Reported use of English outside the AMEP

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Focus on first part of Research question 2:

What kinds of written, spoken and computer-mediated interaction in English do students engage in outside of the classroom and how can the fit between the out-of-class language learning opportunities and in-class language learning be enhanced?
Methodology

- Interview and fieldnote data.
- Available language networks that were drawn during interviews.
- Descriptions of recorded out-of-campus interactions.

Where do students use English outside AMEP?

- Shopping
- Bank
- Post office
- Doctor
- Centrelink/ Medicare
- Maternity lessons
- Childcare
- Child’s school (e.g. teachers)
- Social groups
- Books / Newspaper
- Insurance
- TV
- Further study
- Work
- Public transport
- Restaurant
- RTA/ driver license lessons/ test
- Neighbours
- Hairdressers
- Electricity/ telephone/ mobile/ internet companies
- Internet
- Library
- Making appointments
- Job seeking
- Church/ Religious affiliation
- Counseling
- Volunteer work
- Solicitor
- Accountant
- Real Estate Agents
- Random interactions
- Immigration
- Contractors
- Reading books/ Newspapers
- Friends
- Family
**General Trends**

- Most frequently mentioned: TV, filling in forms, making appointments, friends, family, work, shopping. But some participants point out that you do not need to speak much when shopping.

  Hannah: “Okay there’s not much to speak when you are shopping it’s just that when you don’t know where something is and you want to find out where to find that particular item that’s the only way you can go and ask a question”

- Most participants have someone (spouse/child/family member/friend/interpreter) to help them with difficult interactions.

**More trends**

- Few participants say they do much writing outside the AMEP.

- Pregnant participants, participants with children and participants in the older age group: no matter their level of English, often have to interact more with doctors/midwives etc. For important appointments participants get interpreter or go to L1 doctor. First two groups often have less contact with community.

- Difficulty understanding other speakers (either because of accent or because they speak too fast) or being understood → leads to embarrassment and frustration.
Level of English as obstacle

Dan: I'm not really very comfortable speaking in English. [...] Like okay I can speak easily I- [...] I'm not that baby that's still learning how to speak. [...] I s- I have thoughts in my mind I- I can organise these thoughts and I give- I can give the best talk ever but- [...] In Arabic so ah I want to be the same person in English I want to be like- [...] I love saying jokes but I can't- I can't- I-I couldn't-

Can't make friends or get a job because of English

Anna: You know <,> at the moment I just focus on the English because without English I couldn't get a better job.

Nina: Ah ah <,> you know ah [Nina’s friend] awesome at ah <,> she ah studies English at ah such an old age. [...] And ah I spoke English. But I found it's ah rather difficult for us to talk. [...] Deep talk [...] Yeah just the change. Ah- [L1]”
Talking on the phone

Many perceive phone conversations to be difficult and stressful:

Charles: And it was ah hm the most ahh things that I scared because <> when- when my phone ring. <>@@<> I am scared in the moment and but I use telephone. <>@@<>%

c05AR: Did they call you first? Ah haven’t they called- haven’t they called you? Did they say that in the email?

Charles: No. I receive- I receive ah yesterday a message- a voice message on my cell phone because- [...] But- but when I- ahh <> when I ah hear the message I couldn’t understand for example the name of the person because it was an accent- very hard.

Talking on the phone

Maria: Yeah sometimes I have some communi- problem in communi- sometimes it’s the listening if I’m over the phone someone is I can’t catch what they are talking like last week when I took off my teeth. And someone called me he was telling me where he is it was in Circular Quay. He was say- saying the wharf but I can’t catch it. I’m have to call the police and give them my mobile and they listen and to know what he was saying you know?
### Engagements in English according to CSWE Levels

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pre-CSWE/ CSWE I</th>
<th>CSWE II</th>
<th>CSWE III</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Shopping&lt;br&gt;• Neighbours&lt;br&gt;• Doctor (GP or at hospital, with receptionist)&lt;br&gt;• Centrelink – can now fill in forms&lt;br&gt;• a few go to L1 doctors/ use interpreters&lt;br&gt;• 1 volunteers/ 4 at religious community&lt;br&gt;• some report doing extra reading (books/ bills/ school letters)&lt;br&gt;• Do not use much English and often have limited/ formulaic interactions</td>
<td>• Shopping&lt;br&gt;• Doctor (quite a few say they go to L1 doctor/ use interpreter or relative)&lt;br&gt;• still a few expressed uncertainty using English alone&lt;br&gt;• Learning to drive important&lt;br&gt;• 2 are part of religious/ social group</td>
<td>• Shopping&lt;br&gt;• Doctor (start with interpreter/ spouse but often go alone later)&lt;br&gt;• More participants volunteer (book rounds at hospital/ for a festival etc)/ Social groups of religious community/ Community classes: sewing, drawing, playing in a band&lt;br&gt;• More workplace/ business interactions&lt;br&gt;• Generally more complex interactions, more reading and writing</td>
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### Engagements in English according to Age Groups

