7 Between Dream and Trauma: Agency in Narratives of Language and Migration

This chapter explores narratives of DMWs in Madrid. An analysis of narratives enhances the understanding of the experiences and challenges DMWs face in their everyday multilingual lives and sheds light on the co-construction and negotiation of motives, hopes, dreams, plans, and future expectations, as well as disillusionments, fears, and frustrations related to migration and multilingualism. This builds on the notion that storytelling serves as a meaning-making practice as it allows storytellers and co-tellers to make sense of the world and lived experiences in a temporally and causally coherent way, thus rendering them meaningful and comprehensible (cf. Bruner 1986, cited in De Fina et al. 2020: 354). This heuristic paradigm has also been fruitfully applied in the contexts of multilingualism and migration with different objectives and methodological approaches.[128] Female DMWs are embedded in a neoliberal, global labor market characterized by socioeconomic, political, social, and linguistic power dynamics and imbalances. Therefore, the narrative analysis focuses on agency in *big stories* and *small stories*. That is, DMWs' perceptions of who or what, in contexts relevant to them, makes decisions, has control, and the extent to which they can act autonomously and pursue their own interests and agendas—or not. The analysis of agency considers all stages of the migration process, from the sending society, the Philippines, to the current receiving society, Spain, as well as narratives that oscillate between dream and trauma.

7.1 Theoretical and Epistemological Foundations of Sociolinguistic Narrative Research

People convey their lived experiences and perceptions of the world through narratives. Storytelling is thus considered a fundamental communicative practice and experience of humans. Against this background, storytelling has attracted great interest in various disciplines, making narrative research a broad field with diverse theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches.

Sociolinguistic narrative inquiry is based on the classic model of Labov & Waletzky (1967). Derived from empirical data from 600 interviews in the USA on the

128 Cf. Bürki (2021), De Fina (2003), Gugenberger (2018), Kluge (2005), Guinto (2021), Patiño-Santos (2020), Sabaté i Dalmau (2018).

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topic of life-threatening situations, they developed a formalized basic structure of oral storytelling. Their model consists of five constitutive structural components, which they identify as: (1) orientation, (2) complication, (3) evaluation, (4) resolution, and (5) coda (cf. Labov & Waletzky 1967: 32–39). The first element, *orientation*, introduces contextual factors such as the people involved, the time, the space, the setting, and the situation, thereby establishing the framework for a narrative. Secondly, the *complication* provides information about the action and thus has a central function. The third element, *evaluation*, has an interpretative and coherence-building role, as the narrator's evaluation of the story's meaning highlights what is important and clarifies his or her perspective on the events. The fourth element, *resolution*, follows the *evaluation* and offers a solution to the *complication*. Some narratives also include a *coda* that connects the narrative to the present. This structurally oriented model by Labov & Waletzky (1967) assumes that these elements typically appear in the above chronological order and are causally related. These ideas about storytelling have been widely referenced, critiqued, and developed in various approaches.

In selecting relevant lines of research in sociolinguistic narrative studies for further discussion, I focus on those that expand the scope of narratives beyond the classical framework of Labov & Waletzky (1967). Since the aim of my narrative inquiry is to investigate the negotiation of agency in narratives (see Section 7.2), models that include everyday narratives are particularly relevant (cf. Gülich 2008). Approaches that emphasize interaction and reflexivity are also of particular interest, as the latter in particular serves as a key heuristic in my theoretical and methodological framework within critical ethnographic sociolinguistics. Interactions are important because the narratives of life histories and language biographies that I collected in interviews are always co-constructed. Therefore, they cannot be separated from the framing of the narrative situation, the interlocutors involved, or the accompanying interactions.

A relevant approach in sociolinguistic narrative inquiry shifts the focus from structural concerns to interactional aspects, which did not play a role in Labov & Waletzky's (1967) model. In this interactional context, Bamberg (1997) emphasizes that not only the narrator but also the co-tellers influence the construction of a narrative. The core idea of this model, the so-called *narrative positioning*, is based on the understanding of storytelling as a co-constructed, participatory activity in which narrators negotiate the positions of themselves and others (cf. Bamberg 1997: 336). This negotiation of positions takes place on three levels (cf. Bamberg 1997: 337, Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008: 385): The first level concerns how the characters are positioned in the (internal) narrative world. The second level is about how the narrator positions himself/herself and how he/she is positioned by his/her co-tellers during the interaction. The third level considers how narrators

position themselves in relation to broader discourses. The roles of narrator and co-teller are not static but can change several times during the course of a narrative (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001: 3).

Another important approach in sociolinguistic narrative research criticizes the scope of what Labov & Waletzky define as narrative, arguing that it is too narrowly conceived. A central criticism concerns the assumption of prototypical narrative sequences in Labov & Waletzky's (1967) model, since not all narratives follow well-defined, chronologically ordered patterns and focus on past events. In addition, the model's lack of consideration for the situational context in which a narrative is co-constructed is another key point of criticism (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001). Ochs & Capps (2001) argue for a broader understanding of narratives, one that goes beyond storytelling in interviews to include narratives in everyday conversations (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001: 1). These types of narratives may deviate from the typical structural patterns outlined by Labov & Waletzky (1967):

> Understanding narrative, however, compels going beyond these exemplars to probe less polished, less coherent narratives that pervade ordinary social encounters and are a hallmark of the human condition. These narratives have the character of rough works in progress, because interlocutors use narrative to grapple with unresolved life experiences. (Ochs & Capps 2001: 57)

In this context, Ochs & Capps (2001: 18–54) propose, from a sociolinguistic perspective, a model that characterizes narratives based on five so-called *narrative dimensions*: (1) *tellership*, (2) *tellability*, (3) *embeddedness*, (4) *linearity*, and (5) *moral stance*. All five dimensions are conceptualized as continua, meaning that they vary in intensity. The dimension of (1) *tellership* considers whether a narrative is produced by one or more narrators (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001: 24). (2) *Tellability* refers to the idea that certain events seem more relevant, novel, and thus more worthy of being told than others (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001: 33). The degree of (3) *embeddedness* of a narrative varies depending on how closely it is connected to surrounding discourses and situational and contextual factors (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001: 36). (4) *Linearity* describes the way events are presented in the narrative: they may be chronologically ordered and causally linked, or they may show temporal breaks and openness (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001: 41). Narratives are neither objective nor neutral; the evaluations and attitudes of the narrator(s) towards the narrated events are encapsulated in (5) *moral stance* (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001: 45). By conceptualizing these dimensions as continua, the model acknowledges dynamic developments that can shift even within a single narrative.

This expanded concept of narratives is also linked to the notion of *small stories*, a framework that has been shaped by Michael Bamberg and Alexandra Georgakopoulou. They argue that the majority of approaches in (sociolinguistic) narra-

tive research focus on narratives that retrospectively reconstruct past events, often focusing on so-called *big stories* (cf. Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008: 381). In contrast, small stories research also deals with narratives of current, ongoing events or prospective, future-oriented events (cf. Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008: 381). Their scope tends to be smaller, and small stories may refer to (seemingly) marginal issues, emphasizing fleeting and unfinished aspects (cf. Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008: 382). The narrative dimensions proposed by Ochs & Capps (2001) also apply to small stories; however, prototypical criteria of textuality are not considered strictly necessary for something to be considered a narrative. Instead, Bamberg & Georgakopoulou (2008: 382) adopt a functionalist perspective within the small stories paradigm, focusing on the action orientation of the interlocutors, which includes hints, interruptions, incoherent or incomplete narratives, and refusals to narrate. This approach moves away from an "all or nothing" stance and emphasizes flexibility, embracing a "more or less" approach (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008: 382) in determining whether something constitutes a narrative. Epistemologically, small stories foreground types of narrative and storytelling practices that are excluded from other conceptions.

From an epistemological perspective, small stories are also a crucial tool for researchers' reflexivity (cf. Georgakopoulou 2015: 264), as the way narratives are constructed is shaped by the interaction between co-tellers. Epistemologically, storytelling does not produce a one-to-one representation or a copy of reality and sequences of events; rather, it is a co-constructed, interactive practice. In the words of Baynham (2006: 376), this constructivist perspective can be expressed as follows: "[N]arrative is not a transparent vehicle that conveys 'what happened,' but rather, a structured and structuring genre that shapes and constructs the story that is told and the self-presentations that it involves."

While storytelling, as noted above, is a fundamental human activity, it underlies cultural particularities. In the context of this analysis that is embedded in the Philippines, it is relevant that the concept of chronology is not identical to a Western understanding of it (cf. Lauser 2003: 65), which means that different realizations of narratives are to be expected.

7.2 Agency in narratives

A multitude of interdisciplinary studies have demonstrated that structural factors render DMWs especially prone to exploitation and abuse (cf. Cheng 2006, Constable [2]2010, Guevarra 2009, Lutz [2]2008, Parreñas [2]2015, Romero 1992; for a discussion, see Section 1.1 and Section 3.5.2). During fieldwork, participants also shared lived experiences of exploitation, racism, linguistic discrimination, physical vio-

lence, and the resulting traumas. At the same time, however, other, more positive memories were shared, as well as events and situations in which participants did not perceive themselves as powerless or lacking control, but rather as active. There were also more nuanced negotiations of the advantages and disadvantages. Celia expresses this in her own words—a sentiment that was largely echoed by the other four participants in a focus group:[129]

(90) **Celia**: There is not only just a negative side.
All: Yeah, hm.
Celia: But there is also some positive side.

In representing the narrated experiences of DMWs, it is important to acknowledge their vulnerabilities and positions as victims without reproducing them in a one-dimensional way (see Section 2.4; cf. also Lorente 2018, Morgenthaler García in press, García Agüero 2023, Guinto 2021). Instead, it is relevant to capture this complex and sometimes contradictory spectrum and to explore how DMWs perceive themselves and others, and how they negotiate their own decision-making and so-called *agency* in their narratives. Following Glasgow & Bouchard (2019: 2), agency refers to the "complex links between people, their goals and aspirations, their ability to exercise their own will, and the local and broader contexts in which these phenomena unfold." Deppermann (2015: 64) adds that "agency is a fundamental dimension of the cognitive and linguistic aspects of events. Agency concerns the questions: How are events caused? Who acts upon whom and with what motives?" (my translation; cf. also De Fina 2003: 22–23). Against this background, the aim of the narrative analysis is to explore small stories and big stories about multilingualism and migration from DMWs in terms of agency.

The concept of agency has its origins in the social sciences, particularly in the work of sociologists Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu.[130] It has subsequently been taken up in various other disciplines. Linguistically oriented interpretations of agency can also be fruitfully applied in contexts of multilingualism and migration. In the following, I will first discuss relevant theoretical models of agency grounded in linguistics, before moving on to analytical-empirical models of agency. One classic contribution to this field is the concept developed by linguistic anthropologist Ahearn (2001). In her approach, agency is

129 I will return to this excerpt when I discuss example (93) in Section 7.3.
130 A well-founded discussion of key actors is provided by García Agüero (2023). Smith-Christmas (2022: 355) addresses critiques of agency.

embedded in a poststructuralist framework that considers language as social action:

> Agency refers to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act. [. . .] In my own work, I have maintained that it is important to ask how people themselves conceive of their own actions and whether they attribute responsibility for events to individuals, to fate, to deities, or to other animate or inanimate forces. (Ahearn 2001: 112–113)

Ahearn's conceptualization of agency as a "socioculturally mediated capacity to act" is based on the insight that agency should not be understood as a universal parameter, but rather as something subject to culture-specific particularities in different contexts and historically contingent. According to Ahearn, people attribute agency to individuals, fate, deities, or other entities, whether animate or inanimate. In doing so, Ahearn (2001: 113) emphasizes that defining agency solely from a theoretical perspective is insufficient. Instead, the perspective of the affected actors is critically important and must always be taken into account.

Another milestone in linguistic modeling of agency is Duranti's (2004) interpretation of the concept. His starting point is the observation that agency is expressed with every speech act (Duranti 2004: 451). Duranti highlights three constitutive features:

> Agency is here understood as the property of those entities (i) that have some degree of control over their own behavior, (ii) whose actions in the world affect other entities' (and sometimes their own), and (iii) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g. in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome). (Duranti 2004: 453)

Duranti's first component emphasizes that although agency refers to intentional action, it should not be confused with free will, as the capacity to act is fundamentally subject to macro-structural forces and processes (cf. Ahearn 2001: 114, Deppermann 2015: 65) that cannot be overridden by an individual's will. These include, on the one hand, (macro)structural and institutional social realities such as socioeconomic conditions and educational systems, and, on the other hand, widespread discourses, norms, and ideologies within society (cf. Bürki 2023). The second aspect focuses on the effects of agency, which may affect the agency itself or third parties. The third aspect emphasizes that agency also has an evaluative dimension, as the consequences of action can be assessed.

Al Zidjaly (2009) brings the processual nature of agency more to the fore:

> [. . .] agency is best conceived as a collective process for negotiating roles, tasks, and alignments that takes place through linguistic [. . .] or nonlinguistic mediational means. (Al Zidjaly 2009: 178)

Al Zidjaly's interpretation of agency extends the concept by emphasizing that agency is negotiated in interactions through both verbal and non-verbal means. Agency is not seen as a product, but rather as a process.

It is also important to note that agency should not be understood as an absolute concept. Instead, agency can manifest itself in different degrees at different levels. According to Deppermann (2015: 65), actions can be placed on a continuum with poles of high and low agency. He describes this continuum with the following six dimensions:

1. Activity vs. passivity, i.e., whether one is the agent of action or affected by the actions of others;
2. Whether the cause of action is self-driven (autonomy) or driven by others (heteronomy),
3. The degree of consciousness involved in the action, with preconscious routine actions being an important variant,
4. Control and controllability, and thus responsibility for the action,
5. Intentionality and the degree of planning: While strategic and specifically planned actions show a high degree of agency, conventional, socially preformed routine actions show a low degree of agency; autonomous action implies intentional action,
6. Moral evaluations in terms of (instrumental) rationality and ethical quality of the action (Deppermann 2015: 65, my translation).

Various linguistic methods have been established for the empirical analysis of agency. The most widely used are semantic-syntactic approaches such as semantic roles (cf. García Agüero 2023). Other linguistic approaches include the analysis of pronouns (cf. De Fina 2003, García Agüero 2023), suprasegmental and nonverbal means such as silence (cf. Bürki 2023), and techniques of reported speech (cf. De Fina 2003, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012).

