

# ○ STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTION THROUGH ENGLISH: CHALLENGES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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This article draws on ethnographic data from a longitudinal study of newly-arrived immigrants of non English-speaking background in the Australian Adult Migrant English Program to investigate their opportunities for using English and the language learning strategies (LLS) they used to make the most of these opportunities. Analysis of their reports of spoken interactions in and beyond the classroom suggests that many participants had little awareness of the strategies they could use to increase their opportunities to interact with other English speakers. Most participants did not use any LLS and those they did use were largely social in nature and motivation. With a particular focus on social strategies, we consider participants' use of LLS to improve their English. We identify some constraints on their use of social strategies and some ways in which contextual and individual factors interacted for learners at different levels of proficiency. We conclude with some practical implications for LLS instruction in English language programs for new arrivals. The findings suggest that explicit instruction particularly in social talk and interaction could help learners increase their contact with English-speakers. Families and communities could also benefit from information to promote understanding of the communication challenges facing newly arrived immigrants of non English-speaking background.

KEY WORDS: second language learning strategies, Adult Migrant English Program, NESB immigrants, longitudinal data, social connection, social inclusion

## INTRODUCTION

Research has consistently shown that effective use of language learning strategies contributes greatly to successful language learning (Bialystok, 1981; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Cohen, 1990; Oxford, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). While early research focused heavily on strategies used by successful language learners that might be usefully taught to those who were less successful, more recent studies place greater emphasis on the social context in which learners find themselves and how learners exercise autonomy and agency in

maximising and taking control of their learning (Gao, 2006, 2010; Oxford 2003; Parks & Raymond, 2004).

This paper discusses insights into strategy use from a longitudinal study of 152 immigrants as they made the transition from English language classes in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) to study, live and work in the Australian community. With a particular focus on social strategies, we consider their conscious use of language learning strategies to improve their English speaking and listening in and beyond the language centre. We identify some of the ways in which contextual and individual factors interacted for learners at different levels of proficiency and conclude with some practical implications for language learning strategy instruction in English language programs for new arrivals.

## **LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES RESEARCH**

Language learning strategies (LLS) encompass the range of independent efforts that learners undertake to develop their communicative competence. They have been defined as tools for the active, self-directed involvement needed to develop second language communication skills (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) or specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques that students use to improve their second language development (Oxford, 1993, p. 18).

Social strategies involve seeking opportunities to socialise in the target language. They refer specifically to learners' efforts to use their knowledge and practise the language with other speakers, native or non-native (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 27). Social strategies also include users' awareness, monitoring and management of their emotions, motivations and attitudes towards language learning (Oxford, 1990c, p. 71). Following recent sociocultural perspectives on strategy use (see, e.g. Gao & Zhang, 2011) we view language learning as a social act related to the formation and transformation of identity, a process, we argue, that is every bit as important as the cognitive processes taking place in the learner's mind (Gao & Zhang, 2011, p. 25). Social strategies therefore play a particularly important role for immigrants of non English-speaking backgrounds (NESB immigrants), not only for language learning but also in providing a bridge to the English-speaking community. As social approaches to second language acquisition have stressed, it is largely through this engagement with community members that NESB immigrants build a sense of who they are and who they can be in English (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002). The successful use of social strategies is therefore critical not only to the development of immigrants' English language skills but also to their English-speaking identities and links with the wider community in which they settle.

However, in immigration contexts 'the right to speak' and 'the power to impose reception' cannot always be taken for granted (Norton, 2000, p. 8). NESB immigrants are often among the most powerless people in society and their opportunities for interaction can be constrained by the socio-economic context in which they find themselves. Even those who

arrive with considerable cultural capital can find themselves socially positioned in ways that not only restrict their opportunities for interaction in English but also reduce their investment in the whole process of language learning (Duff, Wong & Early, 2002; Goldstein, 1997; Norton, 2000; Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001). In this article we discuss (i) the use of LLS reported by NESB immigrants to Australia at different levels of English proficiency in developing their oral/aural skills; and (ii) the opportunities they had to extend their learning through the use of social strategies with members of the wider community.

### THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

The study followed newly arrived NESB immigrants in six different states in Australia for 12 months with the aim of understanding the English language demands of early settlement and exploring the fit between these demands and the language instruction provided by the AMEP (see Yates, 2010). The AMEP is a national program funded by the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship. It provides settlement-focused English language tuition to eligible immigrants and humanitarian entrants who do not have functional English and qualify under certain visa subclasses (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010).

