Integrating Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) into a Non-formal Learning Environment to Support Migrant Women Learners’ Vocabulary Acquisition

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Declaration

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 institutions.

Kham Sila Ahmad
Abstract

Learning to speak English is one of the challenges faced by non-English speaking background migrant women in Australia. It is essential to develop conversational skills to communicate and express opinions, feelings and thoughts to other English speakers. Vocabulary acquisition is necessary, as conversational exchanges become more meaningful when a speaker has increased choices from an accumulated word bank.

Research has shown that Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is feasible for language learning but little research has been undertaken on its effect on migrant women’s language learning. This study investigated the impact of MALL on migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition in an Australian context. The questions that guided this research were:

1. How is MALL integrated into the non-formal conversational English classroom for second language migrant women learners?
2. What MALL factors affect migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition?
3. What socio-cultural factors affect migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition?

A case study method using semi-structured interviews and observations was used. Fifteen migrant women who attended conversational English sessions in a community centre participated in this study and were grouped into three case studies:

- Case Study 1 - ten migrant women attended the regular conversational sessions (referred to as non-MALL as learning did not include the use of mobile technologies, and it provided a baseline for comparison).
- Case Study 2 - five migrant women from Case Study 1 who had already experienced non-MALL, and then continued their learning in MALL-integrated sessions (referred to as hybrid as learning was assisted by a tablet and a language app).
- Case Study 3 - five new migrant women who attended only MALL-integrated sessions (referred to as MALL where learning was assisted by a tablet and a language app).

Each case study was analysed thematically, followed by analyses across the three case studies. Three key impacts of integrating MALL that affect a learner’s vocabulary acquisition were identified as:

1. The type of vocabulary learning environment (non-MALL, hybrid, or MALL), as each offered different attributes and learning experiences.
2. The learners' individual characteristics (L1 and English literacy/education background, the learning distractions they encountered, confidence level and pronunciation capabilities).

3. The introduction of technology (the tablet and app) changed the dynamics of learning from teacher-centred to student-centred, created extended scaffolding, and encouraged self-regulated/personalised learning.

The results also indicated that women in all three case studies acquired new vocabulary. In particular, the MALL-integrated environments provided: (1) a significantly enriched and positive vocabulary learning experience through using the app; (2) exposure to English and opportunities to use it during practice and interaction with peers and the teacher; (3) a 'reusable', accessible, and rich resource for learning through the use of the app. However, the hybrid learning environment was found to be the most effective learning environment. The features that led to the hybrid's effectiveness include the learners' extended exposure and opportunities to use English, more intensive practice and repetition of vocabulary with the app activities and exercises, and the exploration of more varied topics. The findings of this research led to the development of a MALL-enhanced framework for vocabulary acquisition for migrant women learners in a non-formal learning environment.
Acknowledgement

I extend a sincere note of gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Jocelyn Armarego and Dr Fay Sudweeks, for the tremendous guidance, support, patience, inspiration and encouragement offered throughout this research journey.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), a successor of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), is a new development in second and foreign language learning. The majority of studies conducted in the MALL field over the past twenty-five years demonstrated its feasibility for language learning (e.g. Afzali, Shaban, Basir, & Ramazani, 2017; Burston, 2014c, 2017; Hockly, 2013; Shadiev, Hwang, & Huang, 2017; Stockwell, 2008). However, these studies are based on learning that takes place within academic contexts, such as schools and universities, where participants are literate in L1 (native/first language), familiar with L2 (second language), and are in a formal and structured learning environment. Little research has been undertaken on using MALL in a non-academic community; that is, culturally and linguistically diverse migrant women, in a non-formal and non-academic setting. Even though literate in L1, migrant women struggle with the language of their new country. This research addresses that gap; specifically, in the Australian context.

1.1 Research background

The causes of migration into Australia are either ‘voluntary’ or ‘forced’ (Kunz, 1973; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017, 2018). While both have a similar purpose, which is a better life and future for their families, the latter is due to unsafe conditions in their own homeland as a result of political turmoil, war, or other forms of oppression that led them to seek refuge in Australia (identified as Humanitarian Entrants). Upon arrival, families have to adjust to a new life and culture in Australian society whilst dealing with emotional and psychological issues, sociocultural and socioeconomic challenges, and learning English as a new language for communication (Office of Multicultural Interests, 2012). Support in improving the migrants’ language skills is critical to their personal, social and economic well-being, and eventually to building an inclusive Australia (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2012; Migliorino, 2011).

One of the common barriers identified by researchers (Coates & Carr, 2005; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Fozdar & Hartley, 2012; Miralles-Lombardo, Miralles, & Golding, 2008) for migrants’ ease of settlement is their lack of English language proficiency. For men, the responsibility of seeking financial stability for the family forces them to go out into the workforce and into society, therefore overcoming barriers and challenges more quickly than women do. Typically, women assume the responsibility of undertaking household duties and engaging in the full-time care of their families. The at-home activities lead to isolation from the
broader community, usually over several years. These women’s lives are strongly influenced by personal and sociocultural factors both pre- and post-migration (Adult Migrant English Services, 2011; McMichael & Manderson, 2004; O’Dwyer & Mulder, 2015). As such, most are only ready for further education or to find work when their children are old enough (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). Meanwhile, one of the few activities these women are able to participate in, is attending local and non-profit community-based centres. Amongst other activities offered, programs on some form of English learning may be available. Even though these programs are non-accredited and short-term in nature, they provide the kind of learning opportunity and space that suit the women’s need for a friendly and non-rigid learning environment (Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008).

1.1.1 Support for English learning

In Australia, funded support for migrant and refugee English learning is provided through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). The aim of the program is to help develop the English language skills needed to access services in the community, provide a pathway to employment, training or further study, and to participate in other government programs (Department of Education and Training, 2017). However, some eligible women forego this opportunity due to personal and sociocultural factors, migration histories and/or fear of engaging in formal education (Adult Migrant English Services, 2011; McMichael & Manderson, 2004). Instead, these women opt to attend non-formal English learning at local and non-profit community-based centres, such as community spaces, public libraries and churches. A comparison between English learning services offered by the AMEP (Department of Education and Training, 2017) and a typical community-based program (Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008) can be made in terms of their different aspects (Table 1-1). Both programs are provided free to learners.

In contrast to the AMEP, typical local and community-based conversational English programs do not require on-going commitment and run for short durations (for example, two hours weekly, in the morning during the school term). They are intended as a meeting place for migrants and refugees to learn and practice English in a more relaxed and fear-free environment, with the flexibility and the non-formal setting of the community-based conversational programs appealing to migrant women.
Table 1-1: Comparison of a community-based English program and the AMEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Typical local and community-based conversational English program</th>
<th>AMEP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>Provide a space for learners to practice spoken English</td>
<td>Prepare learners to communicate and provide learners with the knowledge for everyday living, for work and for further study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) adults who have little or no English</td>
<td>People who have little or no English; aged 18 years or older, or 15 to 17 years old and not attending school; are permanent residents or hold an eligible temporary visas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childcare services</strong></td>
<td>Not provided due to budget restriction</td>
<td>Provided free to learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning setting</strong></td>
<td>Non-formal</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning hours</strong></td>
<td>2-hour free weekly sessions, totaling 80 hours of sessions within the year</td>
<td>510 hours (free for each eligible learner) to be completed within 5 years (e.g. three-hour sessions, three times a week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learners’ streaming</strong></td>
<td>None - various English proficiencies, education and literacy levels, in one session</td>
<td>Screened and grouped into similar English proficiencies, education and literacy levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning material</strong></td>
<td>Flexible discussion topics</td>
<td>Structured curriculum that covers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• learning English, from beginner to intermediate level, to help learner settle successfully in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• learning about Australian society, culture, customs and working in Australia, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• learning speaking, listening, reading and writing skills – for everyday living, work and further study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner evaluation</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Learners are certified based on the completion of the required course levels and assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program availability</strong></td>
<td>A single community-based program</td>
<td>Nationwide (provided by Registered Service Providers who are contracted to the Australian Department of Education and Training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>Based on successful grant/funding application to various local government departments and non-profit organizations</td>
<td>Australian Government Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.2 Significance of vocabulary

A learner with diverse vocabulary can connect with a greater variety of people in their particular areas of interest (Lightbown & Spada, 2013) and become proactive in talking and dealing with issues in detail. Being confident gives learners the ability to voice their opinion clearly, share ideas and thoughts or simply make conversation (J. Ahmad, 2011; Elgort, 2011; Nation & Newton, 2009). This increases the chances of having other people understand what is
expressed. Learners are able to grasp ideas and think more rationally, incisively, and become more informed and involved by possessing vocabulary knowledge. It is claimed by Nation (2000), that the nature of acquiring vocabulary begins with a new word, then it is enriched and established as the words are met again; in other words, it is a cumulative process. Eventually, as learners’ knowledge becomes more established, they are able to see how words are related.

Vocabulary learning is a significant component of acquiring conversational proficiency and competence for adult second language learners (J. Ahmad, 2011). Considering their L1 literacy level and educational background, and current English level, vocabulary acquisition centring on the speaking and listening branches of language development is seen as potentially useful and beneficial. A greater number of words in learners’ word banks provide them with more instruments to work with when putting forward their own ideas and comprehending and examining the ideas of others (J. Ahmad, 2011; Elgort, 2011). These instruments are also useful for reading comprehension, where readers try to comprehend unfamiliar words they encounter in a text (Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

### 1.1.3 Significance of MALL

As part of CALL, MALL utilises mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets and iPods to support language learning “anytime, anywhere” (Burston, 2014b; Kukulska-Hulme, Norris, & Donohue, 2015; Stockwell & Hubbard, 2013; Tai, 2012). According to Burston (2016) from the inception of MALL, the application of mobile technologies to language learning has been targeted to L2 English where over 60% of all implementations focusing on English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) subjects in schools, while about 75% of all studies have involved tertiary education learners (Burston, 2014b). Despite the enormous improvements in the functionality of mobile devices in recent years, Burston (2017) finds that very few MALL implementations have engaged the students in interactive and communicative language learning activities. Though few in number, the most pedagogically innovative MALL applications have been demonstrated by Tai (2012), undertaken with 35 EFL learners who were sixth graders of a primary school in Taiwan.

The use of mobile devices, particularly tablets, has been replacing the ageing language laboratories, and desktop installations (Burston, 2017). The use of mobile devices allows any classroom with wireless network access to take on the functions of a language lab when required. This has become more common for school children where the use of tablets for language activities is extended beyond the computer lab into the classroom. While for school children these activities are usually limited to the classroom, for adult learners who own a tablet
or smartphone, these language activities can be undertaken beyond the classroom, and virtually anywhere, anytime.

The functionality of current tablets and smartphones, and the development and abundance of language applications (apps), can be exploited for the benefit of migrant women’s language learning. Mobile devices are suitable for language learning as they are portable and lightweight, with additional features and functionalities that include connectivity, context sensitivity, individuality and social interactivity (Klopfer, Squire, & Jenkins, 2002; Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2015; Nisbet & Austin, 2013). According to Burston (2017), the effective exploitation of mobile technologies requires careful planning and needs to be firmly grounded in learning theory in general and the principles of second language acquisition in particular. In addition, the learners’ activities need to be constructivist, collaborative, learner-centred, task-based, and require communicative linguistic interaction to complete.

1.2 Research aims and questions

The broad aim of this research is to investigate the impact of utilising MALL for migrant women’s English vocabulary acquisition and conversational skills. To address this aim, the specific objectives of this research are to:

- Identify MALL factors that affect migrant women’s conversational skills.
- Identify the impact of MALL on migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition.
- Identify the sociocultural factors that affect migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition.

To address these objectives, the following research questions are investigated to understand the impact of MALL on migrant women’s English vocabulary acquisition and its effect on their conversational skills.

1. How is MALL integrated into the non-formal conversational English classroom for second language migrant women learners?
2. What MALL factors affect migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition?
3. What socio-cultural factors affect migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition?

1.3 Research design

A qualitative research design of an ethnographic case study method using semi-structured interviews and observations is used in this research. The research follows the design suggested by Creswell (2012), in Figure 1-1 (the boxes highlighted in blue were the steps taken by the researcher).
Figure 1-1: Research steps

- Step 1 involves identifying the research problem, specifying the issue to study, developing a justification for studying it, and suggesting the importance of the study.
- Step 2 involves reviewing the relevant literature by locating summaries, books, journals, and indexed publications on the topic and then selectively choosing the literature to include and review.
- Step 3 specifies the purpose for this research, which consists of identifying the objectives for the study, narrowing it to specific research questions and selecting a qualitative research design, specifically the ethnographic case study.
- Step 4 engages in collecting data, which includes identifying and selecting individuals for the study, obtaining their consent for the study, and gathering information by interviewing and observing their behaviours.
- Step 5 involves analysing and interpreting the data.
- Step 6 involves reporting of the interpreted data.
The fifteen women who are recruited for this research have the following characteristics:

- entered Australia via either the “voluntary/economic” stream (e.g. following their husband’s new employment or looking to build a new life) or “forced/humanitarian” stream (e.g. due to war, thus seeking refuge and resettlement);
- voluntarily attend the community conversational English sessions to improve conversational skills (native language (L1) backgrounds vary from pre-literate to highly literate);
- varied levels of English proficiency from very low to low; and
- the majority are full-time stay-at-home mothers.

These women are grouped into three case studies where each offered different non-formal learning settings for acquiring vocabulary:

- Case Study 1 - ten migrant women attended the regular conversational sessions (referred to as non-MALL as learning did not include the use of mobile technologies, and provided a baseline for comparison).
- Case Study 2 - five migrant women from Case Study 1 who had already experienced non-MALL, and then continued their participation by learning in MALL-integrated sessions (referred to as hybrid where learning was assisted by a tablet and a language app).
- Case Study 3 - five new migrant women who attended only MALL-integrated sessions (referred to as MALL where learning was assisted by a tablet and a language app).

In summary, Case Study 1 has ten new participants, Case Study 2 has five previous participants from Case Study 1, and Case Study 3 has five new participants.

To investigate the feasibility of integrating MALL in the migrant women’s vocabulary learning environment and its impact on their conversational proficiency, each case study is analysed thematically. This is followed by an analysis across the three case studies.

1.4 Significance of research

Very few studies on MALL are found that show its feasibility for migrant women who have to learn a new language in order to survive or function in a new country. However, in the past twenty years, studies have shown that MALL is feasible for language learning in general (Afzali et al., 2017; Burston, 2014c, 2017; Stockwell, 2008). This research addresses this gap in the application of MALL to migrant women language learning in the Australian context. The significance of this research is that it informs the feasibility of integrating MALL in a community-based, non-formal conversational classroom. The research also contributes to the understanding of migrant women’s acquisition of English vocabulary in the non-formal setting.
without and with MALL and thus evaluates the impact of MALL on the women's conversational proficiency. Finally, the research establishes and develops a suitable framework for the non-formal learning environment for migrant women.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is organized into eight chapters (Figure 1-2):

**Figure 1-2: Thesis outline**

Chapter 1 provides the research background, research aims, research questions, research approach, the significance of the research, and the outline of the thesis. Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature to inform the theoretical framework for the research, including previous studies about issues such as migration, second language acquisition, teaching of vocabularies to adult learners, and MALL. Chapters 3 provides a detailed explanation of the research context, as well as a description of participant recruitment, research methods, data collection and analysis. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 document the case studies, types of learning environments (non-MALL, hybrid, MALL), provide within-case analyses of each case study and identify emerging themes. Chapter 7 discusses and interprets the three case studies to identify emerging key factors.
Chapter 8 presents a summary of main findings and offers implications, recommendations and conclusions.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introductory overview of the problem statement, research background, aims and objectives, and questions leading to the research approach. The significance of this research and an overview of all chapters have been presented. The chapter identified a gap in the MALL literature that this thesis focuses on: the feasibility of integrating MALL in migrant women’s non-formal language learning environment. The next chapter reviews relevant literature.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the focus of this thesis, which is the investigation of the feasibility of utilising MALL in the vocabulary acquisition of migrant women in a non-formal/non-academic learning setting in the Australian context. First, migration in Australia, the issues of adjustment, the role of English in the lives of migrants and the support for migrants to develop their English skills in both formal and non-formal settings are reviewed. The term 'migrant', as it is used in this thesis, refers only to migrants from non-English-speaking countries. Those who come from English-speaking countries, with similar cultural norms to Australia, are unlikely to face the kinds of language barriers experienced by the migrants referred to in this research.

Next, a review of second language acquisition is made that includes: relevant theoretical perspectives explaining how second language learning takes place and the corresponding variables; the characteristics of adult English learners, their motivations for learning English, the 'need to be known' language items for an English learner; and the environments typical for learning English for second language learners, including the roles and strategies of the teacher and the learner. This is then followed by a discussion of vocabulary as a language item necessary for adult learners to acquire in order to become proficient English speakers. Under this heading, the type of vocabulary learning and the strategies for learning/acquiring vocabulary are described.

