by Muslim women in the Wellington region to construct a religious identity in narratives?

How do these differ between women who spent their teenage years in New Zealand (women who arrived in New Zealand before age 12) and migrant women who arrived in New Zealand as adults?

I have answered the first research question in the summary of my research findings above, suggesting that there are three different types of religious identity indexed in the data and that these have clear linguistic and discursive patterns. In addition to this, some of the participants use subverted discourses to create their identities, asserting their confidence as Muslim women.

The second question proved harder to answer based on my data set. Although I have eight participants split evenly over the two groups suggested in the second question, I did not find any salient differences between them. This could be because my participant sample was too small for any differences to show up clearly. It could also be that the women who arrived in a western country as undergraduate students (as two of my participants did) have more in common with women who arrived here

before their teenage years, as seems to be the case with the participants in this research project. I suggest that in order to answer this question, further investigation with a larger sample, focusing on generational differences may be required. Sociological research looking at identity for Muslims in the UK suggests that there are differences between different ages and that this is most clearly marked between first and second generation British Muslims (Smith 2002: 15). Although there are no clear trends of this in my data, there were some differences between some of the older participants and the younger ones. Due to word limit constraints I have not been able to discuss these in this thesis, however it does appear to be a salient area for further investigation.

Muslim Identity Research

There has been minimal research conducted focusing on Muslim identity, and so it is difficult to draw any conclusions when comparing my research findings with existing research. My findings reflect Smith's (2002) comments that younger generations of Muslims in western countries are creating a uniquely western Muslim identity, questioning and choosing for themselves which parts of Islam they want to maintain. Smith suggests that because they are able to do this, young Muslims are not losing their faith, but are exploring it and ultimately holding on to it as they mediate different aspects of their identities, a generalisation which could certainly be made about the participants in my research.

In her research looking at the way Muslim women assert themselves in online forum discussions in the UK, Bhimji suggests that lexical and phrasal items acted as salient markers of Islamic identity (2005). She explains that the young women in the discussion forum frequently used Islamic words that made reference to Allah in some way (Bhimji 2005: 204). This is a finding that I expected to see reflected in my data. However, this is not so. It is probably the case that my presence as a non-Muslim researcher affected this, as it is something I observed between Muslim women during my period of ethnographic observation.

Bhimji suggests that young Muslim women are constructing themselves as women who are religious, assertive, knowledgeable, young, female and Islamic (2005). In my data, the women portray themselves as religious, Islamic, western women who are assertive and intelligent, much like the women in Bhimji's study. My research supports and develops Bhimji's, suggesting that Muslim women are utilising language to create hybrid identities that incorporate many aspects and cannot be simply defined.

Implications of Thesis

One of the main implications of this thesis is that we, as a society and as individuals, cannot assume that the media stereotypes of Muslim women hold true for all Muslim women. This research clearly shows that Muslim women are confident, articulate, intelligent, and are asserting their identities as they create a space for themselves in New Zealand society. Similarly, we cannot assume that young Muslim women who were born or raised in the west share the same values and practices as older generations. The young women who participated in my research talk about their need to discover Islam for themselves, their need to reconcile and integrate their western values with their Islamic value, and above all their need to be seen as individuals.

Directions for Further Research

As previously alluded to, this study is exploratory in nature and so does not present any definitive conclusions. The way Muslim women construct their identities in language, not just narrative, but the way they use language more widely, is an under-researched area. There are many possibilities and potential directions for future research. Based on my research, however, I suggest that there are several areas that are salient directions for future investigation. As this study only begins to explore the narratives of Muslim women, there are many questions left unanswered. In particular there are several different variables around the participants in the study which interest me, and could provide further areas of investigations, these include; generational differences; gender; and the comparison of born Muslims with converts. Just as there are different participant variables which could be explored, so too could

different types of discourse and language be explored. In particular, I believe that investigating the construction of individuals' religious identity in conversation with other Muslims could reveal interesting patterns of language use, and contribute to our understanding of the way Muslim religious identity is formed.