Linguistic ethnographies can produce particularly rich and personalised descriptions of growth and change in language learners' lives over time (see e.g. Gao, 2010; Norton Peirce, 1995; Vavrus, 2002). The longitudinal study enabled researchers to follow the developmental path of individuals and groups at different proficiency levels. Over the data collection period we were able to get to know our participants as individuals, and to understand more about what affected their ability to make social connections.

One hundred and fifty-two (112 female and 40 male) learners from CSWE I (beginner) to CSWE III<sup>1</sup> (intermediate) levels in English agreed to participate and 125 remained at the end. Participants spoke over 50 first languages, (Mandarin, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean and Thai being the most common) and came from diverse social and educational backgrounds. A wide range of observational, documentary and spoken data was collected. In this analysis we draw from quarterly interviews in which participants were asked about language learning and use and how these changed over the course of the year. Interpreters were used where necessary. Of particular relevance to this paper are participants' reports of how, when and where they used English and what they had to say about their English language learning both in the language centre and beyond.

As Ortega and Iberri-Shea (2005) note, many questions about second language learning are fundamentally questions of time and timing. The study of learners at different stages brings insights into their changing language development over extended time. In searching the data for evidence of change and development over the period of the study, certain cases presented telling examples of the links between proficiency, strategy use and social connectedness. The

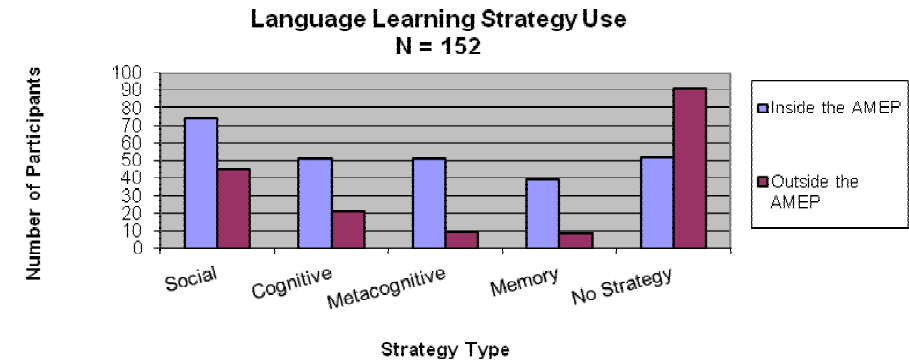
cases in this article highlight the relationship between participants' awareness of LLS, their ability to implement them at different stages of proficiency, their language learning growth and the social situations in which they were becoming English speakers. We found these situations had great bearing not only on their awareness of strategies but also their ability and willingness to use them.

## APPROACH TO THE DATA ANALYSIS

All participant information and interview transcripts were de-identified and entered into the qualitative data analysis package, NVivo 8 for coding and analysis. We searched the interview data for what participants told us about how they tackled speaking and listening and we coded the data for references to the use of LLS strategies. The object of our enquiry was therefore the strategies that they were aware of using to promote their language learning in social interaction. Overall, we found that participants demonstrated little awareness of LLS. Many participants made little or no mention of using any LLS and seemed unaware of how they could help them become more independent language learners, extend their social contacts or improve their communicative competence.

Analysis of the types of LLS mentioned by participants indicated that they made use of four broad strategy types: *social*, i.e. relating to social activity (Oxford, 1990c); *cognitive*, i.e. relating to the direct manipulation of learning materials (Oxford, 1990a, 1990b); *metacognitive*, i.e. regulating or self-directing language learning (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzares, Russo & Kupper, 1985); and *memory* strategies, i.e. aids for memorising and retrieving information (Oxford, 1990a). Figure 1 shows the percentages of participants who reported using these LLS inside and outside the AMEP. By "inside the AMEP" we refer to the classroom and the language centre as a whole, e.g., the library, cafeteria etc. By "outside the AMEP" we refer to language use in the wider community beyond the language centre. Overall, as Figure 1 shows, most participants made no use of LLS and those who did used predominantly social strategies.

Figure 1: Participants’ talk about LLS use inside and outside the AMEP



Overall, participants’ awareness of LLS was low. Seventy-four participants (49%) made reference to using a social strategy inside the AMEP while 45 participants (30%) mentioned using one outside the AMEP during the study. Even fewer mentioned using a cognitive strategy: Fifty-one participants (34%) mentioned using one inside the AMEP compared to 21 participants (14%) who mentioned using one outside the AMEP. Similarly, 51 participants (34%) mentioned using a metacognitive strategy inside the AMEP but only 9 participants (6%) referred to using one outside the AMEP. Use of memory strategies was also low: Thirty-nine participants (25%) made reference to using a memory strategy inside the AMEP whilst a mere 8 participants (5%) made reference to using one outside the AMEP.