Subsequently, a review of the literature on MALL is presented, beginning with the various definitions of MALL offered by scholars, followed by a discussion of the attributes of MALL, and previous research that demonstrated the feasibility of MALL and mobile devices in supporting various language areas. Finally, feasible ways of implementing MALL and also the limitations of MALL are discussed.

2.1 Migration to Australia

The decision to migrate to a new country can be in the form of voluntary or forced (Kunz, 1973; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Kunz (1973) formulated the push-pull theory where voluntary/economic migrants are freely 'pulled' towards the new country in pursuit of better employment opportunities and lifestyle, in contrast to humanitarian migrants who are 'pushed' out of their home country due to traumatic and unsafe living situations. In the Australian context, the Department of Home Affairs (2018) categorises migration into two programs: the
Migration Programme for skilled and family migrants, and the Humanitarian Programme for refugees and others in refugee-like situations. The main determinant for migration in the former category is economic but may also include reasons that are familial, personal, political or social. For the latter, the causes for migration include to escape war or other conflicts, political or religious persecution, extreme living conditions, or violence (Department of Home Affairs, 2018; Department of Social Services, 2017).

The Australian Government determines the number of applicants it will allow to settle permanently in Australia in any given year through its migration programs (Department of Home Affairs, 2018):

- The Migration Programme is divided into:
  - The Family program allows for the migration of immediate family members (such as spouses or fiancés and dependent children) of Australian citizens, permanent residents or eligible New Zealand citizens.
  - The Skilled Worker program is for migrants who are selected on the basis of their occupation skills, outstanding talents or business skills.
  - The Special Eligibility program is for former residents who had not acquired Australian citizenship and are seeking to return to Australia as permanent residents.

- The Humanitarian Programme has further categories such as refugees, special humanitarian migrants and special assistance. The program comprises 'offshore resettlement' for people overseas, and 'onshore protection' for those people already in Australia who arrived on temporary visas or in an unauthorised manner, and who have been given Australia's protection (Refugee Council of Australia, 2017).

On the global migration scene, there are some similarities between the experiences of economic and humanitarian migrants; that is, both are new to the country and both must go through a process of adjustment. A further characteristic of both types of migrants is that they may have left behind friends, family and a familiar environment, having to cope with new normalcy, culture, language and weather. Migrants also tend to require linguistic and academic assistance if their proficiency of the new country’s language is low or none (Gunn, 2003). Some migrants may also take on unconventional family roles (e.g., children taking on adult responsibilities for their parents). Additionally, both types of migrants yearn for an opportunity that will allow them to accomplish their goals in life. Some significant differences in the transition experiences that may significantly impact these migrants’ adjustment process are shown in Table 2-1 (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015).
Table 2-1: Differences in migrants’ transition experience in new country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition experience</th>
<th>Economic migrant</th>
<th>Humanitarian migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for transition, i.e. knowledge and understanding of new country</td>
<td>Sufficient time</td>
<td>Sudden transition to a new country creates difficulties and confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal business before leaving home</td>
<td>Taken care of</td>
<td>Left unsettled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic living requirements in new country</td>
<td>Arrangements likely being made</td>
<td>Urgently needed (food, housing, medical care)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of loss and trauma</td>
<td>Not necessarily present</td>
<td>May be profound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Usually continues uninterrupted</td>
<td>May be interrupted or postponed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family situation</td>
<td>Usually intact</td>
<td>May be separated, or children may be without parents or guardians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect of returning home</td>
<td>An open option</td>
<td>Not an option</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: British Columbia Ministry of Education (2015)

2.1.1 Support for migrants learning English in Australia

Support for migrant English learning in Australia is provided formally by the government through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) (Department of Education and Training, 2017), and also non-formally by local and non-profit community-based organisations, such as community centres, public libraries, and religious centres (Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008). Learners have to meet eligibility criteria and be screened for literacy to enrol into the AMEP program. However, for the community-based organisations, any migrant adult can participate at no cost. The purpose of these organisations is to help migrants develop their English language skills so that they: can participate socially and economically; are able to access employment, education, training, housing, health, and government services; and support their children’s educational development. The AMEP program provides learners with a pathway to employment, training or further study, and to participate in other government programs (Department of Education and Training, 2017). It also provides settlement-relevant classes to migrants who arrive in Australia without basic functional English, and thus provides not only basic language skills pertinent for ongoing learning, but also information about life in Australia (O’Dwyer & Mulder, 2015; Yates et al., 2015).

Participation by eligible women in the AMEP is limited due to conflicting sociocultural issues and fears about engaging in formal learning (Adult Migrant English Services, 2011; ECCV, 2009; Hewagodage & O’Neill, 2010). Instead, the non-formal learning option is preferred by some migrants because the learning environment is flexible, does not require on-going commitment,
and is fear-free for low L1 literate and low English proficiency learners (Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008). The non-formal education offered by non-profit organizations attracts participation by women (Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008) because they provide a supportive and conducive environment for learners. However, as these non-formal English language learning avenues operate with limited funding, they are only able to offer a restricted number of hours and resources for learners (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). This is in contrast to the AMEP that has a stable and permanent operation and applies state-of-the-art technology for teaching and learning language (Chiu, 2013; Grgurović, Chapelle, & Shelley, 2013).

2.2 Second language acquisition

All second language learners, regardless of age, are similar in that they have already acquired at least one language. This prior knowledge may be an advantage as the learners have an idea of how a language works. On the other hand, this knowledge can lead them to make incorrect guesses about how the second language works, which may result in errors in their understanding and usage of the second language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). According to Allender (1998) and Hewagodage and O’Neill (2010), adults learning English as a second, third or fourth language in general, and English vocabulary specifically, are influenced by factors such as level of education in L1, culture, past experiences and knowledge, age, and opportunities to speak English.

Adult learners, as they succeed at language learning in later life, “often depend on the conscious exercise of their considerable intellects, unlike children to whom language acquisition naturally happens” (Pinker, 1994, p. 24). This suggests that adult learners can engage in abstract thought, in contrast to younger learners who have to be trained and rely on activities such as games and songs to develop this ability. Very young language learners begin the task of first language acquisition without the reasoning maturity and linguistic awareness that older second language learners have (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Although young second language learners have begun to develop these characteristics, they still have far to go, before they reach the levels already attained by adults. The critical period hypothesis states that successful language acquisition draws on different mental abilities; abilities that are specific to language learning (Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1978). This view is related to the idea that there is a critical period for language acquisition, where the first few years of life constitute the time during which language develops readily and after which (sometime between age 5 and puberty) language acquisition is much more difficult and ultimately less successful. It is argued that even though older learners’ L1 knowledge can interfere with L2 acquisition, they do have the ability to draw
on their problem solving and metalinguistic abilities effectively, as they can no longer access the innate language acquisition ability they had as young children (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

There are attitudinal and cultural differences between young and adult learners (Harmer, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Most very young learners are willing to try to use the language, even with limited proficiency, and chatter away in their new language in social interaction. Many adults (and also adolescent learners) find it stressful when they are unable to express themselves clearly and correctly. They are also often ‘forced’ to use the language, especially in a classroom, when going shopping, seeing the doctor, or attending job interviews. In contrast, younger learners acquire a second language in an informal learning environment and usually are allowed to be silent until they are ready to speak. Younger learners may also have opportunities to practise their second language in songs and games, and are usually exposed to the language for many hours every day. Older learners in formal language classrooms are more likely to receive only limited exposure, therefore, spend less time in contact with the language, tend to be exposed to a limited range of discourse types, and are often taught language that is somewhat formal in comparison to the language as it is used in most social settings and real communication (Lightbown and Spada, 2013).

2.2.1 Theoretical perspectives of second language acquisition

Theories of second language acquisition have been formed in an effort to provide explanations as to how language learning takes place, to identify the variables responsible for second language acquisition, and to offer guidance to second language teachers, researchers, and policy makers. This section briefly discusses the theoretical perspectives relevant to this research.

Chomsky’s theory

According to Chomsky’s theory (Chomsky, 1965), a person has an innate ability to acquire a language and is thus equipped with a language acquisition device (LAD) or universal grammar. The human brain is said to contain a mechanism for language acquisition, meaning that all languages share the same deeper structures despite the largely superficial surface structures. The linguistic input triggers the LAD so that this linguistic process results in language production. Linguistic production of the learner translates into learner language proficiency that the individual has achieved. The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is applicable to L1 language learners. It has been claimed that the first few years in a person’s life are the “crucial time” for individuals to acquire the language, and beyond this period, it is either difficult or impossible (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 22). For L2 learners, CPH mostly relates to accent and pronunciation issues, and when native-like mastery is the outcome concerned (p.
93). For general L2 acquisition, there are other factors that are in play, such as: learner's general learning ability; the affective variables (self-confidence, motivation, and anxiety); the conditions of the language learning environment, whether natural, formal, or informal; the opportunities to hear the language and use the language; and whether there is pressure to be fluent and accurate from the beginning, or the process is more relaxed and flexible (p.94).

**Skinner’s behaviourist perspective**

Skinner (1957) theorised that everything that an individual does is dictated by the environment, and that this behaviour is a response to external stimuli. Behaviour therefore changes with positive and negative reinforcement. For example, parents enforce correct usage of a word in children with positive facial or verbal reactions. Encouraged by this, children continue to imitate and practise these sounds and patterns until they form ‘habits’ of correct language use. Skinner also said that the quality and quantity of the language the children hear, as well as the consistency of the reinforcement offered by others in the environment, shapes the child's language behaviour. Brooks (1964) and Lado (1964) were two proponents of Skinner's theory. The theory led to the development of audiolingual teachings where classroom activities emphasise mimicry and memorisation, and students learn dialogues and sentence patterns by heart. Thus, language development is viewed as the formation of habits. Even though L2 sentences would be ungrammatical if translated into learners’ L1, L2 learners draw on what they already know, or on habits they already have. Also, L1 influence may become more apparent as more is learned about the L2, leading learners to see similarities that they had not perceived at an earlier stage. Lightbown and Spada (2013) suggested that the influence of the learner’s L1 may not simply be a matter of the transfer of habits, but a more subtle and complex process of identifying points of similarity, weighing the evidence in support of some particular feature, and even reflecting about whether a certain feature seems to 'belong' in the target language.

**Vygotsky’s constructivist learning theory**

According to Vygotsky (1978), language is developed primarily from social interaction. He referred to a metaphorical space, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), in which children would do more than they would be capable of doing independently. He observed that the origins of both language and thought were from conversations that children had with adults and other children in their personal ZPD. These conversations also provided the children with scaffolding; that is, a kind of supportive structure that helped them make the most of the knowledge they had and also acquire new knowledge. In a supportive and interactive environment, children were able to advance to higher levels of knowledge and performance.
Unlike the psychological theories that view thinking and speaking as related but independent processes, sociocultural theory views speaking and thinking as tightly interwoven (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Speaking (and writing) facilitate thinking, which means that people can gain control over their mental processes as a consequence of internalizing what others say to them and what they say to others within their ZPD.

Vygotsky's ZPD is usually compared with Krashen's Input Hypothesis theory $i+1$, but, according to Dunn and Lantolf (1998), these are impossible to compare as each concept depends on very different ideas about how development occurs. The former is a metaphorical 'site' in which the learners co-construct knowledge in collaboration with an interlocutor. Whereas, in the latter, the input comes from outside the learner and the emphasis is on the comprehensibility of input that includes language structures that are just beyond the learner’s current developmental level. Vygotsky also emphasised how learners co-construct knowledge based on their interaction with their interlocutor or in private speech, which means talking to oneself. This speech is not meant to be communicated with others. This happens around the age of three. Social speech is the language used with others, and inner speech only really begins to appear around the age of six or seven with private speech being internalized. As Vygotsky said, private speech is the beginning of “thinking in pure meaning”. This is in contrast to Piaget’s egocentric speech that tends to disappear noticeably after age seven. Greater importance is attached to conversations (social speech) in Vygotsky's theory because learning is occurring through the social interaction. Sociocultural theory holds that people gain control of and reorganize their cognitive processes during mediation as knowledge is internalized during social activity.

Vygotsky (1978) also said that thinking and problem-solving skills are developed through collaboration within a ZPD. There are three types of skills development: (1) those skills that are acquired without assistance; (2) those skills that are never acquired even with assistance; and (3) those skills that are learned with assistance. Other scholars have expanded Vygotsky’s account of the role of the ZPD in human development, and see the ZPD as providing a way of conceptualising how each individual’s development may be assisted by other members within the same culture (Wells, 1999). Learning, therefore, is not a separate and independent activity but an integral aspect of participation in any community or any social system (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Learning is not dependent on instruction according to a set of predetermined objectives. Instead, it occurs when participants of a joint activity contribute to a solution to emergent problems and difficulties according to their ability to do so (Wells, 1999).
Krashen's Monitor Model

In the late 1970s, Krashen developed the Monitor Model, an 'overall' theory of second language acquisition that had important implications for language teaching. The five central hypotheses underlying this model are:

1. **The Acquisition versus Learning Hypothesis.** Acquisition is a subconscious process, much like L1 acquisition, while learning is a conscious process resulting in "knowing about language" (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). Learning does not "turn into" acquisition, and it usually happens in formal environments, while acquisition can take place without learning in formal or informal environments.

2. **The Monitor Hypothesis.** Learning has the function of monitoring and editing the utterances produced through the acquisition process (p.15). The use of the Monitor is affected by the amount of time that the L2 learner has at their disposal to think about the utterance they are about to produce, the focus on form, and their knowledge of L2 rules.

3. **The Natural Order Hypothesis.** There is a natural order of acquisition of L2 rules, some are early-acquired and some are late-acquired. This order does not necessarily depend on simplicity of form while it could be influenced by classroom instruction (Krashen, 1985; Krashen & Terrell, 2000).

4. **The Input Hypothesis.** Receiving comprehensible input is the only way that can lead to the acquisition of L2. If a learner’s level in a L2 is \( i \), he/she can move to an \( i+1 \) level only by being exposed to comprehensible input containing \( i+1 \) (Krashen, 1985).

5. **The Affective Filter Hypothesis.** Comprehensible input will not be fully utilised by the learners if there is a ‘mental block’ (i.e. the ‘affective filter’ (such as emotions, attitude, motivation)), that acts as a barrier to the acquisition process (Krashen, 1985).

Krashen's Monitor Model is an example of a macro theory attempting to cover most of the factors involved in second language acquisition: age, personality traits, classroom instruction, innate mechanisms of language acquisition, environmental influences, input, and others.

Ellis’ framework of second language acquisition

It is claimed by Ellis (1985) that second language acquisition is influenced by individual learner differences, situational factors, linguistic input, learner processes and L2 output. **Individual learner differences** vary in terms of age, language aptitude, cognitive style, attitude, motivation and personality. Each of these factors may have different rates of influence upon each individual’s L2 acquisition and their proficiency attainment. Learners’ environment of interaction and the topic of conversation (**situational factors**) also have an influence; this can happen in a formal classroom situation or in a naturalistic setting. What L2 materials a learner
listens to and reads about becomes their linguistic input, whether in a formal classroom or natural setting. The level of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) received by learners depends on the stage of their L2 learning development.

The linguistic input that a learner obtains needs to be processed, sifted and organized (learner processes) before it becomes language output (Ellis, 1985). These processes are not directly observable but may often be inferred from processing strategies, such as learning strategies (for example, rote memorisation), production strategies and communication strategies. Ellis suggested that situational factors and individual learner differences affect the linguistic input received; for example, a learner can be exposed to comprehensible input but then is not able to produce comprehensible output, or a learner may be fluent in a game situation but less fluent in a formal classroom situation.

2.3 English second language learners

English is being taught and learned in two different contexts (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Ozvirer & Herrington, 2011): as a first language that is learnt from parents as mother tongue (L1); or as another language (L2). L2 English learning in an English speaking community is referred to as learning English as a Second Language (ESL), while L2 learning in a non-English speaking community is referred to as learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Ozvirer & Herrington, 2011). The teaching component in both types of learning is called Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). ESL learners have the advantage of accessing learning inside the classroom and also from the authentic use of the English language beyond the classroom. These learners are able to experience some level of exposure to English, since it is used in their immediate surroundings. Therefore, they receive input either formally or ad hoc. This helps them develop their language skills further through practicing in addition to the material learned in the classroom, and thus may accelerate the process of becoming fluent speakers of English. Some researchers (e.g. Schmidt & Frota, 1986) found that the advantages of L2 learning in its natural environment is that learners are able to simultaneously learn the language and its structure, and also the norms and culture of the country.