Concluding Remarks

In setting out on this research journey, I hoped not only to make a small contribution to the new but growing area of religious identity investigation in sociolinguistics, but to also make a difference to the Muslim community with this research. As I have completed this journey, I have come to realise that the true value of my project is not so much in the conclusions I draw, though they are indeed interesting, or the way I conduct my analysis, but in the act of listening. In listening to the voices of my participants, and presenting them in this thesis, I have been able to give my participants, the wonderfully brave women who agreed to take part, a chance to express themselves and present their point of view, an opportunity many of them are rarely afforded as a minority living in New Zealand.

As is the case with any thesis, I'm sure, I finish this feeling that I have more questions demanding answers than I started with. I have suggested some further directions for sociolinguistic investigation focusing on Muslim identity, and highlighted the implications of this research. It is my sincere hope that this thesis has demonstrated the suitability of religious identity as a topic for sociolinguistic research, a fact I remain firmly convinced of.

ဆ *Appendix One* ಞ

This appendix provides a brief overview and discussion of the types of identity constructed by each woman in her narratives and how she does this. In addition, it also comments on non-religious identities (i.e. feminist, mother, daughter, teacher) which the women draw on in their presentation of the self.

Habibah[19]

Habibah is a young medical professional in her mid-twenties. She arrived in New Zealand at age 12 as the child of South Asian immigrants and received all of her secondary and tertiary schooling in New Zealand[20]. She is not married and has no children. She does not wear full hijab except when going to the Mosque[21].

Habibah's identity constructions in her narratives vary considerably. In many of her narratives, Habibah comes across as confident in her construction of her identity as a Muslim woman, but less confident in expressing that identity. She makes frequent use of hedges in her narratives, and in her hijab narrative, in particular, she constructs her identity as uncertain and indecisive. She constructs a Muslim identity, which focuses on the role of Islam in her everyday life, and how she integrates the rules and rituals of Islam into her daily routine, looking at how this contributes to and affects her sense of identity. That her narratives are hesitant and often quite tentative suggests that Habibah has not consciously thought before about many of the ideas that came up in the discussion group.

---

[19] All the names used in this section and throughout the thesis are pseudonyms.

[20] Note that I use the term South Asian to include Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian ethnicities. Although the term is broad and obscures some important information about the participants, I feel it is necessary to protect the identities of my participants. The Muslim community in Wellington is small and if the women's ethnicities were given, they may be identifiable.

[21] Hijab here refers to the Islamic modest dress, which is loose fitting and covers all of the body save the hands, feet and face. This includes wearing a headscarf.

Husniya

Husniya is a 60 year old Arab Muslim. She has been a teacher for most of her life, and arrived in New Zealand as an immigrant 13 years ago. She is married with three adult children and several grandchildren. She wears full hijab every day[22].

Husniya constructs herself as a confident woman who is traditionally Muslim, as is typical of someone of her generation. She uses minimal hedging and often uses Arabic words from the Qu'ran throughout her narratives, on one occasion even quoting from the Qu'ran in Arabic at some length[23]. This contributes to the identity she constructs as a woman who is exceptionally well educated in her religion. Husniya makes bold statements, which firmly convey her point of view and sense of fairness; often these statements take the form of evaluation. Interestingly, she does not create her identity through direct comparison with the west, but rather situates herself in relation to the west as a Muslim woman through her emotional responses. She makes no apologies for being Muslim and can appear assertive and as thinking she knows best, a view which my ethnographic observation supports.

Khadra

Khadra is a 49 year old mother of five, and is of Asian-Pacific descent. She has been in New Zealand for over 40 years, and completed all of her schooling and university study here. She is married with four adult children and one at primary school. She also has seven grandchildren. She is currently a part time teacher and stay at home mother. She is well respected in the Muslim community and very active at the Mosque, as is the rest of her family. She wears full hijab.

---

[22] I use the term 'full hijab' to mean that a women wears a headscarf as well as modest clothing. It does not mean that she covers her face.

[23] The Qu'ran, along with the Hadith, is the holy book of Islam, considered by Muslims to be the literal and final word of Allah (God).

