

‘Makes me feel more Aussie’:

Ethnic identity and vocative *mate* in Australia

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Unless otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents the original work  
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## **Abstract**

A ‘quintessentially Australian’ feature of English (Rendle-Short, 2009: 245), vocative *mate* has commonly been said to carry a special connection with Australian identity and culture (e.g. Wierzbicka, 1997). However, precisely how this can be measured within a population is yet to be established. This paper analyses the reported use of the address term *mate* by Australians of a Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) and its relation to self-perceived ethnic identity. Data was collected from 101 participants of varying ethnic backgrounds using a written questionnaire observing self-reported use of *mate* and attitudes towards its use. Results demonstrate that, overall, usage patterns for NESB Australians are similar to those found for Australians of an English speaking background (Rendle-Short, 2009), with significant variation in use across gender groups. Though they reported using the term less overall, females using *mate* claimed to do so with a greater range of addressees than male respondents, reporting a use pertaining less to the ‘traditional’ masculine and Anglo-Celtic associations of *mate* (Rendle-Short, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985) and suggesting a more innovative use of the vocative. This would follow the widely accepted notion that young females are the most innovative within a community in situations of ongoing language change (Labov, 1990; Trudgill, 1972).

The influence of identity in language use is widely accepted in sociolinguistic work and it has been proposed that ‘individuals whose ethnic identity is important to them will show more ethnic marking in their language than those who have



chosen to assimilate within the dominant group' (Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001: 226). This claim has however been made without a means for measuring ethnic identity. Such has been developed by Hoffman and Walker (2010) with an 'Ethnic Orientation (EO) Survey'. As applied in the present study, the survey featured questions relating to ethnicity and community language use. Based on answers to 33 questions, respondents were assigned an overall EO score along a continuum and sorted into 'low', 'mid' and 'high' EO groups, with those scoring highly said to identify strongly with their ethnic heritage, those scoring lower identifying with it less, and so, presumably relating more to an Australian identity.

EO was found to correlate with reported use of vocative *mate*, and actually offered a better account than groupings based on time spent in Australia. Respondents in the high EO group claimed to use the vocative less often than those in the low EO group, where the term was also used across a broader range of addressees, including females and other members of the same ethnic group. This would suggest a more widespread and innovative use for some participants, stepping away from the term's traditional sense of masculine and Anglo-Celtic exclusivity.

Results indicate that for the NESB Australians studied here perceived use of vocative *mate* is associated with affiliation to Australian society, many seeing it as a tool of assimilation. As one participant wrote: '[*mate*] gives a sense of an Australian identity despite my skin colour' (female, 24, second generation, low EO).

## **1 Introduction**

Australia is a highly multicultural country, home to a number of minority ethnic groups and communities where languages other than English are spoken. Today, newcomers and first generation Australians of a non-English speaking background (NESB) account for approximately 30% (or almost one third) of the nation's population. Results from the 1991 Census recorded that 14.8% of Australia's total population used a language other than English in the home domain (Clyne, 1997), a figure that has since risen to over 19% in the 2011 Census (Travis and Houle, 2012). The percentage of NESB Australians is especially high in the country's larger cities and urban areas. This study observes data collected in the Canberra, Melbourne and Perth metro areas, where for each the percentage of inhabitants speaking another language at home is higher than the nation's overall percentage. Of the three cities, Melbourne has the highest proportion of NESB inhabitants; almost 35% of people living in the metro area reporting to make use of a community language (ABS, 2011, data generated 24 Oct 2012).

Despite the large number of non-native speakers of Australian English in the country, studies of language use with migrant communities as a topic of interest are limited; as Horvath (1991: 305) has stated: 'too often only native speakers of the language are included in the study, and this may well overlook important sources of change within the speech community'. Indeed, the study of language use by NESB Australians is relevant in acquiring a general view of language use in Australia. In the case of Australianisms and colloquialisms associated with the

Australian culture, such as vocative *mate*, this is especially important, as attitudes and usage patterns of NESB Australians could serve to test previous claims of the address term's connection to the Australian identity and culture and notions of 'being Australian' (Moore, 2010; Rendle-Short, 2009, 2010; Wierzbicka, 1997). The research presented in this paper examines the use of vocative *mate* by Australians of a non-English speaking background (be they first or second generation immigrants, or new arrivals), the first study to do so with use of quantitative analysis. Results can be compared to previous study observing self-reported use by participants of an English-speaking background (Rendle-Short, 2009). A sample of newcomer and first and second generation participants is ideal in measuring the language use of NESB Australians, as 'almost all speakers of community languages are themselves immigrants or second generation Australians, that is, the children of immigrants' (Clyne, 1997: 193).

This study is relevant in the field of linguistics not only for its contribution to understanding of address term and colloquialism use by ethnic populations in Australia, but also for its use of Ethnic Orientation (EO) as a means of measuring the degree to which an individual relates to his or her ethnic community and background. This tool is yet to be operationalized in the Australian context. Use of EO as a variable for differential language use within ethnic communities is beneficial as it accounts for not only time spent in Australia (as with most groupings commonly used) but also for greater levels of integration within the ethnic community (social networks) and differing degrees of desire to assimilate

within the majority culture. As results of this study will show, participant Ethnic Orientation correlated most strongly with ‘age moved to Australia’ and provided a better account of vocative *mate* use within Australia’s NESB population than any other variable pertaining to ethnicity of the informant.

The paper is laid out as follows: an overview of previous study relating to ethnic identity and language and the use of colloquialisms and vocative *mate* is given in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology used in the study, including a detailed explanation of the materials used and the Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire, as well as a breakdown of the 101 participants in the sample across ethnicity, gender and generation groupings. Presentation of results and discussion of findings can be seen in Chapter 4 while concluding remarks are presented in Chapter 5.

## **2 Background**

There are two main topics of interest in this study: (1) language use and identity and (2) use of vocative *mate* by NESB Australians. The following chapter discusses these topics, observing findings from previous studies for each. A discussion of the widely-accepted connection between language use and identity, with a focus on ethnicity can be seen in section 2.1, while an outline of previous work observing use of vocative *mate* and other colloquial features of Australians English is given in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

### **2.1 Language use and identity**

The link between language use and identity has frequently been noted, with one of the major functions of language often understood to be a means of identifying oneself and others (Clyne, 1991). Trudgill (1995: 2) claims that ‘whenever we speak we cannot avoid giving our listeners clues about our origins and the sort of person we are’. Choice of language or language variety presents us in a particular way and so, ‘language choice, and language itself, are part of identity construction’ (Wodak, 2011: 216).

Fishman (1998: 330) states that ‘if people group themselves into differently speaking collectives... then their languages become both symbolic of as well as a basis for that grouping’. This connection between language use and in-group solidarity is of particular interest in the immigrant context, where the social construct of ethnicity can play an important role in language use, being ‘in large part established and maintained by language’ (Gumperz & Gumperz-Cook, 1982:

7). For ethnic and immigrant community groups, such symbolic language use may be the use of a particular community language, however, it has been claimed that people can also express their ethnicity while using the host or majority language through use of an ethnolect. Ethnolects can be defined as ‘varieties of languages that mark speakers as members of ethnic groups who originally used another language or distinctive variety’ (Clyne, 2000: 86). Use of an ethnolect allows a speaker to express a particular linguistic identity, or demonstrate solidarity within a particular ethnic group (Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001). Muysken (2010: 9) describes ethnolect use as a conscious choice of the speaker, claiming that in communities where speakers are proficient in the standard variety, use of an ethnolect is ‘not a matter of not being able to [sound native], but rather of not wanting to’. This idea of ethnolect use as a marked choice is important, as ethnolect use is not necessarily a result of incomplete acquisition of a host language, in fact, a person need not speak the community language in order to make use of an ethnolect (Hoffman & Walker, 2010).

Ethnolectal language use has been a topic of much sociolinguistic research. One of the most celebrated studies of variation across ethnic groups in Australia would be Horvath’s (1985) study of varieties of Australian English, where differences were noted across Anglo, Greek and Italian ethnic groups in Sydney. Ethnicity was found to be one of the most important social factors affecting variation in English across speakers in the city. This work indicated that ethnicity plays an important role in language change, with Greek and Italian informants leading a change

towards the general Australian English variety and away from the broad and cultivated ends of the sociolect continuum. Variation between younger age groups within the ethnic groups was also noted (Horvath, 1991); Greek teenagers had an accent more similar to that of younger Anglo-Celtic participants (though not completely aligned), most likely due to a greater level of assimilation into the majority culture than their parents. Language of Italian teenagers was also more similar to that of Anglo-Celtic youth than that of Italian adults. These findings would suggest that variables related to time spent in Australia and generation would bear an influence on language use within the ethnic community.

The use of ethnolects in Australia has also been reported by Rieschild (2007) for Arabic-speaking communities and Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree (2001) for members of German and Greek ethnic communities, again describing disparity between the ethnicities and across generations. Clyne, Eisikovits and Tollfree (2001) claimed that for many second and third generation NESB Australians there was variation in use of a community ethnolect based on who they were speaking to. They reported that these speakers used a more general Australian accent when speaking to Anglo-Australians and strangers while a more ethnolectal register was used with (especially older) family members and other members of the same ethnic group. This was interpreted as evidence of their dual identity and biculturalism, with ethnolect use as a conscious choice of the speaker.

However it is often the case that in studies observing language variation in ethnic groups ethnicity is treated as a fixed variable within the community, assuming that

all members of a particular ethnic group or generation will have the same *degree* of ethnic identity (Hoffman & Walker, 2010). This is problematic as it would mean that homogeneity in ethnic identification across groups is merely being assumed without being empirically tested. The salience of ethnic identity across a given group is indeed not necessarily as extensive as many studies would suggest, and differing degrees of ethnic identity and group-association have in fact been noted in the literature (for example, Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001; LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Given the widely held connection between a person's desire for inclusion and solidarity with a particular group and language use, this varying degree to which a person identifies with the language and culture of a particular community is especially important if we are to observe any other situation where ethnicity is thought to be a factor in language variation. Clyne, Eisikovits and Tollfree (2001: 226) have stated that 'individuals whose ethnic identity is important to them will show more ethnic marking in their language than those who have chosen to assimilate within the dominant group'. For example, in Australia it would be expected that individuals with strong ethnic identities would have greater ethnolect use than those with higher levels of assimilation into the Anglo-Australian culture, where language use would be more aligned with that of the Anglo-Australian population (Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001). Yet even still, such claims have in general been made without any operationalization of degree of ethnic identity. So, the question arises, how can we measure how strongly a particular person relates to the culture and language of a given community?



One early study that took some steps towards developing such a measure is Giles and Johnson (1987), who set out to measure self-perceived degree of ethnic identity for male bilingual Welsh and English speakers in Wales. The study was based on 34 participants aged 17 years old who attended a bilingual school in Dyfed. Participants were interviewed about their attitudes towards the Welsh culture and language. Topics included the perceived likelihood of using Welsh over English in a number of social situations and whether participants thought it was important that future generations continued to learn Welsh. A number of questions also observed political attitudes of participants towards Wales as a part of Britain. Depending on the answers given to these questions, the strength of ethnic identity of these participants was measured. Variation was indeed found in ethnic identification of the participants, some were found to show a stronger degree of solidarity with the ethnic group than others, despite all having referred to themselves as Welsh over English or British to begin with. Giles and Johnson (1987) claimed that this variation was related to individual perceptions of the 'prestige' and importance of the Welsh language, culture and identity. However, they did not then compare these different degrees of ethnic orientation onto patterns of language use.

A study that has empirically measured the effect of ethnic identity on language use is that of Hoffman and Walker (2010), who developed a replicable test for ethnic identity based on an 'Ethnic Orientation' questionnaire which they administered to 60 participants from Chinese and Italian communities in Toronto. The

questionnaire was comprised of a number of questions relating to language use and solidarity within a particular ethnic group, of which answers were scored and averaged, giving a comparable 'Ethnic Orientation' (EO) score for each participant. Participants in the study were grouped as being either 'first generation' (aged 40-80 years and having spent at least 20 years in the city) or 'second/third generation' (aged 17-32 years and having been born or moved to the country under the age of 5). In results from the study looking at (æ)-retraction and (ɜ)-shifting by the two ethnic groups, participant EO was found to have a significant effect on language use. In particular, in the Italian community, participants scoring a high EO were more likely to use the non-standard vowel variants than those scoring lower. On the other hand, in the Chinese community, participants scoring a high EO were less likely to use the non-standard variants than those scoring a low EO (Hoffman & Walker, 2010). High and low EO grouping was also seen to correlate with first and second/third generation groupings, those from the first generation group generally expressing a stronger affiliation with their ethnic background than other participants. Results from Hoffman and Walker's (2010) study provide empirical support for the previously mentioned claims of Clyne, Eisikovits and Tollfree (2001) in demonstrating that individuals with a higher self-perceived degree of ethnic identity (here EO) will be more likely to make use of community ethnolects than those with a lower EO score.

While a large number of studies have observed ethnicity as a factor for linguistic variation in Australia, degree of ethnic identity or EO is yet to have been explored

in the Australian context. Now we move onto a discussion of previous studies observing vocative *mate* and other colloquial features of Australian English, focusing on the NESB context where possible.

## **2.2 Vocative *mate* in Australia**

Widely recognised as an iconic feature of Australian English, vocative *mate* has been described by some as a label for the Australian identity and culture. While use of the term is not exclusive to nor a product of Australian-English (Butler, 2001), Rendle-Short (2009: 245) states it is ‘quintessentially Australian’ and of particular importance to the Australian culture. Moore (2010: 113) claims that *mate* carries a ‘special resonance in Australia’ and Wierzbicka (1997: 101) proposes that ‘if one word had to be nominated as a key word in traditional Australian culture, few would hesitate to nominate the word *mate*... it is key to the Australian spirit, Australian national character’.