I analyze the participants' narratives about language and migration in terms of agency, focusing on the following two questions:

1. *How do Filipina DMWs verbally express agency in their narratives about multilingualism and migration?*
2. *To whom do the participants attribute or deny agency?*

In the corpus of this study, agency is often conveyed through the choice and variation of pronouns. For the analysis, I consider first-person singular pronouns (*yo, I*), second-person singular pronouns (*tú, you*), and first-person plural pronouns (*nosotros, we*), along with their corresponding verb forms. Impersonal forms (*uno/una, se; one*) do not play a role in this corpus. Another common feature of the participants' narratives is the use of reported speech in so-called *re-*

enactments of key moments. These primarily serve to bring a past action to mind (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004: 228). This approach is particularly revealing with regard to the second research question. Therefore, I combine an analysis of reported speech with an analysis of pronominal choices.

7.3 Motivations for Migration: "I want to change the country if I cannot change the husband"

The motivations that led the participants to work abroad and to migrate to the Spanish capital are individually varied and sometimes overlapping. Thus, narrative approaches offer a speaker-centered perspective, "including the reasons for the migration in first place. These insider perspectives delve deeper than early contributions to migration studies which tried to explain the reasons trough push-pull models" (Capstick 2021: 26). The range of reasons mentioned by participants included heartbreak, the desire to explore something new, and economic motives. Other participants were already employed in other destination countries and moved with by their employers to Madrid. The motivations for migration—including their expectations and being confronted with reality upon arrival—are often framed in their biographies as significant, life-changing experiences, which makes them more relatable (*tellability*). As diverse as the reasons and hopes for migrating to Madrid are also the degrees of agency perceived in this context.

In the following, I will provide insights into different motivations for migration and the corresponding linguistic expression of agency. To illustrate this, I will draw on a discussion from focus group 2, which took place with five participants—Carolina, Celia, Isabella, Sofía, and Diana—and myself as the moderator, held over a meal at my apartment in Madrid. For more information about the participants and the context of the focus group, see Section 2.8.3.

The following sequence from the approximately two and a half hour focus group begins shortly after the introduction, at 00:07:03. In this extended excerpt, selected to provide insight into the interactional dynamics during the group discussion, three of the participants share stories from their lived experiences:

(91) **Sandra**: So, and how and why did you come to Spain? And when?
Carolina: Oh (---) I think just start with me. Hm, actually, I'm I work from Hong Kong for seven years there and then I really wanted to go to Europe, it's like a dream place for me. So, after the contract I break my contract in Hong Kong and then my my cousin invited me to go to Denmark so that's the time I went there last 20 (---) 2018 I guess, December 2018 and then I only move to Spain to continue my career as they say, last February 2019 so this, I really

wanted to to have a residence permit here. Like I really want to work legally but then that's a xxx that I took last time when here and then for three years I have to process my papers and then waited for that for someone or from employers to sign the permit here for me to legally work so I think, that's it.

[omission 00:00:52]

Celia: For me at first I don't have any plans like I don't have any plans to go abroad or somewhere because for me, it is impossible for me like I think like "Oh, it's really impossible to me" because we don't have like (-) we are in the family we are in the family don't have much money so and I think its impossible for me because we don't have money. And then one of my friends, she already worked in Denmark, as an au pair in Denmark, she called me and asked me if I'm interested to replace her to be an au pair also and it is like and she really told me like "Here in Denmark is really nice. It's okay, the whole family is really nice." So he she give me a give me a power <<noise in the background>> "Don't be afraid." Because that's one of the reason that I don't want to get abroad because of that I'm afraid of like I heard some news like there is some something happened to them, bad. So when my friend told me like "You want to replace me here in Denmark?" I just like "Okay, I will try" and then when I went to Denmark, I feel still me like ((imitating a voice)) "I'm here in the paradise." ((laughs)) <<laughter>> My host family is really nice and then my friend she already go to Norway also and then when the contract with his eh when her contract as an au pair in Norway is ended and then she asked me again if I want to replace her is like "Is it ok?" and then, yeah, and I think at that time to go abroad this is my last time I don't want to go somewhere else because I'm afraid like something and then friend introduced like "If you want you can come here in Madrid (---) by a person." "I have haven't any papers." "Right, you need to stay for three years" like that and I was "I'm afraid but I will try I will try." So for me at the first xx couples of month was really hard for me. Like I really want to give up like ((imitating a whiny voice)) "Oh, I don't want the one that" like you're all around like you need to to clean and to babysit it and you need to care with the kids like everything like in the big house like at the because the first family where I'm here is like their house is really big and for me is like every time when I the day is and like my body is too really tired and is really like (---) I don't want to give up like like some of my friends will be like "Don't give up because it's like you're already here in Europe and (---) and if you were going to go home then you cannot come back." It's a you just give up the opportunity that you can have the permanent residents as if I "Okay, I will stay, I will stay, I will stay"

just for to help my pamily and to to have a vacation ((laughs)). That's it. <<laughter>> The vacation, and Europe and have fun, yeah.

Carolina: Hm.

Diana: For me it is same. <<laughter>> <<unintelligible voices 3 sec>> No, I come from Singapore from my first abroad (---) my first abroad is I went to Singapore for two years and then after my contract there I went back to Philippines and I get married. That's the worst decision I made. <<laughter>> And then, after one month, I got married I come to (---) I to apply (---) before I went to the I went back to the Philippines. I apply already from Singapore to going to Hong Kong. So, my visa is processing in the Philippines when I come back. So, after after that mari (.) after one month, straight to the Hong Kong and I stay in Hong Kong for 11 years (---). Yeah. Then (--) two years two years go home for a vacation and then for the long time for 11 years and feeling like tired. Hong Kong for 11 years and nothing happened. So, I feel like I want to change the country if I cannot change the husband.

<<laughter for 6 sec>>

((unintelligible 1 sec))

Diana: And now, I finally decide to myself I need to pay eh to (---) save money to come to this. Actually, the Europe is a (-) is my dream country. Every time when even I when I still young I keep saying like like a joke like "I want to go to España". I just just a joke. But like a dream country already. Ever since ever in my youngest (--) time (--) I'm old now. <<laughter>> And then (---) and then at that time now I save money for an (---) in the Hong Kong for a few years and then I decide to "Which country in Europe I can go?" The first I think eh I think (-) I think is the Paris. But it is difficult to go to Paris. I said I just keep thinking "Where in Europe easily to come ehh easily to exit?" Going to the Europe. And then if (---). Before there is no no no (---) agency no agency going to Europe, is very difficult. And then suddenly (--) last two years two years or three years ago suddenly pop up the agency going to the Poland, Malta. There is some flyers. I really remember that in Central, they give me a flyers (--) eh going to Malta. "Ahhh! ((claps in her hands)) That's it! This is it!". (()) And then the agency is closed. (()) so I decided to find another ways just like a stepping stone (--). So (-) I tried to find in (--) Facebook where in the eh Europe (--) eh país in Europe can find the something (-) in eh xx. So I find it's the Madrid ((---)) vista group?

Celia: There is a facebook group.

Diana: Madrid in España. Ah, Filipino en Madrid. So I add I add myself ((laughs)). And then I (--) I posted eh that (-) (()). So I decide to come here and then they say "Yeah you come to Madrid because Madrid is (--) after

three years you can get your working visa your visa primary visa and get your you can get your family." "Ohhhh!" My mind is like a playing <<laughter>>.

The starting point of the discussion is the question I initially introduced: how, why, and when the participants came to Spain. When discussing motivations for migration, a power imbalance between me and the participants became evident through the asymmetrical differences in the status of our passports (cf. Pool 2024 for passport hierarchies in postcolonial research contexts): For instance, in 2022, when the focus group was conducted, the German passport was ranked as the second strongest in the world according to the Passport Index 2022, allowing visa-free entry to 174 countries or a visa on arrival. This corresponds, based on the calculation of the Passport Index 2022, to a global reach of 88%. In contrast, the Philippine passport was ranked 128th and permitted visa-free entry or a visa on arrival for 77 countries, which corresponds to a global reach of 40% (cf. Passport Index 2022; cf. also Pool 2024).

A key point of similarity between Carolina, Celia, and Diana is the metaphorical verbalization of their motivations and expectations for migrating to Spain. They describe Spain as a "dream place" (Carolina), "paradise" or "opportunity" (Celia), and "dream country" (Diana).[131] However, there are notable discrepancies in their perceptions of their agency in the migration process as depicted in their narratives.

In the course of the focus group interactions, Carolina frequently takes on the role of initiator, often providing her responses before the other participants. In example (91), she also initiates the discussion and begins her contribution by stating, "Oh (---) I think just start with me." In her biographical narrative, Carolina presents herself as the protagonist, recounting events from a first-person singular perspective. She presents a highly linear (*linearity*), chronicle-like account (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann ^{2}2004: 143) of the stages of her labor migration. This implies that the sequence of events is arranged in a chronological and spatial manner, according to the various destination societies, beginning with her seven-year tenure in Hong Kong. Subsequently, Carolina relocated to Denmark as an au pair and then migrated to Spain. Carolina presents herself as a driving force with a high degree of agency, as evidenced by her assertion "I work" and "I break my contract." However, this is not the case with regard to her access to her "dream place," Europe. In describing the support she received from her family network, Carolina indirectly introduces a new character, her cousin, who played a central role in her subsequent access to Europe. Subsequently, Carolina reverts to presenting herself as the agent of her actions, as evidenced by statements such as "I went" and "I only move."

131 Similar discursive constructions of European host countries are found among some participants. See, for example, Yolanda's statements in example (27).

In comparison to Carolina's account, Celia's is markedly more comprehensive and detailed. Although Celia also recounts her biography primarily using the first-person singular, she attributes a low level of agency to herself, which she expresses through the reenactment of important stages in her migration story with direct speech. Following Holt (2000: 429), direct speech involves the co-tellers, as it reproduces "the words and the action."

From the outset, Celia underscores her lack of intentionality, noting that she initially had no plans to go abroad ("I don't have any plans to go abroad"). Then, she shares background information to illustrate that, due to her family's socioeconomic situation, she perceived migration as an unfeasible option for her (*embeddedness*). In this context, she changes the use of pronouns from the first-person singular pronoun to the first-person plural pronoun ("We are in the family don't have much money").

Despite narrating the events with the first-person singular pronoun, Celia does not position herself as the agent. The majority of instances where the first-person singular pronoun is used are accompanied by a negation of agency, as evidenced by the use of "I don't want to." Other instances of this pronoun are used to denote a state of being, such as her emotional experience of the events, which is predominantly characterized by fear ("I'm afraid"). This further diminishes her sense of agency.

In contrast, Celia introduces other characters, thereby incorporating what are referred to as *heteronomous agents* (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann ^{2}2004: 59), whom she positions as influencing her actions. A central role is played by a friend who assisted Celia in establishing connections to au pair positions in Denmark and Norway, and subsequently with a Spanish family. This friend also played a crucial role in motivating Celia to confront her fears and pursue labor migration outside the Philippines. The friend is initially introduced indirectly into the narrative, but she is subsequently referenced directly on multiple occasions.

Celia explains her low risk tolerance and fears by referring to information she had heard prior to her migration through so-called *hearsay* (cf. De Fina 2003: 103), which she indicates with the phrase "I heard." It was only through her friend that she received firsthand information, which she initially presented in a summarized and time-compressed manner with indirect speech ("she called me and asked me if I'm interested"). This is followed by a direct quotation, introduced by a *verbum dicendi* to indicate the reconstructed nature of the dialogue "she really told me like," followed by the direct quotation "Here in Denmark is really nice. It's okay, the whole family is really nice." The use of direct speech serves to anchor the narrated world more closely to the present, as indicated by the deictic "here," in a way that would not be possible with indirect speech. This technique gives the impression, particularly to the co-tellers present in the focus group, of reliving the situation through this reenactment (cf. De Fina 2003: 106; García

Agüero 2023). Furthermore, the use of direct speech serves to justify how Celia's initial fears were eventually alleviated and how this influenced her decision-making process ("she give me a give me a power"). This effect is intensified as the friend offers words of encouragement through direct speech, thereby reenacting the moment and making it vividly experiential once again ("Don't be afraid").

In the subsequent account of the dialogue, Celia once again situates her friend as the principal agent "You want to replace me here in Denmark? I just like 'Okay, I will try.'") Despite her ultimate acceptance of the proposed options and subsequent migration, Celia continues to portray others as the guiding agents who repeatedly initiated various stages of her labor migration and persuaded her to work as an au pair or DMW in different European countries.

Similarly, Celia employs a combination of indirect and direct speech to introduce characters who maintain a friendly relationship with her character, offer emotional support and encouragement, and thus act as guiding agents. In this manner, Celia once again ascribes a minimal degree of agency to herself.

In the following, I will focus on Diana's turns. Initially, Diana makes a humorous reference[132] to the previous turn during her own turn-taking before recounting her own lived experiences. In terms of the *tellership*, Diana presents the events from a first-person singular voice, thereby assuming the role of a narrator. Similarly to Carolina's account, Diana presents herself as the primary agent of the narrative, exhibiting a notable degree of intentionality and planning in her actions. The narrative is also structured in a linear fashion, according to its chronological sequence, and includes periods spent in the Philippines between Diana's eleven years of employment in Hong Kong and her migration to Europe. A crucial aspect of her narrative is her *moral stance* (Ochs & Capps 2001: 45), through which she evaluates her situation and highlights her marriage as her most significant misstep ("That's the worst decision I made"). This *moral stance* serves as a motivational driver for subsequent developments in the narrative. Dissatisfied with her experience in Hong Kong, where she had resided for 11 years "and nothing happened," Diana sought alternative opportunities for her life. She expressed a desire "to change the country if I cannot change the husband," given the legal prohibition of divorce in the Philippines. Despite the challenges she faced, Diana's character remained a driving force throughout larger parts of her narrative, taking the initiative to make decisions that aligned with her values and aspirations ("I finally decide to myself," "and then I decide").

In the final part, however, Diana's attribution of agency undergoes a change. She highlights that her access to her "dream country" Europe, was limited ("I just keep thinking where in Europe easily to come"). Despite her high degree of inten-

132 Jokes, or Diana's classification of her own remarks as jokes, recur throughout the focus group.

tionality, she was unable to overcome these access barriers solely through her own efforts. This shift is reflected linguistically by a change in the perspective of the narrative, as Diana no longer narrates with the first-person singular pronoun. Instead, she introduces a new *heteronomous agent* with guiding authority by mentioning an recruitment agency "Before there is no no no (---) agency no agency going to Europe, is very difficult"). With "And then suddenly," Diana introduces the *resolution*. At this point, she reenacts a turn of events as a sudden and surprising occurrence with "suddenly pop up the agency," thus building suspense (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann ^{2}2004: 229).