The higher use of LLS inside the AMEP is most probably a reflection of classroom instruction but in fact, these results suggest that many participants made no use of any language learning strategies at all. Fifty-two participants (34%) did not mention using any LLS inside the AMEP and 91 participants (60%) did not mention using any LLS to assist their communication outside the AMEP. In order to investigate this issue further, we conducted a detailed qualitative analysis of strategy awareness and use among the participants. In what follows we present an overview of the individual and contextual barriers that appeared to impede the use of social strategies by the participants. These factors are discussed under the following headings, which we recognise are closely interrelated and in some cases, overlapping: strength of the first language (L1) network; roles taken by family members; limited opportunities to use English in the community; low levels of confidence and employment opportunities. We then illustrate how the interaction of contextual and individual factors impacted on the development (or otherwise) of social strategies for three participants at different levels of proficiency<sup>2</sup>.

### STRENGTH OF L1 NETWORK

Many participants had strong L1 networks, so they were able to use their L1 not only at home but also for most aspects of their daily life. While these networks provided vital support and reduced social isolation in the early stages of settlement, they also reduced the immediate need to learn English and the opportunities to practise it, as the following example illustrates:

Tracey, CSWE I, Q1

R: Do you go to the doctor? What do – yes?

[L1 exchange – laughter]

Int: Yeah she go to Vietnamese shopping centre and Vietnamese doctor.

R: So you never you – you – you don't speak English outside – outside the class?

[L1 exchange]

Int: She doesn't practise English yeah outside the – the classroom.

Tracey: [Speaks in L1]

Int: At home everybody speak Vietnamese.

Tracey: Yeah.

We found that many recently arrived low level beginners who had strong L1 networks only used English in a very limited way in shops, banks and when reading signs etc. This tendency was often closely linked to their relationships with supporting family members, which sometimes held participants back from 'having a go'.

### ROLES TAKEN BY FAMILY MEMBERS

Newly arrived participants were often able to rely on friends and family members to communicate for them in English outside the home when necessary. Thus, family members who were more competent in English sometimes took over social interactions or more complicated communications. This tendency could be demotivating if the more proficient relative was unsupportive or critical of their efforts to learn and use English. Individuals reacted to the assistance of a family member (context) in different ways; some found the courage to strike out on their own, while others continued to rely on their support:

Lia, CSWE II, Q2

Lia: [...] even ahh – the same like ahh when I want to call ahh maybe – my embassy like that...

R: Mhmm/

Lia: I tell my husband please call [laughter]

R: Oh but in your own language [laughter].

### LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO USE ENGLISH IN THE COMMUNITY

Studying in the AMEP clearly offered valuable opportunities for learners to use social strategies with each other and with sympathetic staff members. However, outside the AMEP, the extent to which many participants were able to use social strategies was limited. Once they completed the program, their social networks dwindled still further and even disappeared (see Yates, 2011 for further exploration of this issue). Some participants were socially isolated, severely curtailing their opportunities to improve their spoken English, particularly at lower proficiency levels. As one participant said:

Maryam, CSWE II, Q3

Because you know – I always – stay at home – and don't ahh have any relationship with other language – people ... you know... and I don't have – I didn't have any practice... so I think my English gets worse than before.

### LOW LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE

Participants voiced a common sense of inadequacy and fear of making mistakes both inside and outside class. This fear was discouraging and led for some to a sense that learning English was an impossible task. As the same participant put it:

Maryam, CSWE II, Q2

And ah sometimes when I think about learning English and what – I'm – when I want to speak good correctly flu – fluently I scared ... Oh! It's impossible!

For many participants, embarrassment, shyness and downright fear inhibited their use of English in the early stages after arrival, as the following extract shows:

Kristina, CSWE II, Q2

Kristina: When I came here first I feel bad because I afraid to speak

R: Mhm...

Kristina: To speak because I ahh I thought that people all the time ahh lis– listening me and after my speech maybe laughing at me – I think like that...

R: Mhm...

Kristina: Because I thought that my speech is bad.

These extracts clearly demonstrate the interaction of both individual and context, a situation that was often circular: Limited opportunities to use English and self-consciousness made it difficult to reach out but the apparent reluctance of community members to engage in interaction increased the difficulty. As this participant said:

Bryan, C02, CSWE III, Q1

Bryan: Ahh but the difficult is that all the barriers in Australia that I found is –

R: Mhm...

