



MISSING ME AND MSING THE OTHER

COURTESY TITLES FOR WOMEN IN ENGLISHES

Joanne Winter, The University of Western Australia

Joanne Winter is a Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Western Australia. She researches on issues related to the discursive construction of identity, language and gender and discourse features of Englishes. She is co-editor of Maintaining Minority Languages in Transnational Contexts (Palgrave, 2006), and recent publications include articles in International Journal of Applied Linguistics, Language and Education and Current Issues in Language Planning.

Correspondence to Joanne Winter: jewinter@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

Anne Pauwels, The University of Western Australia

Anne Pauwels is Professor of Linguistics and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Western Australia. Her main areas of research include immigrant language contact in Australia, language and gender, and language policy relating to higher education. She is the author of Boys and Foreign Language Learning (Palgrave, 2006 with Jo Carr), and Women Changing Language (Longman, 1998), and is co-editor of Maintaining Minority Languages in Transnational Contexts (Palgrave, 2006). She is chair of the steering committee for an Australian national research project, Innovative Approaches to Provision of Languages Other Than English in Australian Higher Education (Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund).

Correspondence to Anne Pauwels: apauwels@arts.uwa.edu.au

The introduction and spread of *Ms* as the courtesy address title for women is a cornerstone of feminist linguistic planning for English. Its introduction aimed to eradicate the discriminatory inequity in the address system that exposed women through their (non)marital relationship with men. The understanding, use and impact of the courtesy title are fairly well documented, particularly for Englishes of Australia (e.g. Pauwels 1987; 1998; 2001; 2003), US and Britain (Romaine 2001) and New Zealand (Holmes 2001). We have little knowledge of the form's spread, impact and use by speakers for whom English is not the dominant language but forms part of their linguistic repertoire. Graddol (1997) argues that English-speaking bilinguals will outnumber first language speakers and, 'increasingly will decide the global future of the language' (p.10). Such contexts of English – second / third / foreign – usage loosely align with locales Kachru (1997) identified as 'expanding circles', and to some extent, many of the 'outer circle' Englishes, e.g. Hong Kong. In this paper we take up a new direction in feminist language planning: the exploration of courtesy title use and practices by English-speaking mono-/bi-/multilingual women around the world. We draw upon online survey data (available from <http://www.teagirl.arts.uwa.edu.au/>) to probe respondents' strategies for addressing unknown women, as well as women's use of

courtesy titles for themselves. Our mapping of practices associated with *Ms* reveals an unexpected pattern of diffusion with implications for evaluating planned social language change. In relation to *Ms*, the implementation of feminist linguistic policy does not cohere with a pattern of spread from inner to outer to expanding ‘circles’ of English or from ‘first language speaker’ to ... ‘foreign language speaker’ diffusion. The locale and personal contexts associated with education, awareness and personal commitment to gender equity interact in complicating, and surprising ways. Indeed our research exposes a new directionality for *Ms* as a preferred form for unknown women, without necessarily implicating its use in self-naming for many bilingual women resident in ‘outer circle’ locales.

MS AND FEMINIST LANGUAGE PLANNING AND THE GLOBALISATION OF ENGLISH

This paper focuses on the intersection of a ‘new’ concern of applied linguistics namely the question of linguistic hybridity and the globalisation of Englishes, and seeks new directions for the study of feminist language planning – *Ms* and its uses in the Englishes of mono / bi / multilingual women. We probe the ways in which the gender-inclusivity agenda for naming women, in this case the courtesy title *Ms*, has been adopted, avoided or appropriated as part of the ‘internationalising’ of English around the world. Drawing upon predictions about the expanding growth of second and other language users of English (Graddol 1997) and the concentric circle framework (Kachru 1997), we explore the trajectories, or dimensions of spread, for feminist language planning. Kachru’s framework identifies three ‘circles’ – inner, outer and expanding – for the varieties of English around the world. Membership of each ‘circle’ is circumscribed by the status and function of English in the respective communities with ‘inner circle’ locales having English as the primary language and are in some sense ‘norm providing’. In the ‘outer circle’ English plays an important role as a second language and is viewed as ‘norm developing’ while in the ‘expanding circle’ English is seen as an international language and taught as a foreign language. However, the relationship between the three circles, particularly from the ‘inner circle’ to the other two, is a very complex and controversial one, with some contributors describing it as one of *linguistic imperialism* (Phillipson 2001) or *linguistic hegemony* (Pennycook 1994). Debates about the relationship are further complicated by the increasing globalisation of English which may militate against the indigenisation/localisation of the ‘outer circle’ variety of English. Notwithstanding the contestations surrounding the Kachru model of concentric circles it is productively useful in documenting the extent and manner of the spread of feminist language reform. Kachru’s