2.3.1 Motivations for learning English

The reasons people choose to learn English may include (Harmer, 1983): for survival when living in an English speaking country, whether temporarily or permanently; the requirements of the school curriculum; an advancement in professional life since English is the international language of communication and trade; for specific purposes (for example, air traffic controllers use specific technical terms when guiding aircraft through the skies); for students who are
going to study at a university in which English is the medium of communication throughout their course of studies; for the interest of learning the culture of the people who speak it, the places where it is spoken and (in some cases) the writings that it has produced; peer influence; or for visiting or vacationing in an English speaking country.

The motivation for migrants in Australia to learn English is to achieve successful settlement. According to the study by S. Kim, Ehrich, and Ficorilli (2012, p. 42), “English language proficiency arguably provides the major route to migrants’ happiness in Australia”. In this study, the researchers applied Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs in the context of recently arrived migrants in Australia. Higher level needs such as closeness, a sense of belonging and affiliation with other people can be interpreted as settlement success, while lower level needs such as hunger, thirst, and safety can be interpreted as having a job and an adequate income stream for basic necessities. A migrant, therefore, needs to have or to develop at least functional English where they can upskill to a vocational level of English language proficiency in order to procure a job or gain entrance into further education to facilitate their employment prospects. Therefore, the acquisition of English proficiency is an urgent requirement as it can increase migrants’ ability to become part of the wider Australian community and find meaningful employment (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Fozdar & Hartley, 2012; S. Kim et al., 2012; Richardson et al., 2004; Yates et al., 2015). However, studies in Australia and overseas reveal that migrants tend to be underemployed relative to their pre-migration skills, education and experience (Department of Social Services, 2017; Fozdar & Hartley, 2012; Yates et al., 2015). Humanitarian migrants, in particular, tend to have a much higher unemployment rate than other migrant categories. Even migrants with professional expertise can find that the pathway to regain their previous levels of employment is not straightforward. Some may have to change their initial goals, recertify their qualifications, or even change careers.

Compared to men, women confront further challenges that flow from their family responsibilities and also the gendered nature of the labour markets in their home countries (ECCV, 2009). Generally, men’s employment assumes priority, while the women’s employment become secondary to juggling domestic responsibilities and raising children (Flanagan, 2007; O’Dwyer & Mulder, 2015). Barriers for women to participate in employment and training include poor access to and lack of information about culturally appropriate childcare (Flanagan, 2007; O’Dwyer & Mulder, 2015). Therefore, more women experience isolation as a result of a weak social networks and a lack of contact with others, while limiting their economic opportunities and, in due course, intensifying feelings of isolation. According to the Australian Social Inclusion Board (2012), in general, socially isolated individuals face difficulties in integrating and becoming contributing members of society, and consequently are unable to
fulfill their personal aspirations. In Australia, people who are not proficient in English are among several groups who experience social exclusion issues. The other groups are those with low incomes, the unemployed, and those with poor health. Most of these groups also have particular difficulty in “having a say” in their community or influencing decision makers. Not being able to communicate proficiently in English prevents one feeling a sense of belonging to the Australian community (Yates et al., 2015). This feeling of ‘otherness’ is permanent and potentially adds to the problem of adjusting to and settling into a new life in Australia (Colic-Peisker, 2002).

2.3.2 What English language learners need to learn

Krashen (1982) divided ‘learning’ into language acquisition and language learning. He claimed that language that is acquired subconsciously is the language that can be easily used in spontaneous conversation because it is instantly available when needed. Language that is learnt, on the other hand, is taught and studied as grammar and vocabulary, so it is not available for spontaneous use. Krashen also saw that successful language acquisition by second language learners is bound up with the nature of the language input they received. The input had to be comprehensible, slightly above their productive level, and exposed to learners in a relaxed setting. This roughly-tuned input is contrary to the finely-tuned input of much language instruction that chooses specifically graded language for conscious learning. Krashen argued that roughly-tuned input aids acquisition, whereas finely-tuned input combined with conscious learning does not.

English language learners need to learn and acquire similar knowledge as L1/native speakers/competent English users so as to be able to use the language effectively (Harmer, 1983, p.10). The latter share some characteristics of English knowledge that enable them to use the language effectively. These areas of English knowledge include pronunciation, grammar, appropriacy, discourse, and vocabulary.

**Pronunciation**

Pronunciation knowledge is made up of three areas: sounds, intonation, and stress (Harmer, 1983). The English language has its own phonetic sounds that are put together in a certain order to make a word that means something; for example, c/a/t into the word cat. Some learners have difficulty with individual sounds; for example, the Japanese speaker who says a word that sounds like light instead of the intended right. Intonation refers to the tune one uses when speaking, or the music of speech (Harmer, 1983, pp. 11-12). For example, the words You’re from Australia, aren’t you? can be eliciting either information or confirmation. By starting the
question at the medium pitch of the speaker's voice range and dropping the pitch at the end of the sentence (on aren't you) indicates to the listener that the questioner is merely seeking confirmation of a fact about which s/he is almost completely certain. Related to intonation is stress, or emphasis that is given to different syllables a word. For example, the word 'photograph' is divided into three parts - pho, to, and graph - with stress on the first syllable - PHOtograph. With the word 'photographer', the stress shifts to the second syllable - phoTOgrapher. Learners may have to recognise these stresses and intonations, so that they can comprehend and convey messages clearly and thus are able to engage in a conversation more meaningfully. Although one may not be able to utter words that sounds as close to an English L1 speaker, Jenkins (2002) and Brown (1989) emphasised the importance of the intelligibility principle which accepts accents, and sets understanding as the goals of pronunciation.

**Grammar**

The grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and be combined into sentences in that language. Chomsky (1965) suggested that an L1 speaker somehow knows the grammar rules that s/he uses to make sentences. This was interpreted by Harmer (2001) as an English grammar rule stating that the sentences (S) contains a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP); the noun phrase contains a determiner (D) and a noun (N) and the verb phrase contains a verb (V) and another noun phrase. It is the grammar that allows completely different sentences to be made using different words, which nevertheless have the same relationship between subjects and objects. In Figure 2-1, a completely different sentence is made by changing the words but the relationship between subjects and objects stay the same; for example, *The mongoose bit the snake.* A further rule can be created from this; for example, transforming these active sentences into passive ones, such as *The snake was bitten by the mongoose.*

![Figure 2-1: The grammar rule of a sentence](image-url)
L1/competent English language users *know* these rules, although they would find it difficult to articulate them. From this subconscious knowledge, and using a finite number of rules, they can create an infinite number of sentences (Harmer, 1983). In order to be able to communicate efficiently, an English language learner should have a grasp of the major grammatical concepts (such as present simple, past simple) that are essential for any language user. Nation and Newton (2001) referred to such learning as *language-focused learning* where deliberate attention is focused on language features such as grammar exercises and explanation.

**Appropriacy**

Appropriacy refers to knowing what language is appropriate in a given situation, thus influencing the choice of words used. An English learner has to develop the knowledge and vocabularies that they can use in various situations and the variables that govern the word choices including (Harmer, 2001; Nation, 2001): (1) the setting/situation that one is in (informal and spontaneous language is used at home, whereas more formal pre-planned speech is used in an office or work environment); (2) the participants involved in the exchange, whether in speech or in writing (words and phrases in conversation with superiors are different from the words and phrases used when talking to friends, family members, or colleagues); (3) the language function or the purpose of the speaker (whether to complain, apologise or make a remark); (4) channel of the conversation (whether the words are said face-to-face, over the telephone or other media); and (5) topic of the conversation (the vocabulary and grammatical choices are influenced by the topic being addressed; for example, a wedding, physics, or football).

**Discourse**

In a discourse, one has to constantly interpret what is been said by the other person as the conversation continues. The listener uses what has already being said to help them comprehend the message that is being conveyed, and they can also predict what is coming next, thus preparing themselves to understand it and respond appropriately (Harmer, 1993). Florez (1999) claimed that listening and speaking are the most used language skills in the classroom. These skills are critical for functioning in an English language context, especially for low-literacy English learners, and are the logical starting points for language instruction. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. A speaker's skills and habits affect the success of any conversational exchanges. Speakers must be able to adjust these components as needed to ensure successful interaction, such as to predict and produce expected patterns of specific discourse situations, provide
feedback, choose correct vocabulary, use appropriate facial expressions and body language, use grammar accurately, assess the audience, and apply strategies to enhance comprehensibility.

Cummins (1979) distinguished two types of proficiency skills that English language learners seek. The first type is basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), which can be interpreted as survival skills that correspond to the social, everyday discourse skills that typical English language learners develop. These communication skills are context-embedded and used in daily and real-life situations that have real-world connections for the learners; for example, using public transport, at the supermarket, and interacting with neighbours. The second type is cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which is about skills that are abstract, decontextualized, scholarly, and required by an English learner to succeed in school or in a professional setting (Cummins, 1979; Erben, Ban, & Castañeda, 2009). Harmer (1983; 2001) and Lightbown and Spada (2013) argued that adult English learners learn best when the lessons taught to them are related to something they already know or need to know, are able to be used immediately, and are useful and relevant to their goals and needs. Depending on the needs of the learners, Nation and Newton (2007) proposed the four strands principle that can be applied in a well-balanced non-formal or formal language learning classroom (Table 2-2).

**Vocabulary**

L1/proficient speakers generally know English lexis/vocabulary with varying capability, depending on their education and literacy level (Harmer, 1983). They know the meaning of words and also the subtleties of some of those meanings, such as the sentence *He wears his heart on his sleeve*. They know the connotations of words, such as *thin, slim, skinny or emaciated*. They also know nouns that are frequently used as verbs, such as *to input or access*. For English learners, vocabulary needs to be acquired deliberately rather than incidentally (Nation and Newton, 2009), and through grouping vocabulary with other language features that need to be learnt deliberately such as grammar exercises, pronunciation and spelling. For adult English learners, vocabulary learning is crucial because it constitutes the basic building blocks of English sentences (Nation, 2001); it is a significant component of acquiring conversational proficiency and competence (J. Ahmad, 2011); its mastery is the fundamental step of learning a language; and it is an important factor in the development of cognitive systems of knowledge (Coady & Huckin, 1997). Krashen and Terrell (2000, p. 55) supported this, “We are suggesting that vocabulary should not be avoided: with more vocabulary, there will be more comprehension and with more comprehension, there will be more acquisition!” Allen (2007) claimed that comprehension of language is not possible without vocabulary. Krashen and Terrell (2000, p.155) further stated that, “We acquire morphology and syntax because we
understand the meaning of utterances . . . [T]hus, acquisition will not take place without comprehension of vocabulary.” As such, Kenny (2011) surmised that humans would not be able to acquire other words and syntax without initially understanding vocabulary.

The learners’ word bank provides them with instruments to work with when putting forward their own ideas and comprehending and examining the ideas of others (J. Ahmad, 2011; Elgort, 2011; Florez & Burt, 2001). These instruments are also useful for reading comprehension, where readers try to comprehend unfamiliar words they encounter in the text (Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). A learner with a diverse vocabulary can connect with a greater variety of people in their particular areas of interest (Lightbown & Spada, 2013) and become proactive and confident in talking and dealing with issues in detail. Being confident gives learners the ability to voice their opinion clearly, share ideas and thoughts or simply make conversation (J. Ahmad, 2011; Elgort, 2011; Nation & Newton, 2009). Learners are able to grasp ideas and think more rationally and incisively; and become more informed and involved by possessing vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary knowledge refers to the size (breadth and depth) of vocabulary, which includes spelling, pronunciation, syntax, morphology, knowledge about the contexts in which the word is used, whether it has multiple meanings, and how the word combines with other words (Qian, 1999).

Further benefits of vocabulary learning include: increase in both implicit and explicit knowledge (Elgort, 2011); increased consciousness to help later learning of other language skills and features (Roberts, 1999); increased language proficiency leading to larger amounts of well-retained usable knowledge (Nation, 2001); and the enablement of richer listening and speaking abilities (Nation, & Newton, 1996; Newton, 1995). However, acquiring vocabulary is a cumulative process, where it begins with a new word that is enriched and established when it is met again (Nation, 2000). Eventually, as learners’ knowledge becomes more established, they are able to see how words are related.

2.4 Environments for learning

2.4.1 Formal, non-formal and informal learning environments

Formal learning constitutes intentional, organized and structured characteristics (Werquin, 2007). The opportunities for learning are usually arranged by institutions, which include courses and programs through schools, community colleges and universities. The activities are guided by a curriculum with learning objectives and expected outcomes, and individuals attend with the explicit goal of acquiring skills, knowledge or competences. Coombs and Ahmed (1974, p. 8) described formal learning in terms of education context: “formal education is the highly
institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured *education system*, spanning lower primary school and the upper reaches of the university*. Werquin’s (2007, p. 23) description of non-formal learning is the:

...type of learning that may or may not be intentional or arranged by an institution, but is usually organized in some way, even if it is loosely organized. There are no formal credits granted in non-formal learning situations.

Cedefop European Commission (2016) described it as learning that is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. It is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It typically does not lead to certification. Learners may learn during work or leisure activities that do not have learning objectives but they are aware that they are learning. They observe or do things with the intention of becoming more skilled, more knowledgeable and/or more competent (Werquin, 2007). Coombs and Ahmed (1974, p. 8) defined non-formal learning as:

any organised educational activity outside the established formal system - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.

This refers to the learning spaces provided to sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children. Miralles-Lombardo et al. (2008) reported that non-formal learning is fostered by an array of voluntary organisations in communities. The communities are constituted by families, workplaces, voluntary associations and educational institutions therein, where most of the learning associated with building trust, networks and shared values occurs.

Werquin (2007) described informal learning as a type of learning that is never organized or guided by a rigid curriculum, but is experiential learning. It is defined by Coombs and Ahmed (1974, p. 8) as:

... the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment - at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television.

Even though unorganised and often unsystematic, informal learning accounts for the great portion of any person's total lifetime learning, regardless their literacy level. The person may learn in activities without learning objectives and without knowing they are learning.

All these learning environments (formal, non-formal, and informal) can be supported by mobile technology, ranging from mobile devices used in fixed settings in a formal and curriculum-led
classrooms managed by a teacher, to highly mobile learning applications in informal learning using smartphones, controlled by the learner (Sharples, 2013).

2.4.2 Mobile learning environment

The definition of mobile learning by O’Malley et al. (2003, p. 6) captured the dual perspectives of learner mobility and learning with portable technology,

Any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies.

When the focus is placed on the mobility of the learner, the definition becomes very broad, such as that offered by Sharples, Taylor, and Vavoula (2005, p. 5).

It is the learner that is mobile, rather than the technology ... interactions between learning and technology are complex and varied, with learners opportunistically appropriating whatever technology is ready to hand as they move between settings, including mobile and fixed phones, their own and other people’s computers, as well as books and notepads.

Under this definition, any technology that allows flexible access qualifies as a support for mobile learning. On-line and web-based learning materials, for example, accessible 24/7, offer great flexibility for learners’ use in time and space so they would be included in the definition even though the physical devices (e.g. desktop computer) needed to access them may normally be stationary. Similarly, learning that takes place via mobile devices, or even with printed books and notepads, would be considered mobile. When the focus is on the use of mobile or portable technology, it restricts the notion of mobile learning to that which can be supported by devices carried around in a pocket or handbag. As such, “... mobile learning refers to learning mediated via handheld devices and potentially available anytime, anywhere. Such learning may be formal or informal” (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). Therefore, learners should be able to engage in educational activities without being tied to a tightly-delimited physical location.

2.4.3 Instructional environments

Knowle’s (1984) principles of andragogy are widely considered by teachers when developing adult learning curricula. These principles are based on five crucial suppositions about adult learners’ characteristics that differ from those of children (Smith, 2002): self-directed; equipped with experience; ready to learn; oriented toward problem-centred rather than subject-centred; and motivated. The role of the teacher, therefore, is to provide an acquisition-rich instructional environment (Ellis, 2005) that includes support for learners in the process.
The term scaffolding, coined by Bruner (1986), refers to the kind of assistance given by the teacher or more knowledgeable peer in providing comprehensible input, and moving the learner into his/her ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Scaffolding includes all the things that teachers do when they predict the kinds of difficulty that the learner(s) will have with a given task; for example, the provision of background knowledge at the beginning of the lesson or a brief review of key vocabulary at the end. Learners learn best in a social environment, as they construct meaning through interaction with others, and can learn more in the presence of a knowledgeable other person (Bruner, 1986). When learners begin to learn new concepts, they need active support, but as they become more independent in their thinking and acquire new skills and knowledge, less support is needed. Therefore, scaffolding represents a reduction in the many choices a learner might face, so that they become focused only on acquiring the skill or knowledge that is required. There are three categories of instructional settings in which a learner acquires a new second/additional language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 70): in a natural acquisition setting; in a teacher-centred setting; or in a student-centred setting.