Bryan: So after we left the class –

R: Mhm.

Bryan: We – we will get difficult to find somebody to talking to them.

R: Is it?

Bryan: Yes.

R: Yeah? So it's difficult to find someone where you could practise English?

Bryan: Yes, yes.

### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Some participants found that obtaining work provided opportunities to improve their English skills through expanding business and social networks and increased engagement with other English speakers. However, for others, employment primarily provided practice in using routine, formulaic expressions rather than engagement in extended interactions. While these restricted opportunities helped to improve their confidence, they did not extend or develop these participants' English skills. As one participant put it:

Lucia, CSWE III, Q1

Lucia: I'm just – ah feeling totally like stuck... like – like when I know – you know it's like I'm feeling like I'm expressing myself always in the same way or always – using the same words and using the same –

R: Yes, so it's a restricted range of things – that you can say and do and you want to expand that, yeah?

Lucia: Exactly because I feel like robot, you know?

## CHANGES OVER TIME

For some participants, as confidence grew with increased levels of proficiency so did their willingness to experiment with new strategies and take more risks. Greater risk-taking led to rewards in the form of increased social contacts and improved strategic competence. Information from particular participants provided illustrative cases of change and development over time. We divided these cases into three categories: *low or no strategy use*; *willingness to try out strategies*; and *pro-active strategy use*. We now discuss each case in turn. Each participant had been in Australia for just under one year at the time of the study.

### LOW OR NO STRATEGY USE

Tranh, a Vietnamese woman in her early thirties was a CSWE I beginner. She was a stay-at-home mother with two young children, living with her husband and her mother-in-law in a neighbourhood with a large Vietnamese-speaking population. Tranh and her husband had spent ten years in a refugee transit camp in Hong Kong, having been denied entry by several countries on account of her husband's heart condition. She cared full time for her family in the camp and did no paid work. They were finally granted entry by the Australian government on appeal following an initial rejection.

Tranh seemed depressed and withdrawn during interviews and only started to come out of herself with the researcher towards the end of the study. All communication with Tranh was in Vietnamese through an interpreter. Tranh appeared to have only a small network of friends, who were all Vietnamese-speaking, outside her immediate family. She was obviously socially isolated in Australia, reporting almost no interactions outside the home. Via the interpreter, she explained that she only ever used English in class:

Q1

Int: [L1 exchange]: At home yeah she doesn't do anything – no homework – and she doesn't speak to anybody in English.

R: Oh! Okay. How – how come? You don't have time? To do the homework/

[Long L1 exchange]: Yeah she cannot yeah... she cannot do that because her English is too low.

Outside class Tranh avoided talking to people because she was afraid of making mistakes. This avoidance severely limited her opportunities for social interaction, even of the most limited kind, as the following extract shows:

Q2

Tranh:[Speaks in Vietnamese].

Int: So she tend not to – yeah. She te – she tends not to – to avoid – avoid talking!

[L1 exchange].

Int: Her – her speaking mmm is not improve yet. Compare with when she – she first came here. Even she attended a class... she's – yeah – very shy.

Tranh:[Speaks in Vietnamese].

Int: Yeah... only in – in class she has to speak English.

Because Tranh stayed home most of the time, her competence in English was slow to improve and there was little incentive for her to try out her English. This situation did not change at all between quarters 1 and 3:

Q3

Tranh: [Speaks in Vietnamese].

Int: I rarely use English because I stay home most of the time.

R: Most of the time – okay.

[L1 exchange]

Int: Also because I'm not very good at speaking so I do – basically I don't want to go out and communicate with other people.

The shops in Tranh's neighbourhood were mostly run by Vietnamese speakers. It was therefore possible for Tranh to do local shopping without using any English at all. Although by quarter 3 she was going to other shops outside the immediate neighbourhood, these trips did not lead to much social interaction in English:

Q3

R: If you go shopping how – what language do you speak when you go shopping?

[L1 exchange]

Int: I rarely go out by myself and if I have to go out by myself I just use some very basic English.

By quarter 4, Tranh had made minimal progress in English. She still seemed unaware of or unwilling to try out new strategies such as asking for clarification or repetition. The following extract shows how she gave up very quickly when people spoke too fast for her to understand:

Q4

Int: [L1 exchange]. It happen sometimes, like if I can't understand what they talking about I'm going to leave and give up.