framework mirrors to some extent the regional contexts with socio-historical ones that reflect the history of feminist linguistic activism and language planning. The trajectories were clearly outward from the ‘inner circle’ locales. However, the pathways ‘out’ have not been described or interrogated in any way.

Eliminating discriminatory gender-based naming practices was, and is, a central concern of feminist linguistic activism. Prominent in the planning agenda has been the desire to eradicate the discriminatory inequity in the system of courtesy titles (at least in western societies), that characterised women primarily through their marital relationship with men, i.e. married or not married. This involved the use of *Mrs* and its many equivalents in other western languages to address those women who are, or were, in a marital relationship with a man and the use of *Miss* for those who were not (yet). In English the introduction of a new title *Ms* became the preferred strategy to address this inequity: the title *Ms* was promoted as a replacement for *Mrs* and *Miss* within the context or system of courtesy titles for adults as illustrated in Table 1.

	Women	Men
Non-adult courtesy title	Miss	Master
Adult courtesy titles	Ms	Mr

Table 1 Promoted courtesy titles system for women and men in English

Whilst there was some feeling that the retention of *Miss* could be validated if it were necessary to reflect and keep synchrony with the non-adult courtesy title for male persons – *Master*. The latter’s use has become rather infrequent and dated, reducing further the motivation to maintain *Miss* as a non-adult courtesy title for women. Although early feminist planning and activism aimed for a courtesy title system represented in Table 1, the reality to date is a system illustrated in Table 2.

	Women			Men
Non-adult courtesy title	<i>Miss</i>			
Adult courtesy titles	<i>Ms</i>	<i>Miss</i>	<i>Mrs</i>	<i>Mr</i>

Table 2 Current courtesy titles system for women and men in English

The state of play presented in Table 2 can be interpreted in various ways, including:

- That the current system is a ‘transitional’ one. The introduced courtesy title *Ms* has entered the ‘traditional’ courtesy title system and is gradually replacing both *Miss* and *Mrs*.
- That the replacement strategy has failed and that *Ms* has simply been added to the existing female courtesy titles, further amplifying the inequity between female and male courtesy titles as a result of the introduction of *Ms*. We will refer to this interpretation as the ‘amplification’ one.

Research so far, exclusive to ‘inner circle’ English locales, (e.g., Holmes 2001; Romaine 2001) tends to favour the first interpretation, or the ‘transition’ phase, rather than the second, the ‘amplification’ interpretation, although there is also some indication that the complete replacement of *Miss* and *Mrs* by *Ms* is unlikely to occur in the near future due to various social and ideological developments. These two interpretations, ‘transition’ and ‘amplification’, are based, typically, on viewing naming as constructing a consistency for all women, i.e. self and others (familiar or unknown). Feminist language planning promoted the understanding that *Ms* could be used by – and for – all women, and was to be understood as the feminised counterpart of *Mr*.

Our investigations (Pauwels 1987; 1996; 1998; 2001) on the use of *Ms* by Australian women, spanning a period of almost 20 years, showed a dramatic increase in the use of *Ms* from approximately 20% in 1986 to 37% in 1996 and 48% in 2000–2001 (and 62.5% in TEaGIRL¹ in 2004–2005). These studies also noted that *Ms* was making inroads into **both** *Miss* and *Mrs* territory rather than simply being a replacement for *Miss* as mentioned by Graddol and Swann (1989) in relation to Great Britain. To date, these two interpretations have not been subjected to much scrutiny in terms of the naming practices of women – for themselves and for others. As part of our focus we will return to these interpretations in order to understand the practices of naming across Englishes and English-speaking women.