Although many of Khadra's narratives draw attention to the fact that she is Muslim, this does not appear to be particularly important to her. She tries to normalise her identity as Muslim in many of her narratives, often in the way she presents other people's responses to her Muslim identity. She also has more narratives about other people's experiences than the rest of the participants, which seems to be an attempt to normalise her experience by referring to other people's similar experiences, perhaps indexing a shared identity. In addition to presenting her identity as a Muslim woman in her narratives, Khadra also constructs herself as a mother and a teacher, suggesting that these are clearly salient aspects of her identity too. In her Eid narrative she constructs herself as a motherly figure within the community[24]; a role, which my ethnographic observation suggests is very important to her as well as other community members. She portrays herself as someone who is quietly and confidently comfortable with who she is and where she is in her life.

Lashirah

Lashirah is a postgraduate student from South East Asia[25]. She has been in New Zealand for two years and moved here to complete her study. She plans to return to a teaching position at a university in her country once she finishes studying in New Zealand. She is unmarried, and wears hijab.

Lashirah constructs her identity as a Muslim woman by comparing herself with non-Muslims. She places herself in the position of other, often through her lexical choices, choosing to use words such as 'stranger' to describe herself. She often negates negative words rather than choosing a positive word for example 'it doesn't seem very uncomfortable'. This suggests that she is creating her identity as a Muslim woman in opposition to non-Muslim New Zealanders. Lashirah constructs her identity by focusing on what she is not, how she is different. She presents her identity

---

[24] Id-ul-Fitr is one of two main Islamic holy days (both known as Eid or Id). In this thesis I take the term Eid to be synonymous with Id-ul-Fitr, the holy day that celebrates the end of Ramadan, the month in which Muslims fast, believing it to be the month in which the Qur'an was first revealed.

[25] South East Asia includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia and Singapore.

confidently, with minimal hedging, and appears to be very matter of fact in the way she deals with her own identity.

Najibah

Najibah is the youngest of all eight participants at just 20 years of age and is South East Asian. She is currently completing her bachelors' degree in English teaching. She is on a scholarship from her home country to study here for four years and plans to return home once she is finished. Najibah is still quite new to New Zealand having arrived here less than a year ago. She wears full hijab.

Najibah constructs a confident articulate identity, using minimal hedging in her narratives. She seems to place emphasis on portraying herself as a 'normal' girl who happens to be Muslim. Although her Muslim identity appears to be important to Najibah and central to her identity, she creates an interesting dynamic in the way she highlights the similarities between herself and her non-Muslim classmates. Unlike some of the other women, Najibah does not construct herself as someone who is knowledgeable about Islam, but rather as someone who is deeply religious. She emphasises this by talking about how important Islam is to her and how much she values it; this value is conveyed in part through the frequency with which she refers to Allah and the reverential tone she uses when talking about Islam.

Naveda

Naveda is of South Asian descent. She was born in South Asia where she is part of a large Muslim minority population in her country. She is 29 and arrived in New Zealand several years ago. She completed her secondary schooling in her country of birth before moving to the United States to get her bachelors' degree. She is currently a postgraduate research student. She is married, has two young children and wears hijab.

Naveda constructs herself as a strong articulate woman who is aware of her own limitations, particularly around Islamic knowledge. Of all the participants she had the most narratives. She uses a range of different types of identity in her narratives

encompassing all aspects of Muslim identity. She uses minimal hedging, and creates her identity as a well-educated woman, a mother, a scientist and a feminist. Naveda portrays herself as one who is well versed in western culture, citing, alluding to and subverting western concepts to create her own identity as a Muslim women, living and educated in the west.

Mohaddisa

Mohaddisa is a 24 year old mother of two. She has recently separated from her husband, and this year has gone back to university to continue with postgraduate study. She was born in New Zealand to Asian-Pacific parents and completed all of her education here in Wellington. She spends a lot of her time volunteering at the Mosque and with refugee communities and is well regarded and respected in the Wellington Muslim community. She wears full hijab.