She ascribes the responsibility for facilitating her access to Europe to the Manila-based recruitment agency, employing a shift to the third person plural ("they") to indicate their agency and control in the process. With the phrase "I really remember that," she positions herself as a reliable narrator: "I really remember that in Central, they gave me a flyers going to Malta." She also involves the co-tellers in the focus group by narrating the emotional experience of this key moment from her character's internal perspective through an inner monologue: "Ahhh! This is it!": Diana adds that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the agencies were shut down, which meant that she had to find an alternative. While still working in Hong Kong, she once again took the initiative and researched what other opportunities she might pursue. Through online platforms and social media channels, she was able to connect with other Filipinos in Madrid who offered her advice and support in order to help her achieve her goal.

Then, Diana introduces another issue, which provokes further discussion within the focus group:

(92) **Diana**: So, I came here and then finally, I'm here in my dream country, yeah (---). But after I came here, I'm shocked, it's like a Philippines only <<laughter>>. Yeah, because in Hong Kong, there is a (---) really, if you compare, there is like very new, modern on modern, here is old and all the messy xxx <<laughter>>. In Hong Kong, the metro are very organized, very clean <<laughter>>, Yeah, its true.

[omission 00:00:39]

Carolina: But then the best thing is that (--) you have the more opportunities to be better person here. I mean I am not I am not judging everyone like ah "The Philippines are poor" or something like that, no. There's no (-) there's no diversion or there's no (-) no other things no. But then the best part is that you can earn more can have more more, more (--) more salary and you can have better options in terms of career and also to (---) at the point at the (--) at some point, the eh lifestyle here is more more free

<<someone agrees with "Mhm">>. We have the more freedom here, like we can dress whatever we want.
All: Yes!
Carolina: In the Philippines, we're dressing short ((imitating voice)) "Ehhww (---) look at her legs! It's so eh!" <<laughter>> But when you're here, you can have a big tummy, but you can have the (---) <<laughter>> You can have like a ((imitating voice)) "So sexy!." And I think that's the best part.
Isabella: Yeah!
Carolina: It's not only with the work but also with the lifestyle. People here are very, very (---)
Diana: Yeah!
Carolina: The mindset is like open.
Isabella: Open-minded open-minded.
Carolina: Open-minded. So, I think, that's it.

Diana begins to reflect on her expectations about life in Spain, comparing it to her experiences in Hong Kong and the Philippines. In doing so, she deconstructs her initial perceptions of Europe with the statement "and then finally, I'm here in my dream country, yeah (---). But after I came here, I'm shocked, it's like a Philippines," highlighting that she perceived Hong Kong and its infrastructure as more modern. The co-tellers respond with laughter and it also leads to a controversial deepening of the topic within the group. Various viewpoints on the advantages and disadvantages of life in Spain compared to life in the Philippines are argued and negotiated.

Carolina is the first to pick up the discussion after Diana's turn and deepens the exploration of the advantages of life in Spain. In this context, she refers to criteria such as employment, salaries, and mentalities. Notably, Carolina no longer narrates with the first-person singular pronoun in this sequence. She uses the first-person singular pronoun only twice in her turns ("I mean," "I think"), which serves to modify the degree of certainty in her statements. In its basic meaning, "I think"—similar to "I guess" and other expressions—marks uncertain knowledge as opinion or doubt, as noted by Mullan (2010: 51–52).

In the turns of Carolina, the second-person singular pronoun "you" is a dominant form. In employing this pronoun, Carolina compares and evaluates the various parameters between the country of origin and the destination society. These include the potential for higher earnings, greater financial stability, and enhanced career opportunities. With the use of the second-person singular pronoun, she indicates that her statement is valid not only for her individually. As De Fina (2003: 81) notes, "Experience can be presented as relevant to others by depicting events as 'typical' in some way of a condition shared by others, but also involving the hearer in the story world." In this manner, Carolina transitions the focus

from individual experiences to collective experiences. The first-person plural pronoun "we"—for example, "We have the more freedom here, like we can dress whatever we want"—also shifts the focus to group involvement and articulates the argument as a collective experience (cf. De Fina 2003: 72). The modal verb "can" indicates the potential for developing agency in future settings.

With the subsequent reenactment through two direct speech quotations delivered in an imitative and caricatured voice (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann [2]2004: 231) "Ehhww (---) look at her legs! It's so eh!" and "So sexy!," Carolina contrasts the differences in dress codes between the Philippines and Spain and the respective reactions of others. She emphasizes—formulated in the second-person singular pronoun "you" as universally applicable—that Spain is more liberal regarding mentalities and thus offers a higher degree of moral-normative agency. The manner of reenactment is met with laughter in the group and receives approval ("someone agrees with 'Mhm' and 'Yeah!'").

Immediately following the sequence from example (92), Celia supports Carolina's position in her turn-taking:

(93) **Celia**: There is not only just a negative side.
All: Yeah, hm.
Celia: But there is also some positive side. Like we can have we can have residency or if we are going to study more Spanish, we can have these eh (---)
Carolina: Other jobs.
Celia: Residency.
Carolina: Nashionalidad.
Celia: If you are going to take that exam we can (---) we can have the Spanish, the Spanish ah residence (---) residence card. I know it's like you're already Spanish. ((Tagalog 1 sec)) Like you can be a Filipino and Spanish at the same time. ((unintelligible 1 sec)) <<laughter>>
Carolina: Only for the start. Yeah.
Celia: It's always hard. It's hard. But at the end, you're like "Ahh" especially, after like working for three years and like "Yeah!" I am gifted with the residency.
<<laughter>>
Isabella: That's the hard years' price.
Celia: Yeah!

In her next turn, Celia states "there is not only just a negative side." The co-tellers unanimously agree on this statement. Celia also uses the first-person plural pronoun to emphasize collective lived experiences and their supra-individual validity ("Like we can have we can have residency or if we are going to study more

Spanish, we can have"). Beyond the context of the focus group, the issue of language learning has emerged as an important theme for the participants' agency. I will explore this aspect in the next section.

Apart from that, excerpt (93) also illustrates how language proficiency is intertwined with migrants' residency status, imposing responsibilities and costs on them (on the role of language for policymakers in migration contexts, see also Piller et al. 2024: 6–10).

7.4 Access to Spanish is Limited in Madrid

In the context of (labor) migration, it is not always worthwhile from a speaker-centered perspective to expand one's linguistic repertoire with resources that are highly valued in the destination society. Agency thus plays a role in the decision to actively acquire certain linguistic resources—or to reject this pursuit. In the following excerpt from an interview, Sofía articulates her stance on the acquisition of linguistic resources in Danish within the context of her work as an au pair:

(94) **Sofía**: For example, when I was in Denmark (--). In the program, I think, they have this (--). You have to learn, it's free. You can go, I, it's your option, if you want to learn or not, like that, the (--), the Danish language. <<laughing>> But I think my option is (-) no, because I not, I not yeah allowed to stay for almost two years (-) and, and ((laughs)) not everybody. You can only use that language <<laughing>> in Denmark, not ((unintelligible, 1 sec)) wherever you go.

Sofía uses the second-person singular pronoun "you" to explain policies and rules in Denmark, such as access to a free Danish course ("you have to," "you can go"). Nevertheless, she has actively chosen not to enroll in a language class ("But I think my option is (-) no"), for two reasons. First, because she sees no prospect of obtaining a permanent residence permit in Denmark, and second, because she limits the scope and applicability of Danish to Denmark, perceiving it as having little communicative utility and, consequently, Danish is not economically valuable capital for her. In a similar vein, Flor, another participant, justifies her decision not to attend a Danish course in another interview ("Danish I cannot, I cannot, I cannot use it because I'm not going to stay here").

In contrast, a very different picture emerges with regard to the learning of Spanish. In the following chapter, I will revisit some of the findings from Chapter 6 and examine them more closely through the analytical lenses of agency. Spanish was perceived as economically and, in some cases, symbolically valuable

linguistic capital; other participants positioned Spanish as relevant because proficiency in Spanish is linked to a language test required to obtain Spanish citizenship. All participants have been or are actively seeking to acquire linguistic resources in Spanish. At the same time, they report that, regardless of when they arrived in the Spanish capital, their access to formal, so-called *guided acquisition* was or is limited, which in turn has limited their agency. The factors that limit this access and their underlying causes need to be systematically uncovered and explained:

> [. . .] we need to think not only about learners who are already in the classrooms but also about those who are excluded from access to symbolic resources. Gender as a system of social relations, in conjunction with race, ethnicity, class, and age, continues to play an important role in this exclusion as older immigrant women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are often found among the most disempowered members of Western societies. (Pavlenko 2004: 58)

I will begin by discussing the narratives of women who have lived in Spain for more than 35 years. Among them is Beatriz, who has lived and worked in Madrid since 1986. She narrates her lived experiences as follows:

(95) **Sandra**: ¿Y aprendiste español en la escuela en Filipinas o (---)?
Beatriz: Las ((inentendible, 0.5 seg)) um, ¡uf, vamos! Muy (---) muy (---) mm (---) muy (---) cuatro asignaturas nada más.
Sandra: Mhm. ((asiente))
Beatriz: Básica (---) mmh pero eso no valía nada ((ríe)) (---) cuando llegué aquí, pues diferente (---) no, es que no tenía estudios, porque no había clases de español, además, cuando estás traba, trabajando eh y interna (---) no tienes tiempo para estudiar.
Sandra: Ooh.
Beatriz: Es diferente (---)
Sandra: ((interumpe)) ¿Y cómo aprendiste español?
Beatriz: Eh (---) en casa, leyendo, escuchando la tele, intentando hablar con la gente. (---) Yo quizás porque tenía (---) vamos, es eh (---) aprendo rápido (---) y (---) desde luego la gente me decía "¿Cómo hablas bien español?" Como había muchas filipinas ya, y, y nadie hablaba bien. Muy poca gente hablaba bien español. Yo puedo coger (---) en ahm (---) aprender enseguida la manera de pronunciar (---) las palabras (---) mmh con ese, que sab (---) digamos, una habilidad mía ((ríe)) he podido coger enseguida el accento (---) la pronuntación (---) además, leo mucho (---) períodicos, revistas, veo la tele. Así he aprendido.

Primarily, Beatriz uses the first-person singular pronoun in her narrative and thus positions herself as the protagonist. When I asked her about Spanish classes

in the Philippines, she recalled that those classes had proved to be worthless when she arrived in Madrid ("mmh pero eso no valía nada"). Other participants who also had attended Spanish classes in the Philippines reported similar experiences (see, for example, excerpt (15)).

Then, Beatriz contextualizes the situation she faced when she arrived in the winter of 1986 ("cuando llegué aquí"). As she begins to explain the obstacles she encountered, there is a noticeable shift in her narrative perspective, from the first-person singular to an impersonal construction using the verb *haber* ("no tenía estudios, porque no había clases de español"). The lack of language classes for migrants in the 1980s, a structural problem, limited her agency. The second reason she cites is also structurally embedded. She worked as a live-in, which further limited her agency. Beatriz expresses this situation with the second-person singular pronoun ("cuando estás traba, trabajando [. . .] no tienes tiempo para estudiar"). The use of the second-person singular pronoun generalizes the problem and diminishes individual responsibility (cf. De Fina 2003: 54). In doing so, Beatriz also involves me as a *co-narrator* more actively in the narrative than she would by using the first-person singular pronoun (cf. De Fina 2003: 54). In this way, Beatriz verbalizes the reasons for her lack of agency as structurally determined and frames it as a collective experience rather than a matter of individual responsibility.

Then Beatriz's agency comes back into focus. She explains that, despite the challenges, she managed to actively learn Spanish through the media and by talking to others ("en casa, leyendo, escuchando la tele, intentando hablar con la gente"). In this way, she made rapid progress ("aprendo rápido"). Beatriz initially downplays her self-positioning with "yo quizás." However, by reenacting a direct quote, she presents an external positioning in which others affirm her strong Spanish skills ("La gente me decía '¿Cómo hablas bien español?' Como había muchas filipinas ya, y, y nadie hablaba bien").

At this point, a normative, language-ideological dimension emerges that, as she explains later in the interview, influenced her actions:

(96) **Beatriz**: Como (---) estaba yo eh (.) (---) trabajando no tenía tiempo para (---) estudiar. No como mi hija, porque mi hija estaba a_aquí. Y cuido mi hija aquí. Pero solo ha estado aquí seis años. Eh, ((ruido externo)) como yo sabía (.) la (---) ahm, el problema de las filipinas del (---) de de de poder comunicar bien (---) le dije a ella (---) "Tú no vas a trabajar (---) así de ah como interna o externa que no tie_buscas un trabajo que puedes trabajar para por la tarde y por la mañana eh (---) vas al (---) ah ahm estudias español." Entonces ella se ha podido terminar el español un de creo, es un curso de cinco semestres en el instituto (---) en la ¿com_cómo se llama? Eh, en (---) un, una escu, una escuela de español aquí.

Sandra: ¿Del Instituto Cervantes?
Beatriz: No, otro. Es de comunidad de Madrid.
Sandra: Mhm. ((asiente))
Beatriz: Que estar por (---) Islas Filipinas.
Sandra: Mhm. ((asiente))
Beatriz: Hay un (---) por ahí, ahí de (---) del, de lenguas. De todo tipo de, de lenguajes. Ahí se terminó ella. Y desde luego ella habla mejor que yo ((ríe)). Además, escribe mejor que yo. Yo puedo hablar, pero (---) tengo dificultad en (---) escribir. En cambio, ella, como ha tenido estudios, sí que se puede eh (---) se puede manejar bien.

Beatriz continues to narrate using the first-person singular pronoun to explain how she strategically used her knowledge of the host society, Spain, to guide and support her daughter ("cuido mi hija aquí"). When her daughter came temporarily to Madrid for six years, it was important for Beatriz to ensure that her daughter could attend a language course so that she, unlike many other Filipinas in Spain, would not be positioned as an illegitimate speaker ("como yo sabía (.) la (---) ahm, el problema de las filipinas del (---) de de poder comunicar bien"). By reenacting her direct speech ("Tú no vas a trabajar (---) así de ah como interna o externa [...] ah ahm estudias español"), she conveys her directive to her daughter and, through this narrative strategy, further emphasizes her own agency (cf. also De Fina 2003: 106). Beatriz evaluates this decision and its implementation as successful, as it allowed her daughter to develop her own agency ("como ha tenido estudios, sí que se puede eh (---) se puede manejar bien").