**Natural acquisition environment**

In this context, a learner is exposed to the language at work or in social interaction. If the learner is a child, learning is in a school situation where most of the other children are L1 or competent speakers of the target language, and the instruction is directed towards L1 speakers rather than the learners of the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In such a classroom, much of a child's learning would take place in interaction with other learners and through instruction from the teacher.

The characteristics of a natural acquisition context according to Lightbown & Spada (2013, p. 124-126) include:

- Language is not structured and the learner is exposed to a wide variety of vocabulary and structures.
- The learner is surrounded by the language for many hours each day, whether addressed directly to the learner, or simply 'overheard'.
- The learner encounters a number of different people who use the target language proficiently.
- The learner observes or participates in many diverse types of language events; for example, brief greetings, commercial transactions, exchanges of information, arguments, instructions at school or in the workplace.
- Older children and adults may encounter the written language in the use of video and web-based materials.
• The learners are ‘forced’ to use their limited second language ability to respond to questions or to get information. In these situations, the emphasis is on getting meaning across clearly, and more proficient speakers tend to be tolerant of errors that do not interfere with meaning.
• Modified input takes place in one-to-one conversations. The drawback is that the learner may have difficulty of getting interpreters or access to language s/he can understand in situations where many L1 speakers are involved in the conversation.

According to Schmidt and Frota (1986), the advantages of L2 learning in its natural environment, are that learners are able to simultaneously learn the norms and culture of the target language.

Teacher-centred instructional environment

Teacher-centred instruction is also known as traditional and structure-based instructions. The language is taught to a group of L2 learners. The focus is on the language itself, rather than on the messages carried by the language. The teacher’s goal is to see that learners learn the vocabulary and grammatical rules of the target language. The characteristics of a teacher-centred instructional context, according to Lightbown and Spada (2013, p. 126-127) include:

• Linguistic items are delivered and practised in isolation, a separate item at a time, in the order that teachers or textbook writers believe is 'simple' to 'complex'.
• Errors are frequently corrected as accuracy is given priority over meaningful interaction.
• Learning is often limited to a few hours a week.
• The teacher is often the only L1/proficient speaker with whom the learner is in contact.
• The learners experience a limited range of language discourse types, typically the Initiation/Response/Evaluation (IRE) exchange where the teacher asks a question, a student answers, and the teacher evaluates the response. The written language selected for the learner is primarily to provide practice with specific grammatical features rather than content.
• The learners often feel pressure to speak or write the L2 correctly from the very beginning.
• L1 is often used by teachers to give instructions or, in classroom management events, with modifications to ensure comprehension and compliance.
Some learners may have opportunities to continue learning the target language outside the classroom, while for others, the classroom is the only contact they have with that language. In some cases, the learners’ goal may be to pass an examination rather than to use it for their daily interaction beyond the classroom.

**Student-centred instructional environment**

Student-centred instructional environments involve learners whose goal is learning the language itself, but the style of instruction places the emphasis on interaction, conversation and language use, rather than on learning about the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Communicative, task-based and content-based are the types of instructional environments that are student-centred. In communicative and task-based instructional environments, the topics discussed are often of general interest to the learner; for example, how to reply to a classified advertisement from a newspaper. In content-based instruction, the focus of a lesson is usually on the subject matter, such as history or mathematics, which students are learning through the medium of L2.

In these classes, the focus may occasionally be on the language itself, but the emphasis is on using the language rather than talking about it (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The language that teachers usually use is not selected solely for the purpose of teaching a specific feature of the language, but also to make sure learners have the language they need to interact in a variety of contexts. Learners' success is often measured in terms of their ability to 'get things done' in L2, rather than on their accuracy of using the grammar features. The characteristics of a student-centred instructional context, according to Lightbown and Spada (2013, p. 127-128) include:

- Input is simplified and made comprehensible by the use of contextual cues, props, and gestures, rather than through the presentation of one grammatical item at a time, in a sequence of simple to complex.
- Learners provide each other with simplified and sometimes erroneous input.
- Error correction is at the minimum, and meaning is emphasised over form.
- The learners usually have only limited time for learning. Sometimes, however, subject-matter courses taught through the second language can add time for language learning.
- As with traditional instruction, contact with L1 or proficient speakers of the language is limited. It is usually only the teacher who is a proficient speaker in the classroom, so learners receive exposure to the L2 speech of other learners, which naturally contains errors. When learners work in pairs or groups, they have opportunities to produce and respond to a greater amount and variety of language.
• A variety of discourse types are introduced through stories, role playing, the use of real-life materials, such as newspapers, television broadcasts, and field trips.
• There is little pressure to perform at high levels of accuracy, and there is often a greater emphasis on comprehension than on production in the early stages of learning.
• Modified input is a defining feature of this approach to instruction. The teacher in these classes makes every effort to speak to students at a level of language they can understand.

Thompson (1996) listed three advantages of pair/group work activities:
1. They can provide the learners with a relatively safe opportunity to try out ideas before launching them in public.
2. They can lead to more developed ideas, and therefore greater confidence and more effective communication.
3. They can provide knowledge and skills that may complement those of their partners, which in turn leads to greater success in undertaking tasks.

By working in pairs/groups, learners feel free to express their ideas and opinions, because they are more comfortable working with their peers whom they think have the same level of language proficiency and knowledge. This feeling will develop their levels of confidence and self-esteem to communicate in the target language and produce more accurate and appropriate language, which in turn provides more input for other learners (Hedge, 2000) and at the same time provide scaffolding for each other (Bruner, 1986).

2.4.4 English language classrooms

The four strands principle (Nation, 2007) posits that a well-balanced language course should consist of four main components in roughly equal amounts: meaning-focused input; meaning-focused output; language-focused learning; and fluency development. The promotion of these strands involves interaction and use of language as a means of learning, as opposed to only study and rote memorisation. Although vocabulary and grammar are important, the active use of language and creation of purpose-driven opportunities for its use are the primary goals (Nation & Newton, 2009).

Nation and Yamamoto (2012) illustrated how the principle of the four strands can be applied; for example, in the learning of a language item such as collocations (any other language items) or vocabulary. The right question that should be considered is: "How should collocations be learnt"? Answers to the following questions are needed: (1) how can collocations be learned through meaning focused input? (2) how can collocations be learned through meaning focused
output? (3) what language focused learning activities are most suitable for the learning of collocations? (4) how can fluency development help the learning of collocations? Table 2-2 summarises Nation’s (2007) four strands principle.

Table 2-2: The four strands principle (Nation, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Skills involved</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning through meaning-focused input</td>
<td>Reading and listening</td>
<td>On the ideas and messages conveyed by the language</td>
<td>To comprehend as much as possible from an extensive level of input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through meaning-focused output</td>
<td>Speaking and writing</td>
<td>On conveying ideas and messages to another person (communication)</td>
<td>To use language practically to convey a specific message or point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through deliberate focus upon language items</td>
<td>Grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary</td>
<td>On mechanics of language (sounds, spelling, exercises and explanations, language use strategies)</td>
<td>To understand the workings of specific ways the language is constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency development</td>
<td>Use of the known/learnt skills above</td>
<td>Repeat practice (memorised phrases, expressions, or sentences) with an emphasis on reaching the ability to receive and produce language at a reasonable rate</td>
<td>To become fluent with what is already known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diversity in L1 and English literacy

Miller and Windle (2010) proposed that two related and critical factors must be understood about the learning needs of migrants, particularly humanitarian background learners. First, they may arrive without age-appropriate schooling and thus may not have the developed skills, knowledge and dispositions needed for mainstream classrooms. Second, as a result of their interrupted schooling, they may be unable to read and write in their mother tongue. Fundamentally, these skills are vital in the acquisition of an additional language, particularly for academic purposes (Collier & Thomas, 1989; Cummins, 1991; Miller & Windle, 2010).

Academic English requires the use of specialised forms and vocabulary that is specific to subject areas such as mathematics and science. Learners with little or no L1 literacy cannot rely on the transfer of linguistic and conceptual knowledge from L1 to L2; therefore, acquiring literacy in the second language is an enormous task. The level of literacy that includes oral and written proficiency in both L1 and English (the existing level) may have an impact on migrants’ English
language learning (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Tarone, Bigelow, & Hansen, 2007). Other factors may include: (1) the number of years of exposure to and experience of literacy in and outside of formal education settings; (2) learner motivation (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Dornyei, 2002; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Tarone et al., 2007); and (3) age, intelligence, aptitude, personality, learning styles, and age of acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Bialystok (2007) stated that L1 literacy helps learners become literate in L2, while Collier (1989) found that it took longer for a non-literate L1 learner to learn L2 compared to a literate L1 learner. Burt, Peyton, and Schaetzel (2008) categorised the variety of L1 literacy that is typically found in an English classroom for adult migrants (Table 2-3):

Table 2-3: Typology of L1/native language literacy of adult migrant English learner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L1/native Language Literacy</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-literate</td>
<td>L1/Native language has no written form or is in the process of developing a written form (e.g., many American indigenous, African, Australian, and Pacific languages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-literate</td>
<td>Learners have no access to literacy instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-literate</td>
<td>Learners have limited access to literacy instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-alphabet literate</td>
<td>Learners are literate in a language written in a non-Roman alphabet (e.g., Arabic, Greek, Korean, Russian, Thai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Roman alphabet literate</td>
<td>Learners are literate in a language written in a Roman alphabet script (e.g., French, German, Spanish). They read from left to right and recognise letter shapes and fonts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman alphabet literate</td>
<td>Source: Burt, Peyton, and Schaetzel (2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers such as Krashen (1982) and Pienemann (1987) argued that, regardless of what the teacher tries to teach to the English language learner in terms of English skills, the learner will acquire new language structures only when they are cognitively and psychologically ready to do so. According to Erben et al. (2009), even though it seems that a language learner will only learn English in a set path, much research has been conducted that reveals that, although teachers cannot change the path, they can affect the rate of development by stimulating this language development through providing an acquisition-rich classroom. The research by Ellis (2005) provided a broad basis for “evidence-based practice”, which is synthesised by Erben et al. (2009, p. 16) into five principles for creating effective second language learning environments:

**Principle 1:** Give English language learners many opportunities to read, write, listen to, and discuss oral and written English texts expressed in a variety of ways.
Meltzer (2001, p. 16) defined academic literacy as the ability of a person to “use reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking to learn what they want/need to learn and to communicate/demonstrate that learning to others who need/want to know”. This definition implies that literacy is not something static; a learner develops an ability to successfully put her/his knowledge and skills to use in new situations. The teacher’s role is to design and deliver appropriate content that will develop learners’ mastery of the type of language and discourse of the subject areas, which can lead to proficiency in academic literacy.

**Principle 2: Draw attention to patterns of English language structure.**

An English learner who has had very little schooling or none at all will develop the means to communicate in English, but it will most likely be very basic English. English learners with formal schooling have an opportunity to move beyond a basic command of English and become proficient communicators if they are actively involved in classroom activities, specifically ones in which they are required to practice speaking (Erben et al., 2009). Research into naturalistic second language acquisition has found that learners follow a ‘natural’ order and sequence of acquisition (Pienemann, 1988); specifically, grammatical structures emerge in communicative utterances of the second language learners in a relatively fixed, regular, systematic, and universal order. As such, teachers can take advantage of this ‘built-in syllabus’ by implementing an activity-centered approach that provides learners with language-rich instructional opportunities and offers exposure and instruction related to language structures that they are trying to utter but still have trouble with (Erben et al., 2009).

**Principle 3: Give English learners classroom time to use their English productively.**

The interaction hypothesis posits that acquisition is facilitated when L2 learners are engaged in negotiating for meaning (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Long, 2006). This means that when English learners are engaged in talk, they make the language more comprehensible as they modify their communication and adjust their own use of English. The rate of acquisition of an English learner can be attributed to the amount and quality of input they receive, and the opportunities they have for output. Skehan (1989) summarised the contributions that output can make to English learners: (1) by using language with others, they will obtain a richer language contribution from those around them; (2) they will be forced to pay attention to the structure of language they listen to; (3) they will be able to test their language assumptions and confirm them through the types of language input they receive; (4) they can better internalize their
current language knowledge; (5) by engaging in interaction, they can work towards
improved discourse fluency; and (6) they will be able to find space to develop their own
linguistic style and voice.

**Principle 4: Give English learners opportunities to notice their errors and to correct their English.**

Teachers should encourage English learners to notice their errors, to reflect on how they use English, and to think about how English works, all of which play a very important role in their language development. Lyster and Mori (2006) outlined six feedback moves that teachers can use to direct learners’ attention to their language output and in doing so help them correct their English:

- **Explicit correction**, where the teacher directly lets the learners notice the error in the way they use language.

- **Requesting clarification**, where the teacher shows that the communication has not been understood or that the learner’s utterance contained some kind of error. Clarification can use expressions such as “Excuse me?”, “I don’t understand,” or “Can you repeat that?”, indicating that a repetition or reformulation of the utterance is required.

- **Recast**, where the teacher implicitly indicates an error or provides the correction without directly showing that the learner’s utterance was incorrect.

- **Metalinguistic clues**, where, without providing the correct form, the teacher asks a question or makes a comment related to the formation of the learner’s utterance.

- **Repetitions**, where the teacher repeats the learner’s error and adjusts intonation to draw the learner’s attention to it.

Using these corrective feedback strategies helps to raise an English learners’ awareness and understanding of language conventions used in and across content areas.

**Principle 5: Construct activities that maximize opportunities for English learners to interact with others in English.**

The teacher needs to vary the types of instructional tasks in which the learner will engage in order for them to progress with their English language development. Learner involvement is the key to successful language learning goals. Passive learning with mostly teacher-fronted lessons will greatly impede language learning success. In planning instructional tasks, the teacher needs to have a clear picture of their learners’
ability, as there are different levels of proficiency, and to be sensitive to the language
developmental needs of the learners.

Zehler (1994) provided strategies that teachers can use to engage English learners at every stage, that include:

- asking questions that require new or extended responses;
- creating opportunities for sustained dialogue and substantive language use;
- providing opportunities for language use in multiple settings;
- restating complex sentences as a sequence of simple sentences;
- avoiding or explaining use of idiomatic expressions;
- restating at a slower rate when needed, but making sure that the pace is not so slow that normal intonation and stress patterns become distorted;
- pausing often to allow students to process what they hear;
- providing specific explanations of key words and special or technical vocabulary, using examples and non-linguistic props when possible; and
- using everyday language by providing explanations for the indirect use of language (for example, a learner may understand the statement, “I like the way Mary is sitting” merely as a simple statement rather than as a reference to an example of good behaviour).

Erben et al. (2009) emphasised that a lack of language ability does not mean a lack of concept development or a lack of ability to learn. Therefore, English learners should always be challenged to think, by asking them inferential questions requiring reasoning; by hypothesising, analysing, justifying, and predicting abilities.

**Learner strategy**

Krashen and Terrell (1983) categorised the developmental stages of L2 learners into: *preproduction, early production, speech emergence, and intermediate fluency*. Erben et al. (2009) translated these stages in the context of English learners:

**The preproduction stage** applies to English learners who are unfamiliar with English and require exposure time (one day to three months). At this level they are trying to absorb the language and can find this process overwhelming; in the silent period of listening as their language skills are at the receptive level, where they are able to comprehend more than they can produce; and focussing their attention on developing everyday social English. They can engage in nonverbal responses, follow simple commands, point and respond with movement, and utter simple formulaic structures.
such as 'yes', 'no', and 'thank you'. They may develop a receptive vocabulary of up to 500 words.

**The early production stage** is when learners begin to respond with one- or two-word answers or short utterances as they will have had many opportunities to encounter meaningful and comprehensible English. They may have internalised up to 1,000 words in their receptive vocabulary and anything from 100 to 500 words in their active vocabulary. They are encouraged to speak if the classroom is a low-anxiety environment. They are allowed to make errors in grammar and pronunciation. The teacher needs to demonstrate with correct language responses in interactions; for example, by using repetitions and circumlocutions.

**The speech emergence stage** is when learners will begin to use the language to interact more freely. At this stage, they have a 7,000-word receptive vocabulary, and up to 2,000 words of active vocabulary. Usually by this time they may have had between one and three years’ exposure to English, and they can be taught to predict, describe, demonstrate, and problem solve. Because their awareness of English is growing, they should be given opportunities to work in small groups so they can reflect on and experiment with their language output.

**The intermediate fluency stage** is when learners may demonstrate near-native/L1 or native/L1-like fluency in everyday social English, but not in academic English. Teachers are usually aware that, even though the learners can speak English fluently in social settings, they will experience difficulties in understanding and verbalizing cognitively demanding, abstract concepts. At this stage, they may have developed up to a 12,000-word receptive vocabulary and a 4,000-word active vocabulary.

