LEARNING AND LIVING IN ENGLISH

Naranchimeg Tsedendamba

BA (Arts), Mongolian State University of Education
MEd (Coursework), Murdoch University of Western Australia
MEd (Res), Murdoch University of Western Australia

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University,
Western Australia.
2013
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

..............................................
Naranchimeg Tsedendamba
ABSTRACT

This study was borne out of reflection on my own journey of English language learning. My knowledge of English has been built through my ‘lived-experiences’ of academic and social discourses that I encountered as a postgraduate student learning and living, in English, in Australia. I decided I wanted to be able to use my experiences almost as a touchstone for an investigation of the experiences of others like me. In order to do this, this study has been constructed, and is presented, so that the experiences of the researcher - me - run parallel to those of others who are like me.

The study investigates how the knowledge and experiences of English language learning, that Asian students bring with them to Australia, impact academic engagement and second language socialisation. It also examines how the use of explicit instruction in language learning skills and strategies (LLS) influences continued language development, academic engagement and fuller socialisation within the Australian community.

This research is a qualitative case study. The methodology of the study is informed by a number of theoretical perspectives including phenomenology and ethnomethodology as well as by the principles of designed based research. The study also draws on the work of Michael Agar (1994; 2006) to provide a framework for how Asian students adapt to their new environment. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted before and after a language learning strategy training program. Data were also gathered through the application and analysis of a strategy checklist and through the use of an online survey.

There were eight principal participants in the study. Their accounts of their experiences provide rich and detailed information about their language learning, about academic discourse socialisation and about socialisation more generally. Survey data suggest that the experiences of the principal participants resonate more broadly within the Asian student population of the university where this study was conducted.

The findings of the study identify areas of difficulty for the participants and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy program in supporting students to overcome these difficulties. The study reveals that strategy training can be assistive but that other
factors, such as language proficiency and educational experiences both in home country contexts and in Australia, can impact strategy training effectiveness. These other factors are widely reported in the Australian literature (e.g. Betty Leask; Erlenawati Sawir; Helen Benzie; Simone Volet). What is different about this study is that, through the utilisation of a range of theoretical perspectives to inform and enact strategy training and use, a new theoretically cohesive model has been developed that can be assistive in addressing issues associated with both academic discourse socialisation and second language (L2) socialisation more generally. The study also provides recommendations for institutions and advice for students to better support Asian students, like me, who choose to study in Australia.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my principal supervisor, Dr Lindy Norris, for her knowledge and guidance that have been so invaluable for me to complete this task. I count myself very fortunate to have met Dr Lindy Norris as my supervisor from the beginning of this research path. I have been guided by a true mentor who has supported, inspired and advised me throughout the years of my study.

My sincere thanks go to my co-supervisor Professor Simone Volet, whose knowledge, expertise, and valuable feedback have offered great insight for my research. Professor Volet’s support and pertinent advice have been greatly appreciated. I feel privileged to have worked with such an exemplary mentor.

I would also like to thank all the students who took their time and participated in this study besides their busy commitments. Without their dedication and openness, this thesis would not exist. My sincere thanks go to Dr Craig Whitsed, and Mr Colin Beasley, Murdoch Institute of Technology staff, and friends who helped me to recruit research participants.

I wish to acknowledge my husband Steve who supported me for better or worse. I greatly appreciate his patience, faith, and loving support. I also thank my wonderful friends and fellow postgraduate students. Special thanks go to my loving mother Orgodol, sisters Nimaa, Naraa and Gerlee and my beautiful niece Rumeysa. Their unending support and a strong belief in me throughout the research and writing process have helped me immensely to achieve my goal. Finally, I wish to acknowledge Kally Whitehead for proofreading some pages of my dissertation.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ v

TABLE OF CONTENTS .......................................................................................................... vi

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ................................................................................................... ix

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................ x

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. xi

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................... 1

1.1 Setting the scene: Personal perspective ................................................................. 1

1.2 Aims of the study ...................................................................................................... 3

1.3 Setting the scene: Research perspective ............................................................... 4

1.4 Languaculture ........................................................................................................... 6

1.5 Research questions .................................................................................................. 8

1.6 Significance of the study ........................................................................................ 8

1.7 Overview of the study ............................................................................................. 9

### CHAPTER 2 A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ........................................................... 11

2.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 11

2.2 Introducing the concept of LLS ................................................................................ 11

2.2.1 A potted history of LLS research ....................................................................... 12

2.2.2 Defining LLS ........................................................................................................ 16

2.2.3 LLS classifications ............................................................................................... 18

2.3 Variables affecting strategy choice ............................................................................ 22

2.3.1 LLS use and culture ............................................................................................ 22

2.3.2 LLS use and proficiency ...................................................................................... 24

2.3.3 LLS use and learning context .............................................................................. 26

2.4 Strategy instruction ................................................................................................... 27

2.4.1 The CALLA model ............................................................................................... 28

2.4.2 Explicit or integrated strategy instruction ............................................................ 28

2.4.3 Studies investigating the impact of LLS intervention on learners ...................... 29

2.5 Introducing the concept of language socialisation ................................................. 30

2.5.1 The background to language socialisation ........................................................ 31

2.6 L2 socialisation ........................................................................................................ 32

2.6.1 ‘Novice’ and ‘expert’ relationship ........................................................................ 32