Valeria also faced similar challenges in the 1970s, when she tried to find access to acquisition of linguistic resources in Spanish:

(97) **Sandra**: ¿Y cómo ah (---) aprendiste español aquí?
Valeria: Ah en año setenta y tres me fui a (---) a un (---) un ¿cómo se llama? A una escu escuela el xx, eh una xxx conjunto con la mecanografía, eh el español. Pero seis seis meses nada más, pero no ca casi no liego de seis meses porque mi jefe de aquí en al lao de Avenida <nombre>, se montó otro carnicería en otra parte de Madrid, entonces días largos. Vengo vengo ya a Madrid a las nueve de la noche y ya no tengo tiempo para estudiar.
Sandra: Claro.
Valeria: Entonces ya, pero aprendo el español, bueno, en el televisión, revista (---) y hablando con gente. ((ríen))

Valeria performed various jobs in Madrid, starting as a live-in a private home. She narrates using the first-person singular pronoun and presents herself as ac-

tive. However, she encountered a limiting factor for her agency when her employer opened another butcher shop in another part of Madrid. At this point, she shifts from the first-person singular pronouns to impersonal structures ("se montó otro carnicería en otra parte de Madrid") and uses an elliptical style to express the consequences for her working time and how this affected her agency ("entonces días largos"). Later, Valeria returns to the first-person singular pronouns and explains that she no longer had time to attend classes ("vengo ya a Madrid a las nueve de la noche y ya no tengo tiempo para estudiar"). She then describes how she actively sought opportunities to learn Spanish through media like television and magazines, as well as by engaging in conversations with others ("aprendo").

In contrast to the situation of DMWs who migrated to Madrid in the 1970s or 1980s, today, the Community of Madrid offers free Spanish language courses, embedded into the *Programa de actividades de las Oficinas de Información y Orientación para la Integración de la Población Inmigrante.* These face-to-face courses cover different levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). However, access to these courses is very challenging for DMWs: none of the participants can or could attend these courses because they had to start working immediately upon arrival in order to support themselves (and their families) financially. The working hours and legally mandated weekly rest periods for DMWs are incompatible with the times at which these language courses are offered, making participation practically impossible.

Other institutions—such as churches—respond to this dilemma by providing their own infrastructure to offer Spanish classes during the legally mandated rest periods for DMWs. These classes are usually held on Sundays and they are organized and run by volunteers.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Kate. Kate sees learning Spanish as important and she associates it with upward economic mobility (see quote (86): "I hope (---) I can learn Spanish here, so I can work not only in the house"). However, she perceives that her ability and her agency to achieve this goal are limited. In this context, she reflects about her first job as a live-in in Madrid, which she took after working as an au pair in Scandinavia:

(98) **Sandra**: [. . .] and do you remember your first day in in this house? When you arrived eh, what was your first impression? ((laughs))

[omission 00:00:12]

Kate: In the family, my first impression I think you're okay and then they're okay and then, after, after one week one week it, I I was observing them. I think, my first day I was observing the and then, and then I was shock it's because their children I it's my first day. Their children still woke up at 10 o'clock.
Sandra: Tsh! ((laughs))
Kate: Because in in my experience and also they didn't eat yet. I was really hu, hungry, I'm hungry, you know? In this four years job knowing Denmark with ah five o'clock and then sleep six, I finish seven or six. It's finish five or six-seven, it's finish. I'm going to my bed. But here it's different, so I was really shock ((laughs)) and tired, and eh it's like I'm, if you want to sleep but you cannot sleep because your job is not yet finish. Because this this family, they didn't tell me that they're going to eat ten o'clock. So I was observing them and then in the one week I was really tired, you know, it's like "I want to go home," it's like I "I want to quit my job," it's like "I like to quit," but I didn't because I need a job.

[omission 00:06:02]

Sandra: How how did you learn Spanish?
Kate: I (---) how did I learn? I learn ((unintelligible 0.5 sec)) on, you know? ((laughs)) I stop learning it, because of my job interna before and, you know, look. Monday to Friday, I work. I Monday to Saturday, I woke at six o'clock. And then I have Spanish every Sunday, but nine o'clock and I want to sleep more, so that's why I absent, absent, absent at school. Because I want to, I want, I don't want to wake up early in the morning, because Monday to Saturday I woke up early and then Sunday go to school, nine o'clock. I don't want to wake up, so that's why I stop learning.
Sandra: Mhm. ((understands))
Kate: Yeah. So it's very ((laughs)) so I (---) it's like, I don't wa I don't want to eh (---) you know? It's my ((unintelligible 0.5 sec)), and I want to rest a little bit.

In this sequence, Kate narrates using the first-person singular pronoun, shifting to the second-person singular pronoun only at one point ("if you want to sleep but you cannot sleep because your job is not yet finish"). Beyond this excerpt, Kate's sentences are generally characterized by a high level of so-called *reassurance activities*. According to Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann (^{2}2004: 260–261), these include all linguistic means used to secure the co-teller's agreement. In this interaction, Kate primarily involves me with the discourse marker *you know*, which ensures that I am following her and that I share her perspective (cf. Kluge 2011: 308).

In addition, *framing* plays a central role in Kate's turns. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann ([2]2004: 237) describe this as "metacommunicative characterizations that preemptively guide or retrospectively clarify the interpretation of the narrated or re-enacted events and the actors in the stories" (my translation, S. I.-D.). In her first framing, Kate compares her workload in Spain with that in Denmark. Whereas in Denmark she had clearly defined work and rest times, in Madrid she is gradually introduced to the daily habits of her employers and experiences not only longer working hours but also a highly increased workload. In this framing, Kate focuses on expressing the consequences of her workload in Madrid and her lived experiences of physical and emotional strain. She emphasizes this primarily through the increased use of *really* ("I was really hu, hungry," "really tired," "really shock ((laughs))," although she mitigates the latter with a laugh. She further frames her workload by describing the typical structure of her week ("Monday to Friday, I work. I Monday to Saturday, I woke at six o'clock. And then I have Spanish every Sunday"). Based on these framings, Kate explains how this affects her agency to attend Spanish classes. Sunday is her only day off when she can sleep in and recover from her work ("you know? It's my ((unintelligible 0.5 sec)), and I want to rest a little bit").

In another sequence, where Kate has positioned Spanish as economically valuable linguistic capital in the Spanish labor market, additional barriers to accessing language courses become the focal point of the conversation:

(99) **Sandra**: Can you go back to the course on Sundays? For the Spanish class?
Kate: We don't have Spanish class today. It is start on this September for the class.
Sandra: Ah the graduation [was last week]?
Kate: [The graduation in <name of the church>], have you? No, no, I talk to the person eh who is pilipino agency and I ask him when to start the language, for the Spanish level one and he replied me on September.
Sandra: Ah.
Kate: And it cost (---) two hundred euros for (---) I think tree months. But every Sunday. A lot of money but (---) little, I mean, less, every, only two hours, two hours, but it cost a lot of money. Two hundred (---) two hundred for this three months in once a week! Or how many, how many weeks in a one, a four, four, four (---) ((unintelligible 1 sec)) position for two hundred euros. It's not enough for me to learn, right? (---) So, what can I do? Nothing ((laughs)).

Kate also found a commercial Spanish course offered through an recruitment agency for DMWs, but the financial burden is very high, and this limits her agency ("So, what can I do? Nothing ((laughs))").

For Flor, Spanish is also important, but she reports difficulties in acquiring the language. Together with her friends, she had participated in a commercial offer with a private tutor once a week. In the following excerpt, Flor explains why she eventually stopped attending the small group classes:

(100) **Sandra**: Did you also make a course or something like that?
Flor: Course?
Sandra: Eh Spanish class.
Flor: Yeah before, with <friend's name> also, with other friends, but I quit but because I'm not ready with it and my mind is full of something, problems, something like that. So, I cannot observe, so I need to stop and talk with because it's useless. I pay and did nothing, I don't want to learn, something like that, because I was in, I was, I am not in the focus.

Flor explains that her mental load was too high, which affected her language learning process ("my mind is full of something, problems, something like that," "I am not in the focus"). Flor does not specify the particular problem she is referring to, remaining vague by using the indefinite pronoun "something." In addition, this pronoun could indicate that it is difficult for her to talk about this matter (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann [2]2004: 224).

Both Flor and Kate find themselves in a dilemma regarding their agency. Both consider the acquisition of Spanish to be personally important and actively pursue structured learning environments to gain access to this linguistic resource. However, both ultimately decide to forgo the language course in order to preserve their physical and/or mental health. This highlights the complexity of agency: while both have the power to make the decision to withdraw from the course, their ability to access the course is also constrained by external factors. As such, agency is both present and limited, and therefore not always easy to resolve.

7.5 The Domestic Work Sector as an Automatic Pathway for (Filipina) Migrant Women in Spain

For the majority of the participants, there are substantial discrepancies between the level of education or professional qualifications they have acquired in the

Philippines and their actual employment as DMWs in Madrid.[133] In this Section, I focus on the lived experiences of searching for a job on the Madrilenian labor market and how individual agency is perceived in this process. The first example is Beatriz's career history. Although Beatriz has a science degree from the Philippines, she has been working as a DMW in the Spanish capital for 37 years. She explains the reasons as an interplay of different, connected factors:

(101) **Beatriz**: Y sé que tenía que estudiar. Porque mis padres son (---) mi madre es maestra y mi padre profesor.
Sandra: Mhm. ((asiente))
Beatriz: De una universidad (---) y claro con padres así, pues, hay que estudiar. ((ríe))
Sandra: ((ríe)) ¿Y qué has estudiado?
Beatriz: Al principio quería ser medico, lo que pasa eh que me casé pronto, me casé con dieciocho, entonces lo dejé eh mis estudios, entonces he vuelto a estudiar eh (---) ya estudiao química ya.
Sandra: Aha. ((asiente))
Beatriz: Mhm. ((asiente)) Química mmh mh lo que pasa es que ya eso no vale aquí ((ríe, toma aire)) cuando llegas aquí, pues tienes que hacer (---) tienes que trabajar en lo que hay (--) en lo que hay, entonces como ya estaba yo aquí, pues hay que ganar dinero y mantener la famila (.) hay que trabajar en lo que hay ((ríe)).
Sandra: ¿Mmh (---) ehm fue fácil para ti encontrar trabajo en España?
Beatriz: ¿Perdón? ¿Era complicao?
Sandra: Sí, complicado, ¿mmh (---) difícil encontrar trabajo?
Beatriz: Complicado en el sentido de (---) de cómo no podemos hablar español.
Sandra: Aah.
Beatriz: Es que cuando llegué en el ochenta y seis, nadie hablaba inglés. Si había alguien, pues (---) muy poca gente (–) nadie. ((Sandra ríe)) No, es como que los jóvenes ya hablan inglés, ah las escuelas son bilingües (-). Antes no nadie (-) y mis jefes no hablaban bien inglés (--) no, solo español, todo español (---) es que era muy complicao, en cómo no hablamos español (---) además, no había más trabajos, sino en casas, restaurantes.

133 A systematic listing of educational and professional qualifications, as well as the occupations actually pursued in Madrid, can be found in Table 1.

Beatriz's family has a high level of education, so an academic career was expected of her ("y claro con padres así, pues, hay que estudiar"). In the Philippines, however, she did not work as a chemist;[134] instead, she married young and started a family.

When Beatriz arrived in Spain, she experienced the lack of recognition of her professional qualification as a trained scientist due to Spain's Eurocentric approach to degree recognition ("Química mmh mh lo que pasa es que ya eso no vale aquí"). The Spanish labor market does not always recognize educational and professional qualifications from other countries—especially from the Global South—as equivalent. As a result, this Eurocentric attitude creates downward mobility for migrant women (cf. Garrido & Codó 2017: 32). This devaluation also contributes to the high percentage of migrants in Spain's informal service sector (see Section 4.4). To further complicate matters, Beatriz highlights the impact of the local, monolingual Spanish language regimes in Madrid at the time of her arrival ("Es que cuando llegué en el ochenta y seis, nadie hablaba inglés," "es que era muy complicao, en cómo no hablamos español").

While the introductory part of the sequence is primarily narrated with the first-person singular pronoun, as evidenced by statements such as "quería ser medico," "he vuelto a estudiar," this changes, particularly when Beatriz addresses the Eurocentric orientation of the Spanish labor market with the utterance "Química mmh mh lo que pasa es que ((. . .))." In addition, her linguistic expression indicates that, due to the lack of recognition of her institutionalized cultural capital—that is, her educational qualifications from the Philippines—she was and is unable to act autonomously and with agency. She introduces the explanation of her situation with "lo que pasa es que," (cf. Reig 2011: 1435) thereby establishing a contrast with her statement in her previous turn, specifically, the description of her completed studies in the Philippines.

By employing the second-person singular ("cuando llegas"), Beatriz universalizes her experience, thereby mitigating individual accountability (cf. De Fina 2003: 54). Beatriz characterizes the constrained access to the Spanish labor market predominantly through impersonal expressions such as "tienes que" and "hay que," which maintain the agent's position as implicit. In particular, the use of "tienes que" conveys the sense of an externally imposed necessity (de Bruyne [2]2002: 576). In sum, using these constructions, Beatriz positions herself as passive, with a lack of agency in navigating the prevailing norms and processes that regu-

134 In a follow-up interview, Beatriz explained that she had originally planned to pursue a PhD and had already been offered a position at a university for an academic career.

late access to (desired) professional positions outside of the low-wage sector in Spain.