Mohaddisa does not construct a strong identity as a Muslim woman in her narratives; instead her identity constructions centre around her identity as a daughter. I think this is for several reasons; firstly Mohaddisa's mother was part of the discussion group that Mohaddisa was in, and this took place in her mother's house. Secondly, this discussion group was the pilot and so a number of modifications to the elicitation techniques were made based on the results of the pilot. A strong sense of family is conveyed in all of Mohaddisa's narratives, suggesting that Mohaddisa's identity is influenced by her relationships with others, particularly those who are close to her. Only one of her narratives explicitly deals with Muslim culture and customs; the rest focus on her experiences being overseas.

Zaara

Zaara is a British-born Muslim of South Asian descent. She has been in New Zealand for around a year and will be returning to England soon due to her husband's job. She is not currently working and consequently volunteers a lot of time at the Mosque, co-teaching the Muslim women's class. She is an accountant by profession and intends to return to this in the UK. She and her husband do not have any children. Zaara is a

confident, articulate young woman, who is always ready to engage in dialogue about Islam.

It seems to be important to Zaara that she appears both Muslim and Western. She comes across as confident and articulate, in both her identity construction within her narratives and in the delivery of her narratives. She makes minimal use of hedges, sentence restarts, or pauses, all things which generally suggest tentativeness. Her narratives are well thought out and she portrays herself as an extremely able storyteller, using her experiences and observations of life to communicate deeper, more philosophical/intellectual ideas. Her narratives cover the full range of identity categories suggesting that her identity as a Muslim woman is dynamic and multi-faceted. Throughout her narratives she often indexes a young western female identity, often through her choice of lexical items, and portrays herself as a woman who is both intelligent and a feminist, as well as being confident in her knowledge and understanding of Islam.

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Phone	0-4-463 5676
Fax	0-4-463 5209
Email	Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

TO	Brie Jessen
COPY TO	Professor Janet Holmes, Supervisor
FROM	Dr Allison Kirkman, Convener, Human Ethics Committee

DATE	April 23, 2009
PAGES	1

SUBJECT	**Ethics Approval: No 16424, Muslim women and the construction of religious identity through discursive features in narratives.**

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 31 December 2009. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Allison Kirkman
Convener

⧼ *Appendix Three* ⧽

Information Sheet for Participants

Main Researcher: Brie Jessen
        MA Thesis Student
        School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
        brie.jessen@vuw.ac.nz
Supervisor: Janet Holmes
        Professor of Linguistics
        School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
        janet.holmes@vuw.ac.nz

What is the purpose of this research?
- The purpose of this research is to investigate how Muslim women in New Zealand perceive and present their religious identity. I am particularly interested in whether this is different for Muslim women who have grown up in New Zealand compared to those who arrived here as adults.

Who is conducting the research?
- I am a postgraduate linguistics student in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. This research project is being conducted for my Master of Arts by thesis degree.

What is involved if you agree to participate?
- If you agree to participate in this research you will be asked to participate in a small group discussion with other Muslim women to talk about your experiences of being Muslim in New Zealand. You will also be asked to fill in a half page questionnaire which asks a few background questions
- With your permission the discussion will be audio recorded and I will transcribe it later. The discussion will take about 15 minutes and no more than half an hour. You are able to withdraw at any point up until two weeks after the completion of the recording.

Privacy and Confidentiality
- During transcriptions, I will replace your name and important details with pseudonyms and codes to ensure that you are not identifiable.
- Only my supervisor and I will have direct access to the data collected. Extracts which appear in the thesis will be anonymous with no clues as to their source.
- All participants will agree to maintain confidentiality over what is said in the discussion they are part of.

What happens to the information you provide?

- The results of this research will be written up as my thesis and may be written up as an academic paper. A copy of my thesis will be available from the Victoria University of Wellington library.
- The material gathered from the discussions will be compiled into a booklet for the community. All material will be anonymous and participants can choose whether they want their contributions included or not.

Feedback

- A summary of the results will be available in late December 2009, if you would like a copy of these please indicate this on the consent form.

Yours sincerely,

Brie Jessen

Statement of Consent

I have read and understood the information about this research project and any questions that I wanted to ask have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to be a participant in this research.

I agree to participate in both an interview and in a small group discussion.