In her explanation of the word’s significance and meaning, Wierzbicka (1997: 107) states that *mate* functions as a means of establishing a notion of shared experience and equality between people, that is, a way of implying a connection with ‘someone whom I perceive to be “someone like me” but whom I also see through the prism of the collectivist concept “people like me”’. This would indeed help form a concept of the ‘traditional’ notions of a *mate* as someone of perceived equality. *Mate* also has strong associations with males; ‘[a *mate* is] an habitual companion, a fellow-participant in some activity (always a man)’ (Wilkes, 1985: 267). A connection to Anglo-Australian culture has also been made (Wierzbicka,

1997). This suggests that *mate* can be thought of as traditionally associated with male Anglo-Australians who are of similar or same social standing, and support for this has been found in reported use of the term (see below). Vocative *mate* has also been referred to as associated with the working class (Turner, 1972; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985, 1993).

It is important to distinguish between the use of *mate* as a term of address and use of *mate* as a term of reference to a friend, such as in ‘she’s my best mate’ (Rendle-Short, 2010: 1201). While the referential use of the word would not likely be used in reference to someone unknown, as a term of address, *mate* is reported to be used in interaction amongst friends and strangers alike, and in both formal and informal situations (Rendle-Short, 2009, 2010). Wierzbicka (1997: 112) also mentions this phenomenon; ‘*mate* as a form of address is not the same thing as *mate* used in reference or predication, and non-mates are more likely to be addressed in this way’. Vocative *mate* is also rather versatile in its use, able to be used as a gesture of friendship and equality as well as in hostile situations (Rendle-Short, 2009, 2010; Wilkes, 1993).

Given that vocative *mate* would most likely be used in discourse between two or more people, tokens of the term in published corpora are not abundant. Using the Australian National Corpus (AusNC) website, a search for tokens of vocative *mate* in the Monash Corpus of Spoken Australian English (60 hours of adolescent speech, in the form of sociolinguistic interviews and recorded discourse) only found 4 tokens of use. No tokens could be found in the Griffith Corpus of Spoken

Australian English (only 4 hours of recorded speech) and only 2 tokens of use could be found in the Braided Channels Corpus (70 hours of data collected as interviews and spoken texts, only female speakers). A frequent use of *mate* could only be seen in the Australian Radio Talkback Corpus, where 75 tokens were found out of 200,000 words. In this corpus the number of tokens is even for male and female speakers. However the lack of demographic information beyond gender means that factors influencing use of *mate* could not be easily investigated. This along with the generally small number of tokens in the corpora would explain why the use of actual *mate* use in spontaneous discourse is yet to have been quantitatively measured.

Further, the only quantitative analysis I am aware of that considers the use of vocative *mate* is that based on a survey on reported use by Rendle-Short (2009). This study featured data from 698 Australians, using a written questionnaire observing the self-proclaimed use of *mate* by participants in everyday interaction. Unfortunately Rendle-Short (2009) does not specify the ethnic background of participants in the study, just stating that they ‘spoke Australian English’ (Rendle-Short, 2009: 251). However, all were living in Canberra at the time of data collection, where data from the most recent Census has found that close to 80% of the population reported being born in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (ABS, 2011, data generated 24 Oct 2012). I will therefore consider Rendle-Short’s sample to consist of Australians from a majority English speaking

background, or of the “mainstream” Australian society, comparable with the NESB sample featured in the current study.

In an effort to test the purported masculine associations of the term (Wilkes, 1985), the study focused primarily on gender as a factor of use across differing age groups. While results showed a significantly higher reported use of vocative *mate* by male participants overall, reported use of the term by females was shown to rise with each younger age group. Where only close to a third of female participants aged over 50 (37/101) claimed to use the vocative, a great majority of female participants aged 18-29 reported using the term (101/133), most claiming to do so when addressing other females. Reported use of *mate* in addressing females was also generally higher for males in the two younger age groups (Rendle-Short, 2009). From this it was proposed that vocative *mate* is undergoing a shift from the traditional masculine exclusivity of its use and is becoming a term more accessible to females, overtime ‘losing its masculine flavour’ (Rendle-Short, 2009: 257).

The finding that younger females had a more widespread and innovative use of the vocative (in the sense of a higher claimed use when addressing females than was claimed by male participants), would follow the widely accepted claim that females in younger age groups are often the most innovative within a community in cases of ongoing language change (Labov, 1990; Trudgill, 1972). In addition to these informants, 72 participants from a non-Australian English speaking background were also surveyed. Results from these participants were however not included in the study’s final analysis. Indeed, as far as I am aware there is of yet

no study reporting on the use of *mate* in Australia's NESB population. In the light of Rendle-Short's (2009) findings of ongoing change in who uses *mate* and the noted role of immigrant communities in language change (Horvath, 1991), the use of *mate* by NESB Australians is an important area of investigation for this topic.

While study of vocative *mate* is limited, a number of studies have observed the use of and attitudes towards other colloquial features of Australian English by NESB Australians. These studies have found that ethnicity and time spent in Australia significantly influence the use of such terms, as presented in the following section.

### **2.3 Colloquialisms, address terms and other features of Australian English in the NESB context**

There has been some work looking at the use and understanding of various other common 'Australianisms' and address terms by NESB Australians. On the topic of use of nicknames and address terms by such populations, Poynton (1989: 67) states that many Australians with a non-Anglo-Celtic background would likely be 'excluded from the set of possible address practices'. In the context of vocative *mate* this would indeed suggest that a much lower level of use can be expected from NESB Australians. This has been found to be the case for use of hypocoristics (for example, *arvo*) in Australia-English, where 'the tendency to accept their use interacts with ethnic background', suggesting that social and ethnic identity indeed play a role for speakers (Kidd, Kemp & Quinn, 2011: 367).

For Wierzbicka (1986: 361), Australian-English is characteristic in its ‘love for informality and dislike for long words’. This sense of informality is indeed relevant to previous study looking at use of address terms by NESB Australians. In Choi’s (1997) study of address terms used by Korean students living in Australia, a number of participants stated that they preferred use of titles over first names with strangers, most likely due to a lack of formality; ‘older students felt uncomfortable when a younger or non-familiar Australian used their first name’ to address them. (Choi, 1997: 271).

Given *mate*’s association with Australian culture (Moore, 2010; Rendle-Short 2009, 2010; Wierzbicka, 1997), it can be expected that factors such as time spent in Australia would be of great importance in examining the use of vocative *mate*. Regarding the use of Australianisms by newcomers, Curtain (2001) observed the acquisition and understanding of common colloquialisms (both traditional and modern, such as *hard yakka* and *couch potato*) by 60 Malaysian immigrants studying in Australia, comparing results with native Australian-English speakers. As would be expected, the native speakers showed a significantly greater understanding of the expressions and terms than those of a Malaysian background. Participants from Malaysia were divided into two groups based on their time in Australia (0-2 years and 2-5 years) and it was found that participants in the 2-5 year group had a more developed understanding and use of the terms than those in the 0-2 year group, suggesting a link between time spent in Australia and use of the colloquialisms for newcomers (Curtain, 2001). These results would suggest



that adoption of such terms and Australianisms can occur relatively quickly in immigrant and ethnic populations.

The influence of differing ethnicities has also been noted in the use and understanding of ‘Australianisms’ by NESB Australians. Oliver, McKay and Rochecoste (2010) examined the use of common Australian terms (such as *gum boots* for ‘wellington boots’ and *icy pole* for ‘popsicle’) by 69 primary school students from a non-English speaking background in Perth. The study showed that differences in the country of background were found to correlate with the understanding and use of the terms. At the time of the study participants were aged approximately 8-13 years and had at least one parent from a non-English speaking background. All were proficient in English, that is, were bilingual in English and another language or spoke English as their first language. Results showed a general pattern of words known and used by the children when grouped as being from Asian or European backgrounds, with a difference in terms widely understood for each of the two general groups. This was found to be attributable to cultural differences, for example *iceberg lettuce* was commonly misnamed as ‘cabbage’ by the Asian background group and *polony* as ‘salami’ by those from European backgrounds (Oliver, McKay & Rochecoste, 2010). Such results could be seen to relate to the differing varieties of English previously discussed as ethnolects, since the terms understood and used by the students was found to be representative of their varying ethnic backgrounds.

Thus it has been found that use of slang and colloquial features of Australian English by NESB Australians is related to time spent in Australia; as migrants spend more time in Australia they use more colloquial expressions, but can the same claim be made for use of vocative *mate*? This connection would also suggest that use of these features of Australian English should not just be considered a sign of better command in English, but of further integration into Australian society. Through the application of an operational definition of ethnic orientation, this notion can be empirically tested.

## **2.4 Hypotheses**

The widely accepted connection between the use of vocative *mate* and Australian identity (Wilkes, 1985, 1993; Wierzbicka, 1997; Rendle-Short, 2009, 2010; Moore, 2010), would suggest that its use is representative of an individual's perceived association or interest in associating with Australian culture and identity. If this is so, we would expect to see a higher use of the vocative by people relating more strongly to an Australian identity. Through the application of an ethnic orientation questionnaire modelled on that of Hoffman and Walker (2010), it was hypothesised that, in comparison with participants with a low EO as measured here, participants scoring a high EO (and thus claiming to identify strongly with their ethnic background and culture) would (1) claim to use vocative *mate* less frequently and (2) would report a more limited use overall in terms of the range of addressees with whom they use it. Given differences in language use found across generation groups (Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001; Horvath,

1985, 1991), generation grouping was hypothesised to influence use of vocative *mate* also, with second generation NESB Australians presumably having a language use more aligned to that of the majority population, as opposed to that of their parents. Vocative *mate* use by second generation and low EO participants was expected to be similar to Rendle-Short's (2009) findings for young English speaking background participants, where use of the vocative was claimed most often. As briefly mentioned in Hoffman and Walker (2010), it was anticipated that there would be some correlation between generation and EO groupings.

Gender was also expected to play an important role in use of *mate*, following Rendle-Short (2009) and given the term's traditionally masculine associations (Wilkes, 1985); it was hypothesised that males would claim to use the term far more often than females. Finally, the ethnicity of participants was expected to account for differing use, following variation found across ethnicities in previous ethnolectal research in Australia (for example, Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001; Rieschild, 2007) as well as in a previous study of the use of Australianisms (Oliver, McKay & Rochecoste, 2010).

### **3 Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

The study is based on 101 individuals living in the Canberra, Melbourne and Perth metro areas at the time of data collection who either were born in a non-English speaking country or were children of parents who were born in a non-English speaking country and had moved to Australia. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 73 years. Since the study aimed to observe the use of vocative *mate* as a feature of Australian English, it was required that all participants could speak and read English at a proficient level.

Respondents were approached by the researcher and asked if they would like to participate in the study. A number of participants were acquaintances of the researcher and from many of these people the ‘snowball’ method was applied, an approach which utilises ‘the social networks of participants in the study to recruit potential new participants’ (Milroy & Gordon, 2003:32). A majority of the younger participants in the sample were university students at the time of research, a large number of those living in Canberra studying at The Australian National University.

In the first instance, participants were grouped based on generation, following previous studies claiming that for members of ethnic communities, time spent in Australia is influential in language use (Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001; Curtain, 2001; Horvath, 1985) and the hypothesis that participants having spent a

longer time in Australia would be more likely to use the vocative, since they would presumably be more integrated into the Australian culture. Participants were broken down into three groups according to generation; a *first generation* group, a *second generation* group and a *newcomer* group. First generation participants had been living in Australia for at least 6 years and all had been over the age of 12 at the time of moving to Australia. second generation participants were born in Australia to first generation parents or had moved to the country under the age of 6, having completed more or less all of their education in Australia. While neither of these groups was completely aligned to a particular age group, very close to all first generation participants (28/34) were over the age of 35 and majority of the second generation group was aged below 30 (38/41). From this, it can be said that the first generation group was the closest to an 'older' age group, while the second generation group would best represent the youngest group of participants. Newcomers had been in Australia for no more than 4 years, with a wide age range of 21-58 years.

In order to observe whether the traditionally masculine associations of vocative *mate* (Wilkes, 1985) are weakening for NESB Australians as in Rendle-Short's (2009) study, participants were also grouped based on gender, with a total of 55 male participants and 46 female participants in the sample. A breakdown of male and female participants in the three generation groups is given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of gender by generation.**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Generation</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Generation</b>	<b>Newcomer</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Male	18	21	16	<b>55</b>
Female	16	20	10	<b>46</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>101</b>

Though the ethnic heritage of participants varied greatly in the sample, the majority of informants came from Iranian, Chinese or European backgrounds. This allowed for most respondents to be grouped based on ethnicity for comparison. Participants in the Iranian ethnicity group spoke Farsi as a community language and had been born in or had parents born in Iran.

The Chinese ethnicity group consisted of respondents claiming to have a Chinese background and countries of birth for participants born out of Australia included Singapore, Malaysia, China and Hong Kong. The ‘European’ ethnicity group was less homogenous than the others, with participants coming from a number of European backgrounds and ethnic groups. Italian was the ethnicity of the largest number of participants in this group, though French, Greek, Polish and Serbian were also common. A breakdown of ethnicities within the sample can be seen in Table 2.

Education level of participants was also noted, in order to observe any social stratification associated with *mate*, as suggested in the literature (see Turner, 1972; Wilkes, 1985, 1993), though this was not a major priority of the study.