Likewise, Inés describes strikingly similar mechanisms in the Spanish labor market. When I inquired about her memories of her school years in the Philippines, the interview unfolded as follows:

(102) **Sandra**: And how was ah school?
Inés: School?
Sandra: Yes.
Inés: School. In the Philippines or here?
Sandra: No, in the Philippines.
Inés: In the Philippines (--). Of course ((clears throat)), mmh I started (--), I know, I won't say that uhm. I don't want to say that. I, I don't want to ((unintelligible, 1 sec)), right? But uhm, all of us, we graduated from college. Because our parents, even though (-) it's, I think all families, all Filipino families, even though life is so hard, they really seek ((clears throat)) to aid that all of their children, they have to (---), to study (---). They really work hard and that's the one that I appreciate which appreciated my parents, and even (-) how they work hard, how they (-) told that they were business(-)man, and they, they were business uhm. My father, he is a businessman, my mom is (-) a businesswoman. Actually, she works before us uhm (-), as a teacher, but then she left because of the meg, meager income. Now ((clears throat)), they work ha_hard for us to (--), to get into college ((laughs)).
Sandra: Mhm ((agrees)).
Inés: We started, of course, elementary, high school, and then college. Of course, when, when I came here it's different. So, you have to work first. Like in a household.
Sandra: Mhm ((agrees)). And do you have experiences in the household?
Inés: Yes, of course. That's, that's my first work. Actually (--), uhm I think I didn't told you I didn't tell you (-). My aunt, who was married to ahm the a Spanish, when they went to the Philippines (--), ((clears throat)) I was working then as ahm radio broadcaster ((laughs)), a writer.
Sandra: Oh, great!
Inés: Yes and a teacher in ahm, in a school, and then (---), mi tío que es un español, me pregunté "¿Cuánto ganas aquí?" ((Sandra laughs)), y me dice, and I answer (-) like this, no? "Ahm something like five thousand pesos, something." "If you come to Europe, with your, with your talent and with everything, you will gain more. But then you have to start (---) like, como (---) empleada de hogar" and I told myself "Okay." That's why I came here alone,

but with the help of my (-), of my aunt. So, I worked in ahm with a family, a Spanish, Spanish, Spanish family ((laughs)) with three children.

Initially, it becomes evident that Inés organizes her narrative and reflects on what she can and wants to share ("I know, I won't say that"). Then, Inés introduces her actual narrative. It is noteworthy that she initially presents her narrative from a collective perspective but then shifts to focus on her individual biography.

Inés employs the first-person plural pronoun *we* to narrate from a collective perspective, describing not only her own educational trajectory but also that of her siblings. She states, "all of us, we graduated from college". She then broadens the focus to encompass an even wider collective perspective, employing the pronouns "all families, all Filipino families," "they" as well as the possessive pronoun "they." Inés situates her initial experience in the Philippines within a collective Filipino context, emphasizing that it was not shaped by her or her family's individual agency. Despite the high level of education attained by Inés and her siblings, with college degrees obtained through their parents' financial efforts ("they work ha_hard for us"), salaries in the Philippines remain low. Inés' mother, for instance, had already experienced this dilemma, having worked as a teacher but leaving due to the meager income ("she works before us uhm (-), as a teacher, but then she left because of the meg, meager income").

Inés herself was also confronted with this dilemma, and as her narrative progresses, she increasingly adopts the perspective of her narrated self. Inés initially employs the first-person singular pronoun "I" to indicate the degree of uncertainty in her knowledge, as in "I think," and to evaluate situations, as in "I appreciate." Subsequently, the perspective is broadened to encompass her personal account, wherein she presents herself as the protagonist with a first-person singular pronoun, as evidenced by statements such as "I came here" and "I worked."

In recounting her own story, she introduces the figures of her aunt and her uncle, a Spaniard whom her aunt had married. In terms of language practices, it is noteworthy that Inés switches from English to Spanish at the point where she introduces her uncle. In the reenacted direct speech, Inés presents her aunt and uncle as key actors in her migration to Madrid, as they inspired her to migrate and helped her make it happen ("I came here alone, but with the help of my (-), of my aunt").[135] Her uncle inquires about her remuneration in the Philippines as a teacher and radio scriptwriter, having completed her degree in communication

135 Here, parallels in accessing Europe can be seen in the narratives of Carolina, Celia, and Diana; see example (91).

studies. He then explains the options of working in Europe, which would come with a higher income compared to the Philippines ("¿Cuánto ganas aquí?" [. . .] "If you come to Europe, with your, with your talent and with everything, you will gain more"). Simultaneously, he prepares her for the type of employment associated with social downgrading, stating, "But then you have to start (---) like, como (---) empleada de hogar." By directly quoting her uncle, the onus of responsibility for the statement is placed on him. This also corroborates the assertion that the Spanish labor market is Eurocentric and that this dynamic cannot be circumvented with a non-European degree. Inés addresses this issue herself by using the second-person singular pronoun "you" once, framing her statement as a general rule: "here it's different. So, you have to work first. Like in a household." To describe this phenomenon—a professional and social downward mobility in the host society that simultaneously enables economic upward mobility compared to the country of origin—Parreñas ([2]2015: 117) coined the term "contradictory class mobility" for DMWs (see also Section 1.1).

Similarly to Beatriz and Inés, Isabella also obtained a university degree in the Philippines, where she studied to become a nurse. In the following excerpt from the interview, I inquired as to whether she could picture herself working in this profession in Spain as well:

(103) **Sandra**: And did you always (--) think about ehm (---) your (2) mh (3). Did you always uhm (2) want to work as nurse here? (2) That, what you learn in the Philippines?
Isabella: Uhm the problem here is that I need, I think, I need to school again because the units is not enough here, I think? You need to schooling again in, you, you uh certificate (---), but (--)
Sandra: Mh.
Isabella: We will see. I'm just thinking, because I'm just older, older also not only for the house. The problem if I'm just uh (---) leave my ho, my, my employer now and just transferred the same house (---) and they have no kids, I think I don't want to (---) uh leave this employer ((laughs)) I have uh, I have always "I 'm going to the (---) uh what's that? Embassy because I need that," "Okay, okay." Is uh, I think is no conflict the schedule because d (-) d (-) d (-) you don't have a to pick up the kids of like this. So I think is no problem for there (--) and I think my employer (---) that's why I always said to, to <second friend> "Ah! Maybe if I will le uh, change the (---) work, not in the house (---). Maybe if the other house, if I apply my nursing aid, so maybe it's okay. But if you, I believe this uh family to chance the an another family, I think I cannot live here" ((laughs)). Because I, I hear, I feel uh (---) everyday, I have time to relax (--) because

sometimes I sleeping for, after siesta (---) and my employers no problem. If I'm going to vacation because they have a (---) another house in Coruña, Galicia. Is near in the sea (---). The house (---) in my work there is a better, because is just only half day ((laughs)). After lunch, I am go ((laughs)).
Sandra: Oh, why is it only half day eh in (---)?
Isabella: I don't know because uh señora just told me: (---) "Because it's a vacation. You need to not for work (---), work." Because, (---) that's why I'm just always thankful, because (2) usually my friend <another friend's name> always complaining if going to the (---) summer house (---) a lot of work (---), because (-) a lot of visitors, like that (---). I think Spanish, they like so much visitors everyday. ((laughs))
Sandra: And your employer, they don't have visitors in the (---)?
Isabella: Visitors but (-) not (-) everyday.
Sandra: Ah.
Isabella: Sometimes is like once a week in summer. That's why I need that one, but if uh (---) no visitors (--), you can (--) uh half day work only (---). Sometimes no lunch, so after (--) cleaning you can go ((laughs)). I think this is a good uh (--) thing there in Coruña, also when the vacation, because señora and señor just told me "Is not uh all work here." Special you feel like a vacation also because I'm here to vacation also. ((laughs))

Isabella highlights initially the Eurocentric orientation of the Spanish labor market, noting that her nursing qualification from the Philippines is not recognized. She expresses doubt about the sufficiency of her qualifications, suggesting that a higher level of education is necessary to gain recognition in the Spanish labor market ("the units is not enough here, I think?"). Although she initially hesitates, questioning the veracity of her statement, she then immediately frames her assertion as a general rule that applies not only to her individual case, shifting to the second-person singular pronoun ("You need to schooling again in, you, you uh certificate").

Isabella's agency is indeed constrained by the lack of recognition of her degree, as it precludes her from pursuing employment as a nurse in Spain. Nevertheless, she does not perceive herself as entirely powerless. She considers the possibility of leaving her current position as a DMW and reflects on potential risks ("I'm just thinking, because I'm just older, older also not only for the house"). In a subsequent reflection, the narrative self further explores this idea in a reenacted conversation with a friend ("Ah! Maybe if I will le uh, change the (--) work, not in the house").

The primary risk she identifies in leaving her current position is the potential loss of her current job with favorable employers and beneficial working conditions, including the opportunity to relax on a daily basis and the absence of problematic interactions with her employers. She emphasizes the favorable work conditions by contrasting them with those experienced by some of her friends.

Furthermore, other participants evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of their employment in the sector of paid domestic work, rejecting simplistic portrayals that position them as victims. For example, this topic emerged in the first focus group:

(104) **Carolina**: We have this pride like whatever, whatever it is, in maybe big or small work or (---) whatever. Just maybe in just house working, but you have to put your heart in everything you do. I think that's one kind of Filipino happy. That's why we have this joke when we, when I was in Denmark, like "Filipinos are cleaning the world." Like it's a good thing and at the same time it's a bad thing ((laughs)). It's okay. Do we have no uh, no other choice but to work in the house like domestic helpers, but the sa but the same time is a good thing because (--) even if they were just working in the house, like nannies, domestic helper, or cuidadora, or chica, or whatever you call it (--), we always put our hearts in doing our work and making, the other Filipinos maybe (--), yeah, making us proud that we are doing this, you know. So (-), it's like a case-to-case basis (--). Mhm ((agrees)). You, you got my point, right?
Isabella: Yes.
All: Yes, yes, yes.
Sofía: Yeah, yeah. That's why there, we, we cannot also blame that uh (--) agencies must be hiring Filipinas compared to the other (-) nationality.
Isabella: Yeah.
Carolina: So, for our party (--) when we are like in the Philippines (--), when you say you're just a domestic helper (---) before we can say that ah, is very degrading. Ah you don't deserve that kind of work, especially when you graduated from university. But when you get here, then you can see that ah okay, even if I am still working as domestic helper I can still be proud of myself. Like, like I'm doing this for my family. So, why mind of all those people saying "Ay, you're just a domestic helper." At least, I'm earning big. See? So, so you have your dignity (--) within yourself.

In her opening remarks, Carolina employs a first-person plural narrative voice, which she subsequently shifts to a first-person singular perspective. She initially makes a reference to Filipino values, stating, "We have this pride." Carolina per-

ceives this image of Filipinos as a guiding principle that shapes a specific behavioral trait, which is expected to be exhibited regardless of the nature of the task at hand. She then shifts to the second-person singular pronoun to express this as a universal rule, stating, "whatever it is, in maybe big or small work [. . .] but you have to put your heart in everything you do."

Then, she reverts to a collective perspective, employing the first-person plural pronoun to state, "we have this joke [. . .] like 'Filipinos are cleaning the world'." Carolina mitigates her statement characterizing it as a "joke" that has both a positive and a negative reading ("Like it's a good thing and at the same time it's a bad thing"). Even when there are no other options besides working in households ("Do we have no uh, no other choice but to work in the house like domestic helpers"), the job is still performed with dedication. Isabella offers support for Carolina's perspective ("we cannot also blame that uh (--) agencies must be hiring Filipinas compared to the other (-) nationality").

In the final turn of the sequence, Carolina shifts her narrative perspective from the first-person plural to the first-person singular pronoun, rejecting the devaluation of domestic work. This is evidenced by the following examples: "Ah you don't deserve that kind of work, especially when you graduated from university" and "So, why mind of all those people saying 'Ay, you're just a domestic helper'." Instead, Carolina points out that she can be proud of herself and of her employment as a DMW ("I can still be proud of myself"). Her job enables her to act independently and with agency by earning money ("At least, I'm earning big") and in doing so, she can support her family ("I'm doing this for my family"). In consequence, her work in domestic labor also grants her dignity ("so you have your dignity (--) within yourself").

This sequence illustrates the multiple dimensions of agency. Carolina perceives herself as capable of acting autonomously in her role as a DMW. Moreover, she believes that her actions are guided by ethical standards that extend beyond mere self-interest. On an individual level, this includes supporting her family, and on a collective level, it involves representing Filipino values. Carolina primarily refers to a moral dimension of agency, where actions are judged based on their ethical consequences (cf. Duranti 2004: 453, Deppermann 2015: 33).

Elena also underscores that her employment as a DMW has far-reaching and life-changing impacts on those around her:

(105) **Elena**: [. . .] My employer [. . .] wants me to choose what I want and that's why I bring to my friend from Pilippines that they are working here. The, the other one is like, is like my sister because she's working me in Jordan and she go back in our country, and she told me that she needs a work and I bring her in Spain and until now she's with me and every now and then,

she told me ah (---) “I change my life because of you.” I said, “No, you don’t need to tell because you, you are, you are you are working with me and I know you very well” and I bring also my sister-in-law. She’s working with me in Jordan in ((unintelligible 1.5 sec)) and everything change, because before I’m supporting also my brother that in the Philippines. When I bring my sister-in-law, she can support their life and it’s change everything. The, like, the <employer’s name> giving me a good life not only my life but changing all the people around me.

Elena presents herself as the protagonist, employing a first-person singular pronoun. In her *small story*, she describes how her employer sought to hire an additional DMW and tasked her with identifying a suitable candidate. Elena had a close friend (“like my sister”), with whom she shared a close bond, who was seeking employment (“she told me that she needs a work”). Elena was able to recommend her for the position (“and I bring her in Spain and until now she’s with me”). In direct speech, the friend corroborates that Elena’s actions had a transformative impact on her life, stating, “and then, she told me ah (---) ‘I change my life because of you’.”

Elena also assisted her sister-in-law in obtaining employment (“and I bring also my sister-in-law”). While Elena had previously provided financial support to her brother’s family, her sister-in-law became the so-called *breadwinner* of the family (see Section 1.1), i.e. the primary source of income due to her employment (“she can support their life and it’s change everything”).

In conclusion, Elena asserts that her “good” employer has enabled her to feel empowered, and this has had an impact not only on her own life but also on the lives of her relatives and friends (“the <employer’s name> giving me a good life not only my life but changing all the people around me”).

7.6 Language and Trauma

7.6.1 Introduction

Even though it was not my intention to address trauma, a multitude of small stories and big stories were shared during fieldwork, encompassing lived experiences related to multilingualism, migration, and trauma resulting from different types and forms of violence and abuse. All these stories have in common that they address individual traumatic experiences rather than collective trauma. A further commonality is that the trauma-influenced narratives do not focus on nat-

ural disasters, illnesses, fires, accidents, or similar events as causative factors. Instead, these narratives focus on intentional, human-caused traumas, which are often referred to as *man-made disasters*. Prior to revisiting one of these trauma-influenced narratives, I will first provide a preparatory overview of trauma from psychological and linguistic perspectives.