I agree to maintain confidentiality over the group discussion and will not tell anyone what is said by other participants in the discussion.

I give consent for the interview to be audio-taped and transcribed at a later date.

I understand that all data will remain confidential and will only be seen by the researcher and her supervisor. I understand that anonymous extracts may appear in the final thesis, and that I will not be identifiable at any point.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time up until two weeks after the completion of the recorded group discussion in which case any information or data I have given will not be included in the research.

Name: _____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Contact Phone Number: _____

I would like to receive a copy of the summary of the results of this study.   YES   /   NO

Email Address:_____

Postal Address:_____

_____

_____

❧ *Appendix Four* ❧

Glossary of Islamic Terms

This glossary of Islamic terms is compiled based on my ethnographic observation, from reading Muslim women's online discussions, and from conversations with my participants and other women at the Kilbirnie Mosque.

Allah   Arabic word for God

Dua'a   Prayers of supplication

Eid   Muslim sacred days, used to refer to both Id-ul-Fitr (the end of Ramadan) and Id-ul-Adha (the end of Hajj). In this thesis it refers to Id-ul-Fitr

Hadith   The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad

Hajj   The pilgrimage Muslims are obliged to make at least once in their lives to the holy city of Makkah. The pilgrimage takes place over many days, alongside Muslims from around the world

Halal   Arabic term meaning 'legal', usually used to denote what is allowed under Islamic law. Often used in the context of halal food

Hijab   Modest Islamic dress that covers all the body save hands, face and feet, usually includes a headscarf for women. Note that this term is commonly used both in the media and by Muslim women to refer to just the head covering

Hijabi   A Muslim women who wears a headscarf. Typically used by young Muslim women

Islam   A religion that takes the Qu'ran to be the literal word of Allah (God) and believes that Muhammed is the prophet of Allah. People who practise this religion are known as Muslims

Jummah   Friday prayer at the Mosque

Makkah   A holy city in Saudi Arabia, usually referred to by the English spelling of Mecca. This is the site of Hajj and the location of the Holy Mosque

Muslim   A person who follows the religion of Islam and believes that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet.

Qu'ran   The holy book of Islam, it was revealed to Muhammad during the month of Ramadan and is considered by Muslims to be the definitive word of Allah in its original Arabic text

Ramadan   The month in which the Qu'ran was first revealed to Muhammad. Muslims who are able to, fast during daylight hours for this month

Salat   Daily, formal prayer that must be performed at five set points throughout the day

❧ *Appendix Five* ❧

Transcription Conventions

_____	underlining indicates emphatic stress
[ ]	paralinguistic features are in square brackets
: :	colons indicate the start/finish of paralinguistic features
+	pause of up to one second
-	incomplete or cut off sentence
...../....\..... ...../....\.....	simultaneous speech

❧ *Reference List* ☙

Andrews, Molly, Corinne Squire, and Maria Tamboukou (eds.). 2008. *Doing Narrative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Antrim, Nancy Mae. 2007. 'Seeking identity.' In Nancy Mae Antrim (ed.), *Seeking Identity: Language in Society*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 1 - 9.

Badran, Margot. 2001. 'Locating feminisms: the collapse of secular and religious discourses in the mashriq.' *Agenda*, 41-57.

Bamberg, Michael. 2007. *Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Bamberg, Michael, and Alexandra Georgakopoulou. 2008. 'Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis.' *Text & Talk*, 28(3): 377 - 396.

Barkhuizen, Gary. 2009. 'Migrant/refugee learners and their tutors participating in narratives of success.' In *1st Combined ALANZ and ALAA Conference*. Auckland.

Barkhuizen, Gary, and V. de Klerk. 2006. 'Imagined identities: pre-immigrants' narratives on language and identity.' *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 10(3): 277-299.

Barkhuizen, Gary, and U. Knoch. 2006. 'Macro-level policy and micro-level planning: Afrikaans speaking immigrants in New Zealand.' *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29(1): 1-8.

Baynham, Mike. 2006. 'Performing self, family and community in Moroccan narratives of migration and settlement.' In Anna de Fina (ed.), *Discourse and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press 376 - 397.