**Table 2: Distribution of ethnicity by generation.**

<b>Ethnicity grouping</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Generation</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Generation</b>	<b>Newcomer</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>European</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>
- Austrian	1			1
- Catalan			1	1
- Croatian		1		1
- Dutch			1	1
- French	2		2	4
- Greek		2	1	3
- Italian	4	2	1	7
- Macedonian		1		1
- Polish	2	2		4
- Serbian	1	2		3
<b>Iranian</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>
- Afghani			1	1
- Argentinian		1		1
- Brazilian	1			1
- Chilean		1		1
- Colombian	3			3
- Indian		3	1	4
- Japanese	1			1
- Korean	1			1
- Pakistani		1	1	2
- Sri Lankan		2		2
- Thai	1			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>101</b>

### **3.2 Overview of questionnaires used**

The study used a written questionnaire to examine the reported use of vocative *mate* and measure ethnic orientation (EO) of participants. For this, the questionnaire had two main sections – a ‘use of *mate*’ questionnaire modelled on that used by Rendle-Short (2009) and an ‘Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire’, modelled on that used by Hoffman and Walker (2010). The questionnaire also collected demographic information of respondents and totalled 5 pages in length (see Appendix for a full copy of the questionnaire).

Demographic information collected included details such as gender, age, country of birth, time spent in Australia and highest completed level of education. All participation was kept anonymous and names of participants were not recorded. Upon completion of the questionnaire, each participant was assigned a number for ease of future reference.

#### **3.2.2 Use of *mate* questionnaire**

This section of the questionnaire gathered information about the participants’ reported use of vocative *mate*. Questions greatly resembled those used in Rendle-Short’s (2009) questionnaire. Participants were asked if they used vocative *mate* in addressing others, and if yes, were asked to select from a list of when addressing who and in which situations. Given that this study aimed to observe the relation between use of vocative *mate* and self-perceived degree of ethnicity, possible answers were edited from Rendle-Short’s original list to include options relating to



ethnicity of addressees. Addressee categories presented to participants claiming to use the vocative were as follows:

- 'males of a similar age'
- 'males of any age'
- 'females of a similar age'
- 'females of any age'
- 'male relatives'
- 'female relatives'
- 'members of the same ethnic group'
- 'Anglo-Australians'

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the 'traditional' use of *mate* would pertain to Anglo-Celtic males of the same (social) standing, where a sense of equality and 'sameness' resonates between the speaker and addressee. So, a selection of just males or Anglo-Australians in this question would imply a more traditional perception of the vocative, while claimed use across other categories would suggest a more *innovative* use.

Participants were also asked whether they were ever called *mate* and if yes, again selected who was most likely to do so from the same list of possible answers. The section finished with a number of open-ended questions, asking participants about their attitudes towards the use of the address term and their reasons for its use, allowing for some qualitative data to be collected which I will use below to

highlight some key points in the analysis. For example, participants were asked ‘why do you think people call each other *mate*?’ and ‘do you like being called *mate*? Why/why not?’

The reason that this study aimed to observe self-reported use of *mate* as opposed to *actual* use is related to the corpus data mentioned in Chapter 2. Observing the reported use of *mate* allowed for comparison of results with those of Rendle-Short (2009) in her study of Australians from an English speaking background. This was especially beneficial given that only NESB Australians were interviewed in this study. As noted, the count of vocative *mate* tokens in the corpora observed was very limited in face-to-face (sociolinguistic interview) data and occurred with frequency only in the Australian Radio Talkback Corpus (75 tokens out of 200,000 words), for which demographic information of speakers beyond gender is not available. Also, given that vocative *mate* would most commonly surface in situations of spontaneous, informal conversation between speakers, use of sociolinguistic interview or conversation analysis to observe who used *mate* with which addressees (and also who was called *mate* by who) would have been exhaustive and ultimately impractical since multiple conversations would need to be analysed for *each* participant in the study.

### **3.2.3 Ethnic orientation questionnaire**

The final section of the questionnaire consisted of an ‘Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire’, based on that developed by Hoffman and Walker (2010) and applied in their study of ethnolects in Toronto. Hoffman and Walker (2010) asked

participants questions relating to ethnic identity and language use with family and friends, questions such as ‘do you think of yourself as Italian?’ and ‘do you prefer to speak Italian over English?’ The EO questionnaire was administered as part of a sociolinguistic interview, where participants were verbally asked the questions by an interviewer, their answers then scored on a scale of 1 to 3 based on how strongly the response indicated the ties to the participant’s ethnic background were. These scores were then averaged to give a final score, a higher score implying the participant related more strongly to their ethnic background, and (presumably) less strongly to their Canadian identity.

As sociolinguistic interviews were not conducted as part of this study the EO questionnaire was converted to a written format in which participants were presented with a series of statements and asked to ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ on a 5-point Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). As in the original study, selections from each item on the questionnaire were then averaged, giving an EO score between 1 and 5. The EO questionnaire contained 33 items in total and could be grouped into 6 separate sections, each relating to a different topic relating to ethnic identity and language use. The sections were named as follows: (1) Ethnicity and ethnic identification, (2) Language competence and preference, (3) Language use with family, (4) Family, (5) Marriage and heritage and (6) Discrimination.

Although the written survey does not supply the breadth and depth of information that can be obtained in a sociolinguistic interview, it has the advantage that the

scores represent the participants' own perceptions of their ethnicity, as opposed to the interpretation of the researcher based on the content of their response, as in Hoffman and Walker (2010). An example of such a question adjusted to the written format would be 'my parents think of themselves as *Italian*' as opposed to 'do your parents think of themselves as Italian?'

Given that this section asked questions directly relating to a participant's given ethnic background and language, it should be noted that questions were edited for each participant based on their ethnicity and the community language they claimed to use. For example, a participant with an Iranian ethnic background would be given questions such as 'I think of myself as Iranian' and 'I prefer to speak Farsi over English'. This meant that each survey had to be tailored to suit the ethnicity and community language of each participant, and so for this reason participants were asked about their ethnic background and which language they used before the survey could be administered.

### **3.3 Procedure**

In most cases the questionnaire was able to be filled in the presence of the researcher however where this was not possible the questionnaire was left with the participant and collected promptly upon its completion. A great majority of the questionnaires were distributed by the researcher, though in a small number of cases where respondents were friends or family of other participants, questionnaires were distributed by others.

Before filling out the questionnaire, each participant was given a ‘Participant Information Sheet’ containing some information about the study and basic instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire. Following this the participant was left to fill the questionnaire without aid from the researcher unless required. The questionnaire was generally completed in around 10 minutes.

### **3.4 Methodological issues and changes to the questionnaire during data collection**

In a preliminary analysis consisting of the responses of 22 participants aged 18-29 the intelligibility and effectiveness of the questionnaire was observed and a small number of changes were made for all future questionnaires.

One particular issue that was found came from the question ‘when do you use *mate*?’ in the vocative *mate* use section of the questionnaire. Here a list of possible answers was given, providing a selection of situations where the vocative is used (for example, ‘when I am saying hello’ and ‘when I don’t know someone’s name’). In the original questionnaire one of the given options was ‘all the time’. However the vagueness of this phrase rendered it difficult to find meaning in its selection by participants. For 5 of 7 informants selecting ‘all the time’ in this question, it could be assumed that they would use *mate* in all the given situations (either all options *or* only ‘all the time’ were selected). However, for 2 participants answers to this question were problematic, as they selected ‘all the time’ as well as a limited selection of other answers, resulting in two possible and conflicting interpretations of the answer. As a result of this, the ‘all the time’ option was

removed from later copies of the questionnaire. Due to the difficulty of interpreting answers given to this question in general, results from this question were excluded from the final analysis.

Another issue was related to the community language used for questions discussing language use and choice in the EO questionnaire. For a number of participants in the Chinese ethnic group the language associated with their ethnic group was not the language they would speak with their family; in such situations a regional dialect or language other than Mandarin or Putonghua was used. This would mean that if ‘Mandarin’ was used in items such as ‘I learnt Mandarin at home when I was young’ answers would likely be given on the basis of one community language being used over another, where the point of the question would have been to observe use of a community language over *English*. In order to avoid this error, the non-specific term ‘Chinese’ was used as the language name for all participants from a Chinese background.

For one participant from the Catalonia region of Spain, the ethnicity used for items in the EO questionnaire was also found to be problematic. For all other participants, ethnicity related to a country of birth or heritage, however the strong sense of identity associated with this region of Spain meant that to have used ‘Spanish’ would have indeed resulted in the participant answering on the basis of seeing himself as Spanish over Catalan, again where the point would have been to answer on the basis of one’s perception of being a particular ethnicity over *Australian*. To avoid this, the term ‘Catalan’ was used instead of ‘Spanish’.

Beyond these minor issues and changes, all participants were able to fill out the same questionnaire without any difficulty. Following data collection, results were compiled and coded in Excel for analysis. A presentation and discussion of these results is provided in the following chapter.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 What factors influence the use of *mate*?

Overall, just under one half of the participants in the study (47% - 47/101) claimed to never use *mate* as an address term and less than 17% (17/101) claimed to never be called *mate* by others. This differed to results in Rendle-Short's study of Australians from an English speaking background, or the "mainstream" Australian society, where 75% (520/698) of participants claimed to use *mate*. From this it can be seen that use of vocative *mate* is much lower for NESB Australians.

In order to ascertain which variables significantly contributed to use of vocative *mate*, all demographic variables collected in the written questionnaire were included in a linear mixed effects regression model using R Workspace. A number of models were run using backwards selection, whereby all variables were included in the analysis at first, and then systematically removed from further models if found to not significantly contribute to the solution. A final model included gender and EO grouping as the best predictors for vocative *mate* use; those who were most likely to report using the term were males as opposed to females (estimate=-2.20,  $SD=0.51$ ,  $z\text{-value}=-4.32$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ), and in the low EO group as opposed to the high EO group (estimate=-1.68,  $SD=0.61$ ,  $z\text{-value}=-2.762$ ,  $p=0.0057$ ).

A linear mixed effects regression model was also used for analysis of answers to the 'does anyone ever call you *mate*?' question and once again, gender and EO



were found to be the most significant variables: males were significantly more likely to report being called *mate* than females (estimate=-2.25,  $SD=0.70$ ,  $z$ -value=-3.21,  $p=0.0014$ ) and low EO participants claimed to be called *mate* more often than those in the high EO group, who claimed this the least (estimate=-1.34,  $SD=0.73$ ,  $z$ -value=-1.84,  $p=0.0658$ ).<sup>1</sup>

While grouping participants based on their EO score into three levels allowed a simple means of comparing scores of participants within the different groups, it should be noted that EO was also found to significantly affect use of *mate* in the sample when plotted as a continuum and modelled with gender (estimate=-0.75,  $SD=0.34$ ,  $z$ -value=-2.23,  $p=0.02571$ ). As expected here also we see that as participants scored higher on the ethnic orientation questionnaire, they were *less* likely to claim using vocative *mate*.

Interestingly, a number of factors that may have been expected to influence variation in use of the vocative were not found to be significant. Differences in language use across ethnicity groups detailed in previous research (eg. Hoffman & Walker, 2010; Horvath, 1985; Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001; Oliver, McKay & Rochecoste, 2010; Rieschild, 2007) would allow us to hypothesise that there may be some variance in use of *mate* between the three major ethnicity groupings outlined in Chapter 3 (Chinese, European and Iranian), however this was not found to be the case. While some very slight variation could be noted between these

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<sup>1</sup> This result is not significant, though it is close to being so and with these low token numbers is still worthy of note.

three ethnic groups, ethnic background did not appear to have any effect (significant or even marginal) on use of or being called *mate*. It is also important to note that there was no significant variation between distributions of participants across the EO groups when grouped based on ethnicity, that is, none of the ethnic groups had a significantly higher proportion of their participants placed in one of the high, mid or low EO groups. Given the effect we have seen for EO on both *mate* use and being called *mate*, we can assume that the three ethnic groupings do not differ significantly and that EO accounts for their lack of difference in relation to *mate*.

Measuring the effect of social class levels on claimed use of *mate* was not an aim of this study, and the only demographic information collected from participants relating to this and included in the analysis was 'highest completed education level', from which participants selected either 'high school', 'undergraduate degree' or 'post-graduate degree'. While vocative *mate* has been associated with the lower socioeconomic demographic, or working class (Turner, 1972; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985, 1993), education level of participants had no significant effect on the reported use of *mate*, nor did it on whether participants claimed to be called *mate*. Following this, only a small number of participants brought up that they felt the term was associated with a lower or working class to which they did not relate (and so influenced whether they would use it); 'maybe my opinion about *mate* will change after some while but... living in Canberra, I've

heard it more from tradesmen' (female, 30, newcomer, high EO)<sup>2</sup>, 'to me, it's more of a lower-class [address term]' (female, 20, second generation, low EO). In line with the factors found to significantly affect use of *mate*, participants were generally more likely to make comments relating to identity and gendered use of the vocative. A lack of significance for education level of participants should however not be taken as suggesting a complete lack of stratification across socioeconomic levels for use of *mate*; further study observing other variables related to social class would be required to reliably state whether this is the case.

The following sections outline the patterning of the reported use of vocative *mate* observed across the generation, gender and EO groupings, presenting a quantitative analysis of the data collected with illustrative answers to qualitative questions that featured in the questionnaire incorporated where relevant.

## **4.2 Participant generation and use of *mate***

Along with gender and EO, generation was also found to influence use of *mate*, though did not provide as good an account for variation. As mentioned above, around half (47% - 54/101) of informants claimed to never use *mate* as an address term. This was however not distributed evenly across the generation groups. Table 3 shows the percentages of participants in each generation group claiming to use *mate*.

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<sup>2</sup> Age of participant is given after gender. This participant was 30 years old.