The term *trauma* is often employed in informal and colloquial contexts, as well as in media discourse, in a manner that is somewhat imprecise, to describe a diverse array of distressing and painful lived experiences (cf. Busch 2016: 85–86). Busch emphasizes that this usage does not align with its specialized application, which delineates the concept more narrowly. The term *trauma*, derived from the Greek word *trauma*, meaning 'wound' or 'injury,' has its origins in medical terminology and is rooted in the fields of trauma surgery and traumatology, which focus on physical injuries caused by accidents (Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 18–20). Gradually, the term was expanded to include psychological wounds and injuries. However, there is no universally accepted technical definition of psychological trauma. In their seminal work on psychotraumatology, Fischer & Riedesser ([2]2020: 428) define trauma as "a vital experience of discrepancy between threatening situational factors and an individual's coping capacities, accompanied by feelings of helplessness and defenseless exposure, which results in a lasting disruption of self-understanding and worldview" (my translation).

However, extreme and exceptional lived experiences do not automatically result in trauma for every individual. The effects of such lived experiences depend on the interaction of various factors, which Fischer & Riedesser ([5]2020) categorize into two groups: (1) the so-called external or "objective" factors and (2) the subjective dispositions. According to Fischer & Riedesser ([5]2020: 153–163), the first category includes the severity of the experience, its nature and frequency, the circumstances of its occurrence, and the relationship between victim and perpetrator(s). Repeated, so-called cumulative traumatic lived experiences have been demonstrated to intensify the burden of trauma (cf. Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 155). The second category encompasses a broader range of factors, including individual predispositions, pre-existing physiological, psychological, and social vulnerabilities, the subjective perception and interpretation of the situation by the victim, their capacity for action, and the support provided by close relationships (cf. Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 163–172). The question of whether an exceptionally stressful event exceeds a person's psychological coping capacities and results in trauma or a so-called *trauma-related disorder* can only be answered retrospectively (cf. Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 52, 65). Furthermore, Fischer & Riedesser ([5]2020: 50) highlight the necessity of distinguishing between the triggering event and the potential trauma-related disorders that may develop, given that trauma unfolds as a process.

In contexts of migration, the experience of trauma and the act of verbalizing it are not universal or homogeneous across all contexts (cf. Busch & McNamara 2020: 327). A culturally sensitive approach to trauma incorporates the so-called concept of *idioms of distress*, which refers to the idea that the articulation of trauma can be shaped by cultural specificities (cf. Hinton & Lewis-Fernández 2010).[136]

Language plays a central role in the context of trauma, particularly in clinical settings. It is an important factor at each stage of the medical history and diagnosis process, as well as in the (therapeutic) coping work that follows (cf. Deppermann & Lucius-Hoene 2005: 35). The question of whether traumatic experiences can be managed through storytelling is a topic of controversial debate in the field of psychology. De Fina et al. (2020: 354) emphasize that this is an individual matter, the answer to which cannot be universally applied: "Telling one's story may help people overcome trauma and in other cases it may be ineffective or simply may not happen at all."

Concurrently, trauma can result in the retention of experiences that are so traumatic that they cannot be verbalized. Fischer & Riedesser ([5]2020: 37) describe this as "unspeakable horrors," making it difficult or even impossible for victims to verbalize their experiences (cf. Busch 2016: 85). Narratives of trauma, therefore, are less about tellability and more about whether individuals are both willing and able to articulate their lived experiences. "Even the attempt to communicate what has been experienced can be profoundly challenging, given the specific changes in memory function, the threat posed by related memories, and the incomprehensibility of the events" (Deppermann & Lucius-Hoene 2005: 37, my translation). This phenomenon was previously identified by Pierre Janet, whose work is considered to be foundational in the field of psychotraumatology. According to Janet, traumatic experiences that resist verbalization can manifest instead through images, physical symptoms, and behavior (Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 37). Furthermore, additional challenges to narrating trauma may also originate from the interaction itself, in which traumatic experiences are discussed, as well as the accompanying contextual factors. These include the framing provided by the interview setting and location, the relationship between the participants, and other related elements (cf. Scheidt & Lucius-Hoene 2015: 29).

The connections between trauma and language is an emerging field in linguistics, as an increasing number of studies in linguistics are addressing trauma-

136 To illustrate the concept of *idioms of distress*, Hinton and Lewis-Fernández (2010: 210, 216) cite the term *ataque de nervios*, which is used in the United States to describe a condition primarily associated with individuals of Caribbean-Latin American origin.

influenced narratives. To date, sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic studies have primarily concentrated on the structural characteristics and verbal expressions of narratives of traumatic experiences and/or their consequences. For instance, Ladegaard (2017: 92–93) posits that crying and other paraverbal behaviors are salient characteristics of trauma narratives among DMWs from the Philippiness. This observation, however, is not corroborated in the corpus of this contribution. Other characteristics identified include sentence breaks, abrupt topic shifts, and reformulations. These effects are often vaguely described as fragmentation, incoherence, and disorganization (cf. Deppermann & Lucius-Hoene 2005: 38; Ladegaard 2017: 91).

Scheidt & Lucius-Hoene (2015: 28) observe that disruptions in narratives are neither exclusive to traumatic contexts nor specifically indicative of them. Deppermann & Lucius-Hoene (2005: 41) have demonstrated that narratives of traumatic events exhibit considerable variation in terms of their formal and structural characteristics. The authors present a descriptive continuum of verbalizations of trauma based on empirical evidence, encompassing a wide range of complexity across four selected descriptive parameters: (1) the representability of the traumatic situation, (2) the depiction of subjective involvement and agency during the traumatic event, (3) the portrayal of emotional impact at the time of narration, and (4) the negotiation of moral aspects of the trauma (cf. Deppermann & Lucius-Hoene 2005: 62–68). Consequently, they reject the notion of a singular, distinctive *language of trauma*, favoring instead a multifaceted array of formal verbalization strategies. De Fina et al. (2020: 354) additionally observe that this phenomenon pertains to both narrative structures and the narrative process, noting that "stories that relate traumatic experiences may certainly be broken and incoherent, but they may also be complete and detailed."

7.6.2 Ethically challenging moments: Kate's Language Portrait

Trigger warning

This section focuses on a trauma-influenced narrative. In this context, Kate recounts a lived experience she repeatedly characterizes as "traumatic": namely, witnessing a mass murder that occurred in a neighbor's home. If you do not want to read about this, please skip this section and continue with Section 7.7.

It was a scorching day in August 2022, and the streets of Madrid radiated heat, shimmering under temperatures that had exceeded 40 degrees Celsius for several days. I met Kate in a park. She brought along two cups of vanilla ice cream, and

we found a shaded spot with a bench. At that time, we had only met once before, about three weeks earlier, when we had coincidentally crossed paths after attending a Filipino festival.

In the park, our conversation focused on chronotopic changes, encompassing the childhood in a rural area of the Philippines, time spent in school, and various lived experiences related to labor migration to Denmark, Norway, and Spain. Our conversation lasted for two and a half hours. Then, I asked her if she would like to create a language portrait. Figure 12 presents Kate's language portrait:

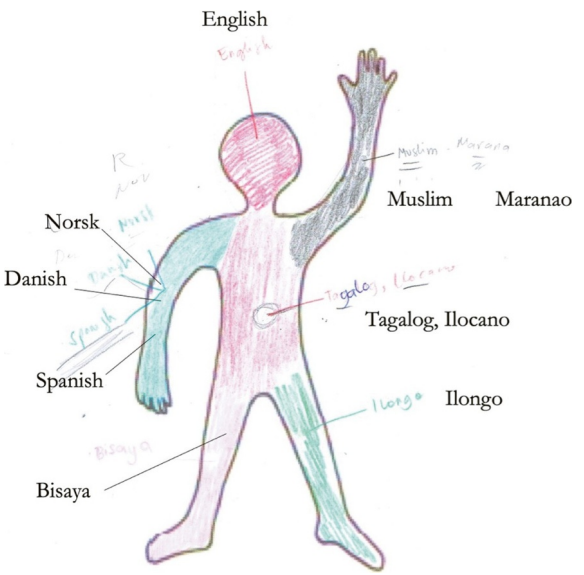

Figure 12: Kate's Language Portrait.

In the visual representation of her linguistic repertoire, Kate identifies ten linguistic resources: Bisaya, Spanish, Danish, Norsk, English, Maranao, Tagalog, Ilocano, Ilongo and Muslim; the term "Muslim" is used by several participants to refer to a variety spoken in Mindanao. When she explains her portrait, Kate identifies a linguistic resource that she associates with a traumatic, life-altering event from her childhood that she described as "very traumatizing and I won't forget" (line 135). This pre-migratory experience continues to exert a significant influence on her life and her relationship with language to the present day. The following excerpt begins at the point where Kate explains her language portrait. I consider an extended part of the conversation to capture its dynamics and development. Her narrative unfolds in two parts (lines 1–75 and lines 78–169). Between these parts,

I paused the recording because I was shocked and I would take care of Kate (line 77):

(106) **Kate**: Ok, we're start at my maybe (---) in (---) my Tagalog (---) I put here, because it's my centre (---) because you know it's here, it's here it is the centre, it's me, so I think (---) Tagalog is the centre, Tagalog is my language, because it's mine. So, I prioritize (---) I put it here in the middle. Then, to (---) we speak Tagalog and also Ilocano at my home (---) okay? and then, when I was (---) I learned English in my school and also I heard from not a lot of people (---) I learned English and the teacher when I was young I was the grade grade six elementary, that is elementary. And also my classmates are all Bisaya, Ilongo and Muslim. So, and also, I speak and I learn through these languages with them to reply to my classmates and I put here here here it because sometimes you're here here until (---) I think (---) I can (---) I will make a story. Hm, I don't know (---) ((laughs)) I know these languages, because it is also in my country, but not really my (---) my dialect. It's because we have many dialects there. And here, here, (---) is the Ilocano. I should put here the Ilocano it's because its (---) I think it's because I know I know this language it's because it is also my in my country.

Sandra: And why did you have chosen red for Tagalog and Ilocano?

Kate: It's because my favorite color.

Sandra: (laughs)

Kate: Yes, is red. Because I don't really speak Bisaya but I understand and also my classmate and also look here, I understand also Maranao (--) Eh (---) and Muslim (---) I put here it's because some of Muslim in our country is really bad people so I will (---) I put black. So, I put here. And it (---) is symbolized (---) this (---) that I don't want Muslim anymore (---) eh, not, I'm joking (---) ehm, I'm just put black. And I understand (---) I understand also a little bit, some some words, but not really. And also (---) and also, when I was ten years old, then (---) our neighbor (---) massacred them.

Sandra: Oh (shocked).

Kate: Yes. They died. And it was really (---) really (--) you know sad because that day (---) the eldest daughter go home in the house that day. And also that day is the massacre day. So (---) the eldest daughter went home to celebrate (---) the (---) the (---) how do you call this? The one year of the eh (---) siblings, the one year. The eldest (---) oh no, the youngest one. So, that day, they massacred them and they died, they died, all of them. Except their mother and th (---) one brother and the twins but (---)

in the twins (---) there are three thr that died, their father and the eldest and the second one. And so, that's why I put because I don't like black because it symbolize bad.

Sandra: And eh (---) your neighbours (---) they were Filipino or eh (---)?

Kate: Yes, they were Filipino, they speak Tagalog. Mostly, the dialect is Muslim.

Sandra: And that's the name of the dialect?

Kate: The terrorists here (---) And I put here, its hard for me to learn (---) but (---) and I put English because I think it is language (--) that has in the Philippines so that's why. And I prioritize also my (---) this is because my dialect as a (---) a (---) Filipin (---) I mean as a Filipino and my dialect is Ilocano. And our mother tongue Tagalog. So I put red and this one. And also we have that in school, everything when I was young. Although (---) this is why I put English there. So, that's the story.

Sandra: And why did you have chosen the head for (---) eh (---) English?

Kate: English (---) eh, English is for international that's why I put English there. Its for everybody. So, head is for international, universal language. That's why I put here. But here, when you put in my country okay it's just here here, but you have only one language. You can use the Tagalog, it is my centre. I mean (---) I put here (---) because the head is for everybody.

Sandra: And why did you have chosen blue for Spanish, Norwegian and Danish?

Kate: I think blue is my favorite and I put here (---) its hard for me to learn. This one and this one but most of this one

Sandra: When did you learn Danish and Danish? Did you make a course?

Kate: Yes. I (---) I speak Norsk. A little bit (laughs). (S laughs). Like for example (---) I think (---) I think there is similarities to this language, there is similarities.

Sandra: How do you call this? Norsk?

Kate: Yes. This is in Norway, this is in Denmark. ((gives an example in Danish)). I put in the hand that I need to learn more, especially Spanish, I don't speak it already. Spanish (---) which I need to learn for my job. Yah (---) This is my story. Another more?

Sandra: Ehm. (---) Why do you have choosen green for Ilongo?

Kate: This green (---) I think (---) green is (---) look, I like green also. (---) green is also my favorite, red and blue. Green not really, but I like also. And Ilongo, I don't really speak Bisaya, but I understand. I am more used in Ilongo to speak than Bisaya.

(I interrupted the recording.)

Kate: Emhm (---) mhm (---) I mean, this is my (---) the center. This is my Tagalog and my country, and my family and I speak at home, that's why in the center, and then here, Bisaya, one Bisaya and one Ilonggo green, also half and half. It's because (---) which means that they are not really my (---) eh (---) my dialect, so I put down and half down. Here at the hands, I put all of them. It's because it's a new for me, but here in the other hand it's because it's far, far and one hand for the (---) eh (---) this language. It's because we have in my language, when I was young I have many trauma, trauma, trauma ((laughs)) it's because I was thinking that they are really bad, but they are not bad people, but ahm there is, there is Muslim, and also I understand Maranao. I have a little language with this part.

Sandra: How old were you when that happened to your neighbors?

Kate: Ah ten.

Sandra: Ten.

Kate: Ten.

Sandra: I'm so shocked.

Kate: You are shocked?

Sandra: Yes!

Kate: I was crawling under the bed with my sisters, with my mom, with my cousin with, with all the people there. That's, that's why after the massacre, so my father have to (---) wake up every night to, to see me, to see my family, to see us, his family if it's they are good, because if not, example, here because my house is not really safe. I mean, my house, my house is like (---) you know, made of (---) bamboo and there is a hole in the (---) hole, hole, you know?

Sandra: Mh.

Kate: Also in the part, in the also following it's raining, so it's like I really have to wake up to go in the other side, so we cannot eh wake from the raining, you know? And then, after that, my father everyday she, he has to wake up every night to see us if we are okay, if there are people surrounding my home, so he has to tell me "wake up, wake up," and "we have to hide somewhere." That day, that, that happening (---) I dared not to sleep in the house (---) so it's so hard because when, because my house there is very far from the, from the rescuer? And also far from the city, also far from the town. It's like we are in the, for example, this is the place where I live and here is almost ahm (---) a lot of grass and (---) and the land with rice or coconut, it's surrounding here, but all the bad people that killed go everywhere here, here and see if there's a people that become killed people, so sabes? Por eso my, my father doesn't ehm (---) doesn't sleep just to protect us, if there's people surrounding my home.