The study by Rubin (1975) about the strategies used by 'good language learners' in California and Hawaii found that the learners (although the type or level of learners are not indicated): are willing and accurate guessers; have a strong drive to communicate or learn from a communication; are often not inhibited; are willing to appear foolish, to make mistakes, to live with a certain degree of ambiguity; focus on form; practise and seek out opportunities to use the language; monitor their own speech and the speech of others; and attend to meaning. This list was supported by Reiss (1985), except that Reiss found that the successful language learner is not necessarily uninhibited. Elsewhere, Stern (1975) took account of the characteristics proposed by Rubin (1975) and offered ten features that indicate good language learning:

1. a personal learning style or positive learning strategy;
2. an active approach to the task;
3. a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy with its speakers;
4. technical know-how about how to tackle a language;
5. strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system and of revising this system progressively;
6. constantly searching for meaning;
7. willingness to practise;
8. willingness to use the language in real communication;
9. self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use; and
10. developing the target language more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it.

Oxford (1990) classified learning strategies into two: direct strategies and indirect strategies (Figure 2-2).

![Figure 2-2: Classification of language learning learning strategies](image)

Under each category, three underlying groupings of strategies are identified. For direct strategies the following are used: memory strategies for new information input, storage and retrieval when needed; cognitive strategies for linking new information with existing information, making learning reasonable and beneficial; and compensation strategies, such as guessing or using gestures to bridge gaps and overcome deficiencies in a learner's current language knowledge. For indirect strategies, the following are used: metacognitive strategies for organizing, focusing, and evaluating learner's own learning; affective strategies for controlling emotional factors; attitude, motivation and values; and social strategies for collaborating and interacting with others in the learning process. Oxford (1990) conceded that the six categories of strategies are not discrete and that there is overlap among the strategy groups, “For instance, the metacognitive category helps learners to regulate their own cognition by assessing how they are learning and by planning for future language tasks, but metacognitive self-assessment and planning often require reasoning, which is itself a cognitive strategy!” (p.16).
It was suggested by Ellis (1994) that five major aspects should be present for successful language learning, including: a concern for language form; a concern for communication (functional practice); an active task approach; an awareness of the learning process; and a capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with task requirements. In a study by Lunt (2000) regarding the language learning strategies of adult migrant English learners attending government funded classes in Melbourne, Australia, it was found that the use of strategies is an individual choice and consequent on the motivation that the learner brings to the learning situation. This motivation is shaped by interaction of internal and external factors, by the learner's past experience, and by his/her current life context.

2.5 Vocabulary learning environment

Nation (2014), Nation and Yamamoto (2012), Graves (2006), Harmer (2007), and Lightbown and Spada (2013) highlight the importance of providing learners with a comprehensive, well-balanced vocabulary-learning program. Following Graves' (2009) model, an effective vocabulary program contains four major components:

1. teaching individual words (instruction of individual words must be rich, extended, and carefully planned to yield optimum results);
2. teaching word-learning strategies (include recognizing and using cognates, using the dictionary, drawing on context clues, and analyzing word parts to unlock meaning);
3. providing rich and varied language experiences (learners should be immersed in a wide variety of language experiences so that they learn vocabulary through listening, speaking, reading, and writing); and
4. fostering word consciousness, that is, "an awareness of and interest in words and their meanings" (Graves, 2006, p. 7). This can be encouraged by teachers by promoting word play, involving learners in original investigations, and teaching about words (Graves, 2009).

Following Nation's (2007) four strands principle to provide an effective and balanced vocabulary course or program, Nation and Yamamoto (2012, p.169) proposed that teachers use the underlying principles as the basis for answering questions, including:

- How can I teach vocabulary? The question is better phrased as: How can I help the learning of vocabulary?
- What should a well-balanced vocabulary course contain?
- How much work on vocabulary strategies should we do?
- Is it worthwhile doing rote learning of vocabulary?
- How can I find out if I have a well-balanced vocabulary course?
“Frontloading a lesson with vocabulary” or pre-teaching/teaching vocabulary is one way to introduce the necessary vocabulary for the lesson to help learners prepare for what they will be learning (Kenny, 2011). In other words, if learners are going to have an experience and listen to the radio during class, it would be important for the teacher to present new vocabulary words to the learners so that a lack of knowledge of some words will not hold learners back from comprehension. “Such pre-teaching may or may not lead to the acquisition of the specific words presented. It will, however, help to make the activity itself more comprehensible and thus help acquisition of other items and/or structures” (Krashen & Terrell, 2000, p. 157). The expanded vocabulary may also assist learners in becoming more confident when speaking.

2.5.1 Vocabulary learning/acquisition

There are two types of vocabulary acquisition: incidental and intentional.

**Incidental experiences**

Acquiring new words from various contexts without explicit instruction is known as incidental vocabulary learning (Schmidt, 1994). The learning is cumulative as learners use accumulated occurrences and contexts to form a more complete sense of word meanings. This learning is highly individualised as it depends on language exposure and opportunities for engagement. This is relatable to Coombs and Ahmed’s (1974) reference to a ‘lifelong process’ where an individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from day-to-day exposure to and interaction with the environment (home, work, family and friends, travel, readings, listening to the radio or viewing films or television). Deng and Trainin (2015) suggested that, in the digital age, learners’ experiences with language have been transformed as they have increased worldwide and online access to print, audio, and multimedia products in English. Some examples include: literary texts through Project Gutenberg (http://www.gutenberg.org/) that offers over 57,000 free eBooks; personal texts in the form of blogs; free access to local and international news; and free access to movies and videos from YouTube (https://youtube.com). These increased opportunities allow learners to follow their own interests, and to learn English and vocabulary incidentally from varied and, more often than not, authentic materials.

**Intentional learning**

Any activities aimed directly at acquiring new words by committing lexical information to memory, such as referring to a dictionary to learning a list of new words in a matching activity, is referred as intentional vocabulary learning (Hulstijn, 2001). Laufer (2005) insisted that intentional vocabulary learning is a must for a better chance of retention and mastery of specific vocabulary, with incidental learning being complementary. Nation (2014) proposed strategies
for learning vocabulary deliberately: studying (unknown) words preferably through the use of bilingual word cards; doing intensive reading while consciously focusing on vocabulary with the help of a teacher or a dictionary; and getting feedback on spoken and written production. Among the vocabulary learning strategies that English learners use are the dictionary, notebooks, flashcards, reading activities, use of L1, and mobile devices.

**Dictionary**

Dictionary resources are available in print or hard copy, electronic (small hand-held computers, similar in size to a calculator, or online accessible on the internet through computers (Harmer, 2007) and mobile devices), or online/offline accessible through apps downloaded on mobile devices (Deng & Trainin, 2015). According to Nation (2001), dictionaries serve a threefold purpose: (1) a comprehension tool when a learner looks up unknown words or confirms a word deduced from context during listening, reading, or translating; (2) a production tool when a learner looks up unknown words or word parts needed for speaking, writing, and translating; and (3) a learning tool when a learner enriches his/her knowledge of known words (for example, for different contextual usages).

Nation (2001) also suggested that advanced English learners use dictionaries very well in receptive ways (able to get information from the context where the word occurs, choose the right entry or sub-entry, relate the meaning to the context, and decide if it fits), and productive ways (able to find the wanted word forms, making sure there are no unwanted constraints on the use of the word, working out the grammar and collocations of the word, and making sure of the correct spelling or pronunciation before using the word).

**Personal notebook**

Ochi (2009), Schmitt (2000), and Lightbown and Spada (2013) suggested that a notebook can be used by learners to help sustain and build vocabulary. Good vocabulary notebooks should become personal word stores centered on individual needs, while at the same time they encourage deep processing, and store learners' personal creation of associations (e.g. through inclusion of example sentences, use of drawings). Notebooks should also offer a cumulative development of different aspects of vocabulary knowledge, and be shared with teachers for help with prioritisation, learning strategies and correction (Ochi, 2009; Schmitt, 2000). According to Nation and Newton (2009), note-taking is a meaning-focused listening activity that stores information for later use and provides the opportunity to encode information. The encoding effect refers to changing from one form of organisation of ideas to another form of organisation.
Reading

Reading is said to be an effective way of acquiring vocabulary because a learner can acquire vocabulary from context more effectively, and acquisition occurs particularly through input-rich environments (Coady & Huckin, 1997). Learning vocabulary through extensive reading improves learners' fluency, as learners look at groups of words rather than each individual word while reading (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001). Learners are said to learn vocabulary incidentally, which results in the vocabulary being retained in long term memory and subsequently used confidently in different situations. Similarly, Krashen and Terrell (2000) asserted that the best source of vocabulary growth is reading for pleasure; however, Lightbown and Spada (2013) thought that, even though the notion is true for both for L1 and L2 learners, more effort is required of the latter. It is claimed that it is difficult to infer the meaning and learn new words from reading unless one already knows 95% or more of the words in a text (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001). Moreover, learners usually need to encounter a word many times in order to learn it well enough to recognise it in new contexts, or produce it in their speech and writing.

Use of L1

Although there are similarities between L1 and L2 vocabulary acquisition, there are distinct differences in general L2 learning. For example, adult L2 learners who are fluent in L1 are older and more cognitively mature than when they learned their L1. As such, they learn vocabulary differently than L1 children. When children learn vocabulary, they also learn how ideas and objects exist and operate in the real world. Adult learners already know these concepts, so their challenge is relabeling a known concept from their L1 when they learn an L2 word (Schmitt, 2000).

Using L1 to help identify vocabulary can be very comforting to learners while also highly effective (Lightbown & Spada, 2013); for example, learners will gain a larger vocabulary if they are able to recognise cognates. Cognate was defined by Lightbown and Spada (2013) as “a word in one language that resembles a word in another language and has the same meaning” for example, nation and nation in English and French or vaca and vache (cow) in Spanish and French” (p.63). Learners may find it useful to become acquainted with cognates when they make note of the similarities with their L1, using their notebooks to assemble their own lists of cognates.

However, Harmer (2007) warned that L1 can become an interference as learners who learn English as an L2 already have a deep knowledge of at least one other language, and where L1 and English clash, there is often confusion that provokes errors in a learner's use of English.
This can be at the level of sounds; for example, the Arabic language does not have a phonemic distinction between /f/ and /v/ and Arabic speakers may say ferry when they mean very. This can also occur at the grammar level where a learner’s L1 has a subtly different system; for example, Japanese learners have problems with article usage because Japanese does not use the same system of reference. Finally, it may be at the level of word usage where similar sounding words have slightly different meanings.

**Flashcards**

“Word cards” or flashcards are defined as “the formation of associations between a foreign language word form (written or spoken) and its meaning (often in the form of a first language translation, although it could be a second language definition or a picture or a real object)” (Nation, 2001, p. 296). In the process of learning from flashcards, a new word is written on one side of a card with its translation (either in L1 or L2) on the other side. Some flashcards use visual representations that help learners make connections with their L1. The learner goes through these cards trying to retrieve the meanings of new words. If they are unaware of a particular vocabulary word but are able to see the word in pictures, they will start to formulate meaning. As claimed by Oberg (2011), flashcards are useful for reinforcing and also assessing vocabulary knowledge, while Harmer (2007) claimed that they are particularly useful for ‘drilling’ grammar items, for cueing different sentences, or practising vocabulary. Several studies show that flashcard learning is an important learning activity in terms of helping learners memorise large numbers of words in a short time (Nation, 2001), and other studies demonstrated that learners can transfer flashcard learning to normal language use (Elgort, 2011).

**Mobile devices**

The use of apps on mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, affords an authentic and rich context for both incidental and intentional vocabulary learning (Deng & Trainin, 2015). For example, beginner learners can use apps that focus on intentional vocabulary acquisition and constructive learning activities (pronunciation and spelling), while advanced learners can choose from various dictionary apps for learning word meanings, and also incidentally acquire new words, through listening to authentic stories from news reports. If learners encounter unknown words when they are listening or reading for comprehension, they can look up the words or confirm word meanings by referring to any of the dictionary apps at hand.

A study by Clark (2013) revealed that the visual and audio exposure provided by an app increases learners’ level of engagement, motivation, and overall vocabulary acquisition. The study examined the effect of using an iPad app, Vocabulary Builder, on the vocabulary
acquisition of elementary English learners. The app supports the learners’ vocabulary acquisition through visual exposure to graphics and at the same time simulates the auditory by the sounds of words.

Popular and free English dictionaries, such as Dictionary.com and The Free Dictionary, are readily used and accessible when downloaded as apps on mobile devices or used online on their website (Deng & Trainin, 2015; Nisbet & Austin, 2013). These apps provide an English dictionary and thesaurus with extensive definitions, pronunciations, and etymologies, and also feature fresh daily contents (such as Word of the Day and word origin) that are useful vocabulary learning tools. Each app contains special features. The app of Dictionary.com, for example, features voice search, multiple specialty dictionaries, audio pronunciations, and favourite words. Free Dictionary, on the other hand, features advanced search options, multiple encyclopaedias, multiple specialty dictionaries, American and British audio pronunciations, plus the possibility of creating unlimited bookmarks of favourite words and encyclopaedia entries, playing games, and sharing via social networks.

2.6 MALL

Stockwell and Hubbard (2013) regarded the contributions of mobile learning and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) as the closest allied fields that inform and also shape the MALL field. CALL became an established term in language education in the early 1980s (Chapelle, 2001). The practitioners and researchers in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) have been at the forefront of innovation, theory, and practice of CALL (Levy, 1997, p. 3), “[W]ithin the field of computers in Education, especially within humanities computing, it is teachers in the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) ... that have been in the vanguard.” A lot of the direction of CALL has been shaped by TESOL. Initially, CALL reflected a field that was heavily based on programmed instruction and on the behaviourist premises of language learning, but it has shifted towards recognising the significance of social constructivism that emerged from the work of Vygotsky (1978). CALL has grown from just depending on software that runs on desktop computers to include online and networked sources such as websites and blogs, virtual learning environments, computer-mediated communication, and mobile devices (Jarvis & Achilleos, 2013). These progressions have led to the emergence of MALL, where language learning is assisted, supported or enhanced through the use of a personal handheld mobile device.

Definitions of MALL are offered in simpler forms such as by Sharples (2007, p. 24) who characterised MALL as:
... the use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access and interaction across different contexts of use or by O'Malley et al. (2003) who described MALL as any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. Kukulska-Hulme (2013, p. 3701) defined MALL as the use of “mobile technologies in language learning, especially in situations where device portability offers specific advantages.” Palalas (2011, p. 76) put together and proposed a more complex definition of MALL:

... language learning enabled by the mobility of the learner and location, portability of handheld devices (Kukulska-Hulme, 2005), human interaction across multiple situations mediated by mobile technology within a networked community of practice (Sharples et al., 2007), embedded in contexts that are relevant and pedagogically sound (Laurillard, 2007), and informed by the real-life context in which the learning takes place.

MALL includes mobile devices ranging from MP3/MP4 players, smart phones, and e-book readers through to laptop and tablet computers (Stockwell & Hubbard, 2013). Mobile devices were described by Traxler (2007, p. 4) as “pervasive and ubiquitous in many modern societies and they are increasingly changing the nature of knowledge and discourse in these societies”. Mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, with their portability and communication abilities, have altered the ways in which we seek information and communicate as well as work with others. The rapid increase of mobile device ownership and its prevalent nature in our lives is making MALL a viable option to support language teaching and for engaging language learners in the language learning process (Burston, 2014a, 2016), extending learning beyond a traditional classroom (T.-T. Wu, 2016). Studies by Abdous, Camarena, and Facer (2009) and T.-T. Wu (2014) suggest that learning and instruction are being reformed by the utilisation of mobile technologies to support, expand, and enhance course content, learning activities, and learner interactions with the instructor, peers, and also learning content.

2.6.1 Attributes of MALL

Learners may find learning in MALL is extended beyond the regular traditional classroom environment (Abdous et al., 2009; T.-T. Wu, 2014) due to the attributes of MALL. According to Kukulska-Hulme et al. (2015, p. 13), in MALL,

... learning is mobile, situated, contingent, context-aware, and authentic. Learning happens both formally and informally, in and between classrooms, homes, transport and other spaces, and in communities extending beyond learners’ immediate physical environments and networks. Classrooms may be ‘flipped’, or blended, combining face-to-face learning with online learning.
**Portability, accessibility, and spontaneity**

Mobile devices are portable, lightweight and small enough to fit in a pocket or in the palm of the learner’s hand; they can be carried around with relative ease; and used for learning activities that are different from what is possible with other media. They range in cost and allow language learners easy personal access to vast educational resources via a wireless network, online and/or offline (P. Kim, Miranda, & Olaciregui, 2008; McManis & Gunnewig, 2012), eliminating dependency on language laboratories (Burston, 2017). In addition, learners can learn anywhere and anytime, and can connect and communicate with their teachers and peers almost immediately with less time and space constraints (Naismith, Londsdale, Giasemi, & Sharples, 2004; B. T. Wang, Teng, & Chen, 2015), making learning experiences seamless and spontaneous (Sharples, 2013).