The study of the use and spread of *Ms* has been largely limited to English language communities in which English functions as a dominant language, and in which a majority of speakers can be categorised as L1 speakers of English. This seems hardly surprising as feminist linguistic activism grew out of western women’s rights movements especially in the English-speaking communities of North America, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. In the context of English becoming the dominant global lingua franca and the increasing diversification of English-using communities, and the emerging critiques of the dominant models used to describe this growth or spread (Pennycook 1994), it is not only interesting but also pertinent to study whether, and how, socially motivated

language change – in this case feminist language reform – which ‘originated’ in a specific English language community has affected and/or spread to other English language communities around the world. Investigating the ‘phenomenon’ of gender-inclusive language reform in the context of other English language communities, brings to the fore a series of interesting questions which transcend present scholarship around socially motivated language reform. They include questions regarding

- The relationship between Englishes with regard to the adoption and spread of socially motivated language reform, i.e. is this an(other) instance of linguistic imperialism whereby ‘inner circle’ Englishes impose their sociolinguistic norms onto ‘outer circle’ and ‘expanding circle’ Englishes?
- The role of English in effecting social changes in multilingual communities, i.e. is English *the* or *a* vehicle for social change in relation to gender equality and equity?

Our examination of women’s naming practices, for themselves and others, and in a range of Englishes, is pertinent given the argument put forward by Graddol (1997) among many others, that speakers of English as a second and foreign language (i.e. English-speaking bilinguals) will outnumber first language speakers of English and ‘increasingly will decide the global future of the language’ (Graddol 1997: 10). Complicating the documentation of Ms in Englishes around the world is the realisation that transnational movements of people, discourses and texts are the norm and not the exception, particularly in contexts such as education, media and other professional workplaces. These flows carry along with them the consequences of contact and problematise discourse orders and social language practices. So, facing the challenge for the new directionality in the study of planned (or managed, Spolsky 2004) social language change we pose the following questions:

1. Is there evidence of the courtesy title Ms being used in different locales of English?
2. What types of uses, adoptions or dissemination patterns can be observed in these contexts?
3. Who or what act as initiating agents of contact in the spread in these locales?

METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANTS

The data for the paper is drawn from an online survey collected from February to December 2004 (see <http://www.teagirl.arts.uwa.edu.au/>). A total of 859 responses were received by 1st December 2004 which included 612 responses by women. All respondents

in this sample were aged 18 years or over. The women came from more than 50 countries: whilst countries like the United States, Britain, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Hong Kong and Singapore were well represented, many other countries included only one or two female respondents – for example Fiji, Croatia and South Korea. The women were classified on the basis of the ‘circle’ model (Kachru 1997) according to their dominant and domiciled residence. Table 3 profiles the ‘residences’² for the women participants in the survey and the proportion of women who agreed that English was their dominant language, as well as the proportion of bi/multilingual women.

		Participants		English dominant		Bi/multilingual	
		No.	No.	%	No.	%	
‘Circles’ of locale	‘Inner’	452	443	98.7	251	55.5	
	‘Outer’	71	40	56.3	64	90.1	
	‘Expanding’	89	25	28.4	84	94.4	

Table 3 Profile of women participating in TEaGIRL survey included in this investigation

The profile of the TEaGIRL female participants supports broadly the classification of ‘circles’ of English in terms of the overall populations of the locales and the role of English in their lives – decreased representation as a dominant language from the ‘inner’ (98.7%) to the ‘expanding’ (28.4%) – and density of bilingualism – substantial proportions in ‘outer’ (90.1%) and ‘expanding’ (94.4%) circle contexts. The socio-demographic profile of the female respondents across the various English language communities and countries was not dissimilar with the majority (90%) having or currently undertaking tertiary educational qualifications. Of the 612 women, 86.8% aligned themselves as users of gender-inclusive language.

The online survey questions upon which we draw in the discussion are:

1. What title of address do you prefer to use for yourself?
2. What title of address do you use for addressing an unknown woman?
3. How did you become aware of the issue of sexist / gender-biased language?

All questions were closed-ended with the alternatives provided. Self-title options and address titles for unknown women included *Ms*, *Miss*, *Mrs* and in the case of unknown women an additional *no title* option was included. In addition, respondents were able

to provide comments or other options on any of these questions in adjacent sections in the online survey. We have included some extracts from a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with English language researchers, specialists and educators in Hong Kong and Singapore in 2004 on the topic of feminist language planning in their locales and lives.

