Expectations, goals and wishes: Towards settlement in a new country

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Settlement and Expectations

• What is settlement?
  “[t]he process of adjustment you experience as you become established and independent in Australia”

• Settlement success (Khoo & McDonald, 2001)
Interdependency between language learning and employment

- Learning a second/third language might become “more meaningful” if it is seen as a means to acquire occupational status and more often recognition.
- AMEP clients are motivated by, and benefit from vocational content courses as they include content of relevance to the current and career lives.

(Murray, 2007)

Expectations, plans, goals and wishes

- We consider:
  - Major themes emerging from data which are closely intertwined and often interdependent.
    - Language learning
    - Employment
    - Non-AMEP education
  - The degree of concreteness in the pathways toward the future in the three areas described by the participant.
**Degree of concreteness**

- No clear boundary between “concreteness” and “non-concreteness”

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Uncertainties related to:
- personal/familial circumstances;
- health/wellbeing—”if…” “when…”

**Continuum between:**

**Concrete plans and undetermined future**

- Criteria for “concrete plans”:
  - Accessibility/viability of the pursuits based on the participant’s background (e.g., age, education, etc.).
  - The way they are articulated (e.g., quantity and quality of information on the steps to take, reasons given to support their choices, knowledge of time frame needed to achieve goals).
  - Ethnographic knowledge (observation, information gathered through more informal interactions) (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008).
Continuum between: Concrete plans and undetermined future

- Criteria for “Undetermined future”
  - Goals expressed with reference to the future but without workable plans.
  - Aspirations expressed as wishes, dreams and hopes.
  - Lack of time frame and/or possible pathways towards their attainment.
  - Goals are also referred to in negative terms (e.g., “I would not want to do this.”).

Example (Female; 57 yrs; CSWE I)

`<c03AR>`: Okay. What are your plans for the future? I-- about English and about other things?

`<c03p005>`: [L1 exchange, laughs].

`<c03Int>`: [Laughs]

`<c03p005>`: [Speaks in Arabic]? Ah English!

`<c03AR>`: Okay. So you want to study English?

`<c03p005>`: Yeah?

`<c03p005>`: My husband all the man ah study ah … stand [Speaks in Arabic]… Ah my husband ah in the home.

`<c03AR>`: And after this course what are you going to do? What do you think you’re going to do?

`<c03p005>`: [Speaks in Arabic].

`<c03Int>`: If there was an opportunity for work I would work and if there is no opportunity well I’ll stay at home and prepare food and do the washing and--

`<c03AR>`: Is at home now. Is retired.

`<c03p005>`: In the home yeah.

(c03-p005-Q1)
Example 2 (Male; 35 yrs; CSWE III)

<co2p006>: Actually I want to do a forklift driving... Yeah. At the same time I want to enrol in TAFE for maybe it will be part-time, if I get... if I get job.
<co2TR>: What... what course are you thinking about doing now at TAFE?
<co2p006>: Actually I have to do English for further study first.
<co2TR>: Okay. So are you planning to do that?
<co2p006>: Yeah.
<co2TR>: Like next term?
<co2p006>: Yes. Yes, I waiting for the time because it’s start maybe [unclear] February.
<co2TR>: Yeah.
<co2p006>: Or January, I don’t know. So [unclear].

Example 2 (continued)

<co2TR>: And have you... have you got your enrolment for that ready or...?
<co2TR>: Oh right. Oh well that’s good. So after doing that, like what’s your goal... your end goal?
<co2p006>: Actually my goal, I want to be engineer you see.
<co2TR>: Right, so are you...?
<co2p006>: So yes. So this... it mean I have to improve my English first so that is why I said I wanted to... I want... I enrol in English for further study. Maybe it will take six months or a year. After I finish I will try to... to enrol in... in mechanic or in engineering.
<co2TR>: Right, at TAFE or at university?
<co2p006>: Actually I want to try to... to enrol in university.
<co2TR>: Fantastic, yeah.
<co2p006>: It’s so difficult but...

(c02-p006-Q2)
**Participants**

- 3 groups (as of Quarter 1)
  - CSWE III (73)
  - CSWE II (23)
  - CSWE I and PreCSWE (57)
- Different competence in English and level of education
  - Different plans/aspirations for the future.
  - Different ways of expressing/articulating.

**Data**

- Interviews across 4 quarters where the given themes were mentioned.

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**CSWE III**

- Language learning
  - 46 participants expressed their ideas/plans for language learning with reference to the future at least one point over the 4 quarters.
- Employment
  - All participants at the CSWE III level mentioned their future employment at least one point over the 4 quarters.
- Further education
  - Majority (46) want to do further training or education.
CSWE III—Language learning
Concrete plans
- 33 Participants identified.
  - Particular skills needed to improve for specific purposes.
  - Names/types of institutions they would enrol.
  - Time frame.
  - Working plans/actions.
- What participants said:
  - 21 named an advanced English course (e.g., EFS/LLNP).
  - 10 stated they needed to concentrate on particular skills because they were weak and/or required for the job they want to have.
  - 1 had alternative plans according to the result for an IELTS test.
  - 1 had a role model for language learning to follow.
- The ultimate goal was always related to employment.