Bhimji, Fazila. 2005. ''Assalam u Alaikum. brother i have a right to my opinion on this': British Islamic women assert their positions in virtual space.' In Allyson Jule (ed.), *Gender and the Language of Religion.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 203 - 220.

Block, David. 2006. 'Identity in applied linguistics.' In Tope Omoniyi & Goodith White (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Identity*. London: Continuum 34 -59.

Bloor, Meriel & Thomas Bloor. 2007. *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Hodder Arnold.

Bucholtz, Mary. 2003. 'Theories of discourse as theories of gender: discourse analysis in language and gender studies.' In Janet Holmes & Miriam Meyerhoff (eds.), *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
Burr, Vivian. 1995. *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Sage.

Burr, Vivian. 2003. *Social Constructionism (Second Edition)*. New York: Routledge.

Cameron, Deborah. 1992. *Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method*. London: Routledge.

Cameron, Deborah. 2001. *Working with Spoken Discourse*. London: Sage Publications.

Chesler, Phyllis. (2009). 'The burqa: ultimate feminist choice?'. Retrieved December 2, 2009, from http://pajamasmedia.com/phyllischesler/2009/08/31/the-burqa-the-ultimate-feminist-choice/2/.

Coates, J. 1996. *Women Talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Collier, Shartriya. 2005. ''Inshallah, today there will be work': Senegalese women entrepreneurs constructing identities through language use and Islamic practice.' In   Allyson Jule (ed.), *Gender and the Language of Religion*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 221 - 239.

Duranti, Alessandro. 1986. 'The audience as co-author.' *Text*, 6(3): 239 - 247.

Eckert, Penelope. 2000. *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice: The Linguistic Construction of Identity in Belten High*. Malden: Blackwell.

Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 'Communities of practice: where language, gender, and power all live.' In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, & Birch Moonwomon (eds.), *Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference*.

Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet.'Think practically and look locally: language and gender as community-based practice.' *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21: 461 - 490.
Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2003. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2007. 'Putting communities of practice in their place.' *Gender and Language*, 1(1): 27 - 37.

Edross, Sadia. 1997. 'Muslim women, self and identity.' *Agenda*, 28-33.

Fairclough, Norman. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fernandez, Sue, and Michael Clyne. 2007. 'Tamil in Melbourne.' *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 28(3): 163 - 187.

Feuer, Avital. 2008. *Who Does This Language Belong to?: Personal Narratives of Language Claim and Identity*. North Carolina: IAP-Information Age Publisher.

De Fina, Anna. 2007. 'Code-switching and the construction of ethnic identity in a community of practice.' *Language in Society*, 36(3): 371 - 392.

De Fina, Anna, Deborah Schiffrin, and Michael Bamberg. 2006. *Discourse and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Duszak, Anna. 2002. 'Us and others: an introduction.' In Anna Duszak (ed.), *Us and Others*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Fishman, Joshua. 2006. 'A decalogue of basic theoretical perspectives for a sociology of language and religion.' In Tope Omoniyi & Joshua Fisman (eds.), *Explorations in the Sociology of Language and Relgion*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company 13 - 25.

Fought, Carmen. 2006. *Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Furseth, Inger and Pal Repstad. 2006. *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion*. Hants: Ashgate.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra. 2006. 'The other side of the story: towards a narrative analysis of narratives-in-interaction.' *Discourse Studies*, 8(2): 235 - 257.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra, and Anna de Fina. 2008. 'Introduction: narrative analysis in the shift from texts to practices.' *Text & Talk*, 28(3): 275 - 282.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra, and Dionysis Goutsos. 2004. *Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. (2nd ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge: Polity.

Gumperz, John J., and Jenny Cook-Gumperz. 1982. 'Introduction: language and the communication of social identity.' In John J. Gumperz (ed.), *Language and Social Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1 - 21.

Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck. 2002. *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hashim, Iman. 1999. 'Reconciling Islam and feminism.' *Gender and Development*, 7: 7-14.

Hewitt, Roger. 1992. 'Language, youth and the destabilisation of ethnicity.' In *Language, Ethnicity and Race Reader.* London: Routledge 188 - 198.

