Chapter 8
"You're a real a Swahili!": Western women's resistance to identity slippage in Tanzania

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I studied French until I was fluent, and was NEVER praised
– not once – by a native speaker in France. In Tanzania
they would praise me for being able to speak the standard
Swahili . . . Swahili speakers were in awe of *methali*s ('proverbs')
that I could recite and use in appropriate contexts
as well as knowledge of politics and government.
Also, got a lot of praise for understanding Islamic beliefs
and principles. People would always say, *wewe- kweli ni mswahili*
('you- you're a real Swahili!'). I think it is fairly easy
to be considered *mswahili* if you can speak some Swahili.
There were countless times where people referred to me
as being *mswahili* and not as *mgeni* ('visitor') . . .
However, I do not feel like *mswahili* at all.
My lifestyle is too different and I have lost a lot of
the language now. If there were ever cases where
people isolated/alienated me, it was certainly
for being a white woman. I feel like as much as there
were people willing to speak to me in Swahili, there were
as many who were more inclined to yell *mzungu!*
('white/ foreign person') at me and not even care that I could
speak Swahili.

Email correspondence with Amanda,[1] an American
graduate student who studied Swahili in Tanzania for two months

1. Introduction

The above excerpt encapsulates some of the tensions surrounding language learning and identity formation within socio-cultural contexts of cultural difference. Amanda's words echo the sentiments voiced by many other study abroad Swahili learners whom I have either taught at the university level or corresponded with regarding their experiences learning and using Swahili as an additional language (L2) in Tanzania.[2] On the one hand, it seems that Tanzania provides a language learning terrain for Swahili language learners with many possibilities for cross-cultural adaptation and *identity slippage* (Armour 2000, 2001), that is, the ability to develop a new sense of self in another language as a consequence of linguistic and cultural knowledge, as well as acceptance into the "target" culture.

Amanda's ability to speak Swahili, recite proverbs, and discuss aspects of Islam gained her access into Tanzanian communities, which in turn provided her with the opportunity to develop a new Swahili-speaking self. On the other hand, however, learners like Amanda often rejected the possibility of their "becoming Swahili," typically citing cultural, racial, and gender role differences as key obstacles. Sometimes these differences were highlighted by Tanzanians, as in Amanda's mention of being called *mzungu* ('white/foreign') by strangers despite her Swahili language ability. For others, their own perceptions of Tanzanian cultural practices and American ways of being were perceived to be a barrier to their possibilities for cross-cultural adaptation.

Perhaps more so than in many other cultural settings, Tanzania provides a context that offers opportunities for L2 identity slippage, as many Swahili learners often find themselves warmly welcomed and given almost immediate access as legitimated participants in Swahili-speaking *communities of practice* (CoP) (Lave & Wenger 1991). Amanda's comments about being treated as *mswahili* ('a Swahili') rather than as *mgeni* ('visitor/foreigner') point to this access, but as she states, she felt too different from Tanzanians during her study abroad experience to consider herself *mswahili*. I too have experienced very similar subject positions as a white, female L2 speaker of Swahili from the United States whose sojourns to Tanzania have involved half a dozen periods of less than a year. These experiences, along with the stories of many study abroad students, led me to wonder whether other westerners who lived in Tanzania for longer periods of time felt differently, and if they had, over the years, achieved the ability to occupy more "target-like" subject positions through speaking Swahili and interacting with Tanzanians. In 2006, I began to pursue contacts with female Swahili L2 speakers[3] who were long-term residents of Tanzania in order to understand how they respond to these opportunities to participate in these communities and to "become Swahili." In this chapter, I make use of narrative analysis to illustrate the range of identity slippage which three of these women narrated in face-to-face interviews.

2.   Positioning in narratives: The construction of expatriate identities

I draw on *positioning theory* as articulated by Davies & Harré (1990) to investigate how three western women discursively constituted and reconstituted their social selves as expatriate, L2 Swahili speakers living in Tanzania. Viewing narration as an act of identity formation, I was interested in understanding how the women positioned themselves and others in their stories, and whether these positionings included subject

positions of cultural "insider" and "outsider," as well as other relevant subject positions involving hybrid, intercultural, or transnational identities. As Davies & Harré explain, "A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those who use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the images, metaphors, and storylines that are relevant within that particular discursive practice" (1990: 46). In my analysis, I focused on the women's responses to opportunities for cross-cultural adaptation, and I approached the narrative data as a rich source of positioning that would reveal their linguistic and cultural vantage points.

Recognizing that the women were expatriates who had committed a decade of their lives to living and working in sub-Saharan Africa, I became interested in seeing how they might articulate their identities with reference to their transplanted, expatriate status. While researchers of language learning and use have examined global flows of people for some time, they have mostly focused on immigrants and refugees from developing countries and nations which have experienced war and other major social and economic challenges (e.g., Baynham & De Fina 2005; De Fina 2003; Menard-Warwick 2009; Pavlenko 1998). In contrast, the women who agreed to participate in my study are quite privileged with regard to socioeconomic status and country of origin. As highly educated women hailing from North America and the United Kingdom, their stories offer insights on the identity formation and language learning experiences among expatriates and transnationals around the world who find opportunities to work outside of their home countries.

In the case of Tanzania, employment for expatriates is often found at international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) that specialize in improving public health, education, and economic conditions for local populations. Due to the number of expatriates in nations like Tanzania, as well as the burgeoning market for elite education desired by wealthy local families, the existence of English-medium international schools also provides qualified foreigners with job opportunities as teachers. The women interviewed for this study reflect these opportunities for employment: one was working for an international aid organization, while the other two were teachers at a prestigous international school (one of the women working as a teacher had previously been employed by a Tanzanian NGO).

Despite the prevalence of expatriate populations in developing nations like Tanzania, very little research has examined how such individuals learn new languages or use them in their daily lives. The women in this study had relocated to Tanzania by choice in search of international travel and work experience, and to begin careers that they felt would be highly

meaningful in the fields of development and education. Their experiences as long-term residents of Tanzania provided them with the opportunity to learn and speak Swahili as an additional language, and to develop identities in response to their new cultural and linguistic contexts. The women are all very knowledgeable of Tanzanian cultural practices and respectful of local languages and traditions, and so they may be considered to show a great deal of investment in Swahili, a language spoken by most Tanzanians. At the same time, they live in a nation where their first language, English, is prized as a medium of globalized communication, and where it continues to be used as a co-official language (alongside Swahili) in many domains. English is the medium of instruction in government-run secondary schools and is increasingly seen as a necessity for obtaining a high-paid job among Tanzanians, which always implies the need to function in a globalizing world. Thus, the interviews provided me with the opportunity to see how these transnational expatriates might negotiate their sense of belonging through Swahili language learning and use in a nation that also prizes global affiliations and English as a vehicle for development and economic growth.

Following the themes of this volume, my approach to narrative analysis is concerned primarily with selfhood and the processes by which language users negotiate selves in additional languages. Pavlenko's (1998, 2001) work on L2 narratives is especially relevant for examining these topics, for her concepts of *discursive assimilation* and *self-translation* relate clearly to my own goals of exploring how individuals reinterpret their own "subjectivities in order to position [themselves] in new communities of practice and to 'mean' in the new environment" (Pavlenko 2001: 133). Narratives of L2 learners show us how "who one is is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and others' lives" (Davies & Harré 1990, quoted in Pavlenko 2001: 134).

To obtain narrative data, I chose to conduct *active interviews* (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) with the women so that I could consider the ways in which my own experiences as an L2 Swahili speaker might shape the production of the identity work in the interviews. In contrast with more positivist and objectivist approaches, active interviewing is characterized by postmodern sensibilities wherein the boundaries between the interviewer and the interviewee are blurred, and the interview itself is more of a conversation than a fact-finding activity (Fontana 2000). In this way, I was free to draw on my own experiences and stories as an L2 Swahili speaker as a means of encouraging the participants to share their own thoughts and memories. I view the fact that I shared a lot culturally with my interviewees as a strength, rather than a weakness or a potential for bias, as our commonalities allowed me to engage more deeply with the

women and to learn more about the sometimes rather personal elements of their self-making through L2 learning and use.

The three interviews I examine below offer the opportunity to see how language learners position themselves in a context that seems to strongly encourage cross-cultural adaptation. The narratives provide evidence that the women are aware of the possibility to "become Swahili," and also that they enjoy inhabiting this subject position, but they also reveal that the women's identities as feminists, sojourners, and world citizens are sometimes at odds with their interpretation of a Swahili-speaking identity.   Rather than adapting to a new L2 self, however, their experiences appear to have created an intercultural *third place* (Kramsch 1993) in which they form their identities. This space does not seem to be connected to Tanzania, their home country, or any one particular geographic or cultural space they have inhabited. Instead, in their narratives, they position themselves as expatriates who are able to decenter from both their original languages and cultures as well as their current context in Tanzania.

3. Narrative analysis

In making sense of the subjectivities narrated by the women, I use tools from narrative analysis to examine how these long-term Swahili L2 speakers respond to the possibility of developing a Swahili self. Because it is a rather impossible task to predict what specific features qualify as "Swahili" and "Tanzanian," or as "English" and "American," "Canadian," or "English" (i.e., the nationalities of the women I interviewed), I depended on the narratives for emic categorizations of behaviors and actions that the participants constructed. To identify how they positioned themselves vis-à-vis the various identity options within their narratives, I looked for retellings of experience that were surrounded by or interrupted with *evaluative comments*.

In locating the evaluative stances of the participants in the data, I draw on work by other narrative researchers who have developed clear analytical tools for identifying narrators' positionalities. Taking Labov & Waletsky (1967) as a starting point, I view the evaluation of a narrative as "that part of the narrative that reveals the attitude of the narrator by emphasizing the relative importance of some units as opposed to others" (1967: 32). To contend with the discursive aspects of evaluation in narrative data, I draw specifically on Goffman's (1981) work on *footing* to identify moments in talk where narrators move from their role as storytellers to evaluators of actions in stories. Specifically, I examine how the women express their stances towards Swahili language and cultural practices when they shift their footing from *authors* and/or *animators* to *principals*. The women's discursive moves between the act of narrating what happened (author) to reported speech (animator) to an aside wherein

some evaluative comment is made (principal) are moments in talk where evaluative stances are expressed. Evaluative comments were often voiced through reported speech, constructed dialogue or inner dialogue as the narrators "ventriloquated" themselves or other characters in their retellings of events (cf. Wortham 2001; Koven 2002; Ros i Solé 2007).[4] Evaluative comments also occurred in the form of asides, mitigations, and concessions after events were recounted (cf. Crawshaw *et al.* 2001). All of these evaluative comments acted as discursive windows into the women's responses to their positionings, and they allowed me to see how they aligned with what they narrated as "Swahili" language and culture.

4. Participants

Brief personal histories of the women help to establish some of the macro-context (Pavlenko 2007) for the study, and such "background" also emerges in the narrative data as a resource for discursively constructing various cultural and linguistic identities.

Diane

Diane is a white woman in her thirties, originally from England.   She first visited Tanzania in 1992 as a development worker, and four years later she began living in Tanzania and working for a variety of INGOs which focused on supervising development projects. Currently, she is a manager for a leading INGO in Dar es Salaam, where she lives and works, but she has spent time traveling the country and staying for several days in small villages. Due to her parents' internationally-oriented occupations, she grew up in Malaysia, South Africa, and England, and therefore, she has some language ability in Chinese, Afrikaans, and Zulu. She also lived in Italy for a period of time and learned Italian "quite well." She is single and has a child.

Kate

Kate is a white American woman in her thirties who first visited Tanzania as a university exchange student in 1993. She returned in 1996 to begin working for an NGO that focuses on gender and development. In high school, Kate lived in Finland for one year and became fluent in Finnish. She also spent time in Austria and has studied German and Spanish in educational contexts. She worked for 10 years at an elite English-medium international school in Dar es Salaam whose student body is primarily children of expatriate workers in Tanzania before she relocated to a smaller town in 2007, where she currently works as a principal at a private

school. She is married to a Swahili–English bilingual Tanzanian man and they have one child.

Tatu

Tatu is a Black woman who was born in Tanzania and lived there until she was three, when her family moved to Canada. Tatu reported that after her family moved, they maintained Swahili at the dinner table, but English eventually became her dominant language. She is frequently deemed a foreigner by Tanzanians, and she evaluates her own Swahili as a language that she is "still learning." Due to her parents' internationally-oriented careers, she and her siblings lived in India, Sweden, the United States, and Canada. Tatu has lived in Canada for most of her life, although she is rather ambivalent about calling Canada home. At the time of the interview, she had lived in Tanzania for 10 years, where she was working as a teacher at the same elite English-medium international school as Kate. She travels frequently to visit her family members who live outside of Tanzania, and she has many family members in Tanzania as well, including two brothers, both of whom are married to Tanzanian women. She lives by herself and is single.

5. Data Analysis

The women described their experiences using Swahili in Tanzania in very positive terms, which seemed to allow for the possibility that identity slippage was easy to achieve. The presentation of Swahili speakers and Tanzanians as warm, welcoming, and open were most prevalent in the early part of the interviews, when I asked the women about their initial days of using Swahili with Tanzanians. Kate contrasts her first efforts to speak Swahili with her experiences learning European languages, highlighting Tanzanians' receptiveness towards L2 speakers. Transcription conventions (see Appendix) are adapted from Atkinson & Heritage (1984). Evaluative comments are in bold, reported speech in the form of constructed dialogue is in double quotes, and inner dialogue appears in single quotes.

(1) Kate

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1  C:  How did they respond to you when you made the effort to speak
2      Swahili?
3  K:  Totally different from Spanish and German because there- people
4      could tell that you didn't know their language very well so
5      automatically they would switch into English. Like, 'why are we
6      bothering,' like they make you feel kind of- like maybe
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7   **embarrassed** or **definitely** just like **'don't bother** to learn, we'll
8   **just** speak English.' Where it's like (.) the opposite here. People
9   are very **enthusiastic**. I feel like their attitude changes with you if
10   they realize that you can speak some Swahili.
11 C: Yeah, I've experienced that I think. Yeah.

Similarly, Diane explains that in spite of her initial low-level language skills, her learning was aided by Tanzanians' friendliness towards her:

(2)   Diane

1   D: I have no recollection of what I must have been saying (1.0)
2   cause I must have had very **basic** Swahili. But I think I've always
3   been **quite confident** in language learning terms of, 'you have to
4   get out there and just be with people and talk and ride the
5   **difficult** moments and the **inabilities to say anything**.' And I
6   always found people **very friendly** and **very responsive**, which
7   is why I've been able to learn (.) particularly the first level of
8   Swahili.

The openness of Tanzanians towards these L2 speakers as cited in the interviews led me to consider how the women discursively positioned themselves in response to the friendly encouragement they received. In my analysis of the data, I found that the women's stances expressed desired entry into Tanzanian communities, but I also discovered that they largely resisted the possibility of cross-cultural adaptation in their L2.

5.1 Stances that reveal a desire and ability to identity slip

In (3), Kate narrates her positioning as a non-Swahili, followed by another narrative in which she is treated as an insider:

(3) Kate: "I'll forget that I'm not (Tanzanian)"

1   C: Do you often get called *mzungu* ('white person/foreigner'), and
2   how does affect your image of yourself?
3   K: It does **bother me** because sometimes I'll even- I'll forget that
4   I'm not. (.) When I was at university like way back when (.) we
5   would get pictures developed and I'd see the picture and I'd
6   really stand out. '**I had no idea.**' [laughs] So when they're all
7   like "*mzungu mzungu!*" it brings it back **in your face** again. Then
8   I was like "*mswahili!*" ('Swahili person') (.) "*Mwafrika!*"
9   ('African') (.) I was like, **'Why are you saying that. Why are
10   you noticing that I'm *mzungu*.'**

Kate describes her reaction to being called *mzungu* in Tanzania, a reaction that I could relate to very well and which is a common complaint among foreign L2 Swahili speakers. Lines 3–6 show how Kate's self-concept as an insider is disrupted by her realization of her own whiteness, made clear to her in photographs that were taken of her and her friends while she was studying at the University of Dar es Salaam. Her evaluative comment in the form of inner speech, "I had no idea," (line 6) reveals a gap between how she viewed herself and how she appeared to others. On lines 6–7, she describes how people who did not know her well called out *mzungu, mzungu!* ('white, white!') to her on the street, which also forced her to recognize her racial difference, and hence, to come face to face with her positioning as an outsider by others. Her evaluative comments in the form of inner speech on lines 9–10 clearly express her displeasure with this form of othering.

As Kate's narrative continues, however, she provides a counter example in which Tanzanians *who know her* positioned her as an insider:

(4) Kate: "We're all Tanzanians here"

1	But then one thing that really touched me the other way was,
2	because my husband just recently got his PhD (.) so we went down
3	to South Africa for graduation, and he had arranged this party
4	>there are a lot of Tanzanians at this university< so he arranged a
5	party afterwards for all these Tanzanians. So there was me and his
6	advisor >his supervisor came< who is Zimbabwean. And when I
7	first arrived there people were like, "How are <u>you</u> madam," and
8	when I used Swahili they would ignore it. And I thought '**Oh**
9	**this will be a terrible evening.**' And then (.) there was some
10	speaking by the advisor and friends, and they wanted me to say
11	something. So I got up in Swahili, and I didn't say much. I said "I
12	want to thank you because your committee was really happy," I
13	didn't say much but it was in Swahili. And you could see them go
14	'**Oh!**' And afterwards one Tanzanian was opening champagne and
15	he was going to say something before it, and before he opened it he
16	said "Well since we're all Tanzanians here, oh except for Professor
17	<u>Ndule</u>," and I was waiting kind of waiting for, "except for," you
18	know, (.) And he didn't say it, and I was like '**Oh, <u>thank</u> you!**' **It**
19	**made me feel really good** and yeah, it <u>def</u>initely was the Swahili
20	that did it.

Kate's evaluative comments in the form of inner speech on lines 8–9 reveal her dismay at the idea of being positioned as an outsider. However, later in the narrative, she uses constructed dialogue to illustrate how she was positioned as a fellow Tanzanian as a result of being able to communicate in the language. Her inner speech that follows on line 18 and

her overt evaluative comment ("It made me feel really good") illustrate her pleasure at being treated as a legitimate member of the Tanzanian community.

In asking Tatu about her desire and/or ability to become an insider, a distinction between *mswahili* ('Swahili person') and *mtanzania* ('a Tanzanian') emerged. Though *mswahili* can refer to one's ability to speak Swahili and to one's identity as a Tanzanian, for Tatu (as for many people), *mswahili* also refers to a person with the type of cunning and shrewd behavior that is necessary to survive in *Bongo* (a well-known street term for Dar es Salaam), whereas *mtanzania* relates more to a general Tanzanian or "local" status. Tatu's explanation reveals how being *mtanzania* is not monolithic, as her own embodied version of this identity is comprised of behaviors that are associated with the "older generation."

(5) Tatu: *Mtanzania* and *mswahili*

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1   C:   I'm curious- I've asked this question to a lot of people but (.)
2        how do you feel about your capacity to be an mswahili or
3        mtanzania. A lot of people see a difference there. Do you feel
4        that you are?
5   T:   I'm not mswahili, and I'm just saying mswahili because I think
6        mswahili is very much, well >I suppose it's the coast< but I
7        consider it like Bongo (.) very: (.) you know 'go out and get it,
8        drive for it.' And it's funny I say that because Tanzania is very
9        <slow paced> but mjanja ('clever person'), cunning, okay. And
10       I'm not that way. [. . .] As a matter of fact, it's funny because in
11       some ways people will laugh at me and say "oh my god you're
12       so old-fash, I remember my mother did that." You know,
13       whereas, like, nobody does that anymore nobody says that
14       anymore, nobody expects that anymore. And so that's funny to
15       me because I'm starting to pick up certain things but I guess it's
16       from the older generation.
17  C:   Like what.
18  T:   Um, I suppose you know in Tanzania when you greet somebody
19       like, you shake their hand and you look at them in the eye. And
20       people don't do that anymore, like my age group and younger,
21       you know we're all working in offices so we're too important for
22       that. But I still do that and they'll go "oh my goodness oh you
23       still do that." You know like (.) etiquette things that have been
24       watered down I guess as times goes on. And they're so much a
25       part of me now and I love it (.) But then everybody else is
26       dropping it and looking at me like 'what is- what are you doing.'
27       So mtanzania I think I'm getting a little bit but mswahili (.)
28       that's just not who I am.
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In using the constructed dialogue on lines 11–12, Tatu positions herself as someone who is evaluated as an insider by Tanzanians, albeit one with out-of-date mannerisms. Tatu's own evaluative comments on lines 14–15 and 24–25 show her positive stance towards being this kind of "old-fashioned" Tanzanian, particularly when she says "I love it" (line 25). Though she mitigates her insider status by describing herself as only "a little bit" *mtanzania*, she shows an allegiance to what might be considered more traditional Tanzanian manners compared to what she negatively evaluates as urban, cosmopolitan ways of being that have "watered down" enactments of Tanzanian culture that she still adheres to.

One of Kate's stories also revealed that the women noticed how diverse a Swahili-speaking Tanzanian identity could be. In an email which she sent to me after our interview, Kate exemplified her success at "passing" as a Swahili/Tanzanian. Her enthusiasm for being able to pass as Swahili is marked through her evaluative stance, as expressed in an emoticon (line 7):

(6) Kate: Passing as *mswahili* on the phone

1	When my husband got hired, the university called my cell phone
2	instead of his. I was in the middle of teaching a lesson, so I just
3	explained that I wouldn't see him till the evening, so "here's his
4	number, could you call him directly?" I didn't know it was the
5	head of dept. I was speaking to! And he didn't know I was an
6	*mzungu*. (the whole conversation was in Swahili - I **can fool**
7	people for short phone conversations **:-)**)He is apparently still **in**
8	**shock to this day** that I **wasn't so impressed and thankful** that
9	my husband was hired by the university, that I **actually suggested**
10	he should make another phone call! And **the funniest part** is he
11	reportedly said to another staff member "*Anavyoongea . . .*
12	*Anajifanya mzungu.*" ('the way she talks. . . she's acting like a white person/foreigner')

Due to Kate's straightforward and hurried telephone interactional style, the Tanzanian who called her described her behavior as *anajifanya mzungu* ('acting like a white person/foreigner'), a phrase commonly used to describe Tanzanians who are seen as overly westernized (and rude). Still, such individuals are part of the range of possible Tanzanian identities, which Kate treated as a positive sign that she was able to pass as an insider.

5.2 Stances revealing the limits of developing a Swahili self

While the interviews did contain evidence of a desire for and success in

cross-cultural adaptation, many of the stories revealed the limits of identity slippage. In this section, I examine three sets of excerpts which reveal these constraints: 1) narratives about cross-cultural interactional styles; 2) narratives about socioeconomic difference and gendered identities; and 3) intercultural identities.

5.2.1 Narratives about cross-cultural interactional styles

Tatu's experience in (7) shows how she constructs a non-Swahili self through her evaluative language in a retelling of a visit to a mechanic. While she presents herself as having "mastered" the Tanzanian art of "discussing" at the beginning of the narrative, her inner dialogue throughout reveals an ongoing struggle with this performance of an L2 self and shows the limits of identity slippage:

(7) Tatu: A visit to the mechanic

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1   C:   I wonder if you have any stories or memories of emotions or how
2        to express them that are very Swahili [. . .] That you've been able
3        to master or that you haven't.
         [ . . . ]
7   T:   I guess what I have been able to master is (.) discussing. (.) And
8        that's something that I'll, I'll hands down I'll give Tanzanians
9        credit for. Because like just this morning I went to fix my tire.
10       And the guy was like, had to go and to and find the (.) wrench to
11       (.) whatever. And I was just like 'c'mon I have to hurry up'
12       and he just kept arguing with me the <whole time>. <The whole
13       time>. And then in the very end I just said to him, >he he wanted
14       to charge me double< and I said "I'm not giving you double for
15       that work you made me wait." "Oh I didn't make you wait," and
16       he goes "Oh you're so cunning." And then (2.0) in the end he
17       said "Oh thank you for coming" and he shook my hand and for
18       that whole time I was like 'oh would you get on with it oh
19       you're so frustrating.' But I had to block myself, 'just engage
20       him, this is, at least he's working.' And when he's fin- it was
21       n↑othing to him that <whole> arguing back and forth. That's
22       what I mean he was obviously stressing or whatever. But that's
23       his way of releasing the tension. Now that adds to my tension
24       but I've learned now (.) 'you (.) <just need to tone it down.>'
25       So he shook my hand "Oh come   again." And I was like
26       'Whoah, I'm exhausted.'
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Tatu contrasts her inner feelings with how she speaks to the mechanic through her inner speech (line 11) and through emphasizing the mechanic's non-stop "arguing" (lines 12–13), or what she had referred to as Tanzanian "discussing" just moments before. Her narrative uncovers a discursive construction of her authentic self, which contrasts with

Tanzanian culture. She explicitly points out the clash she feels between her own pragmatics and those that she knows she must use to accomplish the interaction ('I had to block myself", line 19). Moreover, her retelling shows that she understands the Tanzanian cultural point of view that leads to such "discussions," but despite knowing the appropriate ways of going about such interactions (line 24), she has to police herself, an activity that literally exhausts her.

After she finished her mechanic story, I asked Tatu about the internal struggle that I heard in her narrative. Her response in (8) positions her as someone who can perform the Tanzanian art of "discussing," yet at the same time, she describes this performance as "not who I am":

(8) Tatu: "It's not who I am"

28 C: But then you said you were really tired. So there's still an
29   internal struggle.
30 T: Yes for me, I have to hold it back. So even though I'm taking on
31   the things it's, <**not who I am**>. I'm taking it on so that I can get
32   through the situation in a way that's not going to leave everybody
33   frustrated.
34 C: Do you think there are components of social life- like that like
35   frustrations or disagreements you have absorbed that- you don't
36   get tired in experiencing them because they've just become part
37   of you now?
38 T: No, I think as much I hate to agree with them now **I've become**
39   **western**. [laughs] **I am <u>western</u> and they are <u>tiring</u> and they**
40   **are <u>draining</u>**. Some days more than others so, I think it does
41   depend on my state of mind. But I don't think that that will ever
42   change for me. It won't go away one hundred percent. It might
43   lessen but it won't go away one hundred percent.

Here, the L2 self that Tatu constructs clearly lacks identity slippage. She establishes a boundary between self and other through distinctive pronouns ("I" and "they"), clear labeling of herself as "western", and negative evaluative referential terms (Wortham 2001) of Tanzanians as "tiring" and "draining".

Similarly, (9) shows how Kate dealt with a situation in her workplace involving different interactional styles. In describing her response to the Tanzanian support staff's actions of placing valuable schoolbooks on the floor, Kate's evaluative comments reveal the difficulty she sometimes faces in managing her emotional responses in an appropriately "Tanzanian" way, even though she is fully aware of Tanzanian interactional norms:

(9) Kate: "I kind of lost it"

```
1   K:   One time when I was criticized because I was being too mzungu
2        about communicating with, something was going on. The support
3        staff, the cleaners had to move some books for us and they had
4        moved the books to the floor. And they were really upset with me
5        for showing my anger at them being too mzungu.
6   C:   Is that not what would have been appropriate?
7   K:   I was just really upset and (.) it was tough to do that.
8   C:   What do you think it would have been?
9   K:   I think it would have been, just to- because (.) I mean I basically
10       just said to their faces and in front of anyone else who was there
11       "what are you doing?" "Look, look what you've done to these
12       books." I kind of lost it. And I should have said very calmly,
13       "well this is not the right thing to do" and then maybe later spoke
14       to them, not in front of everyone, or said it to someone else.
```

Kate's "I kind of lost it" (line 12) acts as a comment (Crawshaw et al. 2001) which evaluates her own behavior as inadequate for the Tanzanian context. Furthermore, Kate's comments about the "appropriate" behavior being "tough" (line 7) along with her how evaluation of how she "should have" acted (line 12) point to the existence of a conflict between her L1 self and her perception of how she should behave in Swahili with Tanzanians.

5.2.2 Power and gender as barriers to identity slippage

Beyond differing styles of interaction, the women also talked about the limits of cross-cultural adaptation because of their convictions about hierarchy and power relations, as well as gender differences. In (10), Diane explains that she often feels *mswahili* "on a very simple level," and she cites Tanzanians' acceptance as a key element (lines 7–10); however, she goes on to explain that differences in wealth and power are much more significant barriers to identity slippage since they lead to her sense of alienation rather than acculturation:

(10) Diane: "Too many big gaps"

```
1   C:   Um you were talking earlier about this question, how you feel
2        about your capacity to become mswahili. And you were talking
3        about insiders and outsiders. How this has changed over the
4        years?
5   D:   On a very simple level I feel confident and I think it's just that
6        incremental process of, if you're open and you make friends with
7        people, you watch what's going on. You gradually (.) say the
8        right thing at the right time behave the right way in the sort of
9        different rituals that you get involved in. And I have been
```

10	**fortunate** in having a lot of friends who have really brought me
11	into their families and being part of those situations. So **on a**
12	**very simple level I feel quite able to be an *mswahili* and I get**
13	**accepted as such by people.**
	[. . .]
16	But **on a more complex leve-** I mean there are differences in
17	terms of wealth, which is not a language issue, are so great that **I**
18	**actually feel increasingly alienated**. And also some of my work
19	because it's quite political and I'm an **outsider**, I actually get- do
20	encounter levels of passive aggressive behavior. I just seem to be
21	an *mzungu* outside person, **"what are you doing here."** Not that
22	people say that but you get that feeling, there's politics in it. So, I
23	say in language and ritual and reference, those kind of things I
24	feel fairly integrated, but in terms of the bigger picture and can I
25	really belong and be taken on as *mswahili*, **no too, there are too**
25	**many big gaps**.

In addition to labeling herself an "outsider" (line 19), Diane's use of constructed dialogue in line 21 allows her to ventriloquate the voices of Tanzanian colleagues and to position herself as someone who does not belong, both in their eyes and in her own.

Gendered identities also became barriers to higher degrees of identity slippage toward a Swahili self. Tatu told several stories in which she positioned herself as an outsider because of gendered behavior that she oriented to as feminist in nature. As several other studies on L2 learning, gender, and identity formation have found (e.g., Siegal 1996; Ohara 2001; Ogulnick 1998; Pavlenko 1998, 2001), Tatu's experiences reveal a high degree of difference between her Canadian and Swahili/Tanzanian gender identities. In (11), Tatu responds to my query whether being a Tanzanian-born Black woman who might be taken for a local Tanzanian impacts her possibilities for belonging. She explains how she is often deemed non-Tanzanian due to how her behavior conflicts with Tanzanian norms for female ways of interacting with others:

(11) Tatu: "A woman would not speak out like that"

1	T:	The fact that I speak out is another thing. **People don't do that.** I
2		mean I get on the *daladala* ('bus') and if they don't want the kids
3		to sit down and I tell them [to sit], so then I'm *mzungu* because
4		I'm speaking out. **A woman would not speak out like that.** And
5		so (.) they don't know my background. I think it has nothing to
6		do with that ((i.e., having been raised by Tanzanian parents)) – I
7		think it's just my behavior **-my mannerisms are not typical of**
8		**here**. And so that's what they mean, that I've lived somewhere
9		else foreign.

Through reference and predication (Wortham 2001), she creates a dichot-
omy between herself and Tanzanians through pronouns ("I" and "they")
once again, and she highlights the differences between her own *mzungu*
actions and what (Tanzanian) "people" and what a (Tanzanian) "woman"
would and would not do. She expresses awareness of cultural differences
and worldviews, but in the end, she constructs herself as "not typical of
here" and as being "foreign" to Tanzanians.

   Tatu's experiences with her family members offered rich sources for
identifying the limits of cross-cultural adaptation for women. In our
conversation, I learned that of Tatu's four brothers and three sisters, only
the brothers are married. One of Tatu's sisters had been married, but was
later divorced. The gender division among Tatu's siblings was rather stark.
In (12), Tatu told me about how she and her three sisters went "on strike"
when they were adolescents living in Canada, refusing to accept the
"African" positioning of females as responsible for domestic work while
their brothers did other things. She then talked about how this upbringing
affected the attitudes of two of her brothers who live in Tanzania and are
married to Tanzanian women with regard to domestic duties:

(12) Tatu: "The girls had a coup"

1	T:	It's **amazing** how my brothers have uh, as much as I mean. They
2		do a lot in the home, a:nd we were brought up. Well,
3	C:	mhm,
4	T:	Actually we had a little coup. The girls had a coup >cause there's
5		four girls and five guys< we had a little coup and we said "If they
6		don't help then we're going on strike." And we went on strike for
7		weeks and my mother was like **"This isn't very African,"**
8		[laughs]
9	C:	No:o hh.
10	T:	But in the end everybody helped .hhh. So they do a lot in their
11		homes. So their wives think 'Oh wow this is gr↑eat. >He can
12		change the diapers, I can leave the kids with him, he can get the
13		dinner ready, he makes the bed, goes to the parent teacher
14		conferences<.' But I see it in, my<u>self</u> when I go there. I'm like,
15		"<u>You</u> can get up and do that your<u>self</u> you know." So it's
16		interesting how they let certain things you know, **the wifely**
17		**things.** The roles are there and they don't mind just <sitting back
18		and allowing them.>
19	C:	No.
20	T:	So when my brothers do, do stuff, everybody ((high pitch)): "Hey
21		man look - ↑cinnamon buns," Big accolades! And I look at
22		people and I go **"Excuse me it's just a cinnamon bun, he**
23		**didn't build a building"** you know.

Tatu and her sisters' behavior in Canada was clearly marked as not African in the evaluative comment voiced through constructed dialogue from her mother (line 7), and the fact that the girls were able to go on strike against domestic duties shows a great deal of agency on their part, which was surely aided by the cultural context they were in. As Tatu says, the coup was successful since the brothers shared in the domestic work "in the end" in Canada (line 10). Tatu then explains how the Tanzanian wives of her two brothers who also live in Tanzania praise their husbands and consider themselves lucky for their relatively "good" treatment (lines 11–14) as Tanzanian women. Here, she animates the inner speech of her sisters-in-law to show their assessment of their husbands as good husbands and fathers. However, Tatu shifts her footing and provides a vastly different evaluation of her own response to her brothers' behavior in the form of reported speech (line 15), which indicates that she explicitly tells her brothers to act in more gender-equitable ways in their own homes. She also positions her brothers as undeserving of praise they receive for the domestic work they do (lines 20–21) by using a high pitch to parody the over-enthusiastic response they get for doing what is normally considered "women's work." In her narrative, she also indicates how she vocalized her challenge to the praise for her brothers in the form of reported speech (line 22–23).

Gendered positionings were also noted by Kate, whose status as a western woman married to a Tanzanian man prompted me to ask about her gendered behavior around her husband. Kate explained that her husband had likely adapted toward her expectations for gender roles more than she had toward his. She evaluates this circumstance as counter-intuitive through her evaluative framing "even though" (line 10):

(13) Kate: Changes in gendered roles

```
1   C:   Do you share those kinds of [domestic] duties, or has it become
2        female, male?
3   K:   We have talked about it. We have a housekeeper now, housegirl
4        now, who does most of that during the day. There was a time
5        when we didn't have, and it was half and half.
6   C:   But it was possible to achieve equal work. It wasn't a cultural
7        barrier?
8   K:   It was something we had to talk about and agree upon. Our
9        lifestyle now is sort of half and half ((half western, half
10       Tanzanian)). **Even though** we're living in Tanzania he's maybe
11       changed his culture like twice more than I have (.) but I think it's
12       mostly the gender things.
```

5.2.3   *Shared positionalities in an intercultural third place*

Diane, Kate, and Tatu often commented on their role in Tanzania as one that served to improve society, to advocate for Tanzanian culture, and to increase international understanding. They were also very interested in their own personal growth through experiencing different cultures and languages. As Diane put it, "I think it's really healthy to be challenged in a different culture. I mean it's very hard to evaluate that. I mean I think it's really important where you get involved with something totally different, because you inevitably grow."

Rather than remaining firmly in their western viewpoint or adapting to a new Swahili self, these three women's experiences as social workers, educators, and world travelers appear to have created an intercultural *third place/space* (Kramsch 1993; Bhabha 1994) in which they form their identities. Therefore, rather than slipping into a new self, or creating bicultural identities for themselves to shift between, the women's narratives show evidence of the development of an *intercultural self* (Byram 2008), i.e., the ability to decenter oneself from both the L1 self and the L2 self, and to view each as socially constructed, contingent, and discursively enacted. The positionality that emerged for them was similar to that of the intercultural couples in Piller's (2002) study, "citizen of the world," as well as "intercultural ambassador" and even "intercultural expert." For example, Tatu discussed how she was able to make sense of people's actions from an intercultural perspective no matter where she was in the world. Her ability to master two worldviews from an insider's and outsider's perspective is apparent in two very different sets of inner dialogue:

(14) Tatu: "My whole mindset changes"

```
1    T:    I went away to visit my brother in Austria for a month. And
2          there's a guy ((in Tanzania)) on the street corner who sells
3          flowers. And he said "O:h where have you been I haven't
4          seen your car go up and down here." I said "O:h I went away on
5          holiday." "Oh did you have a good time?" "Yes I did" and I, I
6          was just like 'ahh, I'm back home.' You know, and so it takes
7          on a whole different- Now in Canada, if somebody selling
8          flowers asked me "where'd you go for," I'd say "Mind your own
9          business. What do you want to know that for?" [. . .]
10         In Canada, if somebody says something, "I've noticed your car
11         doesn't go by," I'd think "well is he checking up on me," like
12         so, like my whole mindset changes, you know. Like 'what is he,
13         a ↑stalker?' [laughs].
```

Similarly, Kate described her ability to act as an intercultural ambassador, especially in the context of the elite school where she works, where

most expatriate teachers have little knowledge about Tanzania or Swahili. Kate evaluates the distance between these teachers and the Tanzanian staff as "awkward," and she describes herself as someone who can navigate both worlds in spite of her status as someone with a highly paid teaching position:

(15) Kate: "In different worlds"

```
1   K:   I have friends among the teachers who are largely not interested
2        in Tanzania, they can't really relate to a large part of the
3        population. And also the relations between the Tanzanian, like
4        support staff and the expats, because the lifestyles are so
5        different. And sometimes I find that a bit awkward. I can be
6        friends with the Tanzanian staff there and yet I'm working
7        closely in the office. And teachers teachers live so different,
8        we're like in different worlds.
```

As I learned in the interviews, none of the three women plans to stay in Tanzania for the remainder of their lives. This mobility seems very likely to impact their positioning as "world citizens" rather than as American/British/Canadian or Tanzanian/Swahili selves. Tatu plans to stay in Tanzania for a few years and then move to another country for more work experience teaching English. Kate thinks about moving to a country that is neither her own home, nor the home of her husband. She explained, "sometimes it would be good to have a third country where it's not my home and it's not his home, just have a neutral, where we both, neither." Diane shared a similar perspective in a conversation about her daughter's bilingual abilities. She told me that she found it very important that her child was growing up as a bilingual, and she showed a lot of enthusiasm about the importance of learning languages in general. When I asked her if there was anything particular about Swahili or Tanzanian culture that she especially valued for her daughter's development, however, she told me that she felt it was more important to speak at least one additional language, but that it did not matter what that language was.

Rather than becoming increasingly connected to Tanzania, or more sentimental about their home country, the women seem to have developed a worldly identity not bound by geography or culture. For Diane, this intercultural identity allowed her to grow as an individual, yet it also left her feeling somewhat "stranded" culturally:

(16) Diane: "It's hard to go back"

```
1   D:   So it's hard to go back to Europe and feel at ease about the
2        way people are living. Cause most people's preoccupations are
3        >shopping on a Saturday and get the credit card out the whole
```

4   time.< It's a very different scenario. I don't think it's changed me
5   in the sense that I didn't think the world was like that, but I think
6   I've deepened my understanding of why things are so difficult.
7   And it's made it hard for me to think about living in a developed
8   world situation again.
           [. . .]
12 D: I never used to worry about my sense of belonging because I've
13   always been a very consonant person, very happy. But I am
14   starting to have a level of anxiety about where I belong, cause
15   **I've increasingly felt less like I belong here**. But then as I say
16   when I go back to Europe my reference points also, they've been
17   changing, like **I feel a bit alienated in that context**.

Given her positionality as someone strongly dedicated to improving human rights, women's equality, and development, Diane evaluates life in the UK as uncomfortable after having lived in developing nations for a large part of her life. At the same time, she questions her sense of belonging in Tanzania, and the result seems to be that she does not feel that she belongs in any particular place.

As our conversation continued, it became clear that Diane feels most at home with other "citizens of the world" who have had many cross-cultural experiences and have also developed a high degree of intercultural awareness. In (17), she evaluates her friends from Europe who live in other countries as her "good friends," and she assesses her comfort with her Zanzibari friends who live in London very positively.

(17) Diane: Citizen of the world

24 C: Yeah like there is no way to go home again. Are there people
25   who you connect with really well?
26 D: Well most of my **good friends** from kind of Europe or say (.)
27   when I was studying- have similar kind of interests and concerns.
28   Like me they live in different parts of the world so we don't meet
29   that often. (1.0) But you know I have good Tanzanian friends in
30   the UK as well. One particular family I've known for years,
31   they're Zanzibari. **I enjoy the fact that I can go back to**
32   **London and hang out with East Africans and kind of feel**
33   **very comfortable. So that's good.**

6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined how long-term, expatriate L2 Swahili speakers negotiate their linguistic and cultural identities within a context that offers them the possibility to identity slip. Compared to other language learners'

stories (e.g., Armour 2001; Kinginger 2004; Miller 2003; Norton 2000; Ohara 2001) in which access to the linguistic and social aspects of the target language communities of practice were more difficult, the Tanzanian context seems to have afforded Tatu, Diane, and Kate with many opportunities to cross-culturally adapt to a Swahili L2 self. However, these three women did not take these opportunities up because of a number of obstacles stemming from their western-identified selves and from their high degree of intercultural awareness and worldliness. While gender differences seemed to be the most salient cultural difference that prevented the women from identity slippage, it is important to acknowledge that gender roles among Tanzanian women are (slowly) becoming more equitable, and that these changes will eventually allow for an expansion of gendered positions in Tanzanian culture (Mbilinyi et al. 2003; Stambach 2000). Just as there is more than one kind of Swahili at the interactional level (e.g., Tatu who is characterized like an "old-fashioned Swahili," and Kate, who is treated as a "Swahili who acts like a westerner"), the parameters of gender will also surely become more amenable to change.

Perhaps more significant than gender, however, is the strong identity held by all the women that they are intercultural adventurers without a firm concept of "home," people who enjoy crossing cultures because of the personal growth they experience. In other narrative and ethnographic studies, language learners who study abroad for significant periods of time (Crawshaw et al. 2001; Dufon & Churchill 2006; Kanno 2003) and intercultural couples (Piller 2002) seem to maintain a strong attachment to their first languages and cultures as central to their identity formation, even as they become bicultural and bilingual. In contrast, the narratives told by the women in this study highlight their intercultural, hybrid, and in-between positioning over and above any attachments to their particular L1s/L2s or cultural affiliations. Moreover, their worldliness is further symbolized by their commitment to language learning in all contexts where they have lived, as each language and cultural experience that they add to their repertoires contributes to a multiply intercultural self.

Appendix

(adapted from Atkinson & Heritage 1984)

"talk"	constructed dialogue or reported speech
'talk'	inner speech
>talk<	rapid speech
<talk>	slowed speech
<u>talk</u>	emphasis
talk	evaluative language

.	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
,	continuing intonation
-	cut-off speech
↑	pitch rise
(.)	micropause
(1.0)	timed pause
('text')	translated text provided by the author
((comments))	descriptive comments provided by the author
[. . .]	text deleted
:-)	emoticon (email)

Notes

1. All names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.
2. In contrast with Uganda and Kenya, Swahili has long enjoyed high prestige in Tanzania as a marker of social unity, egalitarian politics, and multiculturalism. Swahili became an important symbol of Tanzanian brotherhood and economic development in the 1960s under President Julius Nyerere, and it continues to be highly valued by most Tanzanians (cf. Mazrui & Mazrui 1998, 1999). These associations with Swahili likely enhance likely the possibility that L2 speakers can be treated as cultural insiders.
3. Most of the westerners I had met in Tanzania were women, and it is likely that my own gender made networking with these women more possible. The study has now expanded to include six western women and a Congolese man who entered Tanzania as a refugee during adolescence. Two participants (Kate and Tatu) took brief survey courses on Swahili but acquired most of the language naturally.
4. The term *reported speech* (cf. Volosinov 1971) refers to *quotations* (Wortham 2001) which are intended to replicate what was actually uttered in a past event but which are often altered in the act of retelling. *Constructed dialogue* (Tannen 1989) refers to quotations that may not have actually occurred, but which are more hypothetical. *Inner speech* refers to thoughts and feelings that are not voiced but rather, are "the locale in which another's utterance is received, comprehended, and evaluated; it is where the speaker's active orientation takes place (Volosinov 1986: 118).