According to Kukulska-Hulme and Pettit (2009), mobile learning is convenient and portable as the learner can utilise dead time productively, for example when commuting. However, some learners prefer to learn in a private and quiet environment, thus public surroundings were less attractive to them (Gafni, Achituv, & Rachmani, 2017). A noisy environment is found to be only a small disadvantage, as people have become used to operating mobile devices in public areas, such as the street or public transport; places that were previously perceived as not being suitable for concentrating on performing a task through a computer or application.

**Context awareness**

Context awareness refers to the application of context-aware computing to enhance learning activities (Vavoula, Sharples, Scanlon, Londsdale, & Jones, 2005), in which learning occurs through context. C. M. Chen and Li (2010) developed a personalised context-aware ubiquitous learning system (PCULS) to support effective English vocabulary learning, based on learner location, learning time, individual vocabulary abilities and leisure time. The system was successfully implemented on personal digital assistants (PDAs). Experimental results indicated that the performance of learners who used PCULS was superior to learners who used personalised English vocabulary learning systems without context awareness.

A context-aware app is beneficial as it initiates an interaction by responding to a change in the user's situation, offering/delivering a set of appropriate choices/contents based on that change (Sharples, 2013; Vavoula et al., 2005). This means that the user sees information in a specific context relevant to the user’s specific situation; for example, when a user/learner uses the Google Maps app (Austin, 2017). The app presents the user with context information such as the
location of the nearest petrol station, bus station or bus stops, cafés and restaurants, landmarks, road construction sites, and traffic conditions.

**Multimedia and interactivity**

MALL learning environments, with the affordances of mobile devices, are able to present multimedia contents to learners. For example, multimedia messaging service (MMS) messages (involving texts, pictures, sound, and films), offer an alternative way for vocabulary learning (Burston, 2014c). Learning materials in language/vocabulary apps such as dictionaries, thesauruses, translators, whiteboards, interactive quizzes, and flashcards are presented to learners with interactive and multimedia-rich features (Nisbet & Austin, 2013). Learners can also create their own learning materials, such as pictures, audio, and video, in authentic (real world) environments using multimedia tools supported by mobile technologies (Huang, Shadiev, Sun, Hwang, & Liu, 2016). Utilisation of these multimedia tools for learning tasks stimulates learners' imagination, helps prompt meaningful output, makes learning more interactive and richer in information, and also tends to make learners more engaged (Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, & Freynik, 2014). In addition, learners are able to practice the target language repeatedly and regularly and acquire diverse learning goals that increase the richness of their language experience (Burston, 2014c; Nisbet & Austin, 2013).

**Scaffolding**

In their report, Kukulska-Hulme et al. (2015) proposed various ways for providing learners with scaffolds that teachers could apply when using mobile devices in language teaching and learning. For example: (1) during both in or out of class individual or collaborative work, reference apps, such as dictionaries or thesauri can be used to help scaffold more creative language use with ease and speed; (2) learners are able to learn English via social media such as Skype, Facebook, or Twitter through chatting or communicating with international friends; and (3) learners can record audios of their short speech as rehearsals where they are able to listen, reflect, and repair these recordings on their own, or collaboratively with their peers, resulting in a stronger final version of the speech.

A 4-week instrumental case study research project was conducted by Y. Chen, Carger, and Smith (2017) to explore the learning effects of scaffolding young English language learners’ narrative writing skills through the use of iPads and a digital handwriting app (Penultimate). The findings showed that learners’ learning motivation and quality of narrative writing abilities are enhanced through the use of those devices. Another study of primary school students’ use of a series of apps on their iPads showed that students use the apps and features of their iPads to
scaffold their practical work at different stages during the experiments (Falloon, 2017). The device functions and app-based scaffolds assist these students to structure their experiments, understand procedures, think about the influence of variables and communicate and share outcomes.

**Support for various language areas**

Research in the MALL field reveals that different language areas can be feasibly supported by MALL through the affordances of mobile devices. These areas include: vocabulary; reading and writing; and listening, speaking and pronunciation.

**Vocabulary**

Learners’ vocabulary learning outcomes and learning motivation can be enhanced by using an app, as shown in a study of Taiwanese university students who used the Learn British English WordPower app on iPad (B. T. Wang et al., 2015). In another study with 85 distance learners of Spanish, learners were found to use apps largely for vocabulary development, translation, and grammar practice, mostly informally rather than in formal classroom sessions, and for relatively short periods of time (Rosell-Aguilar, 2016). All learners reported that using apps improved their language skills and that they were in favour of the ability to practise specific areas, swift access to information, ease of use, and gamification elements, but had concerns about other areas such as usability and interface design, unreliability of content, and lack of grammar explanations.

A study by Q. Wu (2015) in China showed that learners who used a vocabulary app outperformed the control group that used paper printed material of the same lessons. The experimental group used a smartphone app, Word Learning-CET6, that was developed for the study. In a school in Taiwan, Lin and Yu (2017) conducted a study on 32 eighth graders, where the learners were presented with vocabularies on mobile phones. Different modes of presentation were provided (i.e., text in isolation, a combination of text and picture, a combination of text and sound, and finally merging all modes together). An immediate and a delayed post test revealed that audio representation of the words reduced the cognitive load and increased the chances of retaining the words.

**Reading and writing**

Lin (2014) investigated the effects of using tablet PCs in an online English reading program on adolescent learners’ online activities, reading ability, and perceptions, in a senior high school in Taiwan. The results showed that the group that used the tablet (mobile group) outperformed
the group that used a desktop, in online activities and reading achievement. The former also demonstrated greater appreciation of the online program than their desktop-user counterparts.

Chang and Hsu (2011) developed a language learning system on PDAs for EFL college learners that let them look for a translation, and insert annotations, of new words, to help reading comprehension. After an intervention, the learners perceived the usefulness and ease of use of the system. Chang and Hsu (2011) also demonstrated that optimum efficacy in reading comprehension could be achieved by a collaborative group of three members.

The study conducted by S. Wang and Smith (2013) involved regularly sending reading and grammar materials to students’ mobile phones. The students read and/or took part in any aspect of the materials that appealed to them. The information gathered from participants and server logs indicated that reading and learning grammar using mobile devices was regarded as a positive language experience. Elsewhere, a study by Y. Chen et al. (2017) demonstrated that students’ learning motivation and quality of narrative writing abilities were enhanced through the use of iPads and a digital handwriting app called Penultimate.

Li and Hegelheimer (2013) reported on the development and implementation of an app, Grammar Clinic, for an ESL writing class. The app was designed as a series of outside-class grammar exercises in the form of sentence-level error identification and correction. Nineteen intermediate level ESL students at a Midwestern American university used this app. The students’ performance on the app assignments reflected their progress in self-editing. This progress was seen in the positive correlation between the students’ app performance with their gains on a grammar post-test, an increase of self-editing corrections, and a reduction in errors in the final drafts of two major paper assignments.

**Listening, speaking, and pronunciation**

In the study by Hwang, Shih, Ma, Shadiev, and Chen (2016), game-based learning activities that facilitate students' listening and speaking skills were developed for a group of EFL students. The control group used traditional methods, while the experimental group used a mobile app. The results revealed that the latter significantly outperformed the former on the verbal post-test. However, the performance of the two groups was equal on the listening post-test. Most students had positive perceptions toward learning activities that were supported by the app. This suggests that game-based learning activities can significantly improve students' speaking skills if driven by an app, and that the learning activities foster students to: (1) practice speaking more frequently as well as to reflect on their speech; (2) create meaningful sentences and speak with greater accuracy and confidence; and (3) practice speaking in an authentic context.
Lys (2013) investigated the use and integration of iPads in an advanced German conversation class, analysed how students learnt with iPad, and how they affected the development of the students’ oral proficiency level. The results suggested that iPads were well suited for the students’ practice of listening and speaking proficiency at advanced levels, as they were engaged in meaningful, purposeful, and goal-directed discourse. The student-centred language learning approach using iPads facilitated interactions and provided scaffolded assistance. Although task complexity and linguistic complexity increased over the course, students still felt comfortable and competent enough to produce increasingly longer speech samples.

Mompean and Fouz-González (2016) reported on the results of a study in a language school in Spain that tested whether Twitter was an effective tool for pronunciation teaching, whether it could foster online participation and whether it could have a positive effect on the pronunciation of a number of words commonly mispronounced by EFL students. The students were sent a number of tweets on a daily basis, each of them featuring the pronunciation of a word considered to be difficult due to unusual sound-spelling correspondences, lexical stress or the presence of silent letters. The results showed that the instruction had a beneficial effect on the students’ pronunciation of the target words and that participants were actively engaged during the study.

2.6.2 Implementing MALL

Hockly (2013) proposed that six key parameters should be considered by designers of MALL classrooms who wish to implement communicative tasks. Hockly recommended that:

1. Tasks are designed to leverage the affordances of the mobile device, including its features and capabilities such as audio, video, access to apps, geolocational, and screen size. Tasks such as taking photos, or recording audio or video are more suitable for lower proficiency learners than reading or producing long texts.

2. Tasks depend on the mobility of either the devices, learners, or learning experiences (based on Pegrum’s (2014) perspective). Devices are mobile when they are used by learners to, for example, access the internet or create content, but the learners and learning experiences are considered as immobile where the learners are working within the confines of the classroom walls; the learners are mobile when they are moving around the classroom/school premises while learning or using their commuting time to access short content to reinforce learning in self-study mode; and learning experiences are mobile, for example, when devices are used across a range of real-world contexts to access information needed at that moment, or to create multimedia records of learners’ learning at that location at that moment (tasks are called situated learning).
3. The tasks should meet learners' technological competence of using mobile devices in language learning (apart from translation/dictionary apps). Beginning with a low level of technological complexity allows learners to work within their comfort zones, and not be overwhelmed with complicated apps or tasks too early.

4. The tasks should be within learners' linguistic/communicative competency, and not at a high level of both technological and linguistic complexity. When learners have to struggle with both the technology and the task content, it makes the task harder to complete successfully.

5. The type of MALL activities/content (Pegrum, 2014): content MALL (self-study content such as listening to podcasts or reading e-books; tutorial MALL (behaviourist activities, such as vocabulary flashcard apps, pronunciation/repetition apps, quizzes, and games creation, or communication); creation MALL (activities including the creation of text, images, audio and/or video); and communication MALL (for example, the sharing of created digital artifacts via mobile devices, either locally, and/or internationally via networked groups).

6. The tasks are designed within learners' educational/learning context, where the teacher considers the learners' background, L1 and L2 language proficiency, learners' preferred topics and learning style (e.g. a mix with L1 may enable learners to be able to express themselves in their L1s, offer easier feedback, and empower much more complex and nuanced reactions to the use of mobile devices).

Hockly (2013) believed that by keeping these six parameters in mind, and by ensuring a fit with the syllabus, effective classroom tasks can be designed and sequenced in a MALL learning environment.

Stockwell and Hubbard (2013, p. 8) offered 10 principles as an initial basis for developing and implementing MALL, as summarised below:

1. Mobile activities, tasks, and apps should distinguish the affordances and limitations of the mobile device, and of the environment in which the device will be used. For example, the affordances and limitations are directly connected in a principled way to second language learning research and theory.

2. Limit multi-tasking and environmental distractions. Mobile environments, such as when commuting, by their nature are likely to be distracting, and multi-tasking is a natural part of that environment. As a result, it interferes with both deliberate and incidental language learning in both educational and workplace settings.

3. Use push communication, but respect user's boundaries. Research has shown that the push mechanism has the potential to prompt learners to action but, at the same time,
learners have ideas of when and how frequently they would like to receive these reminders.

4. Strive to maintain equity. In a classroom or other formal language learning setting, important issues to be sensitive to include whether the learner has a mobile device, what device the learner has in terms of compatibility and functionality, how consistent device connectivity is, and what the expense is for using that device for the planned operation. Reasonably equivalent non-mobile alternatives should be available if an inequity is apparent.

5. Acknowledge and plan for accommodating language learner differences such as learning styles, as well as differences in comfort levels for learning in a public versus a private space. For mobile devices, access issues such as visual acuity and manual dexterity for smaller keypads and touchscreens are also prominent concerns.

6. Be aware of language learners’ existing uses and cultures of use for their devices. Studies have shown that students may perceive their mobile devices as being for personal and social use rather than as educational tools.

7. Keep mobile language learning activities and tasks short and succinct when possible.

8. Let the language learning task fit the technology and environment, and let the technology and environment fit the task.

9. Some learners will need guidance and training to effectively use mobile devices for language learning. Learners unaware of the negative impact of multitasking or the environment in which they are using mobile devices, for example, need to be informed and trained in making their use as efficient as possible.

10. Recognise and accommodate multiple stakeholders. In the language classroom setting, adequate preparation and motivational support for teachers as well as learners must be provided.

According to Nisbet and Austin (2013), when introducing a new app in class, teachers can utilise the following instructional sequence (adapted from Chamot & O’Malley, 1994): (a) elicit and draw on students’ background knowledge; (b) show (rather than just tell) students how to use the app; (c) point out multiple benefits, features, and uses; (d) engage students in meaningful practice using the app; (e) have students complete an independent task using the app; and (f) provide an opportunity for students to report on the experience afterwards.

Despite the favourable attributes of MALL, there are some factors that have to be considered in the implementation of mobile learning, whether in a formal or informal classroom. It was suggested by Pollara (2011) that to include mobile devices in educational curricula, the teacher needs to investigate the reception and the attitude of the students, as it involves transition from
perceiving mobile devices as personal tools that provide entertainment, social networking, information, and more, to their use as tools for learning. In a study conducted by Lawrence (2015), that examined learner receptiveness towards using smartphones to enhance EFL learning among 159 L2 students in a Korean university, the results showed that 50% of the students demonstrated positivity towards integration. Others were ambivalent, and a small proportion were actively against integration.

Montrieux, Vanderlinde, Schellens, and De Marez (2015) reported that teachers were being cautious about the presence of mobile devices in the classroom, as they believed that students were tempted to spend time surfing social network sites and playing games. The distractions and temptations while using the device had the potential to disrupt their focus when learning. Teachers also indicated they experienced difficulty dealing with the shift from their teacher-centred role, in front of the classroom, to a role in which they had a less controlling function.

Stockwell and Hubbard (2013) emphasised the importance for teachers as well as for learners of receiving support from their institution to ensure that both groups understood: (1) the affordances of mobile devices; (2) the changes that entail from transferring from the traditional approaches to MALL; and (3) motivations for utilising MALL. Kukulska-Hulme et al. (2015) suggested that both teachers and learners should shape the language learning process and that the teacher’s presence is still very important to guide learners in activities. This was supported by the findings of Falloon (2017) who identified the critical role of teachers in structuring and designing tasks and ensuring conceptual knowledge objectives are met. Falloon discovered the limitations in the ability of apps to support conceptual knowledge development in the area of science learning. Even though mobile devices may enable interaction, the resulting communication can be less meaningful due to the limited depth of thinking and learning, distraction, and everything having to be “short and small” (Kukulska-Hulme & Pettit, 2009).

There are physical and technical issues with mobile device such as the screen size, battery life, connectivity/network, the processor speed of phones, the size of the keys, and lack of Wi-Fi access in remote locations (Kukulska-Hulme & Pettit, 2009; Stockwell & Hubbard, 2013). The absence of a physical keyboard on smartphones is considered a disadvantage for language learners wanting to use it for developing their writing skills (Çelik & Yavuz, 2018). Writing is the skill that MALL is least likely to impact, in contrast to desktop or laptop computers. Even though there are miniature physical keyboards for smartphones, learners still experience problems of slow typing and typos. While all mobile devices have touchscreen keyboards which pop out from the bottom of the screen, writing by touching is slower and less accurate than regular typing using physical computer keyboard or writing with pen and paper (Calabrich,
Mobile devices work very well for short messages but not for long and continuous writing. However, a mobile handwriting app was an efficient tool that helped improve writing skills as revealed in a study conducted by Y. Chen et al. (2017) that used a digital handwriting app, not touchscreen keyboards.

Selection of the right apps is thus necessary for language learning to be effective and successful in MALL. As with every language learning resource, the quality and potential for language apps varies enormously and it is arguable whether they can at this point be considered as a single solution to language learning. Godwin-Jones (2011) believed they can effectively support learner autonomy and interest in learning a language. Apps can provide a good supplement for language learners in formal instruction as well as in informal settings, and a good starting point for beginner independent learners; they can also provide regular practice for learners (Rosell-Aguilar, 2017).