[unintelligible]

Sandra: Ehm (---) what happened after the massacre? The police came?
Kate: Eh what happened? No, the reporters came or the police came, of course, yes and it's too late because they cannot save the people and no (---) it's like (---) ahm (---) what you call this? It's called ((unintelligible 1 sec)). No justice, it's because no justice.
Sandra: Mhm.
Kate: It's because these people are bad. It's like ((unintelligible 3 sec)) no justice.
Sandra: Mhm.
Kate: It's like that happened in my country. It's my neighbor, okay? So that's why and also I remembered ahm, for example, this is my house.
Sandra: Eh I give you a new one, ahm (---)
Kate: No, here, right here. For example, this is my house where I live, you remember my story.
Sandra: Mhm.
Kate: Very traumatizing and I won't forget. It's because I was ten years old that day so I have memory of the ((kid laughing, unintelligible 2 sec)). There some policies my house ((children talking)). For example, this is my house and here, and we have also neighbors here, not few, just few, just few and this is it, this one, for example, this is the lan, for example, this is the land. This is this one, this is trees ((children screaming)) trees, right? Or (---) trees, trees, we are surrounding by trees and land, land with the rice, planting the rice, you know the rice?
Sandra: Yes.
Kate: Yeah, planting rice, land with rice, all these are rice, rice and trees, and also there, there is a highway or here is highway so they can look the people or houses or where to go. Here is our neighbor who massacred and here also there is a land, land, trees and also here trees, trees, we are surrounding by that. So and then, here we are. So, this is dead because they entered the massacre and then, them the bad people, you know what, at the back of my, the back of my house, they pass there, they pass and I saw the rice, the planting rice there are, you know? It's like eh, you know it's like that. But when after the massacre, they're passing there inside the rice and all the rice is fall, you know?
Sandra: Mhm.
Kate: You have, the ((unintelligible 1 sec)). So here, it's a lot of banana and here it's no, no houses, no houses. So, it's, it's very, it's like critical area.

Sandra: Mhm.
Kate: Mhm and that's why. So, when I was ten years old, we evacuate to the other land, but which is not our land, but my aunty and then after, after that my aunty ehm we, we evacuate again to the other land, which is, we are in, you have no permanent, we have no land, we have no, I mean, properties, the prop, the real properties to eh (---) to put a house, to build a house. So, we go, I go, we go with my aunties in their house for I think months. I think just a month and then after that, my sister decided to go abroad, so that's why we have eh, we have a little money to send money for us to buy a land, to, to build the house. So that's why my sister work hard also to go abroad, so that's why all, me and my sisters also came here, so our life is changed a little bit than before.

This situation was one of the most ethically challenging situations—or, in the words of Guillemin & Gillam (2004), "ethically important moments"—both during and after the fieldwork. Even with thorough preparation of the context and the specific setting, and previous reflection on potential ethical risks and field dynamics, interactions can still unfold in unforeseeable and unexpected ways (cf. Kostovicova & Knott 2022: 61).

In the following, I will first focus on Kate's multilingual repertoire as illustrated in the language portrait. Following that, I will reflect on this ethically challenging moment.

The starting point for Kate's visual structuring is the metaphorical concept of center and periphery, which she associates with proximity (center) and distance (periphery). The center is visually represented in Kate's drawing through the midsection of the body ("I prioritize (---) I put it here in the middle," lines 4–5). She assigns Tagalog and Ilocano to this central position, emphasizing that both hold the highest significance ("I prioritize," lines 4, 47). She explains that both linguistic resources were spoken in her family (lines 5–6, 78–79), thereby establishing an emotional connection. Another justification is that Kate personally identifies with Tagalog and Ilocano ("it's here, it is the center, it's me," lines 2–3).

She distinguishes between Tagalog and Ilocano on both a national and a local level. Kate categorizes Ilocano as a "dialect" used at the local level, and Tagalog, in contrast, as a "language," tied to a nation-building language ideology, describing it as the nationwide used language of the Philippines ("my country," line 79; also see the transition to the first-person plural in "our mother tongue Tagalog," line 49). Simultaneously, her choice of pronouns marks her sense of belonging.

Kate then arranges all other parts of her multilingual repertoire, starting from the center. A vertical contrast of top and bottom emerges as an additional structuring element, metaphorically expressing hierarchies within the linguistic

repertoire. English holds a prominent position for Kate and is assigned to the head, referencing language ideologies of English as a lingua franca ("It's for everybody," line 54; "international, universal language," lines 54–55). Bisaya and Ilongo are commonly used in her home region (lines 12–13) and are assigned to the left and right legs ("down and half down," line 82), "which means that they are not really (---) my dialect" (lines 81–82). For Kate, Ilongo is closer to the center, while Bisaya is further away. She explains this differentiation with her self-perception, according to which her language practices and usage vary ("I am more used in Ilongo to speak than Bisaya," lines 74–75).

Kate assigns Danish, Norwegian, and Spanish to the left arm and hand—these are parts of her linguistic repertoire connected to her professional activities as an au pair in Scandinavia and as a DMW in Spain. Kate emphasizes "it's hard for me to learn," (line 45), but she considers Spanish as important and connected with upward mobility ("I need to learn for my job," line 69).

This illustrates how the language portrait serves as a method to make the linguistic repertoire more visible and to reflect on the individual meanings of its components. In our preceding two-hour interview, Kate had already discussed her linguistic repertoire multiple times. However, the language portrait added a layer of detail to our conversation, as it was only in this context that Kate addressed Danish, Norwegian, Bisaya, Ilongo, Maranao, and Muslim.

The color symbolism in Kate's language portrait reflects her personal preferences, which she associates in descending order of favor with the parts of her linguistic repertoire that are relevant to her. In contrast, the color black represents the least preferred color in her spectrum ("I don't like black because it symbolize bad," lines 39–40). Kate connects black with Maranao and Muslim, as well as with the inhabitants of the southern Philippine region of Muslim Mindanao. She assigns the color black—and the body part of the right, outstretched arm, which for her is distant from the center—to Muslim, which she associates with a traumatic experience. She identifies this experience as the reason for her rejection of the variety and distancing herself from it, as it is the variety that connects her to the perpetrators of the traumatic event. In her linguistic repertoire, she positions this variety as an element in which she attributes only limited proficiency to herself ("I understand also a little bit, some words, but not really," lines 26–27).

When Kate explicitly addresses the distressing part of her linguistic repertoire for the first time she initially identifies it as one of the local varieties of her homeland and childhood, with which she came into contact, particularly in the school context, through her classmates. Furthermore, Kate contextualizes her traumatic experience in relation to her biography and narrative world, i.e., the spatial and situational environment of the crime scene and the family constella-

tions of her own family and the neighboring family. She embeds the traumatic event in her life story during her childhood ("when I was ten years old," line 28;) and also describes the subsequent consequences for her and her family, which persist to this day (lines 159–169).

Now, I turn to the ethically important moment. At the beginning of the verbal explanation of her language portrait, Kate negotiates whether she can and should share her experience with me. After two self-interruptions, she metalinguistically announces a narrative: "I think (---) I can (---) I will make a story" (line 12), but immediately revokes this statement ("Hm, I don't know ((laughs))" lines 12–13). At that moment, it was not clear to me as the co-teller that Kate was struggling to find the right words and was about to begin telling a trauma-influenced narrative. Consequently, I did not respond to the announced narrative during my subsequent turn-taking (line 18).

Then, Kate marks the beginning of her storytelling ("I will make a story" line 12), even though additional sequences follow before she recounts her lived experience. Accompanied by hesitation signals like "eh" and pauses, which suggest a problem, she introduces her narrative ("eh (---) and Muslim" lines 22–23). Kate initially avoids mentioning her traumatic experience, thereby modifying the chronological linearity of her account.[137] Instead, she displays her stance towards the speakers and the language itself ("really bad people" line 24, "it (---) is symbolized (---) this (---) that I don't want Muslim anymore" line 25). At this point, it is relevant to note that such discourses were also mentioned by other participants; Yolanda had already referenced this discourse in her explanation of her language portrait and deconstructed the discursive conflation of violence with a particular population group (see Section 5.5.3). Similarly, Kate retracts her stance, which marked her dissociation and non-affiliation with the speakers and the language, within the same turn through a self-initiated repair by mitigating her statement as a joke ("I'm joking" line 26). Osborne (2018: 123) describes humor and a joking style in the Philippine context as strategies for saving face and avoiding shame (*hiya*, see Reyes 2015).

137 Trauma-influenced narratives can exhibit diverse narrative structures and linguistic forms. In the case of successive trauma-influenced narratives, Deppermann (2020: 439) emphasizes their processual nature. A gradual approach may indicate that the narrative was not preplanned but developed during the course of the conversation, becoming increasingly explicit over time. "It takes several runs for tellers to get to the traumatizing core events and describe them in detail" (Deppermann 2020: 439). Deppermann explains this phenomenon from both sociological and psychological perspectives. From a sociological point of view, the taboo nature of the traumatic event may position the narrator as powerless. A psychological explanation highlights the fragmented nature of traumatic memories, which can make them difficult to recall.

When Kate began to recount her traumatic experience (lines 28–51), I was deeply shaken by what she had shared and profoundly troubled by the realization that I had unintentionally triggered her to relive it. I had not known about her traumatic lived experiences in her childhood prior to the interview.[138] Obviously, I had had no intention of prompting her to share her devastating story, and yet I had violated the core principles of ethics and caused her potential harm by inadvertently reminding her of the traumatic event (cf. Morgenthaler García in press; see also Section 2.4). At first, I did not know how to handle the situation, how to deal with my own emotions, and how to respond to what I had heard. It was not until several turns into the conversation that I stopped recording—however, it would have been my responsibility to provide her with immediate support and care. In retrospect, and with more experience in conducting interviews, I would have immediately asked whether she wanted to end or continue the conversation. In the situation, when I stopped the recording after several turns, I tried to mitigate and repair the potential harm I had caused asking, whether she preferred to pause the conversation or if she felt the need to continue. She chose to proceed, and we resumed the discussion.

Kate's second storytelling (lines 96–169) is also characterized by a partially modified linearity in its chronological sequence, marked by shifts in tense and thematic leaps between the traumatic event itself, the situational context before the event, and the consequences following the event. She concludes her second storytelling by recounting the consequences of the event for her family. At this point, she merges the narrative time with the narrated time: "So that's why all, me and my sisters also came here" (line 168).

The actual recounting of the event takes up very little space in her storytelling (lines 28–29). Additionally, her description of the violence reflects what Deppermann (2020: 434) refers to as an "abstraction of violence," where the action itself is not explicitly described. Notably, in the second trauma-influenced narrative, there is an increasing amount of contextualization regarding the narrated world. Kate also begins sketching a drawing to illustrate and make the narrated world more comprehensible. The majority of the narrative sequences focus on the spatial contexts and situational circumstances before the act, as well as the consequences for the various protagonists after the event.

138 In this context, it is also important to consider Loch's (2008) observation that "challenging interview examples or experiences should not discourage conducting narrative interviews. Otherwise, no conversations could ultimately take place, as it can never be guaranteed in advance that potential interview participants have not experienced traumatic events." (Loch 2008: 19; my translation, S. I.-D).

The act of recounting a traumatic event and the associated confrontation with its possible consequences can carry the risk of retraumatization (cf. Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 174, 253). In this context, Loch (2008: 16) emphasizes that, particularly for individuals who experienced trauma in childhood, distinguishing between the past and the present is crucial:

> It is essential to support interviewees in staying oriented to the present (by referencing the space, their current life situation, etc.) when there is a risk that they may relive the past so intensely during the storytelling process that it feels as if it has become the present again. Such experiences can lead to retraumatization. (Loch 2018: 16; my translation, S. I.-D.)

However, when participants bring a trauma narrative into the conversation as a need to speak, it is also crucial to respond appropriately to what has been shared within the narrative context. Refusal or rejection of such narratives can signify a lack of acknowledgment, which in itself may pose a risk of retraumatization (cf. Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 220–225, Loch 2008: 5). It is therefore essential to respectfully create space for the expression of this need and to demonstrate empathy and care as a co-narrator (cf. Fischer & Riedesser [5]2020: 218–222, Busch & McNamara 2020: 330). In this sense, interviews can provide beneficial environments for participants to discuss distressing experiences (Kostovicova & Knott 2022: 62, Deppermann 2020: 439). Since I am not a trained psychologist, I provided participants who shared traumatic lived experiences with me with contact information for professional psychological counseling to ensure they were not left to cope alone.

Care, of course, does not conclude with the emergence of an ethically challenging moment, even though research ethics often shift the focus at this stage to the collected data rather than the participants:

> Research ethics are primarily concerned with the process of sharing information in the interview process. Only rarely do we consider the impact of this experience on the research participant after the interview has occurred. Concern for the post-interview period has been focused on the secure storage and safeguarding of data, including research participants' identity. (Kostovicova & Knott 2022: 63)

The sharing of Kate's lived experience had a profound impact on our relationship and fundamentally changed it: After the interview, Kate asked if we could continue meeting to discuss topics she typically would not share with those in her daily life. I met with Kate several more times, and our bond grew closer as a result. After completing the fieldwork, we have stayed in touch.

During the fieldwork, various ethically challenging moments arose. Other participants also shared accounts of traumatic experiences and their aftermath. In addition to responding ad-hoc in the moment, I faced the question of how to

approach the traumatic experiences shared by several participants during subsequent fieldwork trips and reflection sessions. At this juncture, I sought guidance and support through psychological supervision provided by a clinical psychologist. Given the inherent risk of retraumatization for participants, I refrained from bringing up traumatic accounts on my own initiative.

I was also emotionally affected by what I had heard and it was also difficult for me to write about this ethically challenging moment. To navigate this situation better and to develop protective strategies for future ethically challenging moments, I sought supervision for myself as well.

7.6.3 Agency

Kate tells her *big story* primarily in the first-person singular, but as the story progresses, there is an increasing shift to the first-person plural. In the first-person singular, Kate typically does not express her agency; rather, she refers to her memories (e.g., "I remembered" line 130, "I have memory of" line 136 "I saw the rice" lines 150–151). In contrast, Kate assigns agency to the perpetrators; they initiate the actions and control the events decisively and intentionally. Kate also denies agency to other parties who might have helped in the situation. The authority of the police is introduced into the narrative only after my question (line 121). Initially, Kate denies that the police arrived, instead mentioning journalists (line 121). She later initiates a self-repair to indicate that the police did come, but evaluates their arrival as ineffective: "it's too late because they cannot save the people" (line 122). By negating their effectiveness, Kate denies that the police has agency and capacity for an impactful, active intervention. Another potentially helpful entity—referred to vaguely as "the rescuer"—is also denied agency: "my house there is very far from the, from the rescuer" (lines 110–111).