<table>
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<th>16-24</th>
<th>25-54</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Shopping&lt;br&gt;• Friends&lt;br&gt;• Doctor/ childcare etc&lt;br&gt;• Centrelink&lt;br&gt;• At work&lt;br&gt;• Random interactions (e.g. on train)&lt;br&gt;• Quite a few are involved in their religious community&lt;br&gt;• Further/ additional study&lt;br&gt;• Reading books, internet</td>
<td>• Shopping&lt;br&gt;• Friends&lt;br&gt;• Doctor&lt;br&gt;• Driver’s license&lt;br&gt;• Work/ Job search&lt;br&gt;• Child care/ school&lt;br&gt;• Further study/ training&lt;br&gt;• More dealings online (facebook, paying bills, email, chat, etc.)&lt;br&gt;• Centrelink&lt;br&gt;• Solicitor/ real estate&lt;br&gt;• Religious group&lt;br&gt;• Neighbours&lt;br&gt;• Reading books, newspaper, letters, etc</td>
<td>• Shopping&lt;br&gt;• Neighbours&lt;br&gt;• Friends&lt;br&gt;• Doctor&lt;br&gt;• Religious group&lt;br&gt;• Centrelink&lt;br&gt;• Read books, newspapers</td>
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Reported Problems: Reading the menu/CSWE I

Irene:  But when I go with my friends to the restaurant if I want to order something from the menu I find it most difficult [...] For example when I went out with my boss for a- for dining, I got the English menu [...] I did not understand the- the costs and the dishes there and the name of the- the dishes. [...] And I- I found it quite embarrassing, [...] And- and- and I cannot- and I find it quite difficult talking with waitresses or- or waiters.

At the garage/CSWE II

c01TR:  And you didn’t have any problem? When you discussed the car problems with ahm the mechanic?

Johnny: Yes like like yes I <?>met<?> <,> because it’s very this is academic academic. <„> Ahm many many vocabulary I cannot understand. [...] Yes. <„> So it’s very hard.
Returning a TV/ Pre-CSWE (CSWE II at the time)

Lisa: For example I I buy the television. Hhm but after seven days the the television is little bit no work. […] Sometimes the sometimes work sometimes no work. […]

INT: When I went to the shop they said there is not problem with it. […] They say cannot change. […] When I went home it still doesn’t work properly. […] Because when I went back to the second time they said uhm probably you have to send it for repair so I only bought it for fifteen days shop ask me to go and send it for repair […] Because if I know English well I would have confront the shopkeeper.

Job interviews/ CSWE III

Chloe: Because they just give some activities in this situation they show the slide and they said okay in this situation what is do and they give you like three minute and I have to think about that and straight away I have to go in front of the class and then I have to presentation in the situation but Ahh because I’ve never been in the sales ,> like Ahh area so it was really difficult to get the proper answer and plus I have to think about that in English.

c06AR: Yeah, yeah.

Chloe: <>@@<> It was difficult.
Making a complaint/ CSWE III

Xiao Mei: I just one day I just think <,> I I say <,> actually that time I I was <,> not well <,> actually had been sick <,> maybe a headache or something. Ahh Chinese always say I’m not comfortable. <,> I I always remember that I say I’m not comfortable. [...] So my husband say oh <,> No response. So later I’m get angry I say I’m not I’m so you know not well why you are <,> you have to show some concern to and he say well you say you are not comfortable he say you should make your comfortable. He didn’t tell me you’re not sick you are not he didn’t. So later I realise maybe the language.

Reading job ads and finding your way around town/ Pre-CSWE

c11TR: Has so have you looked in the newspaper for a job?
Peter: Yes yes a job.
c11TR: Did you understand the things?
Peter: No I did not understand.
c11TR: No? It's like a shorthand isn't it?
Peter: I just like it yes and and then if I get the the good word and then I will I will remember and then I I will get a number of a phone and then I will ring. [...] And they ask where this place? But it's but it's very hard for me. [...] Like this like this but I don’t know the the area but I don’t know the place.
Use of English with friends

- CSWE I and CSWE II: say have mostly L1 friends. CSWE II also have proportionally the most English speaking friends and generally make more friends within AMEP.
- Singles seem to have more English speaking friends
- Participants from China seem to have fewer friendships with English speakers.
- Women more often report having contact with partner’s friends.
- 45+ years old do not make many friends at AMEP.