2.7 Summary of Chapter 2

The majority of studies in the MALL field suggest that this approach supports language learning that takes place in formal context (e.g. Afzali et al., 2017; Burston, 2014c, 2017; Hockly, 2013; Shadiev et al., 2017; Stockwell, 2008). The investigation undertaken by this thesis is attempting to address the gap that exist in the implementation of MALL literature, which is an investigation of the non-formal learning context, among migrant women English learners. As emphasised by previous studies (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Flanagan, 2007; Fozdar & Hartley, 2012; S. Kim et al., 2012; O'Dwyer & Mulder, 2015; Richardson et al., 2004; Yates et al., 2015), migrant women in Australia face unique challenges in balancing social and family obligations, in addition to the need to become proficient, at the very least, in survival English or basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). Unfortunately for many migrant women, their participation in formal education is hindered by social and cultural factors. An increased use of mobile technology and the availability of language apps, particularly for vocabulary learning, may offer learners the mobility of learning where by they can set their own schedules, set their own pace for practice, and focus on their individual needs and goals (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2015; Nisbet & Austin, 2013; Rosell-Aguilar, 2017).

The next chapter discusses the methodology selected for this study, which explores the feasibility of integrating and utilising MALL in migrant women's vocabulary acquisition in a non-formal learning setting.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research design, research site, ethics consideration (regarding participants selection and recruitment), data collection, and data analysis, are discussed. This study investigates how migrant women's vocabulary acquisition is impacted by MALL in a non-formal learning setting within the Australian context. In this study, first-hand information is sought and learnt from participants through their perspectives. The overarching research questions for this study as stated in Chapter 1 are:

RQ1: How is MALL integrated into the non-formal conversational English classroom for second language migrant women learners?
RQ2: What MALL factors affect migrant women's vocabulary acquisition?
RQ3: What socio-cultural factors affect migrant women's vocabulary acquisition?

This study is based on the interpretivist philosophy that focuses on providing a comprehensive understanding of local knowledge specific to a group, as opposed to making generalisations. Meanings are thus explicit to the setting or social group participating in the study. Principally, an interpretivist is interested in the way participants construct versions of reality in an attempt to understand their world and their experience in all its complexity (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Thomas, 2011).

Interpretivism involves researchers interpreting elements of the study and integrating human interest through social constructions such as language, consciousness or shared meanings; thus, the emphasis is on qualitative analysis over quantitative analysis. Qualitative research is suitable for this study as it is exploratory in nature. A research is exploratory when the topic is new or has not been written about extensively (Neuman, 2000). Table 3-1 distinguishes interpretivist from positivist research.
Table 3-1: Comparison of interpretivist and positivist research paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERPRETIVIST</th>
<th>POSITIVIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualitative approach</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quantitative approach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explores and answers research questions; asks broad, general questions</td>
<td>Tests hypotheses; asks specific, narrow questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employs open-ended stance and often changes the phenomenon being studied or at least allows it to emerge during the study</td>
<td>Employs a close-ended stance by identifying variables and selecting instruments to collect data before the study begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The research questions may change based on the responses of the participants – inductive</td>
<td>Hypotheses do not change during the study – deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collected consists of words, texts, pictures and audio. Data can be numbers but are analysed as descriptive statistics. Analyses these words by describing events and deriving themes.</td>
<td>Data collected consists of numbers using inanimate instruments (for example, scores, scales, tests, surveys, questionnaires. Analyses these numbers using mathematical procedures (i.e. statistics).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers do not compare groups or relate variables. Instead, they seek a deep understanding of the views of one group or single individuals</td>
<td>Researchers seek to measure differences and the magnitude of those differences between two or more groups or measure changes over time in individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers remain visible and present in the written report (i.e. mention themselves)</td>
<td>Researchers remains invisible in the written report (i.e. do not mention themselves)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Creswell (2012, p. 52), Stake (1995, p. 40), and Merriam (2009, p. 18)

3.1 Research designs associated with qualitative research

Research designs prescribe specific procedures of how an investigation takes place. These procedures include how data is to be collected, what procedures will be employed and the intended means for analysing the data collected. Narrative, grounded theory and ethnography are the three primary designs under the umbrella of qualitative research that have four characteristics: (i) the goal of the research is to understand; (ii) the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; (iii) fieldwork; and (iv) the inductive building of concepts, themes, categories, hypotheses, or theories (Merriam & Simpson, 2000) (Figure 3-1). Narrative design focuses on individual stories, grounded theory research delves into abstract theories, and ethnographic design focuses on the broader picture of cultural norms.
Figure 3-1: Qualitative research designs
Adapted from Creswell (2012, p. 20)

A narrative research design is employed when a researcher wishes to tell the stories of one or more individuals. Here, the researcher describes the lives of individuals, collects and tells stories about these individuals’ lives, and writes narratives about their experiences. Narrative research has strong ties to literature, and provides a qualitative approach in which the researcher can write in a persuasive, literary form. Examples of narrative research form are autobiographies, biographies and personal accounts. The process of narrative research generally includes standard characteristics (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, & Orr, 2009; Creswell, 2012): the study of the experiences of an individual (in some cases more than one individual) including their social and personal interactions; placing them into a chronology of experiences (past, present, and future experiences); collecting field texts that document these experiences; retelling the story; coding the field texts for themes or categories; incorporating the context or place into the story or themes; and collaboration between the researcher and the participants in the study, such as negotiating field texts (Creswell, 2012).
Grounded theory design is appropriate for research that studies a number of individuals who have all experienced an action, interaction, or process. This design outlines a systematic qualitative procedure that generates a general explanation (grounded in the views of participants) describing a process, action, or interaction among people. The procedures for developing this theory include gathering interview data, developing and linking categories (or themes) of information, and producing a visual model that depicts the general explanation. In this way, the explanation is “grounded” in the data from participants. From this explanation, predictive statements about the experiences of individuals are constructed (Creswell, 2012).

As they have been described, narrative research designs are suitable for studies that are about one or more persons’ personalised experiences/story-telling, while grounded theory designs are for inductive theory-building studies. To conduct an exploratory study on one group of individuals in their natural setting participating in particular activities, and to develop a portrait of how they interact, the ethnographic design is an appropriate choice for the qualitative researcher to obtain the desired data and results. The ethnographic design outlines the procedures for describing, analysing, and interpreting the group as a cultural group (Creswell, 2012), as the individuals share patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language that develop over time. Using the prescribed procedures, the researcher can explore the prevailing issues and discover the emerging themes that they are looking for.

Within ethnographic research design, the major branches are realist ethnography, critical ethnography and ethnographic case study (Creswell, 2012). Realist ethnography objectively focuses on developing a scientific and deeper understanding of a cultural theme within a culture-sharing group. The cultural topics may include enculturation, acculturation, socialisation, institutionalised education, learning and cognition, and child and adult development (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993). Critical ethnography studies the shared patterns of a marginalised group with the aim of advocacy about issues of power and authority and call for changes. The topics addressed include inequality, dominance, oppression, or empowerment (Creswell, 2012). The ethnographic case study is well suited for studies that analyse a person, group or multiple groups of individuals, or processes within a cultural perspective. An ethnographic case study researcher focuses on an in-depth understanding of the people/group/case being studied through immersing themselves within the cultural group. The researcher then can use this in-depth and detailed understanding to assess its intrinsic merit, to understand an issue, or to provide information to compare several cases.

An ethnographic case study design is thus appropriate for this study, as the researcher is investigating the impact on English vocabulary acquisition among culturally dissimilar
individuals. As stated by Yin (2011), the major strength of the case study is that the researcher undergoes a progression of understanding the problem, the nature and the complexity of the process taking place. From here, valuable insights and perspectives can be gained into new and emerging themes.

3.1.1 Case study design

Stake (1995, p. xi) stated that case study is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances". Stake further elaborated that the real business of case study is particularisation, not generalisation. A particular case is studied and the researcher comes to know it very well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is and what it does. There is an emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself.

Creswell (2012), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Stake (1995) classified the types of cases that qualitative researchers often study. The “case” may be a single individual, several individuals separately or in a group, a program, events, or activities (e.g., a student, several students, or the implementation of a new science program). The case may represent a procedure consisting of a series of phases (e.g., a high school curriculum process) that forms a sequence of activities. A case may be selected for study because it is an intrinsic case study, an instrumental case study or a multiple instrumental case study (Figure 3-2).

| Intrinsic Case Study | Multiple Instrumental Case Study  
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unusual Case</strong></td>
<td><strong>(also called a Collective Case Study)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Study an intrinsic, unusual case which has merit in and of itself:  
  e.g. the study of a bilingual school (Stake, 2000)  
| **Issue**            | **Case**                        |
| **Instrumental Case Study** | **Issue**                       |
| Study a case that illuminates (provides insight into) a particular issue (or theme)  
  e.g. the study of campus reaction to violence on campus (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995) | Study several cases that provide insight into an issue (or theme)  
  e.g. the study of four middle school students who have reading disabilities; the study that examines factors contributed to the development of reading disabilities in adolescents (Kos, 1991) |

Figure 3-2: Types of qualitative case studies
An in-depth understanding of the case is developed by the case study researcher by collecting numerous forms of data (e.g., interviews, observations, documents, e-mails, pictures, scrapbooks, video clips). The researcher also locates a case (or cases) within their larger context, such as geographical, political, social, or economic settings. For example, in an evaluation study of family centres, a family centre fulfils a contextual function whereas the data for the study comes from the staff and clients of the family centre (Mulroy & Lauber, 2004). In a study of the demise of a large firm, the contextual function is taken from a large firm, while the data comes from the practices and the individuals within the firm (Schein, 2003).

The case study research method, in particular a multiple instrumental case study, is employed for this study as it is a suitable method of investigation considering the topic and the nature of the phenomenon under study. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 26) argued that,

... multiple cases offer the researcher an even deeper understanding of processes and outcomes of cases, the chance to test (not just develop) hypotheses, and a good picture of locally grounded causality.

This method allows a researcher to explore, compare and contrast within and between cases. According to McDonough and McDonough (1997, p. 214), case study design is a suitable research method as it presents research in an accessible form where participants and classes are ‘ready-made’, as it were, for use as case studies. The case study design is also appropriate for an individual researcher. As Bell (2005, p. 10) stated “it gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale”.

According to Yin (2011, p. 6), the appeal of qualitative research is that it allows in-depth studies about a broad range of topics in everyday terms, with the researcher given greater autonomy in selecting the topics of interest. Five appealing features of qualitative research, according to Yin, are that, firstly, it studies the meaning of people’s lives, under real-world conditions. Secondly, it represents the views, ideas and perspectives of the people in a study, not the values, preconceptions, or meanings held by others. Thirdly, it covers the contextual conditions that influence people’s lives: social, institutional, and environmental. Fourthly, it contributes insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour. Finally, it strives to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source.

### 3.2 Research site

The research site is a community centre located 20 km from the metropolitan city of Perth, in Western Australia. The position of the researcher as the coordinator of the English conversational program for migrant women at the research site allowed for easier access to the site and the participants, and the researcher being part of the research field. This program is
held for ten weeks during the school term, where sessions run every Tuesday from 10:00 to 12:00. The researcher has been the coordinator of this program for four years, as a volunteer in the first year, and as a part-time employee until the present. The researcher’s responsibility is to coordinate the sessions including setting-up of the learning room and planning the topics for discussion. This program has been funded by various government departments and other non-profit and private organisations since it began in 2001.

The centre provides community services and learning programs to the surrounding community members, the English conversational program being one of them. The main objective of this program is to provide a flexible learning space for speakers of non-English background who want to practise basic conversational and survival English whilst meeting other people and socialising. The program is free of charge, offers a non-formal learning atmosphere that is relaxed, supportive, non-threatening, and provides a somewhat level playing field for learning. Mothers with small children are permitted to bring along their children to the learning room.

Due to the flexibility and convenience that it provides, it attracts mostly women even though it is open to both men and women. Attendance in the program is not compulsory. As such, attendance is irregular, contingent upon participants’ availability and convenience. About 40 participants enroll in the program each term with an average attendance of 12 to 15 per session. Some participants have been regulars for many years, though they do not come to every session. The program receives new participants almost every term, but it is never known whether they will return in successive sessions.

The women have different English proficiency levels (from below average to little or no English), have unique pre-migration histories, are from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and are full time mothers. They have different literacy and numeracy levels as a result of educational backgrounds that range from high levels to very little experience of formal education. They may be able to speak many languages, or may have only a basic knowledge of reading and writing in their first language (L1). Their countries of origin include Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Japan, Libya, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Sudan. The majority entered Australia through the humanitarian or spouse visas.

From prior group engagements and small-talks with the women, the researcher is informed that the motivation for these women in attending the program is to improve their conversational skills by practicing spoken English. Other motivational factors include: to communicate better with their children who have entered the mainstream Australian educational system and have become fluent English speakers; to support their children’s education by being able to communicate with their children’s teachers and help their children with homework; to be able
to communicate better with neighbours and community members; to be comfortable in general communication so that it will make it possible for them to get jobs or find better jobs; and to learn sufficient English to apply for the citizenship examination.

The researcher’s role in this setting is perceived as a teacher by the program participants. As is the norm in non-western culture, the researcher is addressed as ‘teacher’, instead of calling her by her first name. The researcher’s involvement in the program provides an opportunity for her to get to know the participants, and she is sometimes given the privilege of sharing participants’ personal stories, earning their trust, and understanding their learning needs. Given these circumstances, the researcher is in a strategic position to undertake this study and use the case study design research pathway.

Adelman, Jenkins, and Kemmis (1976) describe case study design as a ‘user-friendly’ research method and popular among teachers as the data is ‘strong in reality,’ and recognizes the complexity of ‘social truths’. The researcher has a natural vantage point for observing how the participants act, speak, and how they engage with each other, as well as with the researcher and other people in the community centre. These observations and interactions provide the researcher with a valuable general view of the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the participants toward using MALL and whether MALL has any impact on their vocabulary acquisition and ultimately conversational proficiency.

3.3 Participants

This study investigated and derived views and understandings from the perspectives of the migrant women based on their background and experiences within the natural learning setting; that is, the weekly and casual conversational English sessions they attended at the community centre. Before approaching potential participants who were of linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, ethical issues were strictly considered.

3.3.1 Ethics consideration

Ethics permission for this study was applied for and subsequently granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Murdoch University (Appendix A). This study sought to conduct research ethically by complying with the National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research.

Recruitment of the participants was via the community centre where participants attended and participated in the conversational English program (Appendix B; Appendix C). It is crucial that researchers respect the participants and the sites for research (Creswell, 2012; Miles &
This study was designed and carried out in a way that minimised risk and harm, and protected and respected both the participants and the research site. Not only is the researcher a migrant, she is also trained and has adequate experience engaging with linguistically and culturally diverse people. In addition to working in the community services sector that interacts greatly with migrants and refugees, she holds a Certificate III in Community Services, Health & Education (with Education Support focus) and a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) from the University of Cambridge.

Communication with participants was conducted clearly and they were asked to provide consent only after they were presented with an Information Letter (Appendix D) that informed them of:

i. the purpose and objectives of the study;
ii. the reason for seeking their involvement;
iii. that participation or non-participation would not impact their visa status;
iv. that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw any time without giving any reason and that their participation would not be graded;
v. that the study would take place during the regular conversational English sessions;
vi. that the researcher would: not record their real name or any other identifying information; record what they said so it could be used to write her thesis and report; not refer to anyone by name in her thesis and report; erase the tape recordings as soon as the researcher finished writing the transcript; keep the participants’ name and contact information until the study was completed; be able to be contacted by the researcher and supervisors if they had any questions; and
vii. that participants had the freedom to choose to participate or not in the study and to give informed consent (Appendix E).

3.3.2 Participant recruitment

The term ‘purposeful sampling’ is used where the sample is not selected randomly. Individuals and sites are deliberately selected by qualitative researchers to learn or understand the central phenomenon. Patton (1990, p. 169) suggested the criterion to look for is whether they are “information rich”. Creswell’s (2012, p. 214) criteria for selecting the sample and site are that they might provide useful information, help people learn about the phenomenon, and give voice to silenced people. These criteria allow the development of a detailed understanding that
ultimately helps researchers to understand the phenomena. As such, in qualitative case study research, the sample can be very small. Patton (1990, p. 184) stated that,

There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources. ... With the same fixed resources and limited time, a researcher could study a specific set of experiences for a larger number of people (seeking breadth) or a more open range of experiences for a smaller number of people (seeking depth). In-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich. Less depth from a larger number of people can be especially helpful in exploring a phenomenon and trying to document diversity or understand variation. I repeat, the size of the sample depends on what you want to find out, why you want to find it out, how the findings will be used, and what resources (including time) you have for the study.