USE AND SPREAD OF *MS* IN THE ENGLISHES AROUND THE WORLD.

In Table 4 we present women’s use of *Ms* according to English language region. The information in this table registers any form of *Ms* use, i.e. it includes women who use the title *Ms* for self reference only, women who use it for themselves and others, as well as women who only use it to address other women (whose title preference is unknown). The findings in this Table show that women belonging to ‘inner circle’ English language communities have the highest uptake of *Ms* (75%). Women in ‘expanding circle’ communities record the second highest use of *Ms* with nearly 63%, whilst female respondents from ‘outer circle’ English language communities use slightly lower proportions than those from the expanding circle communities.

Title of address	Users and ‘circles’ of Englishes (%)		
	Inner	Outer	Expanding
<i>Ms</i>	75.26	59.15	62.79

Table 4 The use of *Ms* in any context according to English language region

Given the history and origins of feminist language activism in English the leading position’ of ‘inner circle’ English communities, 75.26%, is not unexpected. Perhaps more surprising is the relatively high take up rate in the other English language communities especially in the so-called ‘expanding circle’ communities – 62.79% – as English has the status of a foreign language in the latter. Before we seek explanations for these observations we provide some breakdowns of *Ms* usage in an attempt to discover patterns of use.

In Table 5 we focus on those participants who indicated that they used *Ms* for themselves and others, i.e. it excludes those women who use *Ms* only to refer to another woman whose title preference is unknown.

Title of address	Users and ‘circles’ of Englishes (%)		
	Inner	Outer	Expanding
<i>Ms</i>	59.6	38.0	50.0

Table 5 The use of *Ms* for self and others according to English language region

It could be expected that the pattern of *Ms* for self-use is most widespread in ‘inner circle’ English language communities. This is confirmed with almost 60% of the participants from such communities adopting this pattern. Again women from the ‘expanding circle’ communities of English (50%) make greater use of *Ms* for self and other women, than women from the ‘outer circle’ communities (38%). In this case, the former’s pattern of use is much closer to that of women from ‘inner circle’ than of the women from ‘outer circle’ communities. The latter’s pattern of *Ms* use is more focused on *Ms* use for other women, whose title preference is unknown, as shown in Table 6.

Title of address	Users and ‘circles’ of Englishes (%)		
	Inner	Outer	Expanding
<i>Ms</i>	15.6	21.1	12.7

Table 6 The use of *Ms* for others only according to English language region

Table 6 shows the percentage of women who use *Ms* to address other women whose title preference is unknown but who do not use the title for themselves. This pattern of *Ms* use is more prominent in ‘outer circle’ communities (21.1%) than in the others (15.6% for ‘inner circle’ and 12.7% for ‘expanding circle’ respectively).

The title of the article, i.e. *Missing me and Msing others*, is evidenced strongly in the data generated from women in Hong Kong. Of the Hong Kong women participating in the survey, 75% claimed *Miss* as their title of preference for themselves and correspondingly chose *Ms* (50%) for women whose title preference is unknown. This pattern suggests that while *Ms* has uptake in the setting, echoing the prescriptions from non-discriminatory guidelines, it is not adopted for self-naming by these young women (average age 23.5 years). The presence of *Ms* in the context can be interpreted as providing a third option for address titles – one that certainly replaces *Mrs* and *Miss* but is limited to naming practices for others and not for self. This duality resonates with the research by Aoyama (2005) who identifies the ‘dolly’ identity among young Asian women. *Miss* captures the

youthful, carefully crafted, fashionable Hong Kong young woman but issues of feminism are relevant for identities beyond the self.

These survey findings were also contextualised in interviews with educators in Hong Kong who used *Ms* to and in reference to their students but recognised that the form was rejected as part of the students' identity naming practices.

Extract 1³

Georgina: and I would have to change . Her. and correct I would have to put in parenthesis
Ms
Audrey: Mm
Georgina: get rid of the Miss
Audrey: Mm
Georgina: I would have to . And I would have to tell her . You know . you're a professional
woman

In Extract 1 Georgina, the Educator, presents her voice as the critical transformer of knowledge, intruding into the naming practices of her young female student(s). Clearly, for Georgina, the promotion and adoption of *Ms* constructs a *professional woman* profile in contrast to the 'dolly' image lingering in the *Miss* naming.

The information emerging from the Tables shows that patterns of *Ms* usage among women from 'inner circle' and 'expanding circle' communities are more similar than those between 'inner' and 'outer circle' communities. Their use of *Ms* for self naming is proportionally greater than the women from 'outer circle' communities, and show relatively stable practices for self naming and naming unknown women whose reference is unknown. Women from the 'outer circle' English communities are resistant to the use of *Ms* in self naming but emerging evidence shows adoption of the form for unknown women. The Missing of the young Hong Kong women for self-naming points to the role that courtesy title choice is playing in the performances of the contemporary 'dolly' in that locale.

In the next section we turn our attention to the issue of how the women participants have come into contact with feminist language change; we also look at what – or who – acts or has acted as agents for initiating contact with and possibly the spread of this feminist language awareness.

THE SPREAD OF *MS* IN AND ACROSS ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES – CONTACTS AND INITIATING AGENCIES OF CHANGE

Here we investigate how participants came to be users of *Ms* through examining locales and contexts of contact. The choice of set locales and contexts of contact with gender-inclusive language has emerged from previous work investigating feminist language change and its spread throughout communities (Pauwels and Winter 2004a; 2004b; 2005; Winter and Pauwels 2006a; 2006b). In addition they are based on known agents and agencies in the spread of language reform and changes (i.e. education, media, policies). Table 7 presents participants’ identification of the ‘contact’ point for awareness of feminist language planning.

Context & locales of contact	Inner Circle (%)	Outer Circle (%)	Expanding Circle (%)
Through teachers at school and/or at university who talked about it.	36.4	54.1	46.3
Through personal involvement and interest in gender issues.	31.6	20.8	31.7
Through friends and colleagues who use gender-inclusive language or comment about sexist language.	17.3	12.5	9.7
Through comments and reports in the media.	9.4	8.3	4.8
Through contact with people from other English speaking countries who use gender-inclusive language.	1.8	4.1	4.8
Through information about discrimination and gender equity policies in the work place.	3.4	0.0	2.4

Table 7 Context and locales of contact with gender-inclusive language reforms across English language communities

Table 7 shows that the main points of contact with gender-inclusive language reform are similar across the three different types of English language communities. This similarity lies in an almost identical hierarchy of relevant locales and contexts of contact. It is within the educational context that most of our participants came, or come, into contact with gender-inclusive language and also inspires them to change their language use. The

role of Educators as initiating agents of change is particularly powerful among participants from ‘outer circle’ English communities (54%) whose main contact with gender-inclusive language issues occurs through teachers (Winter and Pauwels, 2006b). This is also the case for participants from the ‘expanding circle’ English communities. Extracts 2 and 3, drawn from interviews held with Educators from ‘outer circle’ Hong Kong and Singapore illustrate the role accorded to teachers of English either as a second language (‘outer circle’) or as a foreign language (‘expanding circle’) in raising awareness and functioning as agents of transformation and change:

Extract 2

Arabella: I think most people
Audrey: Mm
Arabella: who have been educated overseas
Audrey: oh right [yes]
Arabella: [who have] picked up the . Um way of doing this

Extract 3

Hanna: Definitely the U S
Audrey: Ok
Hanna: Um I had no view
Audrey: Mm
Hanna: Of consciousness when I was here
Audrey: Mm
Hanna: Nobody
Audrey: Mm
Hanna: Ever drew
Audrey: Mm
Hanna: My attention
Audrey: Mm
Hanna: To this problem
Audrey: Mm mm

In Extract 2 Arabella, a Hong Kong academic, explains that evidence of awareness about, or practices that conform with, feminist language planning reforms are *picked up* and become a *way of doing this* by those colleagues *who have been educated overseas*. In Extract 3 Hanna, a Singaporean university lecturer, constructs a personal narrative about her lack of awareness prior to her international postgraduate research in the US: *I had no view and nobody ever drew my attention to this problem* (of linguistic discrimination).

For participants from ‘inner circle’ and ‘expanding circle’ communities, *personal involvement or interest in gender issues* also features prominently as a point of contact and source of inspiration for gender-inclusive language use. With many feminisms within ‘inner circle’ English communities highlighting the powerful role of language (i.e. English) in the maintenance of, as well as liberation from, gender-based discrimination it is not surprising that participants from such communities are sensitised to the linguistic aspects of gender issues. For participants from ‘expanding circle’ communities, the link between personal involvement, or interest, in gender issues and linguistic changes in *English* is possibly less straightforward. If we assume that the personal involvement in gender issues occurs for these participants in their own cultural, social and linguistic contexts which vary (significantly), from those of ‘inner circle’ participants then the former need to ‘translate’ their social and linguistic actions to another linguistic system, i.e. English. This is especially complex in relation to naming practices as the linguistic actions proposed for other languages are often quite different from English (e.g. Pauwels 1998).

The *role of friends and colleagues* in the process of gender-inclusive language change ranks third in the three communities although its impact varies across the communities ranging from approximately 17% in the ‘inner circle’ to less than 10% in the ‘expanding circle’. The fact that gender-inclusive language issues have been debated in public arenas for close to thirty years in ‘inner circle’ communities has undoubtedly had an impact on the number of people not only aware of the issues, but also using gender-inclusive language, or conversely appropriating the media discourses of ‘pc’ – political correctness – and resisting the use of naming practices. Indeed, considering the contexts of self-interest in gender issues with friendship networks in ‘inner circle’ locales account for nearly half of participants’ initiating contacts with the issue (48.9%). Such public exposure of linguistic discrimination issues may not have occurred (yet) in other communities or alternatively may reflect the lack of knowledge of, or the lack of need to embrace, English equivalents of gender-inclusive strategies and features. The former is most likely to apply to many ‘outer circle’ communities and ‘expanding circle’ communities outside of Europe whereas the latter is specifically a feature of ‘expanding circle’ communities. These sug-

gestions may also apply to two other options – *media comments* and *gender equity policies in the workplace*. Furthermore, the relatively low level of influence that the (mainstream) media exert on the participants' gender-inclusive language use, in this case naming practices, has been documented for a variety of speech communities and languages. Research (e.g. Pauwels 1998; Winter and Pauwels 2006a) has shown that the majority of mainstream media is very slow to embrace gender-inclusive language use and in fact, often acts as an agent opposing change. The low rate of influence exerted by *formal equity policies* in the workplace across the three communities also warrants some unwrapping: in the case of 'inner circle' communities formal equity policies including gender-inclusive language guidelines are a feature of many large workplaces. That they seem to exert relatively little direct influence on the participants' gender-inclusive language use may be due to a variety of factors: for example, participants are reluctant to modify their linguistic behaviour mainly on the basis of policies, or the fact that such policies may be associated with a 'policing' factor may limit their acceptability. Of course there may be more positive reasons for its low rate of influence: i.e. participants have a well-developed understanding of gender-inclusive language use and do not 'rely' upon gender equity policies to shape their linguistic behaviour.

For participants from 'outer circle' English communities we have some evidence that formal equity policies that include language guidelines are generally absent from their work places, explaining the zero result reported in Table 7.

Whilst participants from some European 'expanding circle' communities indicate the existence of formal gender equity policies in the workplace, these policies seldom have a linguistic component, let alone one dealing with English. Other 'expanding circle' participants come from communities more akin to the outer circle communities in Asia and Africa in which gender equity policies are not yet a formalised feature of many work places.

The inclusion of *Contact with speakers from other English-speaking countries* aimed to investigate to what extent the global spread of English and the diversification of the English language communities played a role in the spread and adoption of gender-inclusive language. Overall its influence is low to very low. Although the question did not make explicit the type of English speaker (e.g. first, second, foreign language) exerting influence, the findings show that for those belonging to the 'inner circle' their contact with speakers from other 'inner circle' communities or from other communities does not affect their linguistic behaviour. For speakers belonging to the other two types of communities there is some evidence that contact with other English speakers has some influence. We probed the direction of influence in interviews, especially with 'outer circle' participants (see

Extract 4), finding that contact with ‘inner circle’ speakers of English was the prevalent pattern. This contact mainly occurred outside the ‘outer circle’ locale, i.e. ‘outer circle’ speakers spending time (usually for study purposes) in ‘inner circle’ communities especially North America and Australia.

In Extract 4, Visala, a university Educator in Singapore who works with pre and post-qualification teachers, refers to secondary level teachers and the necessary *going abroad* requirement for contact with, and raising awareness about, gender representation and discrimination in English naming practices.

Extract 4

- Visala: ... and I think it all depends on the teacher
Audrey: Yeah
Visala: How the teacher has been socialised you you’re gonna have teachers who’ve been who’re educated abroad
Audrey: Mm
Visala: And I think they’d be more abroad.. and that .. critical awareness will come via those teachers

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The documentation of the spread of feminist language planning, in this case the courtesy title for women – *Ms* – linked to the globalising of English reveals diffusion and complexity. The diffusion of the courtesy title is evident among women from ‘inner’, ‘outer’ and ‘expanding’ circle locales. Knowledge of the form, and its primary promoted meaning – naming for women whose title preference is unknown – is widespread in situations where English plays a dominant, secondary or limited role in speaker identities and realities. Perhaps not unexpectedly the diffusion of *Ms* reflects an initiating trajectory from the ‘inner’ circle locales. However, the outward movement predicted by the Kachru model – ‘inner’ to ‘outer’ to ‘expanding’ – is not evidenced in terms of the uptake and use of *Ms*. Use practices for self naming is in greater evidence in ‘expanding’ (largely European sites) locales than in ‘outer circle’ contexts. Further, the concomitant naming practices with *Ms* for self and other women reflect similar patterns of use in ‘inner circle’ and ‘expanding circle’ located women. These similarities are contrasted with ‘outer circle’

contexts, which revealed far greater use for naming unknown women with *Ms* than self identifiers. These two patterns can be summarised as:

1. self use of *Ms* co-occurs with obligatory use for unknown women; and
2. *Ms* is the appropriate term for naming women whose title preference is unknown, but it is not the self naming preference.

Reconsidering the two interpretations of *Ms* distributions identified in the introduction to the paper ‘transitional’ and ‘amplification’, we find that they mirror, to some extent, the two distribution patterns found in the various English locales. *Ms* usage in ‘outer circle’ contexts, with preferred dominance for naming other women, links with the ‘amplification’ interpretation for *Ms*. The spread of *Ms* in these contexts is providing a third option largely reserved as a pragmatic naming device for unknown women. Unlike the British results (Graddol and Swann 1989), *Ms* in these contexts is definitely not replacing *Miss*. Our findings from the ‘inner’ and ‘expanding circle’ contexts reinforce the ‘transitional’ interpretations of the spread of *Ms*.

Left undescribed by the ‘circle’ diffusion model of Englishes, is the role of self awareness about the issue more broadly. It would seem that while Education and Educators, as critical transformers of knowledge, dominate all three contexts as the initiating agents, the degree of that dominance is differentially relevant across the locales. In ‘inner circle’ contexts self interest, friends and involvement in gender equity are crucial initiating sites, accounting for the greatest influence if considered together. To some extent these points of contact are also critical in ‘expanding’ contexts but are complicated by the language of social change typically not being English. Thus the performativity of identity through the adoption of *Ms* can be seen as reflexes of these personalised spaces and commitments. In contrast, the role of Education is far and away the primary contact point for women of ‘outer circle’ communities. The program of planned social language change is, largely, constrained by the formal contexts associated with education and the ‘international’ meanings of professional naming. Personal responses to issues of gender equity realised through linguistic practices are not taken up by the young women of these sites.

In this new intersection of considering language change, via a case study of planned social language change, and the globalisation of English we establish that the social mechanisms of identity and discursive alignments are being highlighted in the (non) adoption and spread of the *Ms* courtesy title. These notions of personal commitment and gender equity activism are operationalised in ‘expanding circle’ locales despite English

not being the first language of awareness about linguistic discrimination. Conversely, English appears to be the vehicle for diffusion of feminist language planning but is not, on the whole, linked to personal identities and performativities in the ‘outer circle’ arena. The performance of personal identities are not conducted through English but in a situation of *crossing* (Rampton 1995), young women stylise their naming identity through appropriation of English *Miss*. Thus the introduction and adoption of *Ms* reported on here presents a problematisation of the relationship between Englishes and their role in prompting gender fair language practices.