Holmes, Janet. 1986. 'Functions of you know in women's and men's speech.' *Language in Society*, 15: 1-21.

Holmes, Janet. 1997a. 'Story-telling in New Zealand women's and men's talk.' In Ruth Wodak (ed.), *Gender, Discourse and Ideology.* London: Sage 263 - 93.

Holmes, Janet. 1997b. 'Struggling beyond Labov and Waletzky.' *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 7(1-4): 91 - 96.

Holmes, Janet. 1997c. 'Women, language and identity.' *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 1: 195-223.

Holmes, Janet. 1998a. 'Why tell stories? contrasting themes and identities in the narratives of Māori and Pākehā women and men.' *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 8(1): 1 - 29.

Holmes, Janet. 1998b. 'Narrative structure: some contrasts between Māori and Pākehā story-telling.' *Multilingua*, 17: 25-57.

Holmes, Janet. 2005. 'Story-telling at work: a complex discursive resource for integrating personal, professional and social identities.' *Discourse Studies*, 7(6).

Holmes, Janet. 2007. 'Social constructionism, postmodernism, and feminist sociolinguistics.' *Gender and Language*, 1: 51-65.

Holmes, Janet. 2008. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. (3rd Ed.). Harlow: Longman.

Holmes, Janet, and Meredith Marra. 2002. 'Humour as a discursive boundary marker in social interaction.' In Anna Duszak (ed.), *Us and Others*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Holmes, Janet, and Miriam Meyerhoff. 1999. 'The community of practice: theories and methodologies in language and gender research.' *Language in Society*, 28: 173 - 183.

James, Bev, and Kay Saville-Smith. 1989. *Gender, Culture and Power*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Johnstone, Barbara. 2002. *Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Joseph, J. 2004. *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jule, Allyson. 2005. *Gender and the Language of Religion*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jule, Allyson (ed.). 2007. *Language and Religious Identity: Women in Discourse.*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kolig, Erich, and William Shepard. 2006. 'Introduction: Muslims in New Zealand.' *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 8(2): 1-7.

Kryzanowski, Michal, and Ruth Wod. 2008. 'Multiple identities, migration and belonging: 'voices of migrants'.' In Carmen Rosa an Rick Iedema Caldas-Coulthard (ed.), *Identity Trouble: Critical Discourse and Contested Identities.* Basingstoke: palgrave.

Labov, William. 1972. *Language in the Inner City; Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Labov, William, and Joshua Waletzky. 1967. 'Narrative analysis: oral version of personal experience.' In J. Helm (ed.), *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press 12 - 24.

Lazar, Michelle M. 2007. 'Feminist critical discourse analysis: articulating a feminist discourse praxis.' *Critical Discourse Studies*, 4: 141-164.

Manji, I. (2005). *The Trouble with Islam Today: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith* (1st ed.). New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

Marra, Meredith and Janet Holmes. 2005. 'Constructing ethnicity and leadership through storytelling at work.'.

Marranci, Gabriele. 2008. *The Anthropology of Islam*. Oxford: Berg.

Maynes, Mary Jo. 2008. *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Mazumdar, Shampa and Sanjoy Mazumdar. 2005. 'The articulation of religion in domestic space : rituals in the immigrant Muslim home.' In Pamela J. Stewart & Andrew Strathern (eds.), *Contesting rituals : Islam and practices of identity-making*. Durham: Carolina Academic Pres.

McElhinny, Bonnie. 2003. 'Theorizing gender in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology.' In Janet Holmes & Miriam Meyerhoff (eds.), *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Menard-Warwick, Julia. 2005. 'Transgression narratives, dialogic voicing and cultural change.' *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 9(4): 533-556.

Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 2001. 'Language and identity.' In Peter Trudgill, Jack Chambers, & Natalie Schilling-Estes (eds.), *Handbook of Variation Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 475 - 499.

Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 2008. *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice Among Latina Youth Gangs*. Malden: Blackwell Pub.

Mishler, Elliot. 2006. 'Narrative and identity: the double arrow of time.' In Anna de Fina (ed.), *Discourse and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 30 - 48.