CSWE III—Language Learning
Non-concrete/undetermined future
- 30 participants expressed:
  - Goals/plans in loose terms (7 participants)
    - Viable; some references for required skills, types of institutions/courses.
    - General expectations or awareness of their needs to improve English skills.
  - Wishes, dreams, vague expectations, and pending plans (26 participants)
    - Plans were pending due to:
      - Uncertainty about the level of English skills they would reach.
      - Expected changes in their personal circumstances.
    - General wishes to continue language learning/to return to formal language courses once the issues are resolved.
CSWE III—Employment
Concrete plans

• 33 Participants identified:
  ▪ The field they would like to operate in (new/equivalent to former profession).
  ▪ Only 11 seemed to be certain of the outcome of their planning and/or find a satisfactory arrangement which fulfill their current expectations.
  ▪ External factors: family commitments, language skills, financial limitations, etc.

• What participants said:
  ▪ 10 stated they wanted to resume their past occupation or related one.
  ▪ 10 wanted to set up a business. However, only 2 seem to have a clear idea on how to proceed.

CSWE III—Employment
Non-concrete/undetermined future

• 40 participants reported not having concrete plans in relation to their occupation.
• The uncertainty about the future
  ▪ The level of language skills required to join the workforce.
  ▪ Their own level of language skills not attested in the actual workplaces.
  ▪ Specific to the particular job they have in mind as well s related to both the labor market in general and the Australian work system.
  ▪ Having qualifications recognized does not translate into the knowledge of what is required in the workplace.
Example 3 (Female; 22yrs; CSWE III)

<c05AR>: So ah are you taking that course because ah you are going to ah-
<c05p012>: Uni-
<c05AR>: Study further in the university?
<c05p012>: Yep. After this course I'm going to study in tafe some course ah such as ah management… And ah then I transfer this course to uni… Ah and then conti- I want to continue my lesson in uni
<c05AR>: So if you take the management course in tafe can you- ahm ah can you get the ah course- course credited? Ah ah-
<c05p012>: I don't know because I must consult with someone in tafe after this course in new year… And- but I'm not sure how can I transfer this course to uni… I must ask but ahm I think- I think it's possible.

<c05p012>: It's- I think now I need for example ah how to speak with people… Ah in future I- for example when I want to find a good job… Appropriate job I need to speak well.

(c05-p012-Q2)

CSWE II—Language learning
Concrete plans

• 5 Participants
• Specific goals/wishes are mentioned. However, these were not elaborated as plans, except for one (IELTS test).
• What participants said:
  ▪ Plans to take further education.
  ▪ Plans to study English to get a certain grade in IELTS.
  ▪ Need for particular skills in English to be able to work in desired profession (e.g., communication skills, reading, writing, etc.).
• The ultimate goal: always related to employment.
CSWE II—Language Learning
Non-concrete/undetermined future

- 12 participants
  - Goals/plans expressed in loose terms (8 participants)
    - No specific time frame (general reference to the future)
    - Non-specific comments on:
      - The need to improve English to be able to function appropriately in everyday life and workplaces.
      - Language skills they need to improve further.
      - Some courses they might take.
  - Wishes, dreams and pending plans (6 participants)
    - General wishes to speak good English.
    - Unable to have a clear picture in regards to their English proficiency and what is required of them to improve--also embedded in other circumstances.

Example 4 (Female; 24 yrs; CSWE II)

- First still ielts<>
- <c01p003>: Yes<>
- Hm because yes I want go to the university<>
- To get a diploma<>
- <c01TR>: Sure<>
- <c01p003>: Yes<>
- So first I must ah through the ielts test<>
- <c01TR>: Uhmhm<>
- <c01p003>: Sure<>
- <c01TR>: And uhm I have a goals<>
- First ah the ielts I want to get point over five<>
- <c01TR>: Uhmhm<>
- For uni I think you need seven<>
- <c01p003>: Yes I know<>
- If for uni I should- I should ah six point five<>
- <c01TR>: Oh okay<>
- <c01p003>: Over six point five<>
- Uhm so that is because I want take the ielts in July<>
- <c01TR>: Okay<>
- <c01p003>: In July so the first I want get ah over five point<>
- And ah maybe next year<>
- I will- I will to do this again<>
- <c01p003>: So that is six point five<>
CSWE II—Employment

• All participants reported they want to work in a trade, semi-skilled or administrative occupation (hospitality, beauty salon, hairdressing, plumbing).
  ▪ 1 in a teaching position (primary).
  ▪ 15 expressed the need/will to undertake further study/training.
  ▪ 8 wanted to resume their previous occupation.
  ▪ 7 wanted to set up a business.
• Noticeable degree of uncertainty in all participants’ statements with regards to their desired employment.