Value of migrant friends

Alina: &lt;&gt;@@@&lt;&gt; Yeah because ah you don’t have a social life to the beginning because ah you couldn’t show um &lt;,&gt; to the other people what kind of person you are. They don’t know you and ah if you- you couldn’t explain you- you couldn’t speak good English language &lt;,&gt; you can- ah &lt;,,&gt; they reject you because they- ah the people don’t have patient to um &lt;,&gt; know you, to understand you, ah um it’s totally different now what I said. Ah it’s totally different when ah you have friends with other migrants because there are the same things. So once you start to have friends between the migrant people, you feel more confident for yourself. And once you start to- to sp- speak &lt;,&gt; better, you can ah see that the people accept you.
Cultural differences

Anna: Yeah. Oh <> something that is ah <> actually I want to make friends here. Hmmm [cough] but I'm not certain if I can communicate with them <> sometimes I'm afraid to make a mistake with them. So no now <> we don't have many friends <> just Chinese we can go closer and so a colleague in my company he once- once last time I told him I want to go back China <> I feel very lonely here <> I don't want to stay here anymore. And he suggest me to make friends with- with neighbours or locals. I don't- I don't know how to do that <> because everybody here <>@<> <> because here you know <> in China after- after we go back home after we have our dinner sometimes we go out <> have a walk. We can we can know each oth- some some- some people and we can make friends with them. But here [...] But here after I have my supper it's dark <> nobody came out.

Use of English in the Family according to Partner’s Language: Partner with same L1

- Most participants report using L1 with the partner and the children.
- Some use a mix of languages, e.g. L1 with partner but English with niece. Participants with children seem to perceive them as important for their language learning, either as motivation, practice partners or informant.
- Some children do not like to talk to their parents in English and even seem embarrassed about their parents’ language level.
- A few participants report to be dependent on their partner/children to some degree.
English only

- Mostly use English at home with partners but also children (often a mix), in-laws and extended family.
- Only few spouses learn participants’ L1.
- Participants report having problems communicating (‘deep’ topics but also pragmatics) with their partners and experiencing the sense of a ‘reduced personality’.
- Partner’s don’t want to correct either because they are afraid to offend, are too tired or think participant’s accent is ‘cute’.
- Others say that partners are supportive, e.g. help by making them answer the phone, or that the in-laws are friendly and take the time to talk to them.
- A few participants indicate that they rely on their partners for some interactions (for some there is a change over time).
- Lack of progress/language related shyness can cause tension between partners.

Level of English a cause for tension

Lila: And I, you know; and what else? Yeah I, we went for dinner with my husband’s friends but I was too quiet I didn’t say a word. So my husband got really upset and say like I, you should try I, you should try. But still I-I got I get really I got really upset too with myself because I just nothing came-came to my mind? Came up to into my mind.
**English only: L1 with children**

- Some participants say they use L1 with children (often from a previous relationship) when alone but English when spouse is around to avoid exclusion.

Mary: Ahh My daughter say to me mum <,> at school I have nine Thai friend also speak Thai at school. <„> Mix Thai mix English when in ahh at house because ahh I don’t want my husband get upset. Hmm Because sometime we speak Thai he will like to know story.

Yeah. When we speak Thai and I have to explain to him in English again oh we only talk at one time. Finish story not to have explain.

**English only: English with children**

A number of participants indicate they mostly use English with children → Some children lose L1, prefer to speak English.

Anne: Ahh every time. I didn't speak my own language. If I <,> at first when we arrive here<,> with my son <„> he-he doesn’t know how to speak English well fluently but ahh I speak him with Tagalog but since he arrive here my husband said that<,> can you please don’t talk Tagalog on your son so <,> so that the other kids will know if I’m angry or not until <?>...

Anne: No never. After one <?> ... <?> he never speak Tagalog anymore. He can’t understand.
English only: no other L1 speaker at home

- Also difficult for participants with English stepchildren.

Alina: Ah <,> daily life- ah because <,> my husband is Polish but his son, my stepson he don’t know Polish, <@> don’t </@> know Romanian. So was difficult time for us to- for him to accept me in his life. [...] Maybe this- ah he don’t understand my English maybe. But now we speak about lots of things.

Bilingual

- Some report using mostly L1 at home.
- 2 participants with generation 2 spouses say partners prefer L1 so that they can practice (one of them isn’t that proficient in L1, the other one says they use more English later on).
- Others use a mix of languages.
Single

- Most singles are male.
- A few are from African countries who speak English either as an L1 or are very proficient L2 speakers.
- Most report using a mix of languages, i.e. having contacts to both their L1 community and others in English.
- 1 participant says he and his parents decided to use mostly English at home now so that they can all practice.

Observations

- The extent to which students use English outside the AMEP varies greatly within and across the groups.
- Most participants have found ways to handle interactions outside the AMEP in one way or another.
- Language level is perceived to be an obstacle to achieve certain things (e.g. get a job, make friends) regardless of the CSWE level.
- Those that overcome inhibitions often have a catalyst moment that gave them confidence (e.g. get a job, make friends, manage to haggle with a shopkeeper, tell someone off in English).
Observations

- One of the more commonly mentioned difficulty is talking and listening on the phone.
- Language use in the family and connections to the wider society (Australian as well as other migrants) can have a great impact on settlement experience.
- What are the implications of these observations for the AMEP?