ENDNOTES

- 1 TEaGIRL [‘Transcultural Englishes and Gender Inclusive Reform of Language’] (www.teagirl.arts.uwa.edu.au) is a research project funded by the Australian Research Council [DPO344041].
- 2 Residences: Participants’ birthplace and the locale where they completed secondary education and their place of residence at the time of completing the survey.
- 3 Transcription Conventions

Name	Participants
?	questioning intonation
/	rising intonation
.	pause
..	untimed pause
[]	overlapping / simultaneous talk

REFERENCES

- Aoyama, T. 2005. ‘Transgendering *shōjo shōsetu*: Girls’ inter text- sex-uality’. In *Genders, transgressors and sexualities in Japan*, edited by McLelland, M; Dasgupta, R. London: Routledge.
- Graddol, D. 1997. *The future of English?* London: British Council.
- Graddol, D.; Swann, J. 1989. *Gender voices*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hellinger, M.; Bussmann, H. Eds. 2001. *Gender across languages: International perspectives of language variation and change. Volume 1*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Holmes, J. 2001. ‘A corpus-based view of gender in New Zealand English’. In *Gender across languages: International perspectives of language variation and change. Volume 1*, edited by Hellinger, M.; Bussman, H. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Kachru, B. 1997. ‘World Englishes and English-using communities’. *Annual review of applied linguistics* 17: 66–87.

- Pauwels, A. 1987. 'Language in transition: A study of the title "Ms" in contemporary Australian society'. In *Women and language in Australian and New Zealand society*, edited by Pauwels, A. Sydney: Australian Professional Publications.
- Pauwels, A. 1996. 'Feminist language planning and titles for women. Some crosslinguistic perspectives'. In *Contrastive sociolinguistics*, edited by Ammon, U.; Hellinger, M. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Pauwels, A. 1998. *Women changing language*. London: Longman.
- Pauwels, A. 2001. 'Spreading the feminist word? A sociolinguistic study of feminist language change in Australian English: The case of the new courtesy title "Ms"'. In *Gender across languages: International perspectives of language variation and change. Volume 1*, edited by Hellinger, M.; Bussman, H. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Pauwels, A. 2003. 'Linguistic sexism and feminist activism'. In *The handbook of language and gender*, edited by Holmes, J.; Meyerhoff, M. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Pauwels, A.; Winter, J. 2004. 'Gender-inclusive language reform in educational writing in Singapore and the Philippines: A corpus-based study'. *Journal of Asian Englishes* 7 (1): 4–21.
- Pauwels, A.; Winter, J. 2004. 'Generic pronouns and gender-inclusive language reform in the English of Singapore and the Philippines'. *Australian review of applied linguistics* 27 (2): 50–62.
- Pauwels, A.; Winter, J. 2005. 'Feminist linguistic activism in the 21st century: A view across the English-speaking world'. In *Contexts: Historical, social, linguistic studies in celebration of Toril Swan*, edited by McCafferty, K.; Bull, T.; Killie, K. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Pennycook, A. 1994. *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. London: Longman.
- Philipson, R. 1992. *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Romaine, S. 2001. 'A corpus-based view of gender in British and American English'. In *Gender across languages: International perspectives of language variation and change. Volume 1*, edited by Hellinger, M.; Bussman, H. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Rampton, B. 1995. *Crossing: Language and ethnicity among adolescents*. London: Longman.
- Spolsky, B. 2004. *Language policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Winter, J.; Pauwels, A. 2006. 'Men staying at home looking after their children: Masculinities and gender inclusive language reform'. *International journal of applied linguistics* 16 (1): 16–36.
- Winter, J.; Pauwels, A. 2006/in press. '"Trajectories of Agency" and discursive identities in education: A critical site in feminist language planning'. *Current issues in language planning* 7 (2).

Cite this article as: Winter, Joanne; Pauwels, Anne. 2007. 'Missing me and Msing the other: Courtesy titles for women in Englishes'. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 30 (1): pp. 8.1–8.17. DOI: 10.2104/ara10708.