R: You give up? Okay. Is that because they speak too quickly?

[L1 exchange].

Tranh: Yeah.

Int: It's very difficult to – to listen and to understand and also they speak too fast to me.

R: Okay and have you ever tried to tell them to repeat?

[L1 exchange].

Int: No.

### **WILLINGNESS TO TRY OUT STRATEGIES**

For other participants, as their confidence grew so did their willingness to take greater risks and engage more actively with the host community. The following extracts show how one beginner gained confidence in small, incremental steps over the period of the study. Soomi, a Korean woman in her forties, was just finishing CSWE I when we met her. She and her husband had moved from Korea to Australia to set up a small business. In quarter 1 she was shy and unwilling to speak directly to the researcher but her positive attitude to English learning came through, even via the interpreter:

Q1

R: Okay and how – how does she find learning English – does she – does she find it easy or difficult?

[L1 exchange].

Int: Because she can't – she can't speak or understand as much as she wish it's a bit difficult, but she really enjoys it she says.

In quarter 2 Soomi still felt nervous, even about talking to elderly Australian neighbours:

Q2

R: Would you like to have Australian friends?

Int: Of course she would like to make friends with some Australian, like neighbour, some elderly ladies but then because of Eng – language barrier she get frightened or she get scared to start.

However, by quarter 3 things were starting to change. Soomi had fought hard to overcome her shyness and she now said she felt more comfortable talking with people in English. In the extract below the interpreter describes how even small social encounters gave Soomi a sense of achievement:

Q3

Soomi: [speaking in Korean]

Int: So when she – when she – so when she ordered coffee for the first time and then she was really happy. She was really proud at having coffee sitting there.

The following extract describes her sense of achievement at renegotiating an appointment with a tradesman in English:

Q3

Int: And then the repairman came yesterday and it was – he was going to come other day, but then it was their mistake they – they misunderstood and then he came yesterday and she was about to go – come to school so she talked to him, oh you made a mistake and then we have to make another appointment on Sa – on Friday, she could talk to him so she was very happy.

Soomi: [Speaking in Korean]

Int: [laughing]. Before, she used to run away from them. She wouldn't answer the door!

Starting up the business venture with her husband had boosted Soomi's confidence, given her a sense of purpose and was forcing her to engage with English speakers. Starting work had also raised her self-esteem, as she explained in the following extract:

Q3

Int: before there wasn't anything concrete that she could feel that she achieved but now that she started the business, so especially since then she really feels she's getting there.

R: That's wonderful.

Int: And settling in really well she feels/

R: But even your appearance has changed!

Int: [L1 exchange]... Before – before she started the business she felt like it was a bit meaningless so probably her attitude was little bit kind of negative – could have been... but since she started the business even though it's really hard physically she really feels happy and a lot more confidence now.

One reason for Soomi's increased confidence was the realisation that she had wider networks through her business contacts than she had at first appreciated and she now needed to exploit these networks and get the best from them.

Q4

Int: [L1 exchange]... she had – she and her husband had quite good social network that she didn't realise before. But then since – when she started business they realise they – they have – they got to know really a lot of people and then they had quite good network around them.

R: Here?

Int: Here, yeah... so that – that was really helpful for them.

### PRO-ACTIVE SOCIAL STRATEGY USE

Among participants with higher levels of proficiency there were some excellent strategy users for whom success bred success. For the following participant, things got worse before they got better but once they improved, progress was rapid and was accompanied by greater confidence. Originally from Egypt, Emad was a single man in his mid-twenties enrolled in CSWE III. Initially, he felt little connection with the English-speaking community as everyone in his immediate community spoke Arabic. Although he had relatively high proficiency in English, he felt extremely nervous when interacting with English native speakers.

Q1

Emad: Yeah of course my teachers – all of them because they told me you are speaking good and my classmates your speaking is good how come – but before I was – I was not confident and because I am not confident and I never try to – to make a sentence and speak before in the whole year I spent here so I – I can't stay with you I'm talking about like I'm talking now...you will – I – I can't put two word with each other and now I'm sitting comfortable and I'm talking to you without panic... before it's – it was a very hard job to – to speak yeah.

In quarter 2 Emad still felt insecure about interacting in English, only now his insecurity was a reflection of starting to think more consciously about how he used English, as the following extract shows:

Q2

Emad: When I start thinking I– I start talking slowly and feel that I'm not– I'm not talking as easily as outside/

R: Mhm/

Emad: ... which is totally opposite to the beginning.

R: Okay.