CSWE II—Employment
Cause of uncertainties

• External factors, although identified, seem out of their control (if, when and but factors):
  ▪ Family commitments (young children)
  ▪ Health
  ▪ Temporarily going back to their country
• Almost all participants reported that their English proficiency to attain employment was not sufficient.
• Although they had a future direction in mind, they were not ready.
• Only 2 participants seemed to show a certain degree of planning towards a satisfactory professional outcome.
Example 5 (Female; 27 yrs; CSWE II)

<c01TR>: What kind of job do you want to do<>
<c01p001>: I think now I think a simple job like a cashier<>
Yeah<>
<c01TR>: Like<>
<c01p001>: Cashier<>
<c01TR>: Cashier<>
Cashier you mean<>
<c01p001>: Cashier<>
<c01TR>: Uhmm<>
Good<>
<c01p001>: And<>
Yeah in Woolworths maybe or Coles<>
<c01TR>: Uhmm<>
<c01p001>: Because I think my language is not little not good I think<>
Not very- not very well<>
But ahh I just have like a- I can use a computer<>

(c01-p001-Q1)

Example 6 (Female; 27 yrs; CSWE II)

<c01TR>: Yeah and my second question<>
What is enough<>
<c01p003>: What is enough<>
Hm I can go to the workplace
<c01TR>: Uhmm<>
<c01p003>: And I can go to the university<>
<c01TR>: Uhmm<>
<c01p003>: Study no hard- not very hard<>
<c01TR>: Uhmm<>
<c01p003>: And ah English is eno- is enough for me<>
<c01TR>: Uhmm<>
<c01p003>: Hm just ah I can ahm communicate<>
With other people<>
With teacher<>
With my workplace ahh staff<>

(c01-p003-Q3)
Example 7 (Male; 42 yrs; CSWE II)

<c01p002>: Not good. In Australia if you have a skill you can get the money.
<c01AR>: Hm.
<c01p002>: You can get the money.
<c01p002>: So I think get the money is important.
<c01p002>: Because I am forty- four three years old.
<c01AR>: You’re very young. <>@<>
<c01p002>: That’s a long time. If you spend three years to improve your English and two years and ah-
<c01AR>: <>@<>
<c01p002>: And finally you can get the bank manager. You are- maybe you are fifty five years old. So I can earn- I can learn the maybe plumber.
<c01AR>: Hm.

Example 7 (Continued)

<c01p002>: I can got a job maybe one year two year I got a job. He can’t- he can’t- he he don’t- doesn’t need the good English. Just ah simple- simple sentence is enough.
<c01AR>: Hm.
<c01p002>: So I think okay. Study Tafe. But during the half year I learning English. <>I learn English.

(c01-p002-Q4)
CSWE I—Language Learning

- 14 participants
- Only 1 comment could be regarded as expression of a concrete idea about language learning.
  - Needs to improve English skills to start a new business.
    “[To be] able to speak in a full sentence with grammar” (C08-p00-Q1)
- 8 expressed their expectations or goals in very broad terms or their simple wishes or ideas.
- Questions were asked to other 7, but...
  - Unable to make a concrete plan— not an immediate task.
  - Lack of language skills—feeling of powerlessness.
  - Strong wishes are often expressed in unrealistic vague terms (e.g., "perfect English") or related to own children (e.g., wish to learn English to help them learn).

CSWE I—Employment

- Little awareness of the relationship between language skills and employment and how to pursue both.
- Uncertainty about the future and real possibilities in terms of employment and employment pathways.
  - 16 related their future employment to their language learning progress although they are not sure how to pursue it.
  - Only 4 participants mentioned wanting to pursue specific training to find a job.
  - 6 stated that a job (any job) would give them the opportunity to learn English (social outlet as well as income).
- Main access to information through immediate network: relatives, friends of own community.
Example 8 (Female; 26 yrs; CSWE I)

<c03INT>: (Long L1 exchange). “I can find a suitable job for <,> for example even <,> now I don’t have any kind of job or career options because I don’t really know about the options. I couldn’t read in <,> in English so <,> so I have a very limited idea about career options so

(c03-p014-Q3)

Example 9 (Female; 23 yrs; CSWE I)

<c03AR>: Yeah sure. Okay. I just want to ask you now in the <,> in the first or second interview you told me that you wanted to do <,> to study hairdressing- hairdressing.

<c03INT>: (Short L1 exchange). Yes I- I thought so but then I felt that that could be hard because I don’t have enough time and you would not have enough time for your children and things like that.

(c03-p016-Q3)
Pathways towards settlement: Language, education and employment

- Complete the current level of CSWE
- Improve English Further
- Further education (job training/vocational/degree course)
- Get a job

Knowing the students

- Factors constraining individual agency.
  - Students' lives outside the classroom.
  - Their access to the target language.
  - Their past and current experiences.
  - Their wishes for the future.
- To know more about the life of the learners is to know more of their individual experiences and needs.

(Cooke, 2006)
How can this pathway be facilitated?

• Discussion points
  - Language learning as a prerequisite for a (better) job—how do we identify the real needs?
  - A job as a vehicle to learn English?
  - Further education/training as a vehicle to learn more English?
  - Language skills of a specific type to access both?
  - How to address different needs at different levels (CSWE I, II and III)?

Issues to consider further

• To what extent can the interplay between academic needs and students’ expectations/goals be enhanced during their studying at the AMEP?
• Is there space for a “School Culture” which regards students’ ability to plan for their future one of the main objectives?
References