Following previous study where longer time spent in Australia was found to influence greater use and understanding of colloquialisms and ‘Australian slang’ terms (Curtain, 2001), it was expected that participants in the newcomer group would use vocative *mate* the least, followed by those in the first generation group, second generation participants using the term most often. However as can be seen in Table 3, this was not the case. As hypothesised, participants in the second generation group claimed to use *mate* more than in any other generation group (68%, 28/41), but first generation participants and not newcomers reported to use the term the least overall, only 38% of the time (13/34), almost half the usage reported by the second generation participants. Interestingly, newcomers reported use exactly 50% (13/26) of the time, placing them in between the other two generation groups. Difference between use of *mate* in the first and second generation groups was found to be significant ( $p=0.0114$ ). Although no significant difference could be noted between the newcomer and first generation ( $p=0.4349$ ) or second generation groups ( $p=0.1983$ ), these results would point to a tendency that was not in the expected direction.

**Table 3: Reported use of *mate* across generation groups (percentage of participants in each group using/not using vocative *mate*).**

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Use <i>mate</i></b>	<b>Don't use <i>mate</i></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> gen	13 (38%)	21 (62%)	34
2 <sup>nd</sup> gen	28 (68%)	13 (32%)	41
Newcomer	13 (50%)	13 (50%)	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54 (53%)</b>	<b>47 (47%)</b>	<b>101</b>

While half of the sample claimed to not use the vocative, less than 20% (17/101) claimed to not be called *mate* by others. All participants claiming to use *mate* also claimed to be called *mate*, that is, no one claimed to use *mate* without claiming to be called *mate*. Almost all (93% - 38/41) participants in the second generation group claimed to being addressed with the term, compared with just over 70% (24/34) of those in the first generation group. Once again the difference between these two groups was significant ( $p=0.0153$ ). However, as for use of *mate*, participants in the newcomer group did not behave as expected based on their time spent in Australia and were placed in between the first and second generation groups, 85% (22/26) claiming to be called *mate* by others, though again, this difference was not significant for the first generation group ( $p=0.2350$ ) nor the second generation group ( $p=0.4172$ ). A breakdown of these results is given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Answers to ‘does anyone ever call you *mate*?’ question across generation groups (percentage of participants in each group called/not called *mate*).**

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Called <i>mate</i></b>	<b>Not called <i>mate</i></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> gen	24 (71%)	10 (29%)	34
2 <sup>nd</sup> gen	38 (93%)	3 (7%)	41
Newcomer	22 (85%)	4 (15%)	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84 (83%)</b>	<b>17 (17%)</b>	<b>101</b>

In order to try and explain the results in the newcomer group, newcomer participants were further grouped by gender and time spent in Australia (1-2 years

and 3-4 years) similar to in Curtain (2001); however neither grouping was found to be significant.

One means for explaining the results in the newcomer group would be as discussed by Hoffman and Walker (2010); while most studies observing language variation and ethnicity ultimately assume that ethnicity is shared to the same degree by all members of a community, this is not necessarily the case – ‘individuals may have different attitudes and degrees of orientation towards the values and characteristics associated with their respective ethnic group’ (Hoffman & Walker, 2010: 40). Since, in the immigrant context, individuals relating strongly to their ethnic identity are likely to show less assimilation with norms of the majority population and more ethnic marking in their language (Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001), grouping participants in a way that assumes each identifies with their ethnicity to the same extent may not provide the best account for variation within the sample.

From the results given above, it can be assumed that differing levels of desire to assimilate with the Australian majority culture were indeed a cause for variation within the newcomer group. While grouping of participants based on generation and time spent in Australia fail to take such issues into account, EO provides a solution to this problem, grouping participants instead on how strongly they associated with their ethnic background. This would account for the differing levels of desire to assimilate for every individual in the sample, as those with a

lower EO score from the questionnaire would theoretically associate more with ‘being Australian’ than those with a higher score.

### 4.3 Ethnic orientation

As mentioned in the previous chapter, upon filling out the EO questionnaire, answers of participants were averaged, giving a final score between 1 and 5, a higher score representing a higher perceived degree of ethnic identity (and presumably a lower level of assimilation to the Anglo-Celtic Australian culture). This allowed participants to be placed in one of three EO groups: a *low EO* group of scores of 2.5 and below (n=34), a *mid EO* group of scores between 2.6 and 3.2 (n=28) and a *high EO* group consisting of participants scoring 3.3 and above (n=32). Distribution of participants with high, low and mid EO scores across the 3 generation groups can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5: EO scores across the three generation groups.**

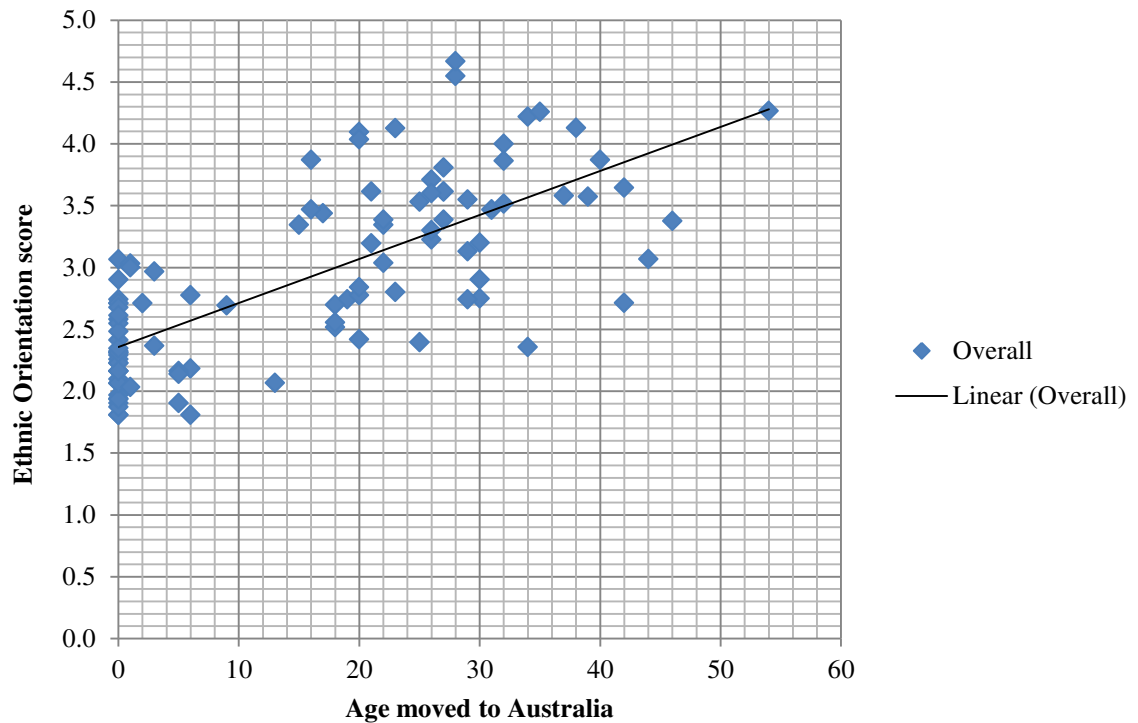
<b>Generation</b>	<b>N high EO</b>	<b>N mid EO</b>	<b>N low EO</b>	<b>EO range</b>	<b>Median EO</b>	<b>Mean EO</b>
<b>Newcomer</b> (n=26)	18 (69%)	6 (23%)	2 (8%)	2.4-4.3 <b>1.9</b>	3.6	3.5
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Gen</b> (n=34)	17 (50%)	12 (35%)	5 (15%)	1.8-4.7 <b>2.9</b>	3.2	3.2
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Gen</b> (n=41)	0	12 (29%)	29 (71%)	1.8-3.1 <b>1.3</b>	2.3	2.4

Here the fact that ethnic identity does not directly correlate with generation groups can be clearly seen, as no generation grouping scored exclusively high, mid or low EOs. Second generation participants were distributed in the mid and low EO groups, the latter forming majority of the group (over 80% of second generation participants scored a low EO). Newcomer and first generation participants showed great variation in EO, spread out across all three EO groups, the majority lying in the high and mid EO groups. There was also some difference in the range of EO scores in the generation groups – second generation participants had the smallest range of scores (1.3 on the 5-point continuum), compared with a range of 2.9 (over 2 times larger) in the first generation group and 1.9 in the newcomer group. Differences between the first generation and newcomer groups regarding high/low EO distribution were not found to be significant, however each did differ significantly from the second generation group ( $p < 0.0001$  in both cases). Differences in mid/low EO distribution were also significant when comparing first generation and newcomer groups with second generation participants ( $p = 0.0073$  and  $p = 0.0389$ ) as were differences for high/mid distribution ( $p = 0.0004$  and  $p < 0.0001$ ). This would suggest a similarity in EO between newcomer and first generation groups regarding EO scores. The highest EO overall came from the first generation group (4.7) though in general newcomer participants were more likely to score a higher EO than any other group, as can be observed in the ‘median EO’ and ‘mean EO’ columns. Thus, although there is no direct correlation between EO and time spent in Australia, the two are not entirely unrelated.



In order to examine relationships between ethnic orientation and time-based factors such as time spent in Australia, Pearson correlations were run using SPSS. EO scores of participants were compared with 3 variables: age, time spent in Australia and age moved to Australia (the latter not taken directly in the questionnaire but calculated using the two former variables). Interestingly, EO was not found to correlate strongly with age (Pearson correlation=0.403) nor time spent in Australia (Pearson correlation=-0.341). A high correlation was however found between age moved to Australia and EO (Pearson correlation=0.732), showing that this variable was the best predictor for participant EO. In general participants who had moved to Australia at an older age were more likely to score a high EO than those who had moved at a younger age. A scatterplot given in Figure 1 shows the relationship between EO score and age moved to Australia.

From this scatterplot, the influence on age of moving to Australia on participant EO can clearly be seen (participants plotted as having moved to Australia at the age of zero were all born in Australia). The lowest EO scores from the data came from participants who had moved to Australia under the age of ten and EO scores steadily increased for participants who had moved at a later age, as shown by the trend line.



**Figure 1: Scatterplot of EO and age moved to Australia (Pearson’s correlation=0.732).**

Given the previously mentioned effect of gender on use of vocative *mate*, it would be useful to first observe any variation in EO scores within the gender groups before we move on to discussion of the differences in use of and being called *mate* across the sample. Table 6 provides a breakdown of gender distributions in the three EO groups, with generation groupings also given so any variation caused due to uneven numbers of newcomer, first generation and second generation participants across the gender groups can be viewed with ease.

Overall there was a higher proportion of males in the high EO group than females (40% of males compared with just 28% of females), and a higher proportion of females in the low EO group (31% of males compared with 42% of females). This

was however not significant and is indeed most likely due to an imbalance in male and female participants in the original generation groupings, especially in the newcomer group, the majority of whom were male. It should also be noted that the ranges of EO score in the two gender groups was also very similar, male participants overall (1.8-4.7) only having a slightly larger range of scores than female participants (2.0-4.5). From these results it can be noted that participant EO is not influenced by gender, as there was no significant difference in scores between the male and female groups. This would imply that the variation in use of the vocative caused by gender would be unrelated to variation caused by EO.

**Table 6: Distribution of male and female participants across the three EO groups.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N high EO</b>	<b>N mid EO</b>	<b>N low EO</b>	<b>EO range</b>
<b>Male (n=55)</b>	<b>22 (40%)</b>	<b>16 (29%)</b>	<b>17 (31%)</b>	<b>1.8-4.7</b> 2.9
- Newcomer (n=16)	13 (81%)	3 (19%)	0	2.7-4.3 <b>1.6</b>
- 1 <sup>st</sup> Gen (n=18)	9 (50%)	6 (33%)	3 (17%)	1.8-4.7 <b>2.9</b>
- 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen (n=21)	0	7 (33%)	14 (67%)	1.8-3.0 <b>1.2</b>
<b>Female (n=46)</b>	<b>13 (28%)</b>	<b>14 (31%)</b>	<b>19 (41%)</b>	<b>2.0-4.5</b> 2.5
- Newcomer (n=10)	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	2.4-4.3 <b>1.9</b>
- 1 <sup>st</sup> Gen (n=16)	8 (50%)	6 (38%)	2 (12%)	2.2-4.5 <b>2.3</b>
- 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen (n=20)	0	5 (25%)	15 (75%)	1.8-3.1 <b>1.3</b>

The following section observes the use of *mate* claimed by participants observed in the sample, with a focus on variation between EO and gender groups.

#### 4.4 Who uses *mate*?

As noted above, EO was found to have a significant effect on use of *mate*. Table 7 shows the breakdown of participants reporting to use *mate* to address others within each of the EO groups. We observe here that, as expected, overall participants with a high EO were least likely to claim using *mate* (43% - 15/35), compared with 50% of mid EO participants and almost 70% of low EO participants. As previously noted, differences in the high and low EO groups were found to be statistically significant ( $p = 0.0057$ , see section 4.1). Differences between the mid EO group and the high and low EO groups were not found to be significant ( $p=0.6232$  and  $p=0.2126$  respectively) though still show a clear drop in use as participant EO score increases.

**Table 7: Reported use of *mate* across EO groups (percentage of participants within each group using/not using vocative *mate*)**

EO grouping	Use <i>mate</i>	Don't use <i>mate</i>	TOTAL
High EO	15 (43%)	20 (57%)	35
Mid EO	15 (50%)	15 (50%)	30
Low EO	24 (67%)	12 (33%)	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54 (53%)</b>	<b>47 (47%)</b>	<b>101</b>

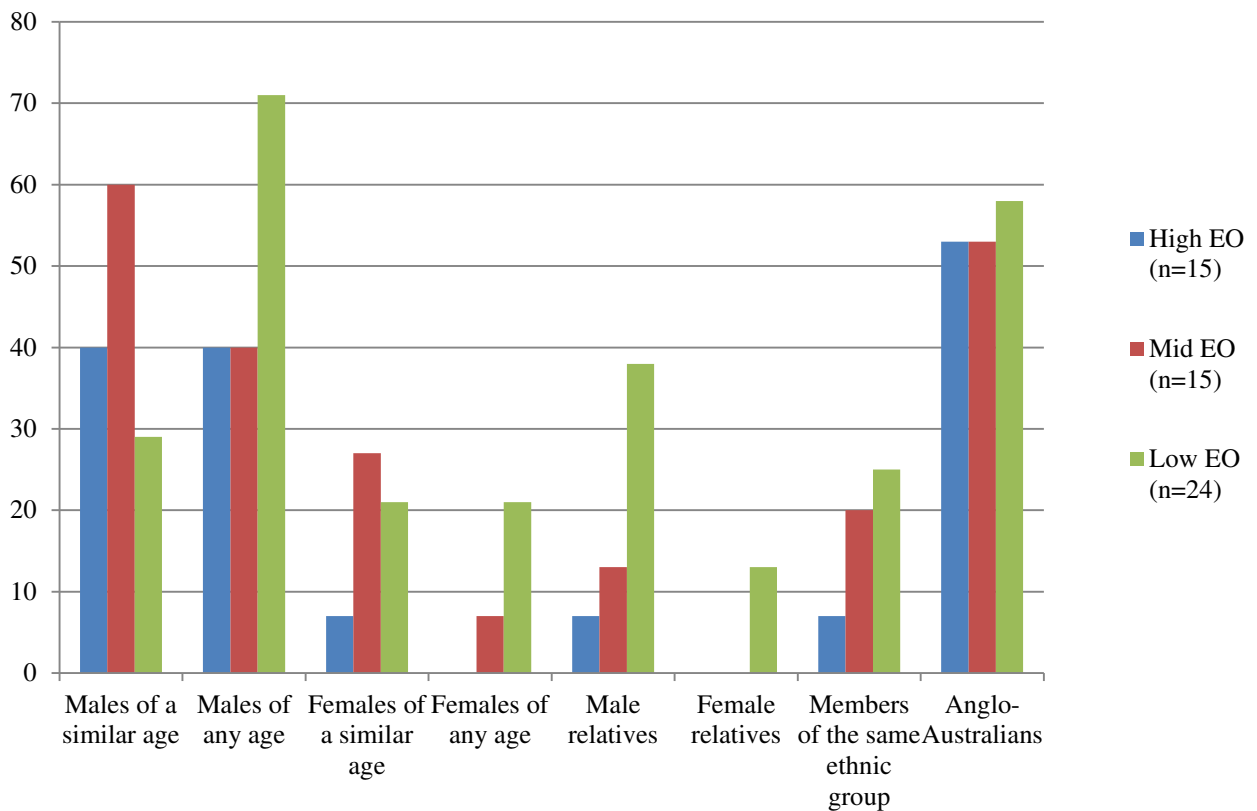
These results are in line with the study's hypothesis, and would provide support for the idea of vocative *mate* as strongly related to the Australian culture and identity (Moore, 2010; Rendle-Short, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985), as we understand participants with a high EO score to relate *less* to an Australian identity than those with a low score.

Where participants answered ‘yes’ to the ‘do you ever call anyone *mate*?’ question, they were asked to state who they would use the vocative with, selecting from a range of addressee categories. These answers were then compared across the EO groups in order to observe who participants were most likely to use *mate* with in each group, as presented in Figure 2.

Overall, the most commonly selected addressee categories were ‘Anglo-Australians’, ‘males of any age’ and ‘males of a similar age’. This would appear as expected, given the ‘traditional’ Anglo-Australian and masculine associations (Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985) of *mate*. However, some variation can clearly be seen in selections made across the three EO groups. High EO participants selected the smallest number of addressees, claiming an almost exclusive use with Anglo-Australians and males, very rarely reporting to address females, relatives or ‘members of the same ethnic group’ with *mate*. Use in the mid EO group was slightly more widespread (though still no participants in this group selected the ‘female relatives’ category). In the low EO group we see a wider use still, where use of *mate* was claimed across all addressee categories, such that participants in the low EO group reported using the vocative with males, females, relatives, other members of their ethnic community and Anglo-Australians.

An interesting difference can be seen in selections of the two ‘similar age’ and ‘any age’ male categories in the mid and low EO groups. All participants in these groups claiming to use *mate* reported to do so with males, however 60% (9/15) of the mid EO group claimed to call only ‘males of a similar age’ mate, comparable

with 70% (17/24) of low EO participants claiming to call ‘males of any age’ *mate*<sup>3</sup>. Given the traditional use of *mate* as a term used to establish equality with people of perceived similarity; ‘someone whom I perceive to be “someone like me”’ (Wierzbicka, 1997: 107), use of the vocative with addressees of the differing ages would imply a more innovative, widespread use of the vocative than use with solely addressees of the same age group.



**Figure 2: Who participants claimed to use *mate* with (as a percentage of participants claiming to use *mate*).**

<sup>3</sup> Selections for male and female age-related categories were coded as one over the other, that is, only one selection from each pair was coded for each informant. Selecting ‘any age’ would suggest a more widespread use than selection of just ‘similar age’, so where participants selected (for example) both ‘males of any age’ and ‘males of a similar age’, only the ‘any age’ category contributed to the results presented in these figures.

From the results presented and discussed above, it is notable that the low EO group had the most extensive use of vocative *mate*. Participants in this group were most likely to claim using the term to address people who would pertain less to the traditional perceptions of *mate* (Rendle-Short, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985). This would indeed suggest that participants in the low EO group had a more innovative use of the vocative than in any other EO group.

If we now compare the reported use of *mate* for male and female participants, some interesting differences can be noted. As found in a previous study of vocative *mate* (Rendle-Short, 2009) as well as in this study, gender indeed has an influence on use of the term, with males more likely to report using *mate* than females. This variation can be seen in Table 8 where use of *mate* is presented for the two gender groups, along with a breakdown across EO groups for each.

**Table 8: Reported use of *mate* by males and females across EO groups (percentage of participants within each group using/not using vocative *mate*).**

Gender	Use <i>mate</i>	Don't use <i>mate</i>	TOTAL
<b>Male</b>	<b>40 (73%)</b>	<b>15 (27%)</b>	<b>55</b>
- Low EO	14 (82%)	3 (18%)	17
- Mid EO	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	16
- High EO	14 (64%)	8 (36%)	22
<b>Female</b>	<b>14 (30%)</b>	<b>32 (70%)</b>	<b>46</b>
- Low EO	10 (53%)	9 (47%)	19
- Mid EO	3 (21%)	1 (79%)	14
- High EO	1 (8%)	12 (92%)	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54 (53%)</b>	<b>47 (47%)</b>	<b>101</b>

In general, use of vocative *mate* was reported significantly less often by females than by males; 73% (40/55) of males claimed to call others *mate* compared to only 30% (14/46) of females ( $p=0.0004$ ). For both gender groups, use of *mate* was reported less by participants with a higher EO, though this decline was far more dramatic for female participants. Females in the low EO group claimed to use the vocative 53% (10/19) of the time, this dropping by more than half in the mid EO group, where only 21% (3/14) of female participants reported using the term, a figure which then halves again for the high EO group at just 10% of the time (1/13). While males also showed the same decline in use of *mate* as EO rose, the difference between EO groups was far slighter. Over 80% (14/17) of male participants with a low EO claimed to use the term to address others, compared with 75% (12/16) in the mid EO group and slightly less than 65% (14/22) in the high EO group. Although the numbers are low, this marked difference is nonetheless striking.

These results would suggest that the perceptions and attitudes of females towards vocative *mate* differ greatly across the three EO groups, more so than for the male participants. Individuals in the low EO group were mostly from the second generation group, which as previously mentioned was predominantly comprised of younger participants and so would loosely represent the sample's youngest age group. These results indicating a shift towards greater use of the vocative for younger people would appear in line with Rendle-Short (2009: 257), where it was found that vocative *mate* was 'losing its masculine flavour' for females in younger

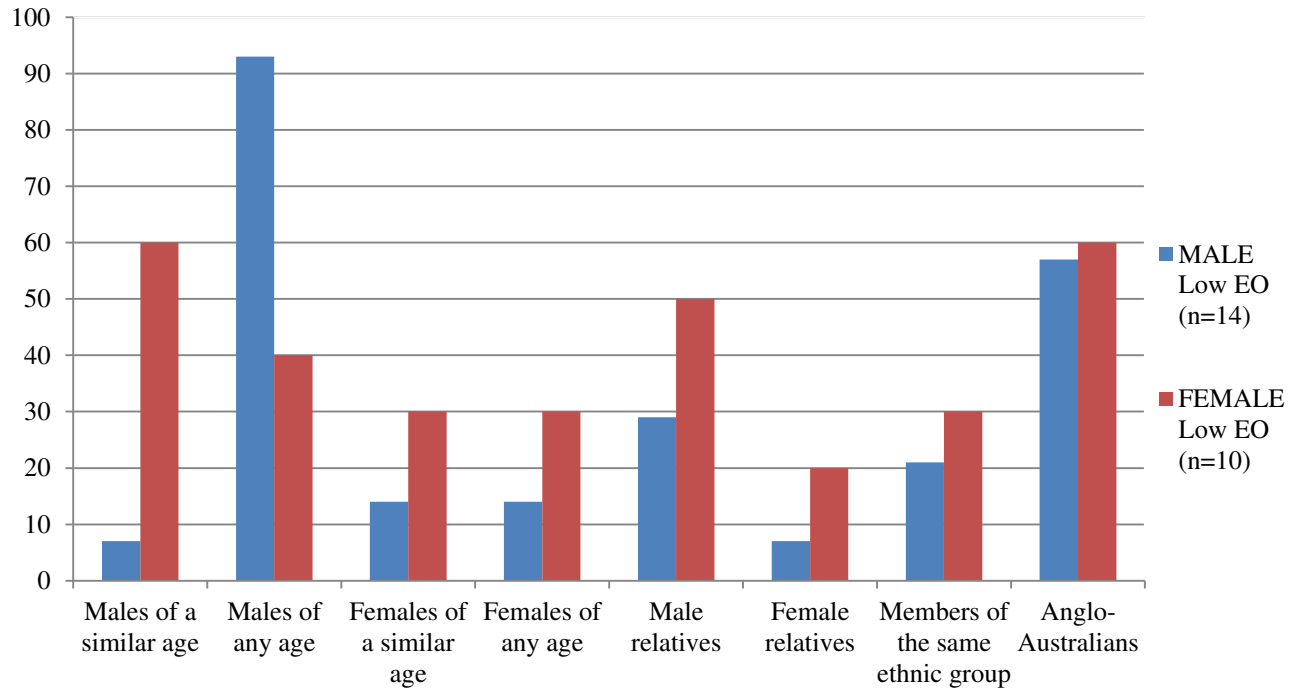


generations. These younger female participants also reported using the vocative with females more often than male participants. Rendle-Short (2009) noted a much starker decline in use of vocative *mate* across the female age groups, as has been found here.

Further, while females report to use *mate* significantly less than males in both the mid EO group ( $p=0.0213$ ) as well as in the high EO group ( $p=0.0079$ ), there is no significant difference between males and females in the low EO group ( $p=0.1519$ ), though the direction is as predicted with females reporting to use the term less than males. These findings were in line with qualitative data collected in the questionnaire, as some females noted that it was inappropriate to use *mate* solely as a result of their gender: ‘[*mate*] sounds manly’ (female, 66, first generation, high EO), ‘as a female it never really feels natural to call someone *mate*’ (female, 22, second generation, mid EO).

Following these results, it would now be of interest to observe variation in regards to who male and female respondents claimed to use *mate* with. A comparison of who male and female participants reported calling *mate* can be seen in Figure 3. The small number of female participants actually reporting to use the vocative in the mid and high EO groups meant that realistically such a comparison could only be made using participants from the low EO group. Although overall females claim to use *mate* less, as found here and also previously reported in Rendle-Short (2009), low EO females break the expected trend in terms of breadth of use,

claiming to use vocative *mate* across a wider range of addressees than the low EO male participants.



**Figure 3: Comparison of who male and female participants in the low EO group claimed to call *mate*.**

Interestingly, low EO females selected each addressee category more often than low EO males, with exception of the ‘males of any age’ (selected by over 90% of males but only 40% of females) and ‘Anglo-Australians’ (where the proportion is nearly identical) categories. While females were far more likely to use *mate* with just ‘males of a similar age’, selections showed that they were more likely to call other females *mate* and more likely to use the term with relatives and ‘members of the same ethnic group’. This is again quite similar to Rendle-Short’s (2009) results, which indicated that females using the vocative are more likely to address

males *and* females as *mate*, as opposed to male participants who were more likely to address only males with the term. Thus, while *mate* is reported to be used far less by females from a non-English speaking background than males overall, the results seen in Figure 3 suggest that females in the low EO group who do use the vocative report to have a much more widespread use than their male counterparts. While some male participants in the low EO group claimed to use *mate* across a wide range of addressees, use was more in favour of the traditional associations of the address term, that is, with males and Anglo-Australians. In observing variation in the low EO group it can be said that females using the vocative reported to have a more innovative use overall.

#### **4.5 Who doesn't use *mate*?**

So far we have concentrated on those who do claim to use *mate*, but what about those who do not claim to use the vocative? The following section briefly considers some of the qualitative data collected from participants who don't use *mate*.

Of the 47 participants claiming to not use *mate* to address others, 62% (29/47) reported being called *mate* by others. Respondents who claimed to be called *mate* without claiming to use *mate* were distributed quite evenly across the EO groupings. In terms of gender, majority (17/29) were female. When these informants were asked why they did not address others with the vocative, a wide range of reasons were given. Many respondents stated that they were not used to the term and 'Australian slang' in general, offering responses such as 'I am not

quite integrated into the local community yet' (male, 24, newcomer, high EO) and 'as a non-native speaker, I am more comfortable with formal language' (female, 54, first generation, mid EO) This would relate to the claims of Poynton (1989) who stated that non-Anglo-Celtic individuals (in general) would less likely be involved in use of vernacular address terms. Comments relating directly to ethnicity were also given by a number of the respondents, who felt the term sounded 'unnatural' when they used it: 'it sounds very awkward and artificial when I use [*mate*]... it rolls better in an Australian accent' (male, 23, newcomer, mid EO). From these opinions it can be noted that for these respondents, feelings of not assimilating with or being part of the Australian cultural majority were related to use of vocative *mate* and that use of the vocative would indeed imply some level of integration into the culture. A number of respondents also expressed that they would prefer to call others by their name over using *mate*, as in previous study of address terms regarding NESB Australians (Choi, 1997), while some female participants stated that their lack of use was directly influenced by their gender, as one wrote: '[*mate*] feels unladylike... it makes me feel like a boy' (female, 18, second generation, low EO). For many of these female participants, negative attitudes towards being called *mate* were also expressed.

#### **4.6 Who is called *mate*?**

As previously mentioned in the chapter, a far greater percentage of participants claimed to be called *mate* (83% - 84/101) than to use *mate* (53% - 54/101). As to be expected, this was highest in the low EO group, where almost 90% (38/41) of

participants claimed to have been addressed with the term, comparable with 83% (25/30) in the mid EO group and 77% in the high EO group. These results mirror the reported use of *mate* and can be viewed in Table 9. Differences between the EO groups here were not significant (difference between high and low EO groups –  $p=0.2196$ ), though results from the linear mixed effects model discussed in Section 4.1 found that EO grouping did have a marginal effect on whether participants claimed they were called *mate* ( $p=0.0658$ ).

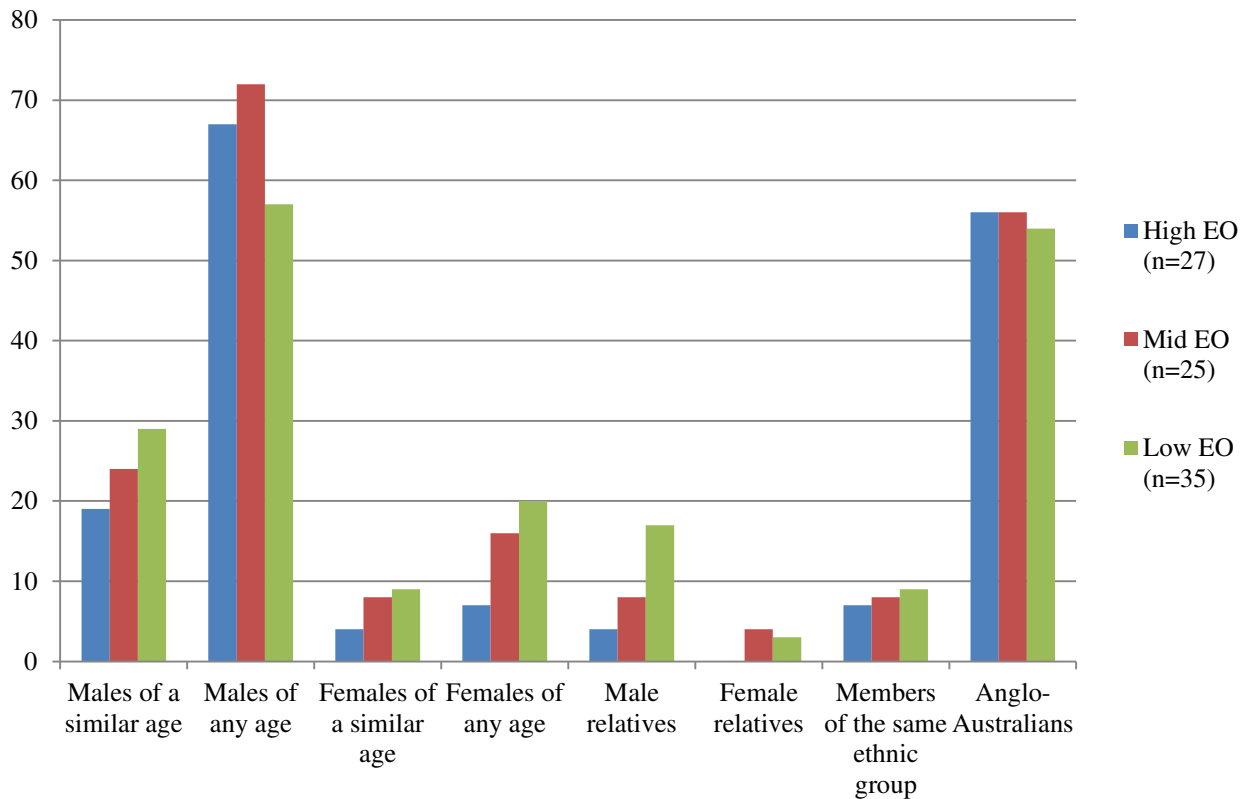
**Table 9: Answers to ‘does anyone ever call you *mate*?’ question across EO groups (percentage of participants in each group called/not called *mate*).**

EO grouping	Called <i>mate</i>	Not called <i>mate</i>	TOTAL
High EO	27 (77%)	8 (23%)	35
Mid EO	25 (83%)	5 (17%)	30
Low EO	32 (89%)	4 (11%)	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84 (83%)</b>	<b>17 (17%)</b>	<b>101</b>

With there being overall far less variation between the EO groups regarding being called *mate* than was previously seen for use of *mate*, it would now be interesting to observe *who* participants were addressed as *mate* by, and whether again there is less disparity between the EO groups. Such can be seen in Figure 4, where the addressee selections of participants from each EO group are presented for comparison.

As seen above with use of *mate* (Figure 2), ‘males of a similar age’, ‘males of any age’ and ‘Anglo-Australians’ were the most commonly selected categories for

each of the EO groups, however this time a notably larger number of participants claimed to be addressed with the vocative by ‘males of any age’, this being especially notable in the mid and high EO groups. Very few participants in general claimed to be called *mate* by females, relatives or members of the same ethnic group, though it can be observed that low EO participants claimed to be addressed with *mate* by these people marginally more often than high and low EO participant groups, with exception of ‘female relatives’, where the percentage of participants selecting this category was slightly higher than in the low EO group.



**Figure 4: Who participants claimed would call them *mate* (as a percentage of participants claiming to have been called *mate* by others).**

Though EO grouping was only found to marginally affect being called *mate*, differences between the gender groups was found to be significant. Almost 95% of males (52/55) claimed to be called *mate* by others, compared with just 74% (32/43) of females, that is, more than 20 percentage points less ( $p=0.0011$ ). Variation between EO groups for male participants was very slight; almost all males across each of the EO groups reported they had previously been addressed with *mate*, the high EO group with the lowest percentage overall at 91% (20/22). EO grouping accounted for far more variation for female participants; a high percentage of females in the low EO group reported having been called *mate*; close to 85% (16/19) in the low EO group. This dropped to 64% of females (9/14) in the mid EO group and even further to just slightly more than half (7/13) for those in the high EO group. This followed a similar pattern as noted for use of *mate*, where the difference in reported use between EO groups was also greater for female participants than male participants.

As can be seen in Table 10, there was significant difference between genders in the high and mid EO groups; all males in the mid EO group claimed to be called *mate*, compared with 64% (9/14) of females ( $p=0.0140$ ), while in the high EO group 91% (20/22) of males claimed to be called *mate*, compared with 54% (7/13) of females ( $p=0.0140$ ). Once again differences in reported use between male and female participants in the low EO group were less notable and did not achieve significance; in fact, in the low EO group females claimed to be called *mate* only 10 percentage points less than males in the low EO group (94% and 84%). These

results are similar to those of Rendle-Short (2009), who noted that males were very likely to be called *mate* regardless of their age while females showed more difference according to age, with younger age groups reporting to be called *mate* far more often than older age groups. Rendle-Short (2009) also found there to be little difference between males and females in the young age group (in this study the group most relatable to a young age group would be the low EO group).

**Table 10: Answers to ‘does anyone ever call you *mate*?’ question across gender groups (percentage of participants within each group claiming to be addressed with vocative *mate*).**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Called <i>mate</i></b>	<b>Not called <i>mate</i></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>52 (94.1%)</b>	<b>3 (5.9%)</b>	<b>55</b>
- Low EO	16 (94%)	1 (6%)	17
- Mid EO	16 (100%)	0	16
- High EO	20 (91%)	2 (9%)	22
<b>Female</b>	<b>32 (74%)</b>	<b>14 (26%)</b>	<b>43</b>
- Low EO	16 (84%)	3 (16%)	19
- Mid EO	9 (64%)	5 (36%)	14
- High EO	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84 (83%)</b>	<b>17 (17%)</b>	<b>101</b>

#### **4.7 Differences in addressee: who participants claimed to use *mate* with and who they claimed to be called *mate* by**

It should be noted that despite the high number of participants claiming to be called *mate* by ‘males of any age’ (as seen in Figure 4), respondents generally claimed to be called *mate* by a range of addressees marginally smaller than those



whom they claimed to use *mate* with. It was very rare that a participant claimed to be called *mate* by a greater range of addressees than they claimed to use the term with and in most cases participants were found to claim being called *mate* by less people than they use the term with. Given the fact that these results regard self-reported use of the vocative as opposed to *actual* use, it is possible to think of answers to the ‘who calls you *mate*?’ question as who respondents felt the term *is supposed to be used by* or who respondents thought they *should be* called *mate* by, a perception that would differ from one individual to another. The connection between who people are called *mate* by and who they use it with was in fact mentioned by some participants, one writing ‘[people use *mate*] because others call them *mate*’ (male, 18, second generation, low EO).

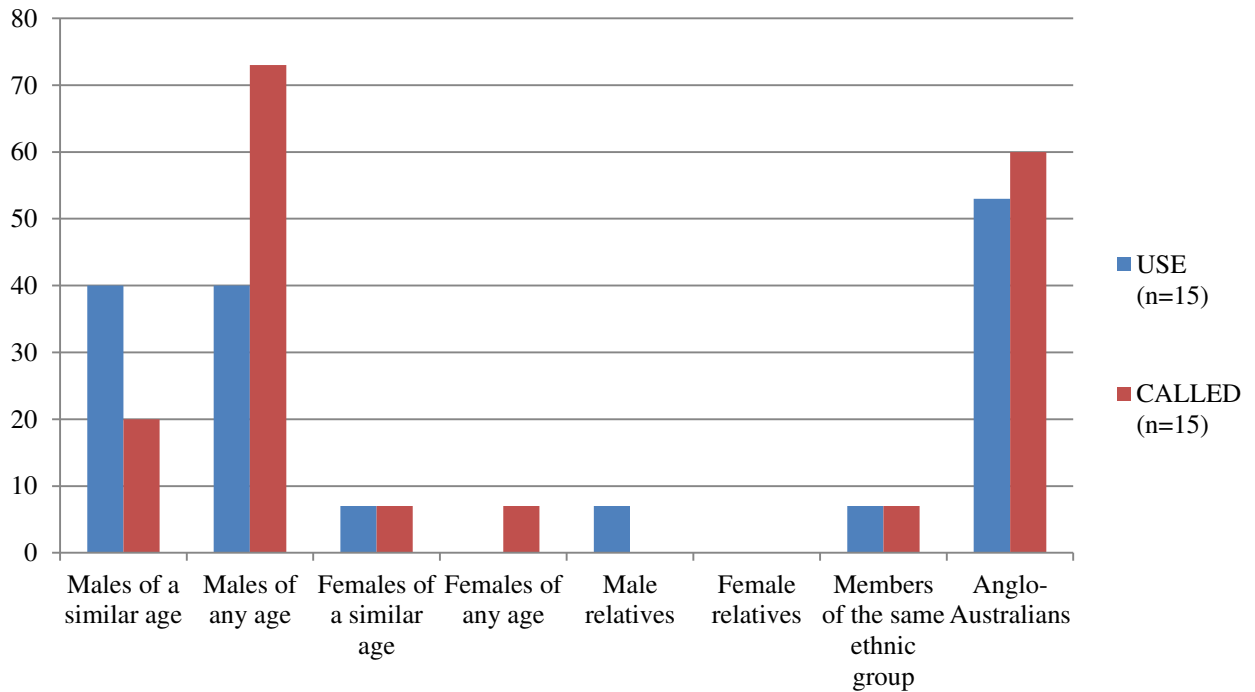
If this is the case, it would be interesting to observe differences regarding selections made for the two questions. Figure 5 and Figure 6 show a comparison of who participants were called *mate* by and who they used *mate* with for all participants claiming to use *mate* in the high and low EO groups<sup>4</sup>.

As can be noted in Figure 5, with exception of selections in the ‘males of any age’ and ‘males of a similar age’ categories, high EO participants used *mate* with almost the exact same addressees they were called *mate* by; almost exclusively with males and Anglo-Australians, a use pertaining greatly to the traditional

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that in order to compare the answers of participants using and being addressed with *mate*, participants claiming to be called *mate* but to *not* use *mate* were not included in these figures. For example, in the high EO group, a total of 27 participants claimed to be called *mate*, however only answers from the 15 also claiming to use *mate* are presented in Figure 5.