2.6.2 Studies investigating the L2 socialisation process .............................................. 33

2.7 Introducing the concept of L2 academic discourse socialisation ......................... 36

2.7.1 Studies investigating L2 academic discourse socialisation .................................. 37

2.8 L2 students of Asian background in the Australian context .................................... 39

2.8.1 Early studies on Asian learners: Surface approach to learning ......................... 39

2.8.2 Challenge on early claim: Surface and deep approaches to learning ............... 40

2.8.3 English proficiency issue: Transitioning into Australian university learning .... 41

2.8.4 English proficiency issue: Forming relationships with Australian students .... 41

2.8.5 Programs to increase academic performance and intercultural interaction ....... 42

2.8.6 Little attention to enhancing language ................................................................. 44

2.8.7 L2 students of Asian background and the wider Australian community .......... 44

2.9 Conclusion ................................................................................................................... 46
6.5.1 Oral communication strategy use ......................................................... 149
6.5.2 Vocabulary strategy use ................................................................. 152
6.5.3 Listening strategy use ................................................................. 154
6.5.4 Writing strategy use ................................................................. 155
6.5.5 Reading strategy use ................................................................. 157
6.5.6 Tutorial participation strategy use .................................................. 158
6.6 Conclusion ................................................................................. 161

CHAPTER 7: LEARNING AND LIVING AFTER THE STRATEGY TRAINING PROGRAM ................................................. 163
7.1 Introduction ................................................................................. 163
7.2 The impact of oral communication strategies on the L2 socialisation process... 164
7.3 The impact of strategies on the L2 academic discourse socialisation process.... 168
7.4 Conclusion ................................................................................. 177

CHAPTER 8: ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS, SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY, FURTHER RESEARCH, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE .................................................................................................................. 178
8.1 Introduction ................................................................................... 178
8.2 Review of the research process ....................................................... 180
8.3 Addressing the research questions .................................................. 182
8.4 Research question one .................................................................. 183
  8.4.1 Participants’ English language learning and types of LLS used in home country contexts ........................................................................................................ 183
  8.4.2 LLS participants used to facilitate their academic engagement and socialisation process in the Australian context .................................................. 184
  8.4.3 Impact of LC1 on academic engagement, socialisation processes and continued development of English proficiency within Australia ................................... 184
8.5 Research question two .................................................................. 186
  8.5.1 Determining the form of the strategy training program ................. 186
  8.5.2 Impact of the strategy training program in the use of LLS on academic engagement, socialising within the Australian context and continued language development (LC2) ........................................................................ 186
  8.5.3 Impact of strategy training in the use of LLS to support ‘translation’ into the LC2 ................................................................. 193
8.6 Reconceptualising Agar’s languaculture model ................................ 193
  8.6.1 Explaining the ‘refined languaculture model’ .............................. 194
  8.6.2 Addressing the final research question ...................................... 197
8.7 Contributions of this study ............................................................ 199
  8.7.1 Contributions to strategy training programs ............................... 200
  8.7.2 Contributions to theoretical orientations in LLS research ........... 201
8.8 Limitations of the study ............................................................... 202
8.9 Suggestions for future research ...................................................... 204
8.10 Recommendations for institutions ................................................ 204
8.11 Advice for students like me ........................................................... 206

APPENDICES ......................................................................................... 210
REFERENCES ......................................................................................... 228
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALLA</td>
<td>Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBRM</td>
<td>Design Based Research Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>English for Academic Purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELICOS</td>
<td>English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Third language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC1</td>
<td>Home/source languaculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC2</td>
<td>Target languaculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLS</td>
<td>Language learning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL</td>
<td>Strategy Inventory for Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>Test of English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Agar's languaculture model 7
Figure 6.1 A model of my reflective practice adapted from Wallace (1991) 137
Figure 6.2 Scaffolding steps informed by the CALLA framework 146
Figure 8.1 A reconceptualisation of Agar's languaculture model 193
**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3.1 Data collection procedures ............................................. 68

Table 3.2 Initial in-depth semi-structured interview guide .................. 69

Table 3.3 Journal entry No. 3 - an example of observation note .......... 72

Table 3.4 Second semi-structured in-depth individual interview guide .... 73

Table 3.5 Provisions to ensure trustworthiness for this study based on Guba's (1981) criteria ........................................................................... 80

Table 4.1 Brief summary of participants' background information ......... 86

Table 5.1 Patterns of participants' English language learning in their home country contexts .................................................. 122

Table 5.2 Challenges associated with participants' L2 academic discourse socialisation .................................................. 125

Table 5.3 Challenges associated with participants' L2 socialisation ........ 128

Table 5.4 Findings that emerged from the online survey ....................... 130

Table 5.5 Using data for the design of the strategy intervention .......... 132

Table 6.1 Oral communication strategies to engage with the L2 socialisation process .................................................. 138

Table 6.2 LLS to enhance L2 academic socialisation ............................ 140

Table 6.3 Module outlines ................................................................. 143

Table 6.4 Dara, Sung Hi, Annan and Maly's use of oral communication strategies .................................................. 150

Table 6.5 Maly and Akio's vocabulary strategy use ............................... 153

Table 6.6 Mariko's listening strategy use ........................................... 154

Table 6.7 Ai and Annan's use of writing strategies ............................... 156

Table 6.8 Maly, Ai, Akio and Nori's reading strategy use ...................... 157

Table 6.9 Maly, Ai, Akio and Nori's use of tutorial participation strategies 159
**LIST OF APPENDICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2.1</td>
<td>Example strategies</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3.1</td>
<td>Information Letter</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3.2</td>
<td>Questions for the initial semi-structured in-depth interview</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3.3</td>
<td>Online survey on English language learning experiences</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3.4</td>
<td>Questions for the second round semi-structured in-depth interview</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6.1</td>
<td>Module 1 - Example session</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6.2</td>
<td>Strategy checklists</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>