Emad: It was hard to speak outside but easy to speak inside.

Emad had made a conscious decision to use English as often as he could, adopting a range of social strategies that increased his exposure to English. For instance, he convinced his classmates to use English rather than Arabic with him and he was pleased that they respected his wish:

Q2

Emad: [...] after like two weeks or something like that I – I told them/

R: Mhm/

Emad: I will not speak Arabic in class/

R: Yeah/

Emad: or outside of cla – outside class... if you want to speak to me – you have to speak English with me/

R: Yes/

Emad: because I'm here to learn English and this is the ONLY place and the only opportunity to learn English is IN this place/

R: Mhm/

Emad: Ah and all of them respected that and/

R: Okay.

Emad: All of them start speaking English with me ah all the time. I never speak with someone of them Arabic ah unless if – if there's a – a word I want to understand or she or he want to understand.

By quarter 3 Emad was excited to report many positive changes in his English use and his increased confidence in speaking English. He had found a job and was serving in an English-speaking Church. As he explained, although these roles did not add much to his knowledge of English, he now had to take the initiative in interacting with English native speakers:

Q3

Emad: So the job ga – gave me like confidence because I HAVE to speak with people I – I'm not like sitting at home or with my friend that understand my same language...

R: Mhm/

Emad: So there's some situations that I have to speak. There's some situation that I have to talk to people. Some issues I have to do so – some problems some things. So my job help me like give – ga – gave me like the opportunity to – to be confident of myself. I – it – it didn't add anything to my language...

R: Mhm/

Emad: but it gave – it gave me like confidence.

Emad capitalised on whatever resources and experiences were available to him. By quarter 4 he was considerably more self-assured:

Q4

Emad: Yeah I started to work a lot on myself, like – like I told you I'm in TAFE<sup>3</sup>, at work, with my brother, with any – just like – I always try to find a situation like that so I can go out and speak in English, you know....

R: Mhm/

Emad: All the time I'm trying to find a place that I can speak English in.

## DISCUSSION

Our data suggested that participants' use of LLS was largely unconscious in the sense that they appeared to be motivated by the desire for social integration and the need for employment rather than the desire to enhance their language learning *per se*. As participants gained in proficiency, they were increasingly able to implement social strategies to support their language growth. Taking risks brought a sense of achievement and increased motivation. Participants who were reflective about their English learning also seemed to grow personally through the study. As Gao and Zhang (2011, p. 36) found, reflection on their learning gave participants a sense of ownership and control. However as Gao (2006, 2007) also notes, strategy use is not solely a matter of individual choice but also a product of the interplay between proficiency and contextual social realities (see also Donato & McCormick, 1994; Gao, 2008, 2010; Norton & Toohey, 2003). Living in close-knit L1 communities provided support but also limited opportunities for social interaction in English. Shyness, self-consciousness and anxiety also restricted LLS use. Family members were generally highly supportive but some could be over-protective, leading to dependence. Other family

members could be critical, domineering or discouraging. Evidence from this project suggests that families could benefit from information on how to support both English language development and first language maintenance in the home (Yates, 2010).

### IMPLICATIONS FOR LLS INSTRUCTION

To recap, the longitudinal study enabled us to track participants' changing self-perceptions, monitor their progress and witness their sense of achievement over time. The interviews had the added bonus of enabling the participants to reflect on their language learning over the study. The limited opportunities for social interaction in English reported by the participants in this study highlight the importance of the AMEP in developing and extending both social language use and social networks. Learners could benefit from more explicit training in social talk not only in classes but also in extracurricular activities that help to foster social networks. Whilst it is perhaps unrealistic to expect that immigrants will be able to make instant friends among the settled English-speaking community, they could benefit from explicit instruction on strategies to optimise contact with English-speakers (Yates, 2010, p. 83). However, this responsibility does not only rest with NESB immigrants themselves (Yates, 2010, 2011). Our findings suggest that, notwithstanding their vital role in L1 maintenance, NESB immigrant families could benefit from information about how to support family members' English learning. English native-speakers might also benefit from public education promoting better understandings of the communicative challenges facing new arrivals from non English speaking backgrounds.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Certificates in Spoken and Written English Levels I, II and III.
- 2 Transcription Conventions:
 

-	Hesitation
...	Long pause
/	Speaker overlap
Int	Interpreter
P	Participant
R	Researcher
Q1/2	Quarter 1/2 and so on
[L1 exchange]	Dialogue between participant and interpreter in their first language
CAPS	Emphatic speech
- 3 Technical and Further Education College.