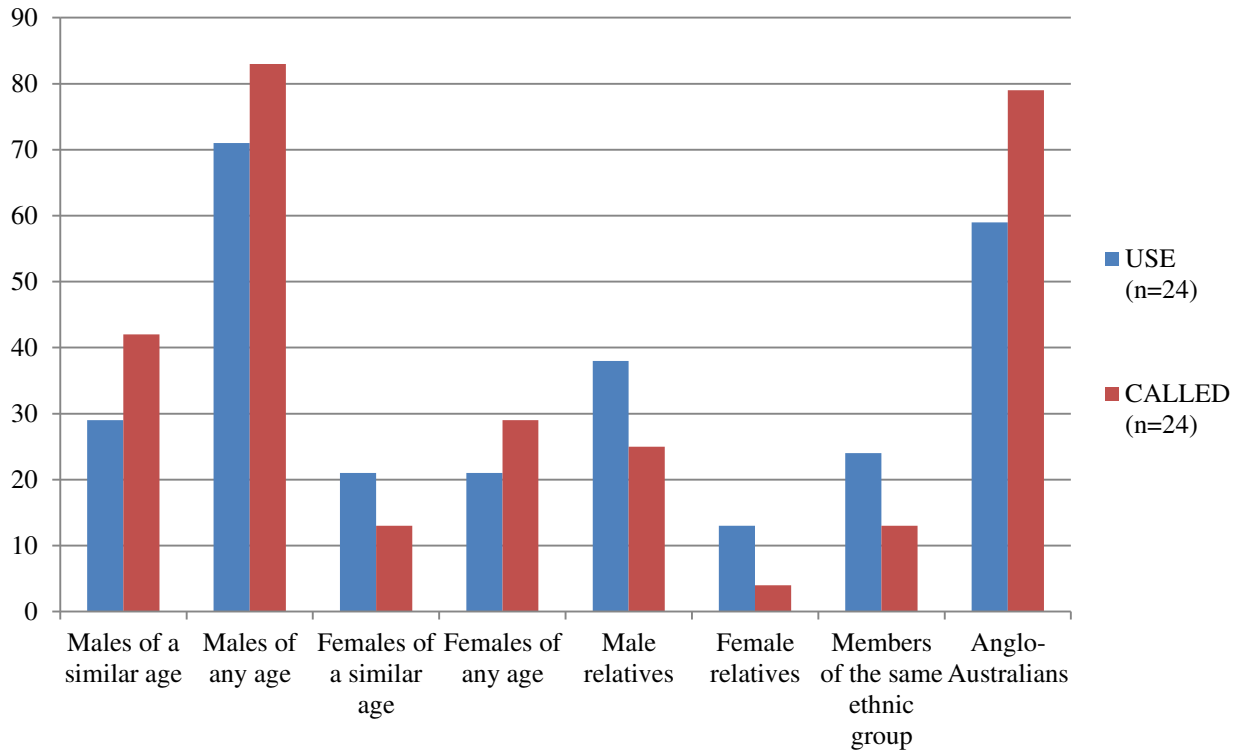
associations of the term. All the other addressee categories – females, relatives and ‘members of the same ethnic group’ – were rarely selected in both of the questions, and the ‘female categories’ category was not selected in either question.



**Figure 5: Comparison of who calls participants *mate* and who participants call *mate* in the high EO group.**

Comparatively, results for the low EO group presented in Figure 6 show a greater level of difference between who respondents were addressed as *mate* by and who they reported to use the term with. While participants were more likely to claim being called *mate* by males and Anglo-Australians more than they reported to use the term with these addressees, participants claimed using vocative *mate* with ‘females of a similar age’, relatives and ‘members of the same ethnic group’ more often than they claimed these people would call them *mate*. While the variation in selections across the EO groups was not significant due to low numbers, for some

categories it was especially great; participants claimed to use *mate* with ‘female relatives’ three times as often, and almost twice as often with ‘members of the same ethnic group’.



**Figure 6: Comparison of who calls participants *mate* and who participants call *mate* in the low EO group.**

The similarity between reported answers to the ‘who do you use *mate* with?’ and ‘who calls you *mate*?’ questions for the high EO group would suggest that vocative *mate* serves as a sort of ‘assimilation tool’ for these respondents, as they ‘decide’ who to address with the term through who they are called *mate* by. This attitude of vocative *mate* as being a means of assimilation into the Australian culture was commonly expressed by respondents in the high EO group, as one wrote ‘[using *mate*] makes me feel more Australian’ (male, 27, newcomer, high

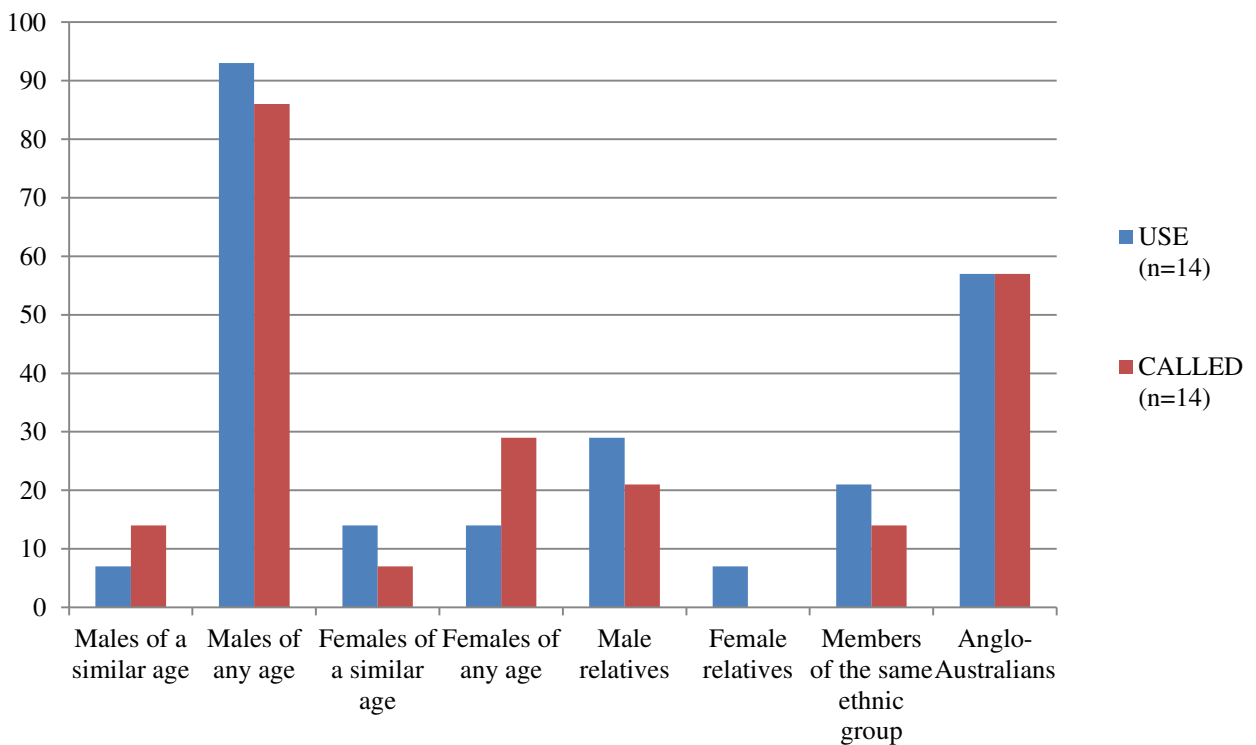
EO) and another '[being called *mate*] feels like belonging to Australian cultural majority' (male, 60, first generation, high EO).

On the other hand, while high EO participants seemed to align their own use of *mate* based on how they claimed others used the vocative (so, what they perceived 'proper' use of the term to be), low EO participants can again be said to have a far more innovative use of the address term, using it not only with addressees relating less to traditional associations (masculinity and Anglo-Australian culture – Rendle-Short, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985) but also with people who they claimed would not call them *mate*.

Given this finding, it would now be interesting to observe whether there was any difference between whom male and female participants in the low EO group report being called *mate* by and claim to use it with. As previously observed in Figure 3, low EO female participants claimed to use *mate* with females, relatives and 'members of the same ethnic group' notably more often than low EO males. This was said to suggest that these female participants in general had a more widespread and innovative use of the vocative than their male counterparts. In Figure 7 and Figure 8, the comparison of addressees selected for use of *mate* and being called *mate* in the gender groups would further support this claim.

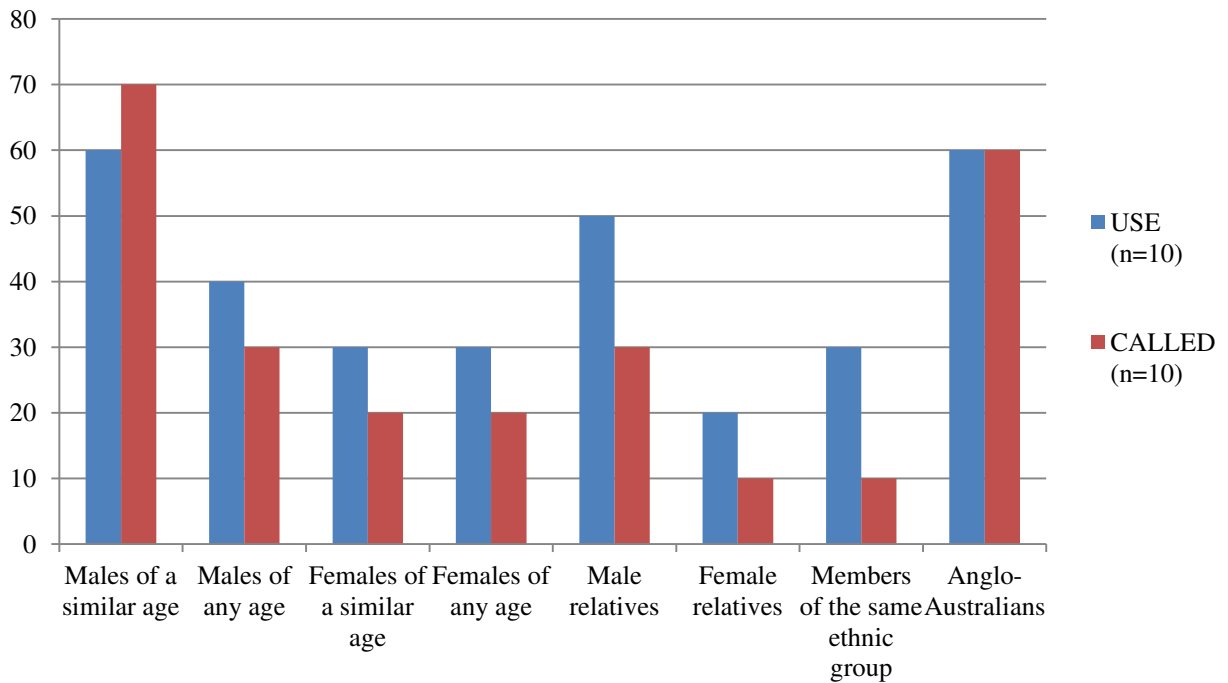
Results presented in Figure 7 show that male participants in the low EO group generally claimed to use *mate* with the same people who call them *mate*, as was the case for all participants in the high EO group (see Figure 5). Low EO males

were more likely to claim using *mate* with ‘male relatives’ and ‘female relatives’, ‘females of a similar age’, ‘members of the same ethnic group’ and ‘males of any age’ (though for this category the difference in percentage was negligible) than they claimed they were called *mate* by these addressees. The greatest variation was however noted in the ‘females of any age’ category. Participants reported using the term with females regardless of age half as often as they claimed they would address them with *mate*. ‘Anglo-Australians’ was the only category selected by the same number of participants in both questions.



**Figure 7: Low EO male participants: Comparison of who they use *mate* with and are called *mate* by.**

For low EO females, the difference between who respondents claimed to be called *mate* by and who they claimed to use *mate* with was far greater than for males. Females in the low EO group notably reported to use *mate* more than they were called *mate* across all addressee categories except ‘males of a similar age’ and ‘Anglo-Australians’, the number of participants selecting the latter the same in both questions, as seen in the low EO males. Use of *mate* was especially higher with ‘members of the same ethnic group’, where participants claimed use of *mate* three times more often than they were called *mate* by these addressees and the two ‘relatives’ categories, where use of *mate* was reported close to twice as often .



**Figure 8: Low EO female participants: Comparison of who they use *mate* with and are called *mate* by.**

As a comparison of Figure 7 and Figure 8 would show, low EO females indeed claimed a more innovative use of the vocative than male participants, not only claiming to address people unrelated to the traditional associations of the address term, but also doing so far more often than they were called *mate* by these addressees, so using the vocative in situations outside of its perceived ‘proper’ use.

#### 4.8 Who isn’t called *mate*?

As mentioned in Section 4.2, all participants who claimed to use *mate* also claimed to have been addressed with it, meaning that the 17% (17/101) of participants claiming to not be called *mate* also reported never using *mate*. But who were these participants?

**Table 11: Breakdown of participants not using *mate* and not being called *mate* by gender and EO score.**

	High EO	Mid EO	Low EO	TOTAL
Male	2	0	1	3
Female	6	5	3	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>

As presented in Table 11 and previously mentioned, the highest number of participants reporting to not be called nor use *mate* came from the high EO group (47% - 8/17), the smallest number overall coming from the low EO group (24% - 4/17). It can be seen that over 80% (14/17) of these participants claiming to neither use nor be called *mate* were female (primarily from the high and mid EO groups),

reflecting the disparity between genders in vocative *mate* use discussed above and found in previous study of the term (Rendle-Short, 2009).

When asked whether they liked being called *mate*, these respondents gave a range of answers. Only 3 out of the 17 who claimed to neither use nor be called *mate* stated that they would like to be addressed using the term, saying it was a friendly gesture. Interestingly, all three of these informants were female and from the high EO group. For these participants, it is likely that the use of vocative *mate* was not reported as it is perceived as a term to be used by males and native or Anglo-Celtic-Australians and therefore thought of as not appropriate for them to use. One of the three participants wrote ‘I don’t know how to use [*mate*] and I’m afraid I might use it wrong’ (female, 48, first generation, high EO). Almost half of the 17 participants indicated that they did not like being called *mate*, most commonly stating that they found use of the vocative rude, informal and occasionally offensive. Some female participants also stated that they didn’t like the term due to it being associated with males. As one wrote ‘[*mate* is a] male’s phrase. I think it is a little rude too’ (female, 20, second generation, low EO). Respondents showing a negative attitude towards the vocative were not exclusive to any one EO group or gender. Three other respondents expressed that they were impartial to being called *mate*, as long as it was in a kind or friendly context. Two left the question unanswered.



#### 4.9 Summing it all up

A mixed linear effects regression model found that of all the variables featured in this study, gender and Ethnic Orientation (EO) were the best predictors both for use of vocative *mate* and being called *mate*. Male participants in general were far more likely than females to claim a use of *mate*, a finding that was expected given findings of previous study in the field observing use by Australians of an English speaking background (Rendle-Short, 2009) and proposals commonly found in the literature regarding the ‘masculine’ associations of the term (Wilkes, 1985). Great variation in the claimed use of *mate* was noted across the participant EO groupings; with those in the low EO group reporting to use the term far more often than those in the high EO group. This was also expected, given the widely-accepted relationship between language use and identity (Trudgill, 1995; Wodak, 2011), and the claim that individuals relating strongly to their ethnic identity will show more ethnic marking in their language use than those who assimilate more with the cultural majority, and so presumably have a language use more aligned with the majority population (Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001).

When compared with generation grouping, EO provided a more reliable account for variation in use of the vocative; thus supporting the notion that members of an ethnic group are not necessarily homogenous in their ethnic identification (Hoffman & Walker, 2010) and outlining that indeed ‘degree of ethnic identity’ differs from one individual to another. Grouping of participants based solely on time spent in Australia would assume that all participants within one group

identify with their ethnicity to the same extent, which as shown in Table 5 was definitely not the case. A comparison between age-related variables found that EO was in fact most influenced by age moved to Australia over any other time-based variable, and a strong correlation (Pearson's correlation=0.732) between the two variables was noted. NESB participants moving to Australia at an older age were more likely to score a high EO than participants who moved at a younger age or were born in Australia.

Ethnic grouping did not account for any variation in EO or use of *mate*. Likewise 'highest completed level of education' was not found to be significant, though further study using a wider range of class related variables would be required to say whether social stratification has any actual influence over the use of *mate*.

In observing who participants claimed to use vocative *mate* with, an important difference could be seen in the EO groups; high EO participants were most likely to use *mate* in addressing only males and Anglo-Australians, a use that suggested a more traditional perception of the term, as was also expressed in qualitative data from the questionnaire: 'I see *mate* as a word you reserve to male colleagues/friends in 'Anglo' circles' (female, 52, first generation, high EO). Participants in the low EO group were more likely to claim also using the term with females, relatives and 'members' of the same ethnic group, and were also more likely to use *mate* with addressees of *any* age, as opposed to just those of a similar age.

Given that the questionnaire measured the self-reported use of *mate* by participants, who participants claimed to be called *mate* by can be seen more as a reflection of who participants thought would use the term, that is, their perceptions of who *mate* would *normally* be used by. High EO participants were most likely to claim using *mate* with the exact same addressees they were called *mate* by, modelling their own use on the use of others, suggesting that the term indeed carries an assimilatory power for some NESB Australians. In contrast to this, the low EO group claimed a use of *mate* less aligned with who they reported called them *mate*, especially notable in the relatives and ‘members of the same ethnic group’ categories. These participants claim to use the term with people who don’t use it with them and who are not perceived to be the ‘normal’ users of *mate*, again outlining a more widespread and innovative use of the address term than in any of the other EO groupings.

A look at who male and female participants used *mate* with found that females in the low EO group claimed to use *mate* with a greater range of addressees than males, a finding also discussed in Rendle-Short (2009), who found that females were far more likely to report using *mate* to address other females than males were. Here, females claimed to use the vocative more often with relatives and females than their low EO male counterparts, again pointing to a more innovative use and a step further away from the traditional associations and use of the vocative.

Comparing differences in who males and females used *mate* with and were called *mate* by in the low EO group would again point to this same conclusion. Females claimed to use *mate* with these same ‘untraditional’ categories (Rendle-Short, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985) more often than they reported being called *mate* by them, and indeed more so than the low EO males. This would seem in line with previous findings in sociolinguistics, where females have commonly been noted as more innovative in their language use in situations of ongoing change (Hoffman & Walker, 2010; Labov, 1990; Trudgill, 1972). Indeed, it would appear that vocative *mate* is in a state of changing use, as presented in results here and in previous work observing variation across age groups (Rendle-Short, 2009, 2010).

For the almost half of the sample that claimed to not use *mate*, reasons and attitudes expressed in questionnaire answers most commonly discussed issues of gender and ethnicity; ‘[*mate* is] more often in males’ conversation... I don’t like being called *mate*’ (female, 30, newcomer, high EO), ‘for the newcomers to Australia, it is a bit strange [to use *mate*]’ (male, 28, newcomer, high EO).

Responses given by participants were of course varied, though overall indeed pointed to the notion of vocative *mate* as an iconic feature of Australian English and the Australian identity, as was stated explicitly by a number of participants; one writing ‘[*mate*] brings out the Australian identity’ (female, 21, newcomer, mid EO) and another ‘I love being Australian and I think *mate* is a word that makes me feel more Aussie’ (female, 23, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, low EO).

## 5 Conclusions

This study has aimed to examine the self-reported use of the vocative *mate* by Australians from a non-English speaking background (NESB). Through the use of a written questionnaire, based on that of Rendle-Short (2009) applied to Australians of an English speaking background, participants were asked about how they used the vocative and how it was used to them. An Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire was also used, as modelled by Hoffman and Walker (2010) in order to measure the role of perceived ethnicity of participants as a variable in use of *mate*. Data collected from 101 participants was analysed using a quantitative approach and showed that use of the vocative could be best predicted by gender and EO scores of participants. That is, males were far more likely to claim using the term than females, while participants with a low EO score (who can be said to identify *less* with their ethnic background) claimed to use and be addressed with *mate* more often than those with a high EO score. This concluding chapter discusses the importance and limitations of the study, as well as the possible avenues for future research.

Studies observing language use within a society without accounting for migrant populations ‘may well overlook important sources of change within the speech community’ (Horvath, 1991: 305) and as seen in Chapter 2, previous research focusing on the use of slang terms and colloquialisms in Australia by NESB Australians is limited and the use of vocative *mate* in this context had been entirely untouched prior to this study. A further innovation of this study has been the

operationalization of ethnic orientation. As such, this study provides empirical support for the widespread assumption that language use is tied to identity (for example, Clyne, 1991; Trudgill, 1995; Wodak, 2011). Results showed that EO is highly applicable for the use of *mate*, accounting for the variation found in the sample in a statistically significant way. Further, it provides a better means of grouping participants than other time-based variables (namely, groupings based on generation of participant, as is most commonly used in studies of migrant communities).

One limitation of the study that should be noted is the fact that only *self-reported* use of the vocative was measured, and it should not be assumed that this would mirror *actual* use of the term; indeed it would be preferable to observe the use of *mate* in natural discourse. Given the possible assimilatory function of vocative *mate* for NESB Australians (see Chapter 4), it is conceivable that those wishing to assimilate more with the Australian culture may claim to use it more than they actually do, while others relating most strongly to their community culture and background may understate their actual use of the term. Despite this however, the observation of self-reported use was beneficial to the study in that it allowed for comparison with findings from Rendle-Short's (2009) study, which is useful in forming a general picture of vocative *mate* use in Australia.

Another limitation of the study was the number of participants in the sample (101), which would have benefited from being larger. It is possible that some variables found to not influence use of *mate* may indeed be significant, as for the ethnicity

groupings, where no significant variation was noted despite the findings of much previous study claiming that ethnicity is an important variable in language variation (for example, Clyne, Eisikovits & Tollfree, 2001; Horvath, 1985).

Further study of the topic would also benefit from greater use of variables relating to socioeconomic level and class, in order to observe the social stratification that would be implied by *mate*'s traditional working class associations (Turner, 1972; Wierzbicka, 1997; Wilkes, 1985, 1993). Results in this study have found that claimed use of vocative *mate* is not affected by level of education, which is indeed related to socioeconomic level, in the NESB context. However, in order to reliably view the effect of socioeconomic level on use of the vocative analysis using a wider range of variables would be desired.

The results of this study have shown that for NESB Australians use of vocative *mate* is seen as a sign of 'being Australian', as written by one participant, '[being called *mate*] gives me a feeling of being part of a wider Oz community' (male, 23, newcomer, mid EO). This notion is supported by the fact that use of the address term indeed correlates with ethnic orientation of participants, those with a low EO score most likely to use *mate* overall. The patterns of vocative *mate* use for NESB Australians are also similar to that of the "mainstream" Australian society, or Australians of an English-speaking background (as in Rendle-Short, 2009), with variation in use between genders. At the same time, a greater variation across EO groups was found for the female participants than for the males, females with a high EO far less likely to use *mate* than those in the low EO group. Low EO

females were also found to have the most widespread and innovative use of *mate*, using the vocative with more addressees than in any other participant group. These findings outline the relevance of study observing language use by NESB Australians, and given that Australia's immigrant population is growing (see Clyne, 1997; Travis & Houle, 2012), it will indeed be interesting to see what other innovations are to come in the future.



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## Appendix – Use of *mate* and Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire



By filling in and returning this questionnaire you are giving consent to participate in this study and are allowing your results to be published and used in any subsequent further study. This study is in compliance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 and the ANU Policy for Responsible Practise of Research and any information given by participants will remain confidential.

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### PERSONAL DETAILS

Gender (please circle):            *Male*            *Female*

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest completed level of education (please circle):

*High school*            *Undergraduate degree*            *Postgraduate degree*

Which country were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_

If you were not born in Australia, how many years ago did you move here? \_\_\_\_\_ years

Do you speak any languages other than English? (please circle):            *Yes*            *No*

If yes, which language/s?

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**PART 1**

**Firstly, look at these sentences.**

“Ah *mate*, I’m not sure.”

“Yes *mate*. You’re right.”

“Where are you off to *mate*?”

“Thanks *mate*.”

“See ya *mate*.”

**Please answer the following questions.**

**1A:** Do you ever call anyone ‘mate’? (please circle):                      *Yes*                      *No*

If no, why not?

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**Go to Question 2**

**1B:** If yes, who do you call ‘mate’? (you can select more than one)

- Males of a similar age
- Males of any age
- Females of a similar age
- Females of any age
- Male relatives
- Female relatives
- Other [insert ethnicity] people
- Anglo-Australians

**1C:** If yes, when do you use ‘mate’? (you can select more than one)

- When I don’t know someone’s name
- Instead of someone’s name
- When I’m being friendly
- When I say hello
- When I say goodbye
- When someone calls me ‘mate’

**2A:** Does anyone ever call you 'mate'? (please circle):                      *Yes*                      *No*

**2B:** If yes, who calls you mate? (you can select more than one)

- Males of a similar age
- Males of any age
- Females of a similar age
- Females of any age
- Male relatives
- Female relatives
- Other [insert ethnicity] people
- Anglo-Australians

**3:** Why do you think people call each other 'mate'?

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**4:** Do you like being called 'mate'? Why or why not?

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**5:** Do you have any additional comments?

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## PART 2

On a scale of 1 to 5, how strongly do you agree with the following statements?  
1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree

	<b>strongly disagree</b>			<b>strongly agree</b>	
1. I think of myself as [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5
2. Most of my friends are [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5
3. Most of the people in my neighbourhood are [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5
4. Most of the people I work with are [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5
5. When I was growing up most of my friends were [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I was growing up most of the people in my school and neighbourhood were [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5
7. I speak [insert language] well.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I learnt [insert language] at home when I was young.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I prefer to speak [insert language] over English.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I prefer to read and write in [insert language] over English.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I frequently read [insert language] magazines and newspapers.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I prefer to listen to the radio in [insert language] over English.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I prefer to watch TV and movies in [insert language] over English.	1	2	3	4	5
14. When we get together, my family speaks [insert language].	1	2	3	4	5
15. I always speak [insert language] with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I speak [insert language] when I am angry.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I speak [insert language] when I am talking about something personal.	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>strongly disagree</b>			<b>strongly agree</b>	

	<b>strongly disagree</b>				<b>strongly agree</b>		
18. I always speak to my parents in [insert language].	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
19. I always speak to my grandparents in [insert language].	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
20. (If you have any children) I always speak to my children in [insert language].	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
21. (If you have any children) I always speak to my grandchildren in [insert language].	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
22. My parents think of themselves as [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
23. My parents speak [insert language] well.	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
24. My grandparents speak [insert language] well.	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
25. I would like to marry / I am married to someone who is [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5		
26. I would like to marry / I am married to someone who speaks [insert language] well.	1	2	3	4	5		
27. [insert ethnicity] people should only marry other [insert ethnicity] people.	1	2	3	4	5		
28. All [insert ethnicity]-Australians should learn [insert language].	1	2	3	4	5		
29. I would rather live in a [insert ethnicity] neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4	5		
30. In the past I have had problems getting a job because I am [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5		
31. In the past I have had problems renting a house or apartment because I am [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5		
32. In the past I have been treated differently because I am [insert ethnicity].	1	2	3	4	5		
33. There is a lot of discrimination against [insert ethnicity] people in Australia.	1	2	3	4	5		
	<b>strongly disagree</b>				<b>strongly agree</b>		

**Thanks for your time!**