Mishler, Elliot G. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mojab, Shahrzad. 2001. 'Theorizing the politics of 'Islamic feminism'.' *Feminist Review*, 124-146.

Morgan, David L. 1988. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Morgan, Marcyliena. 2004. 'Speech community.' In Alessandro Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Ochs, Elinor. 1979. 'Transcription as theory.' In Elinor Ochs & B. Schieffelin (eds.), *Developmental Pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press 43 - 72.

Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps. 1996. 'Narrating the self.' *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 25: 19-43.

Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps. 2001. *Living Narrative: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Omoniyi, Tope. 2006. 'Hierarchy of identities.' In Tope Omoniyi & Goodith White (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Identity*. London: Continuum 11 - 33.

Omoniyi, Tope and Joshua Fishman (eds.). 2006. *Explorations in the Sociology of Language and Religion*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Omoniyi, Tope and Goodith White. 2006. 'Introduction.' In Tope Omoniyi & Goodith White (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Identity*. London: Continuum.

Phillips, Louise, and Marianne W. Jørgensen. 2002. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage.

Predelli, Line Nyhagen. 2004. 'Interpreting gender in Islam: a case study of immigrant Muslim women in Oslo, Norway.' *Gender and Society*, 18: 473-493.

Rampton, Ben. 1995. *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents*. London and New York: Longman.

Rampton, Ben. 2006. *Language in Late Modernity: Interaction in an Urban School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riessman, C.K. 1993. *Narrative Analysis*. London: Sage.

Rosenwald, G. C. & R. L. Ochberg. 1992. *Storied Lives: The Cultural Politics of Self Understanding*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rubin, Herbert J. 1995. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Pubications.

Sallabank, Julia. 2006. 'Guernsey French, identity and language endangerment.' In Tope Omoniyi & Goodith White (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Identity*. London: Continuum 50-71.

Saville-Troike, Muriel. (2003). *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction*. (2nd ed.). Ox: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 1996. 'Narrative as self-portrait: sociolinguistic constructions of identity.' *Language and Society*, 25: 167 - 203.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 2009. 'Crossing boundaries: the nexus of time, space, person, and place in narrative.' *Language in Society*, 38: 421-445.

Shepard, William. 2006. 'New Zealand's Muslims and their organisations.' *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 8(2): 8-44.

Smith, Jane I. 2002. 'Introduction.' In *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Statistics New Zealand. 2006. *Census 2006*.

Stenstrom, Anna-Brita. 1994. *An Introduction to Spoken Interaction*. London: Longman.

Stewart, David W. 2007. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Suleiman, Yasir. 2006. 'Constructing languages, constructing national identities.' In Tope Omoniyi & Goodith White (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Identity*. London: Continuum 50 - 71.

Tabakowska, Elzbieta. 2002. 'The regime of the other: 'us' and 'them' in translation.' In Anna Duszak (ed.), *Us and Others*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Thornborrow, Joanna and Jenifer Coates. 2005. 'The sociolinguistics of narrative.' In Joanna Thornborrow & Jenifer Coates (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Narrative*. Philadelphia: Benjamins Publishing Co.

Vine, Bernadette, Gary Johnson, Jennifer O'Brien, and Shelly Robertson. 2002. 'Wellington archive of New Zealand English transcriber's manual.' *Language in the Workplace Occasional Papers*, 5.

Watkins-Goffman. 2006. *Understanding Cultural Narratives: Exploring Identity and the Multi-Cultural Experience*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Weedon, Chris. 2004. *Identity and Culture*. Miadenhead: Open University Press.

Weiss, Gilbert and Ruth Wodak. 2003. 'Introduction: theory, interdisciplinarity and critical discourse analysis.' In *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan 1 -35.

Wenger, Etienne. 1998. *Communities of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer. 2001. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

Wolf, Naomi. 1991. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. (1st ed.). New York: W. Morrow.

Yaacob, Abdul Monir and Zainal Azam Abdul Rahman. 2002. *Muslims' Rights in Non Muslim Majority Countries*. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia.