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Unity in Diversity: When In Australia Do As Australians Do?

Personal Advertisements Submitted by Immigrants to Australia

Přistěhovalci a jejich seznamovací inzeráty v australském tisku

Keywords: Australian English, media, advertising.

Annotation: The study looks at the language of personal advertisements submitted by Australians and immigrants to Australia with the aim to determine the differences which would indicate different understanding of societal values. Great differences in collocations may explain for the different understanding and usage of self- and partner's references (*gentleman, lady, male, female, gent, etc.*) i.e. for different semantic validity not only in Australians and immigrants, but also males and females.

Anotace: Studie se zabývá otázkou, zda přistěhovalci, kteří inzerují v běžném australském tisku, se shodují ve svém pojmů a hodnot s rodilými Australany. Podstatná část je věnována odlišnému použití identifikačních výrazů, jak pro inzerenta samého, tak i partnera (*gentleman, lady, female, gent, atd.*), které je snad možno vysvětlit odlišnými kolokacemi ukazujícími na odlišné konotace. Byly zjištěny rozdíly v inzerátech nejen mezi rodilými Australany a přistěhovalci, ale i mezi muži a ženami.

Unity in Diversity: When In Australia Do As Australians Do?

Numerous magazines and newspapers currently contain pages of personal advertisements. Self-advertising in various kinds of media, including the radio and the internet, has become a popular way of meeting prospective partners.

Some studies explain the increase in the popularity of personal advertising by alienation and loneliness which stem from high population density in urban areas. Other studies view personal advertising as "a healthy and innovative adaptation to rapid social change" (Bolig,

Stein & McKenry in: Tither) and as "relationally efficient and 'natural' response" to the work centred, time-pressured and mass-mediated circumstances of modern life (Coupland in: Tither). The presented pilot study considered advertisements submitted by immigrants to Australia with the aim of determining how these people align with values and their linguistic manifestations in advertisements submitted by other Australians. The integrity of a country largely depends on the degree to which its people identify with the constituents of the nation by being - more or less- united in the values they recognize. It is even more important in a multicultural country like Australia.

The language people use is one such constituent. This paper examines the language of advertisements in the personal column, i.e. the language used by a large spectrum of people, not only the specially trained. My focus is on different age groups and national backgrounds of the writers.

As M.Merleau-Ponty says, "I may speak many languages, but there remains one in which I live."At stake is their acculturation, i.e. whether they are still in "the 'permanent immigrant ' state, where one is always able to understand the words but is never completely capable of comprehending all their connotations" (in:Valdes 21), or whether they passed beyond that threshold and became virtually 'native'. The paper discusses only statistically interesting differences between the two groups.

In spite of Australia's being home to many ethnic groups, Caucasians are in the majority, as recent statistics from 1999 show:

<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	70%
<i>West Europe</i>	7%
<i>South Europe</i>	7%
<i>Asia</i>	6%
<i>East Europe</i>	4%
<i>Middle East</i>	3%
<i>Indigenous</i>	2%
<i>Other</i>	1%

The method applied in this study draws on the observations that language can influence thought especially through repeated codings which then constitute 'semantic habits' (Halliday's term in Stubbs 1996.235). The aim was to identify recurrent phrases which encode culturally important

concepts in corpora (collections of texts). The process included summarizing concordance data and calculating the frequency and the likelihood of association between words. The texts were excerpted from the following Australian newspapers: *The Age*, which is a respectable paper; then, a little tabloidy, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*; and *The Weekly Southern Courier*, which is almost entirely dedicated to advertising. No restrictions were imposed as to the number of advertisements taken from individual copies or the sex of the advertisers. The study is part of the research project GAČR 405/02/0349.

Strategy

It is known that individuals reveal their social identity in communication. When communicating, people unwittingly demonstrate how they feel about their position in society and how they want to be perceived and viewed by other people. As Kress puts it ... "everything that has cultural significance enters into communication", and "...communication never involves 'just' individuals expressing 'their' meanings. The meanings are produced and consumed by individuals who are already socially and culturally formed, and who draw on the meanings of their culture and social group." (Kress 1988).

Personal advertisements are pieces of phatic communication, the main goal of which is to establish social contact (Jakobson 1960). Personal advertisements are habitually limited in space. The advertisers - in an attempt to conform to the established requirements - put in their advertisements the things and values they consider most important in life. They attempt to give their devices maximum efficiency, valid for an unlimited number of addressees with a potential focus on a single reader. The writer is preoccupied with the way s/he want his/her message be decoded by the reader so that not only the meaning but the attitude to what is being conveyed is shared by the reader. This attempt may not be successful because the authors of personal advertisements are not expert at writing and are not always fully aware of the complexity of interplay between mere communication and the expressive, affective and aesthetic connotations.

For the above reasons, the research also considered male and female advertisements separately, as there is a recognised 'asymmetrical semantic filter' (Tannen in: Langsdorf 11). This means that words may be understood differently by men and by women and also bring different associations (e.g. 'blonde' may be just a description of 'fair hair' but may bring up associations of 'sex appeal', or 'a bearded man' may be associated with 'manliness' but also with 'neglected hygiene'). It is therefore important for the success of the advertisement that the

message (and connotation) intended by the writer is understood in the same way by the reader (cf. Stolt & Trost 1976).

The usual structure of a personal advertisement consists of two parts, i.e. the writer's self-description (SD) (*attractive, outgoing, sincere...*), including self-identification (SI) (*guy, gent, male, lady...*), a bridging verb (*seeking, looking for...*) and a partner's description (PD) (*slim, educated...*) and identification (PI) (*lady, girl, male..*). This information is frequently complemented by 'viewed relationship', (*for friendship, lasting relationship...*):

Ex.1.: *OUTGOING 24 Aust.guy, 5'8", brown hair, blue eyes, sense of humour, likes outdoor activities, movies, would like to meet slim lady 21-26 years of age for friendship, view relationship if suited. (D.T.)*

This structure exhibits numerous modifications, nevertheless, the first part of the advertisement is most important as it should encourage the reader to read on. The detached form of identification (*male, gent, female...*) and the verb in the cohesive third person singular is often seen as plain and not attractive enough by Australians. They try to be more interactive and informal, and therefore they look for different ways of structuring the advertisement. Some of their ads start with a greeting "hi", sometimes followed by the advertiser's first name:

Ex.2: *Hi! My name is Adrian and I am a hardworking Aust.guy....(D.T.)*

Hi is mostly found in advertisements submitted by younger Australians, i.e. between twenty and forty years of age. It seems that these age groups are more open to new trends that come into the language with expanding American culture. Americanisms not only penetrate into the lexis but also in the style of address, such as the use of first names, due to TV programmes and other media. "Americans are inherently egalitarian... The British tend to be formal in their personal presentation, while the Yanks are notoriously informal"(Adler, 1982:56) Australian women, if they start their ad with a greeting, the greeting will also be a "hi!". They will never give their name, indicating thus they do not want to be addressed so by the potential respondent, and signalling they want to observe a certain distance.

Even more formality can be seen in advertisements put by people from other ethnic backgrounds. None of them starts with a greeting. They usually follow the traditional detached form of the third person. This holds true without any exception for Asian advertisers. European men, not women, sometimes start the text by presenting themselves in the first person. This, however, is in advertisements where the foreign nationality is complemented by 'Australian'

Ex.3: *I am Greek/Australian, 29 yo....(W.S.C.)*

Ex.3a): *I am Scottish Australian gentleman....(D.T.)*

Ethnicity/nationality

Ads submitted by Australian men frequently refer to Australian nationality (in 26%), less in women (6%). This is especially so among the advertisers in Sydney where numerous minorities of non-European descent have settled down. ‘*Australian*’ may also suggest that the advertiser is a Caucasian born in Australia, as the nationality reference is frequently accompanied by information on ‘*blue*’ / ‘*green eyes*’ and ‘*fair hair*’. This indicates that the generally accepted concept of a true Australian is that of a white Australian of Anglo-Saxon background. This study considered only ads in which the nationality/ethnicity was explicitly mentioned, such as in example 1.

Reference to nationality can be found only in 14% of men who come from other ethnic backgrounds and 7% of women. To be able to say that a person is ‘*Australian*’ seems to be highly desirable when looking for a partner. For this reason, some advertisers from other ethnic backgrounds stress their Australian affiliation:

Ex.4: *GREEK AUSTRALIAN 55yo, interested in going to movies...(W.S.C.)*

The following table giving the most frequently wished nationality in the prospective partners (if stated) indicates that Australian partners are preferred by females from other ethnic backgrounds and by Australian women while Australian men prefer Asian partners. Only 2% of *Australian* men wish for an Australian partner. Rumour has it that this is the case because Asian women are less assertive, more obedient and perhaps better homemakers. Men from other ethnic backgrounds look for a European if they themselves come from a European background, usually Greek or Italian.

MAU	Moth.nationality	FAU	Foth.nationality
Asian (26%)	European (16%)	Australian (20%)	Australian (25%)
Australian (10%)	Asian (13%)	British/Anglo-Saxon (20%)	European (12%)
European (3%)	Australian (13%)	European (10%)	American/ Canadian (12%)

MAU = male Australian; Moth.nationality = male other nationality

FAU = female Australian; Foth.nationality = female other nationality

‘Asian’ incl.Chinese, Thai, Japanese

As the statistics show, the term *lady* in our sample is obviously considered suitable and appropriate for self identification. *Lady* carries a connotation of a middle-class speaker, i.e. of someone who is not somewhere low on the social ladder: "... women are expected to talk like 'ladies', that is, like middle-class speakers" (Cameron 1990:62). Nevertheless, the younger generation prefer some other description (*other* in our chart) to any of the listed above. The acceptance of *lady* in self identification grows with age; there are more occurrences in the older age groups, which would be in correlation with Langsdorf's interviewees (1994): *lady* = *not modern*. Moreover, most members of the youngest generation are descendants of the war and post-war immigration wave. The Anglo-Saxon heritage is not part of their linguistic memory and therefore they are more open to non-traditional, new ways of expressing oneself. *Other* in SI includes *girl*. *Girl* in SI is more frequent in women of European background (Italian).

Men: Partner's Identification

The following table gives a picture of how men identify their prospective partners:

	LADY	FEMALE	WOMAN	YOU	OTHER	NO PI	
Australian	65.6%	14.3%	8.7%	1.4%	10%		100%
Other nat.	56.8%	13.6%	9%	2.2%	13.9%	4.5%	100%

PI=partner's identification

The data suggest that in men, *lady* is the preferred identification for their prospective partners; this also applies to the youngest generation. Langsdorf (1994:41) found in a field interrogation that using the term *lady* by men had its roots in their childhood when their parents insisted on 'a lady' when their children referred to a woman they did not know. The word *woman* was considered rude.

This indicates to the subconscious connotation of *woman* ≠ *lady*.

This paper will only discuss the two most frequently used 'identifications', i.e. *lady* and *female*. There will also be a few notes on *girl*.

The Macquarie Dictionary gives the following definition of **LADY**:

1. (correlative of *gentleman*) a polite term for any a woman of good family or social position, or of good breeding, refinement, etc. woman; 2.(ca) a less formal substitute, often used conversationally, for the specific title or rank of a countess, marchiness, etc.; 3.a woman; 4.a wife; 5.a woman who has proprietary rights of authority; 6.a woman who is the object of chivalrous devotion.

Miller & Swift(1981) note that the term 'lady' is used most effectively to evoke a certain standard of propriety, correct behaviour, or elegance. They quote Jennie Churchill's words: "You may be a princess or the richest woman in the world. But you cannot be more than a lady". It is because of these strong connotations, 'lady' is not a synonym for 'woman'. 'Lady' can also suggest a certain éclat.

Melbourne different from Sydney

V. Langsdorf (1994) who examined personal advertisements from 'Australian magazines' found that there were very few women who identified themselves as 'lady'. In my study, 'lady' is the prevailing word both in self – and the wished – for partner's descriptions. Taking the advertisers in *The Age* only, the findings are similar to Langsdorf's: only 25% of women describe themselves as 'lady' (these include women who do not describe themselves as 'Australian'). Langsdorf (1994.41) mentions an interview with Australian women which showed that should they refer to themselves as a 'lady', they would consider the expression rather pretentious and obsolete and would prefer to use the term 'woman'. Montgomery (1995.228) says that "... there is no absolutely neutral and disinterested way of apprehending and representing the world. Language always helps to select, arrange, organize, and evaluate experience, even when we are least conscious of doing so. In this sense representation is always interested: the words chosen are selected from a determinate set for the situation at hand and have been previously shaped by the community, or by those parts of it, to which the speaker belongs." It is possible to hypothesise that the explanation is in the history of the two cities. Sydney was founded as a penal colony. For a long time of two or three generations, its population consisted mostly of convicts and ex-convicts. Female convicts were always referred to as 'women', not ladies. The term 'lady' signified a woman of social distinction, a well-bred woman, which was connected with the English ruling class. There was a 'Female Factory' in Parrammatta (part of Sydney) where free settlers and ex-convicts could come and choose 'a Factory Lass'. The actual 'lady' was someone of high respect. It may be possible that these connotations are still surviving hidden in the subconscious of Sydney language users and

especially the older age groups avoid it in self-reference. Also ‘woman’ had, most probably, the connotation of ordinariness and was therefore considered as inappropriate in self description: this would explain for its low occurrence in SI. There is not a single ‘*woman*’ among those who include ‘*Australian*’ in their SD.

Sydney is a place of large non-European immigration. The newcomers attempt to conform to the accepted usage. It is mostly Asian women who identify themselves as ‘*ladies*’.

Melbourne, on the other hand, with its large population of other European descent has always been considered the principal intellectual and cultural centre of Australia. Unlike Sydney it was not founded as a penal settlement. The state of Victoria was founded in 1834 and became independent of N.S.W. in 1851. Only a few convicts were sent to Victoria directly; some were sent there via N.S.W. and the ones sent in 1849 were rejected (cf. Wood, 175) Melbourne thus has very little, if not negligible, convict heritage.

The table below gives a list of the most frequent words connected with *lady* both in male and female advertisements:

FAu–SD		MAu–PD	
attractive	20%	slim	30%
slim	20%	attractive	16%
dining	40%	Asian	14%
music	10%	Australian	2%
soc. drinker	20%	affectionate	7%
dancing	10%	genuine	7%

F0th–SD		M0th–PD	
attractive	47%	attractive	35%
slim	35%	slim	20%
dining	11%	fun	15%
music	41%	any nationality	30%
soc. drinker	11%	romantic	20%
dancing	23%	Asian	10%

The collocates suggest that *lady* in female understanding is a ‘social companion’, perhaps someone her male partner likes to be seen with. The expression *slim* in FAu seems to stand for *attractive*. Female advertisers use only one of these expressions to refer to their physical qualities. *Ladies* of other nationalities on the other hand, frequently complement *attractive* with *slim*: ‘*attractive, slim Chinese lady...*’ Apart from mentioning their physical qualities FOth also mention that they are educated (20%). *Dining* is among their priorities only in 11% ; *ladies* of Asian origin do not mention dining at all. Men, on the other hand, see *lady* as someone who is not only attractive but whose character qualities make her a good life partner. No *lady*, either Australian or of some other nationality, describes herself as *affectionate* and only a few say they are *romantic* (5%).

FEMALE

The dictionary definition says that a female (McQ Dict.) is

1. a human being of the sex which conceives and brings forth young; a woman or girl
2. any animal of corresponding sex

Though used by some 20% of ‘Australian’ women *female* in SI does not enjoy much popularity. Women in the older age groups omit it completely. The connotation they have, as well as men above 60, may be the one given in *The COD* of 1964: as an adjective: 1. *Of the offspring bearing sex, (~ child, slave, dog)* 2. *Of inferior vigour etc.* And as a noun ~ *person or animal; (vulg.) woman, girl.* The *Australian Contemporary Dictionary* of 1975 only gives: ‘*one of the sex that bears young*’. It is the biological aspect that is stressed here. There may also be a connotation mentioned above - there was the ‘Female Factory’ for convicted women. Referring to a person as to a female means putting her into a category. It denotes a kind here, an image. What it means is that *female* is not a pure distinguisher here, as Wierzbicka (1988:471) describes its usual usage “... *female or male are of entirely different order from concepts such as man, woman and child. In particular, male and ‘female’ are pure ‘distinguishers’, which are used to distinguish members of two abstract sub-classes from one another rather than to identify certain positive kinds...*”. Then she continues, “*They are mostly used as nouns in generic sentences, when a stereotype is made.*”

In my view, *female* in personal advertisements gives an example of a term perceived through an asymmetrical filter (Tannen 1993). Women over forty apparently understand it as a category and therefore they do not use it in SI. The older generation men treat the term not as a category

but use it in its adjectival form, the function of which is to refer to only one of the numerous features the categorial word has, as in the following example:

Ex.5: AN AUSTRALIAN MAN 40's tall, dark &..., n/drinker, adventurous, passionate & caring, bored & lonely, doesn't live for TV & kids, looking for **female companion** with similar interests. (D.T)

It is *companion* here that carries the core (i.e. categorial) meaning.

Younger men usually pair *female* with *male* in SD and PD and consider it equal in status. This claim is supported by the definitions in the latest edition of *The Macquarie Dictionary* which does not mention any negative reference to *female*, unlike the (British) *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1964) or *Language Activator* (1993) which speak of a vulgar or an offensive way of referring to a woman. We have two rather different, asymmetrical, perceptions: most women, and some men, especially the older generations, apparently perceive *female* with its negative connotations while the younger generations of women and some other men in the older generations see it as a neutral, non-formal way of reference to a woman.

The most frequent words that accompany *female*

FAu-SD		MAu-PD	
movies	10%	slim	20%
sense of humour	20%	movies	10%
music	10%	attractive	8%
enjoy life	10%	sailing	8%
beach	10%	fun personality	10%

FOth	*	MOth	
financially secure		romantic	60%
sense of humour		honest	20%
		feminine	20%
		humour	20%
		outgoing	20%

*statistical data irrelevant because of the low number of occurrences

The tables indicate that *females* more often than *ladies* mention pleasure activities: movies, music, beach, or say that they (like to ~) ‘*enjoy life*’, i.e. activities which are popular with Australians. The most frequent words suggest that *female* in women’s understanding is someone of common folk, perhaps a prototype of the consumer of pop culture, a person whose job does not require university education. This claim is supported by the fact that *female* is never collocated with *professional*, i.e. there is no ‘professional female’.

Neither do Australian men look in *female* for spiritual or other qualities that would indicate a profound character. *Slim* which is connected with the contemporary standard of beauty and sometimes used as a synonym of attractive comes first. Apart from the requirement of (*sense of*) *humour*, a *female* should enjoy fun, have a fun personality, fun to be with, (enjoy to ~) have fun times, i.e. qualities that are sensual. A female in the eyes of some men may be a woman with ‘life experience’ who may have children.

Sometimes men, especially those of other than Australian background, may tone down the possible negative tint in understanding and they put a positive premodifier, such as *feminine* (> *feminine female*):

Ex.6: *GOODLOOKING European/Australian gent 31 y.o., sincere and elegant, sense of humour, likes dining out, film, music, seeks **feminine female** European or Australian, 24–29, attractive, intelligent for friendship/relationship (W.S.C.)*

or add another PI (lady) :

Ex.7: *ROMANTIC good looking financially secure Aust. male, with no ties who lives in the Hills District. Looking for **female** to share my time with. I’m 38years old... Would like to meet a slim career minded **lady** aged between 26 and 36, who likes keeping it & who is exciting & fun to be with, also likes live bands, romantic dinners, w’ends away & socialising with friends.(D.T.)*

GIRL

In western society women have been taught to value youthfulness and many take the term ‘girl’ as a compliment.” According to Dumond the terms ‘girl’ and ‘gal’ apply to females up to the age of mid- or late teens. ”Both ‘girl’ and ‘gal’ are demeaning when applied to adult women, whether or not it often is thought ‘cute’ to refer to older women as such.” (1991.41.) Our data below indicate that ‘*girl*’ is sometimes used as a counterpart of ‘*guy*’ in male advertisements. Female advertisers who use ‘girl’ (or ‘gal’) in SI are not ‘*Australian*’.

One may presume here that those of other than English speaking background are not fully aware of the connotations, and under a possible influence of their ethnic culture they describe themselves as *girl* to say that they have never been involved in a serious relationship and are ‘inexperienced’.

Men, who use *girl* in a partner’s description, are men of the younger age groups, i.e. between 20 and 39 years. A ‘*girl*’ in men’s eyes can be up to 40:

Ex.8: ... looking for intelligent **girl** aged between **30–40** for outings...

The finding that the older male generations (50+...) in our study do not refer to their potential partners as ‘girl(s)’ contradicts to the note on usage in the *Macquarie Dictionary* (1998): “*Many women do not like to be referred to as ‘girls’ However, this is a form of reference which has been common in the past and which survives still particularly amongst males of an older generation.*”

None of the men who advertise for a ‘*girl*’ identify themselves as ‘*gentleman*’, ‘*gent*’ or ‘*man*’. The preferred SI is *male*, which seems to be seen neutral in relation to *girl*. *Girls* usually look for *gent/s* or *partner/s*. The greatest imbalance can be observed in Asian ‘*girl*’ advertisers, who look for *professional gents*:

Ex.9: **ASIAN girl**, very nice, 27 yrs, educated, seeks Aust. prof. gent, n/s, 28–37yrs, for marriage.(W.S.C.)

The advertisement corresponds to the common image of an Asian woman: submissive, kind and understanding in exchange for lasting security (marriage). *Nice* may here also mean ‘pretty’, as some non-native speakers of English use ‘nice’ in the meaning of beautiful, pretty or attractive. By saying ‘educated’ she conveys a) she is not from a poor background; b) may be able to match her partner’s intellectual standard.

And how do men identify themselves, how do they feel “who they are”?

	gentleman	gent	male	guy	man	Other	%
AuSI	1%	11.%	37%	21%	8%	22%	100
Oth.Nat.SI	1%	21%	20%	23%	0	33%	100

Women, on the other hand identify their prospective partners as:

	gentleman	gent	male	guy	man	Other	%
AuPI	10%	30%	10%	20%	20%	10%	100

Oth.Nat.PI	25%	17%	4%	8%	25%	21%	100
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The data indicate that there are possible differences in understanding of the concepts by females and males. Because of the limited space, this paper will only touch on *gentleman/gent* and *man*. The reason why so few men use *gentleman* in SI may be sought in the resentment of formality in Australian English. For most men *gentleman* as self-identification might sound rather ‘posh’. As the collocates suggest, they do not wish to comply with the dictionary definitions of ‘a man of good breeding, education and manner’ or ‘a man of good social standing by birth, especially one who does not work for a living’ (*McQ.D.*). The most frequently used words accompanying *gentleman* are related to drinking and smoking habits (*non/social drinker, non/smoker* (58%), and *travelling* (30%)). Women, on the other hand, especially those from other ethnic backgrounds, expect a ‘*gentleman*’ to be someone in a respected position with a good income:

Ex.9: *Attractive, refined South American lady... loves music, dancing, travelling, dining out. Seeks an intelligent, educated, financially independent gentleman for friendship, view perm.rel’ship (D.T.)*

A *gentleman*, in women’s eyes, will be someone high on the social ladder. One may hypothesise that women who identify their prospective partner as *gentleman* expect, according to Trudgill’s findings, (In: Cameron 1992.63) that they will be categorised with men: “... the husbands occupation defined the class of the wife (along with other criteria such as what kind of housing they lived in).” Trudgill came to the conclusion that “... women wished to identify themselves with a higher social class, and thus that their status aspirations were higher than men’s.” (Cameron *ibid.*).

The greater popularity of *gent* may suggest to be fully in line with the Australian love of abbreviations: ‘*gent*’ = (coll.) *gentleman* (*McQ.D.*) In Wierzbicka’s theory of nouns and adjectives one may argue that the person who perceives himself and is perceived as *gent* will be expected to have informality reflected in his behaviour. *Gent* is an embodiment of qualities and manners of a *gentleman* combined with those of someone who sometimes does not take life too seriously.

Australian *gents* tend to provide rather detailed information on their appearance (hair, eyes) and interests :

Ex.10: *Aust.gent, 40yrs,non-drinker, 189cms, auburn hair, brown eyes, enjoys BBQs, picnics, beach...(S.T.),*

while *gents* from other ethnic backgrounds inform about their character qualities (*sincere*) and interests (*classical music, opera*). Australian women, do not add any desired attribute to *gent*,

while women from other ethnic backgrounds expect a gent to be *sincere, honest, caring* and *financially secure*. A *gent* in men's eyes is more aware of his body than a *gentleman*. Women do not expect in *gent* such a high status as in *gentleman*, but still, they look for character qualities more than appearances:

Ex.11: ...*Italian born lady... I wish to meet a good, sincere, honest, caring gent...(W.S.C.)*

MAN

The definitions in The Macquarie Dictionary put the meaning of *man* as a 'representative of all humanity' before 'male human being'. The number of possible meanings enable various connotations to be at work. *Man* as a representative of the human race without any reference to women has been strongly criticised and considered sexist. The word does not have the charge of youth as *guy*, neither is it neutral as *male*. All this can explain the relatively infrequent usage of *man* in SI.

On the other hand, *man* appears in all PIs. Except the 60+ age group where *gentleman* is significantly preferred, *man* ranks relatively high among the descriptions (identifications) in other age groups. *Man* for women seems to mean someone who is able to be 'a head or a leader', a sensible person, someone who does not have any hang-ups and therefore is stable and capable of creating a lasting relationship, which is what mature women are usually looking for irrespective of their ethnic background.

The most frequent words that accompany *man* are:

M-SD		F-PD	
tall	15%	genuine	40.%
camping	15%	sincere	40.%
outdoor/s	10%	honest	25.%
fishing	10%	intelligent	25.%
touring	10%	energetic	10%

Unlike the most frequent words that accompany *guy* and *male*, i.e. *music, dining, movies*, the words that accompany *man* – *camping, fishing, touring*, refer to activities connected with situations in which life may depend on an immediate correct decision, especially in the Australian outback. The activities the advertisers mention make them look as if they wanted to match the model of Paul Hogan (Crocodile Dundee) who was deliberately introduced as a

‘typical Australian’ character in the 80s to strengthen the sense of national identity in Australians.

Character qualities/ skills

While there is not much difference between the groups as to the described physical qualities both in self and partner’s descriptions, and therefore the issue is not discussed here, the category of character qualities and skills offers a different picture. Females of other nationalities stress their being intelligent, educated and caring, while Australian women prefer having fun and say they are romantic and warm. They value qualities of character rather than intellect. Men do not consider education in their partners as being important, nevertheless, some of them would like their female partner to be intelligent, and they also would like their partner to have a sense of humour, none of the qualities mentioned by Australian women. Women from other ethnic backgrounds stress education in their partners, most probably because they look for security and protection and consider an educated partner to have a secure job with reasonable income. The same would apply to a *professional*. Australian women, on the other hand, stress character qualities which do not have a materialistic overtone.

(For explanation of abbreviations see above)

Females

FothSD		FAUSD	
educated	24%	fun-loving	20%
intelligent	24%	warm (personality)	10%
caring	20%	active	10%
loving	8%	romantic	10%
sense of humour	8%	sense of humour	0

FothPD		FAUPD	
educated	24%	genuine	20%
intelligent	20%	sincere	20%
professional	20%	sense of humour	20%
caring	16%	secure	10%
honest	16%	educated	0

sincere	16%	intelligent	0
non-smoker	16%	caring	0

Males

MothSD		MAUSD	
non/social smoker	12%	non/social drinker	23%
sense of humour	10%	non/social smoker	23%
professional	7%	caring	17%
romantic	7%	secure	17%
caring	0	educated	8%

MothPD		MAUPD	
romantic	20%	intelligent	10%
sense of humour	10%	affectionate	7%
intelligent	3%	sincere	7%
affectionate	3%	sense of humour	5%
educated	0	educated	1.5%

Hobbies/Interests

The advertised hobbies and interests which rank at the top among Australians are given little attention among the ‘other nationalities’ groups. Apart from travel, which is popular both among Australians and other ethnic groups (MAu 23%, MOth 13%, FAu 20%, FOth 24%), and which may be a code for sufficient means, ‘other nationality’ groups would rather be engaged in some sort of socializing, such as dining, movie going, dancing, and cooking, than activities connected with Australian open spaces. None of them mentions bush walking, camping or BBQ, i.e. activities which are popular among other Australians.

Viewed Relationship

Though the purpose of personal advertising is clear to all involved, more than half of the advertisers mention the goal of their looking for a partner; they do so in describing the viewed relationship, whereby *friendship* and *relationship* occur most frequently (Au men 79 %, MOth

50%, FAu 30%, FOth 60%).

Wierzbicka (1997) includes 'friendship' in her study of key words that are culturally revealing. She looks at collocations with 'friend' and finds that they may be controversial, such as a 'faithful friend' but also a 'false friend', a 'steadfast friend' but also a 'fair weather friend' or a 'summer friend'. 'Friendship' is viewed as something permanent, as reflected in collocations such as 'eternal friendship'. Other collocations included the words 'steady' and 'constant'.

The advertisers in our sample challenge Wierzbicka's claim of 'friendship as something permanent' as they do not see 'friendship' as something 'eternal' or 'steady'. 'Friendship' seems to have slipped into the same usage as Wierzbicka (51/52) describes in 'friend': "... in the old usage of the word *friend*, people were usually expected to 'love' their friends... (Now) there is a qualitative difference, which roughly speaking, can be linked with the contrast between 'affection' and 'enjoyment'.... In the older English literature, people 'loved' their friends, or felt and thought of them as 'dear' and 'dearest'. By contrast, in contemporary English ..., people are more likely to talk about 'friends' in terms of 'enjoyment' 'pleasure' and 'fun'." These terms can be observed in collocations such as *fun & friendship*. The collocation *casual friendship* even denies the fundamentals of the traditional concept of 'friendship': *casual* does not presume 'commitment' and 'faithfulness' to another person.

Ex.12: *CHARMING AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSMAN ... seeks casual friendship... (w.s.c.)*

Nor do the advertisers who leave *friendship* unspecified bring any evidence to their understanding of the word in its traditional meaning, as most of them see it as the 'first stage' which may develop into *relationship*.

Ex.13: *AUSSIE MALE ... female 18-20 with similar interests for friendship view permanent relationship. (D.T.)*

Relationship thus seems to be understood as involving more commitment, as being lasting or permanent, as a word that substitutes for the 'old fashioned' 'marriage'. And indeed, the most frequent collocate is *permanent*, i.e. *permanent relationship*. One can thus presume that 'relationship' may, in some situations replace the traditional 'friendship'. Western culture sometimes denies the existence of lasting friendship between the opposite sexes. This may be the reason why Australian women do not use the word 'friendship'; they only say '*relationship*' without any further attribute, i.e. '*for r'ship*'.

There are, however, also examples which contravene the hypothesis of stability and permanency of 'relationship'. Some advertisers do not see 'relationship' be limited in the terms of time and/or commitment as most collocates suggest, but allow it a rather free course even

allowing the interpretation of ‘an occasional date’:

Ex.14: *AUSSIE 40, seeks Aussie or Asian, 30-40, casual to permanent relationship. Sports, beaches, ... (W.S.C.)*

Marriage is almost a ‘taboo’ word among the viewed relationships, used by only 5% MAu and 3% Moth. and 0% Fau and 12% FOth. ‘Marriage’ seems to be out of date: its place has been taken over by ‘permanent relationship’ and ‘lasting relationship’. ”‘Marriage’ is a legal union of a man with a woman for life”. (*Macq.Dict.*) Words suggesting life-long commitment are not popular today in that they suggest the loss of ‘personal freedom’. Unlike marriage, one can always walk out of a relationship as there are no documents, no authorities one would be liable to. ‘Relationship’ is not the final stage. Most (80%) advertisers who mention *marriage* see it as the culmination of some preceding phase, i.e., of *companionship, friendship* or *relationship*:

Ex. 15: *ASIAN LADY good looking ...well educated, ...seeks educated man - preferably businessman 39-46 y/o with similar interests for a long term rel/ship, marriage ... (S.T.)*

All the females who mention *marriage* are of foreign origin, usually Asian. We can presume that they are affected by their ethnic culture that is not so open to free cohabitation. Marriage may also ensure permanent residency and some income in case the marriage breaks up. On the other hand, men who advertise for *marriage* are looking for an Asian or a partner of any nationality. Thus they convey that they respect the traditions of other cultures and that they are ready to make the commitment. Other advertisers mention their Christian religion. The Church does not approve of cohabitation in a ‘relationship’ without marriage. By saying *marriage* the advertisers signal they are practising believers.

Friendship –permanent relationship		Relationship
Mau	32%	47%
Moth	10%	40% /marriage 3%/
FOth	20%	40% /permanent/ marriage 12%
Fau		30%

Conclusion

Advertisements submitted by people from other cultures do not exhibit striking differences in vocabulary or structure . The collocates of ‘identifying’ words (such as *gentleman, female,*

etc.) , however, indicate different associations in men and women of ‘Australian’ and ‘other’ origins. Also the offered and required qualities, such as education, intellectual activities, socializing and permanent commitment in relationships which point at the values recognized in their home cultures, thus contrasting with the easy-going, laid back attitudes which can be traced in advertisements submitted by other Australians. They tend to follow the traditional established ways of communication between men and women, which require keeping distance and are rather formal. Nevertheless, people from other cultures -though not ”fully in line” with Australians- enrich Australian society with traditional values

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