Kate and her family can only react to the perpetrators' actions and hide: "I was crawling under the bed with my sisters, with my mom, with my cousin, with all people there" (lines 96–97). No justification or explanation of the perpetrators' motives is mentioned at any point. Kate also assigns responsibility and blame for the act to the perpetrators, morally labeling them as evil ("bad," line 87) and guilty ("the terrorists," line 45). However, Kate makes distinctions to avoid morally condemning all speakers of Muslim: "it's because I was thinking that they are really bad, but they are not bad people" (lines 86–87).

Most of the narrative sequences are dedicated to the aftermath of the event. In this context, Kate describes the consequences for various individuals. The neighboring family—about half of its members—is rendered powerless and falls victim to the incident. Kate elaborates most extensively on the impact on her own

family. Her father holds a particularly central role. He is the only character who is given a voice through direct speech: "so he has to tell me 'wake up, wake up,' and 'we have to hide somewhere'" (line 108). Through this monologic direct speech, the perspective of another character beyond Kate's narrated self is brought to the forefront of the story. Drawing on De Fina (2003: 105–106), two primary functions of direct speech can be identified here. First, actions, emotional perceptions, and moral evaluations are no longer solely conveyed from the perspective of the narrated self but are presented through an additional voice. Through his direct speech, the father confirms the gravity of the event and its lasting effects, such as his insomnia. By quoting her father's directive to wake up and hide, Kate also avoids directly expressing her own emotions regarding her father's sleeplessness and fears. Second, direct speech can also serve as a listener-oriented strategy, allowing the co-teller to step into the perspective of the addressed character, "letting the listener feel what the character was feeling" (De Fina 2003: 106).

As the narrative progresses, Kate increasingly uses the first-person plural when discussing the consequences of the event for her family, such as the loss of their old home. She attributes agency to her sister as well: "my sister decided to go abroad" (165), "my sister work hard also to go abroad" (lines 167–168). Through her sister's decision (and later those of other family members) to migrate and send remittances to the family, they were able to establish a new livelihood in the Philippines: "so that's why we have eh, we have a little money to send money for us to buy a land, to, to build the house" (lines 166–167). Finally, Kate evaluates the consequences of the event in terms of family life: "so our life is changed a little bit than before" (lines 168–169).

In both parts of the storytelling, Kate contrasts the agency of the perpetrators with that of the victims. The perpetrators dominate and control the events, not only during the attack but also by remaining significantly responsible for the actions survivors are forced to take afterward. However, her family regained agency when her sister and other family members began to work abroad, and her family was able to purchase land and build a new home with the remittances.

7.7 Narratives of Empowerment: How to Stand Up for Yourself in Conflicts with Employers

This final section on individual agency sheds light on narratives that depict an—at least partial—disruption of power imbalances and hierarchies, which are typically skewed in favor of employers. In a focus group, Carolina recounted her lived experiences of a conflict with her employers:

(107) **Sandra**: Ye_yes. When you start working here uh (---) which memories do you have?
Carolina: Oh my god. Okay, go ahead. Go first.
Isabella: ((unintelligible, 1 sec))
Carolina: Okay, I go first. I think that is one of the worst thing that ever happened to me here. Like, I've been cleaning, I mean, I was with a family of four. Like there're tu uh pirst uh (---) the (--) the parents of these two kids, there is a son and there is a daughter, and then I have to clean like three storey, three storey house, and then I went upstairs, and then they ask, she ask, my employer, my ex_ex_employer ask me to clean the wor uh, the, the gate and then it was really that hot. It's like rising hot weather and then I'm not used to it, because I came from Denmark and it's freezing cold in there. So, what I had was this nosebleed. Literally, and then I really hate it. Okay, after, after I got my salary, I, I ho, I wanna go out in here. Like this is not a place for me. So, I think it's one of the worst things that ever happened. So, I'm not going to explain more of that, but you can imagine already how hard it was, and then they are not really that with family. I mean, I'm not saying, I'm not saying (---) can I, should I share? Yeah, it's okay?
Sandra: Sure.
Carolina: Okay, I'm not really saying they are good family, but then there's always this kind of person who is going to check out with you. Like, for example, you're cleaning something, and then you already cleaned this portion of the house, and then (-) you, you go to other portion. Like, you clean from the living room and then go to the kitchen. Then, my (-) boss, the girl boss, went to the, went to the (---) uh, to the liv, to the living room where I was cleaning, and then she was going to inspect and then doing something like this to check by her, using her fingers, and then, and then she come to me and will ask me "Did you clean the living room?" "Yes," I said that, like that, and she said "I don't think it's clean enough. So, you have to clean again." Oh my god, I have to clean the three storey house, I have to go to the market, I have to cook for br I have to prepare breakfast, and then cook for lunch, and then cook for dinner. I have to iron everything, and then she's like that? So, I was really like (--), I already ((unintelligible, 1 sec)) and the family for two months. So, after so on over those struggles, like I also wanted to address, maybe I, I have to give them the chance. But then it didn't, it didn't work out. So, I have to say goodbye to them in property. What mean in property was that I got my salary for two months and then I went home to my apartment, I just message them like "I'm not coming back anymore. Thank you for everything." And then I don't even waited for

their reply, and then I just (--) like (---) break my sim card and then throw it out. Like I don't want to have any contact with them anymore. So, I think it's (--), it's not that good. It was not that good.

In response to my opening question about the memories associated with starting work in Madrid, Carolina initially encourages Isabella to contribute. However, Isabella's response is inaudible on the audio recording. Carolina takes over instead and begins to share her story ("Okay, I go first").

She introduces a challenging topic, characterizing it as "one of the worst thing that ever happened to me here." In a similar vein, she ends her small story ("So, I think it's (--), it's not that good. It was not that good"). After this framing, she situates the events in the period when she relocated from Denmark to Madrid, using the first person singular. At this time, Carolina was employed in a family with two children. She describes her duties in the private household and then articulates her emotions, noting "So, what I had was this nosebleed. Literally, and then I really hate it". Then, she interrupts her story telling "So, I'm not going to explain more of that, but you can imagine already how hard it was." She asks whether it would be prudent to continue sharing her experiences in this particular setting ("can I, should I share? Yeah, it's okay?").

In her next turn, Carolina shifts to the second-person singular: ("but then there's always this kind of person who is going to check out with you. Like, for example, you're cleaning something, and then you already cleaned this portion of the house"). In doing so, she generalizes the experience as a collective one, describing a particular type of employer behavior. She then returns to the first-person singular and reenacts a conflict with her employer through direct speech: "she said 'I don't think it's clean enough. So, you have to clean again'." Such behavior is deemed unacceptable by Carolina ("I have to cook for br I have to prepare breakfast, and then cook for lunch, and then cook for dinner. I have to iron everything, and then she's like that?"). In the progression of events, Carolina demonstrates a high degree of agency. Initially, she considers giving her employers another chance ("over those struggles, like I also wanted to address, maybe I, I have to give them the chance"). When no improvement occurs, she decides to terminate the employment relationship ("and then I went home to my apartment, I just message them like 'I'm not coming back anymore. Thank you for everything'."). Moreover, she cuts off any possibility of further contact by destroying her phone's SIM card ("Like I don't want to have any contact with them anymore"). In this way, she retains full control over the situation.

Carolina's small story illustrates that the balance of power in employment relationships is not always weighted in favor of employers. Her small story, in which she—not her employers—terminates the employment contract, is not an

isolated case. Other participants shared similar experiences. Olivia, for instance, recounts how her first employment contract in Madrid came to an end. She arrived in the Spanish capital in 1974 and worked for two years in the household of a prominent family. In the following excerpt from an interview, she reflects on the day her two-year employment contract expired:

(108) **Olivia**: [. . .] así el día que va a terminar mi contrato porque dos años (---). Era sábado eh están en salón todos. Entonces, yo ya tengo (--) he buscado ya un matrimonio. No tienen hijos. Que es en en calle calle <nombre> ¿Sabe calle <nombre>?
Sandra: No.
Olivia: No (---). Es el dueño del edificio. Son (-) no tienen hijos. Tiene otra chica eh triple sueldo porque no va a cambiar. Y entonces yo ya entonces porque ya he elegido este. Yo quiero este. Y un día, (---) preparando mi maleta, porque no habla nada y yo también así porque se cree que sí sí sí sí. Entonces, eh mediodía "Señora," estaba en el salón, "Señor, que me voy" (---). Uy, dos años ya terminé mi contrato (---) "No!" Uy, como loca: "No no no no" y los niños "Tata, tata, no, no." "Pero señora tú sabes que se ha terminado mi contrato ¿no? <énfasis> ya termino hoy." "No, no ¿cuánto quieres?" "No, no es muy tarde" (---) "A ver" (---) señora: (---) "No, no un año, un mes. No por favor. No, no un año, un mes." Yo: "No." <<risas>>.

The story is presented from a first-person singular perspective by the protagonist, Olivia. She situates her account both spatially and temporally, noting that her final day of work fell on a Saturday, with all the family members gathered in the living room. At this juncture, a brief so-called *secondary story line* emerges (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann [2]2004: 133). Olivia elucidates that she had already taken proactive steps by securing a new position ("yo ya tengo (--) he buscado ya un matrimonio"), which not only promised less work but also a salary three times that of her previous position. Furthermore, she conveys her determination, stating, ("ya he elegido este. Yo quiero este") and she mentions that she had already packed her belongings. This transition shifts the focus to the *primary story line* (cf. Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004: 133), situated in the living room of her previous employers.

Olivia re-enacts the progression of events through direct speech. She portrays herself as the agent of action, informing her former employers of her definitive departure ("Señor, que me voy"). The employers are taken aback and react emotionally ("Uy, como loca"), as do the children, whose voices Olivia mimics ("y los niños 'Tata, tata, no, no'."). Olivia, however, retains control over the situation, rejecting their desperate pleas for her to stay for another year or even one more

month (“No, no un año, un mes. No por favor. No, no un año, un mes.” Yo: “No” <<laughs>>).

Olivia’s storytelling highlights that there are indeed mutual dependencies in the employment relationship, meaning that it is not only DMWs who rely on their jobs. Employers also depend on reliable childcare and other forms of domestic labor within the household.

Linguistic resources are another domain in which power asymmetries come into play: The linguistic repertoire is increasingly seen as a means to enhance agency. As demonstrated by Lan (2003), Lorente (2018: 117–118), and Guinto (2021: 128–129), DMWs have used English to temporarily alter the power dynamics in their professional relationships with their employers. This has involved providing English lessons to their employers, for instance.

Among the participants in this study, similar assessments emerge in relation to Spanish. Gabriela argues that Spanish can be used as a means to exercising agency, such as negotiating better working conditions:

(109) **Sandra**: Y ¿crees que puede ser también una ventaja ah (---) hablar correctamente el español?
Gabriela: Yo creo que sí, especialmente en el trabajo.
Sandra: Y ¿por qué?
Gabriela: Especialmente en el trabajo. Así te entienden bien, puedes razonar con ellos mmh, porque si, por ejemplo, hay algunos algunas jefes que te que te tratan mal o te (---) ay, ¿cómo lo digo? Que pasan de ti o si, por ejemplo, uy para mí si uno, no no no no puedo (--) que si te te eh hacen todo el trabajo o las horas y ya todo eso, por lo menos si hablas bien, puedes razonar con ellos (---) mmh razonar con ellos.

Gabriela explains that linguistic skills are particularly relevant in the workplace, especially when dealing with employers and negotiating working conditions. She initially frames this as a generalized rule using the second person singular (“Así te entienden bien, puedes razonar con ellos”). She argues that linguistic resources become especially important when dealing with “bad” employers (“por ejemplo, hay algunos algunas jefes que te que te tratan mal”). From this collective perspective, she briefly shifts to a personal experience (“uy para mí si uno, no no no no puedo (--)”), but she interrupts her narrative after this hint. Finally, she returns to a collective perspective, stating that being able to “speak well” helps in negotiating workload and working hours with employers: “que si te te eh hacen todo el trabajo o las horas y ya todo eso, por lo menos si hablas bien, puedes razonar con ellos (---) mmh razonar con ellos.”

7.8 Interim Summary

Firstly, on a content level, the analysis of agency has shown that motivations for migrating to Madrid are plentiful. Additionally, it became evident that—even with a high degree of intentionality and initiative—Filipinas face considerable barriers to gaining access to Europe. Key facilitators in this process are heteronomous entities, such as recruitment agencies or familial and friendship networks with prior experience in labor migration or the ability to connect migrants to necessary resources. Upon arrival in Madrid, expectations about life in Europe are often partially deconstructed. At the same time, attention shifts to the advantages of living in Madrid, along with situations where the women describe experiencing a high degree of agency. Examples include higher incomes, greater personal freedom, or the prospect of permanent residence—opportunities that Spain offers in contrast to most other host societies.

Secondly, the analysis of agency has provided further insight into the access to Spanish. As indicated in chapters 5 and 6, an analysis of language ideologies and linguistic regimes in various social spaces has revealed that Spanish is frequently positioned as economically and symbolically valuable linguistic resource. However, DMWs are precluded from participation in structured language acquisition, such as (free) Spanish courses provided by the *Communidad de Madrid*. The accessibility of these courses is constrained by structural factors, namely the scheduling of the language courses during time slots that conflict with the legally mandated working hours of DMWs in Spain. Consequently, the alternatives are language courses provided by volunteer organizations or commercial entities. Some participants face a dilemma in this regard, as they contend with significant workloads, financial and mental burdens, among other challenges.

Thirdly, the cultural capital acquired in the Philippines is not fully recognized in the Spanish labor market. Consequently, unskilled labor such as paid domestic work often represents the predominant employment option. Nevertheless, participants clearly position themselves against views that devalue their professional roles and social status. In contrast, some emphasize that their work enables and empowers them to act as agents of change, such as by providing for their families.

Fourthly, there are instances in which participants perceive themselves as having agency in their interactions with employers. While systemic inequalities in the power dynamics between employers and DMWs cannot be entirely eliminated, some participants report that their linguistic repertoire has enabled them to negotiate better working conditions for themselves.