According to Creswell (2012), for qualitative research that is interpretive in nature, a small number of participants allows more focus and an in-depth level of detail about experiences and perspectives to be captured. An individual can be the sole subject of a research project as shown by Hakuta (1976) where he conducted a case study of a Japanese child learning English as a second language; by Haznedar (1997), who conducted a longitudinal case study of a Turkish-speaking child’s acquisition of English; and by Halliday (1975) who studied the early language development of his son Nigel, attending closely to the social functions of language and communication. Kos (1991) examined the factors that contributed to the development of reading disabilities in adolescents; as such, four middle school students who had reading disabilities were his subjects of study. Padula and Miller (1999) conducted a case study of four women who had re-entered university as full-time doctoral students. Through interviews and observations, several themes about beliefs that these women held were discovered.

The purposeful sampling strategy used for this study is called maximal variation sampling (Patton, 1990). This variation displays different dimensions and diversity of the case studies. This study attempts to present multiple perspectives of individuals to represent the complexity of the phenomenon (Figure 3-3). The researcher sampled three cases where each comprised individuals who differ on the characteristic of experiences of learning vocabulary:

- **Case Study 1:** Ten migrant women who attended English conversational sessions, learning vocabulary the conventional way; that is, not assisted by any technological devices thus no MALL experience (non-MALL learning experience).
- **Case Study 2:** Five migrant women who had participated in Case Study 1 who continued their participation in MALL sessions where learning vocabulary was assisted by an app downloaded on a tablet (non-MALL plus MALL learning experience – hybrid).
Case Study 3: Five new migrant women who attended MALL sessions where learning vocabulary was assisted by an app downloaded on a tablet (MALL only learning experience).

Figure 3-3: Multiple instrumental case studies involved in this study
Adapted from Creswell (2012, p.466), Miles and Huberman (1994), Stake (1995)

Thus, fifteen women from diverse countries and linguistics backgrounds (Table 3-2) participated in this study in the three case studies (Figure 3-3) to form a multiple instrumental case study. This sample was sufficient to provide answers to the research questions. The criteria of these women that qualified them to participate in this study included the following:

1) They attended the conversational English program held at the community centre.
2) English is not L1.
3) They were migrants (i.e. entered Australia through the humanitarian visa program, or as a family member of a skilled worker visa, or as a family member of a student visa, or on a visitors’ visa). Some of these women held a Temporary Protection Visa that was issued to persons who had been recognised as refugees fleeing persecution, some had been granted permanent residency status or had become an Australian citizen after a lengthy process and waiting period.
Table 3-2: Participants of this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>L1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ami</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeda</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liddy</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
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<td>Malay</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
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<td>Rina</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
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<td>Rose</td>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Lingala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suki</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Farsi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuni</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zehra</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Dari</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to cultural sensitivities, the researcher and all participants were female thus no gender related issues arose. No images were taken of participants because most do not allow their photos to be taken. The snacks provided during the sessions were halal as the majority of the women were Muslim. Throughout the interview sessions, the researcher accommodated and was prepared for interruptions and distractions as participants brought along their small children. The interview avoided touching on personal issues that would cause discomfort to participants, such as migration histories of participants who were refugees or who came from countries that were experiencing war and conflict. The researcher was aware of such cues; for example, if the participant exhibited a change in facial expression from being engaged in the discussion to showing disinterest, a change in mood, or breaking eye contact when certain issues were talked about. To alleviate any potential emotional distress that could arise in the course of the interview process, the researcher reminded the participant that they could choose to decline to answer any question in the interview and they could choose to end the interview at any time.
3.4 Data collection

A distinctive feature of case study research is the fact that it is detailed and intensive as it attempts to build up in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. To achieve this, the phenomenon is studied in context and uses multiple data collection methods to derive multiplicity of perspectives (Creswell, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995). Data for a case study can be either generated or occurring naturally (Ritchie, 2003). Generated data, such as those derived from interviews, give insight into participants' perspectives on their beliefs and behaviours. Naturally occurring data, such as those found in observations and discourse analysis, provide the researcher with the opportunity to record behaviours and interactions as they occur through the eyes of the researcher. For this study, the data collection used both generative and natural occurrence approaches with semi-structured interviews and observation as the key instruments.

3.4.1 Instruments

Interview

Talmy (2010, p. 131) stated that "[as] a research instrument, interviews are theorized (often tacitly) as a resource for investigating truths, facts, experience, beliefs, attitude." An interview is a tool or resource for collecting or gathering information. The interview data becomes the 'reports', which reveal truths and facts, and/or the attitudes, beliefs, and internal mental states of self-disclosing interviewees. Interviews thus give voice to interviewees. Through interviews, the participants' experiences, opinions, feelings, knowledge are disclosed first hand and these become rich and valuable data (Patton, 2002). Dörnyei (2007, p. 135) categorised interviews into three types based on their degree of structure:

a) A **structured interview** is where the researcher follows a structured format using a prepared, elaborate interview guide that contains a list of questions to be covered closely with every participant. The advantage of this is that the elicited information is comparable across participants. The disadvantage is that it is limited in richness with little room for variation in the responses as they are recorded according to a coding scheme. This type of interview is appropriate for a researcher who is aware of what he/she needs to know and can frame questions that will yield the needed answers.

b) An **unstructured interview** allows the researcher the maximum flexibility and to follow the participants in unpredictable directions. There is minimal intervention from the research agenda as the intent is to create a relaxed atmosphere, so that the participant may reveal more than he/she would, with the researcher assuming a listening role. There is no prepared, elaborate interview guide, although the researcher usually thinks
of a few opening questions to elicit the participant's story. Interruptions are kept to a
minimum. Even so, the researcher may request clarification or give reinforcement
feedback to keep the communication and the interview moving. This type of interview is
most appropriate when a study is looking for the deep meaning of a particular
phenomenon or looking into an historical account of how a particular phenomenon has
developed.

The **semi-structured interview** type offers a compromise between the structured and
unstructured extremes. It uses a set of prepared guiding questions and prompts, but the
format is open-ended, and participants are encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised.
The interviewer remains in control of the direction of the interview, though with some
leeway. The order of questions can be changed and some questions can be probed
further for more extensive follow-up of responses (McDonough & McDonough, 1997).
This type of interview is suitable when the researcher has an adequate overview of the
phenomenon and is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance, but
does not want to use prepared answer codes that would limit the depth and breadth of
participants’ response.

The semi-structured interview method was selected for this study as it was the suitable method
to gather the information needed from the participants. The interview had an overall structured
framework but with inbuilt flexibility. The same questions were asked of all the participants,
not necessarily in the same order or wording, with the main questions supplemented by various
probes. Therefore, the interview was guided by a prepared questionnaire and prompts while
encouraging participants to elaborate their views. Dörnyei (2007, p. 136) listed the areas where
the interview guide helps a researcher. It (a) ensures that the domain is properly covered, with
key areas not left out or missing; (b) suggests appropriate wordings for questions; (c) offers a
list of useful probes to be used if needed; (d) offers a template for statements; and (e) lists some
comments to bear in mind.

Case Study 1 had ten participants (Figure 3-4). The data collection procedure used was semi-
structured interview sessions. The data collected were demographics and responses to general
questions (Appendix F). The demographic questions sought participants’ personal information,
everday language use (L1, L2, and L3), education and work experience pre- and post-migration
to Australia, and their future plans. General interview questions sought data about how
participants acquire English skills and their perception of their own English skill, their
perceptions of the importance of English, and how they communicate using English in the social
setting. Participants then attended 4 to 5 regular conversational English sessions (non-MALL
sessions) and then responded to the post-non-MALL interview questions (Appendix G). The
data collected were about the changes they perceived had occurred, if any, after their participation in non-MALL, their learning experience and the vocabulary that they had learnt.

**Figure 3-4: Interviews and sessions undertaken by participants of Case Study 1, 2 and 3**

Five of the ten participants in Case Study 1 then extended their participation as Case Study 2 participants. Participants answered pre-MALL interview questions (Appendix H), attended MALL sessions, and then answered post-MALL interview questions (Appendix I). Pre-MALL interview questions collected data regarding participants’ familiarity and experience with computers and any type of mobile devices. Post-MALL questions sought data regarding: participants’ perceptions of their English skills after attending the MALL sessions; participants’ experiences from attending the MALL sessions and of using the tablet; and the vocabulary that they had learnt.

Case Study 3 commenced when Case Study 2 had been completed. Case Study 3 comprised a new group of five migrant women. After pre-MALL interviews, participants attended a set of 4 to 5 MALL sessions. Participants answered demographic and general questions, attended MALL sessions, and finally answered post-MALL questions. The data sought from participants were about: personal information, everyday language use (L1, L2, and L3), education and work experience pre- and post-migration to Australia, and their future plans; acquiring English skills and their perception of their own English skill and the importance of English, and how they communicate using English in a social setting; perceptions of their English skills after attending MALL; experiences and the learning outcomes from attending MALL and of using the tablet; and the vocabulary that they had learnt.

The participants in this study were non-proficient English speakers, thus were not able to express their opinions as deeply and broadly as native speakers. In many instances, the
researcher had to repeat and/or simplify the questions (and use follow-up questions). No professional interpreters were used in this study, but with the consent of the participants, help from other participants or people who were available at the community centre at the time of the interview was used. These helpers spoke the participant’s L1 and were a little more proficient than the participant, willing to sit down with the participant and the researcher, help the participant understand the interview questions, and interpret for the participant. This allowed participants to express their views more freely in L1. Notes were taken and audio recordings (where allowed by participants) were also made.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face. As suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2005), and also discovered by the researcher, a face-to-face interview was advantageous especially if there was an established rapport between the researcher and the participant as the latter felt encouraged to speak freely. The researcher gained the participant’s confidence and cooperation, could clarify ambiguous answers and, when appropriate, seek follow-up information. The disadvantage of face-to-face interviews is that it is impractical when large samples are involved, and can be time consuming for an individual researcher.

A Likert-type scale for responses was used for some of the questions that had the same set of answer categories. Referring to Baxter and Babbie’s (2004) examples of Likert-type measures in communication research, responses where word descriptions were used to describe frequency, intensity or quantity, values “1” to “5” were assigned to each response from a lower to higher degree. Responses from participants were written on the printed questionnaire by the researcher.

**Learning sessions (non-MALL and MALL)**

**Non-MALL sessions**

The regular conversational sessions were treated as non-MALL sessions for this research. These sessions were conducted following the original premise of the community centre, which was to provide migrants and refugees, whose English was not their native language/L1, a non-formal learning space to practice spoken and conversational English. The researcher selected topics and then brought them to discussions in the weekly meetings.

An example of a topic of conversation was about grocery advertisements in the community newspaper. Krashen’s Input Hypothesis of second language acquisition stated that learners acquire language by receiving input that is comprehensible and impactful (Krashen, 1985, cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2013). Using a grocery advertisement, which is a form of authentic text
(found in everyday lives) helped low literacy learners, to understand words in context much better (K. S. Ahmad, Sudweeks, & Armarego, 2015, pp. 6-7). The discussion followed this order:

1. Each attendee was given a current community newspaper available free in the community (Figure 3-5). An introduction to the community newspaper was made that included recognising the front page and title of the newspaper, describing pictures on the front and back page, finding advertisements and inserts, and identifying page numbers. There were no discussions about the news in the newspaper as most participants were poor readers and would not be able to comprehend the texts.

![Figure 3-5: Community newspaper used for non-MALL sessions](image)

*Figure 3-5: Community newspaper used for non-MALL sessions*

From left to right: front page of 2 September 2014 issue; grocery advertisement on page 14; another grocery advertisement on page 19.

2. The follow-up discussion revolved around two grocery advertisements and the prices of grocery items, comparison of prices (where one is cheaper or more expensive in one store than in another), in-season fruit, learning to describe items by the weight or the quantifier/container in which they were sold. Examples of vocabulary were a kilo of ___, a bag of ___, a carton of ___, a dozen eggs, grocery list, cheaper and expensive. The discussion elicited stories from participants about their last shopping trip to the grocery shop and what they had bought. These stories triggered follow-up questions and elicited other vocabularies.

3. The researcher chose some statements/expressions and let all participants repeat after her.

4. Participants attempted making a grocery list and shared it with the group.

A sample of how a non-MALL lesson was conducted on the topic of Personal Information is in Appendix J).
MALL sessions

The MALL learning environment was created for the English conversational program at the community centre as the setting for observation. In designing the MALL sessions, the researcher considered the timeframe allowable for her to have access to the participants who were also part of the larger group who attended the program. The researcher was permitted by the community centre to conduct research at their premises and use the same two-hour time block that is used for the regular conversational English program. The researcher also had to retain a similar non-formal setup of the regular program while conducting the MALL sessions.

The topics selected for the MALL sessions considered the principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1984), the natural approach of language learning (Krashen & Terrell, 2000), sociocultural instructional design (Grabinger, Aplin, & Ponnappa-Brenner, 2007; Halliday, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978), and the four strands of a well-balanced language course proposed by Nation and Newton (2009). Combined, the vocabulary lessons for this study exposed participants to a variety of everyday functional and conversational language use, and focused on:

- language learning rather than the grammar and technicality of language;
- fluency rather than accuracy, thus direct error correction and pronunciation work was not necessary at early stages;
- treating vocabulary as an essential component of learning English rather than grammar because extensive vocabulary knowledge permits fluency in communication;
- learning vocabularies that were essential to the learners’ needs, strengths, weaknesses and aspirations; for example, learning phrases that are commonly used to ask permission politely or to describe people’s facial features; and
- building listening and speaking skills.

The content for the MALL sessions were sourced from English as a Second Language (ESL) textbooks, ESL websites, and the ESL language mobile app called Think English! (version 1.2) (NSW AMES, 2016). The following is a sample of how a MALL lesson (K. S. Ahmad et al., 2015) on the topic of Describing People from the app was conducted.

**Step 1 – pre-teach vocabulary**

Pictures were used to pre-teach vocabulary (words/phrases) such as “wears glasses”, “beard and moustache”, “spiky hair”, “blonde hair”, “tall and short”, and “young” (Figure 3-6). The purpose of pre-teaching was for learners to understand the meaning and become familiar with the vocabulary so that it would be easier when encountering more complex sentences or texts.
Each picture was A4 size. One picture was displayed on the board and discussion was elicited from the attendees based on this picture. With a partner, the attendees made sentences using the keyword/phrase and shared their sentences with the whole group. To encourage conversation, follow-up questions were asked from the sentence that was created and the attendees would try to compose follow-up sentences/answers. This process was repeated for the other pictures.

Figure 3-6: Pictures used for pre-teaching vocabulary

Step 2 - drilling

This step was drilled to help attendees practice fluency and become familiar with how the words and phrases are used. With all six pictures on the whiteboard, the following example corresponding sentences were drilled: “She wears glasses”; “He has a beard and a moustache”; “He’s got spiky hair”; “She’s got blonde hair”; “He’s tall”; “He’s short”; and “They’re young.”

Step 3 – app activity and exercise

This is when each attendee was given a tablet to work with and paired with another attendee. The Think English! app was downloaded on all 10 tablets before the start of the lesson, and all the tablets used were fully charged. The app was then pre-set at the start page when the tablet was switched on by the learner. Six topics were used in the MALL sessions for Case Study 2 and Case Study 3 (Describing People, At the Post-Office, At a Café, Your Health, What’s the Matter – describing broken things at home and Talking to Neighbours). A sample of a MALL lesson and the
observational notes is shown in Appendix K. Figure 3-7 shows a sample of the app interfaces on the topic of *Describing people* that participants worked on.

![App Interfaces](image)

**Figure 3-7: Sample of the app exercises interface**

The app was included in Step 3 of the MALL sessions as the mobile and technology element for participants’ vocabulary learning in the conversational English program. The researcher selected topics from the app that were considered simple, relevant, meaningful and useful for daily interaction. The app was considered appropriate as it was designed and developed by the creator of the Australian national language and literacy curricula of the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). The material in the app enables a language learner to learn about Australian society, culture, customs, and the norms of working in Australia, which were seen as relevant to migrants. The learner used the app for acquiring speaking, listening, and reading skills for everyday living, work, and further study.
The tablet was used as the mobile device for the MALL sessions on which the free version of the app was downloaded. The participants and also other attendees of the program had the opportunity to use the tablet. When there were many people attending, they would share a tablet between two people. The researcher had to ensure that the batteries for the tablets were fully charged before they were brought into the learning room and also that the tablets were connected to the local Wi-Fi network. The ten tablets were acquired by the researcher for the community centre through a grant from a non-profit organisation that supports the community, neighborhoods, family, resource and learning centres in Western Australia. The grant was for conducting an adult education workshop for the surrounding community members between July 2013 and November 2013. The tablets were then loaned to the researcher to be used throughout the duration of this research.

**Participant observation**

Observation as a method of gathering data enables a better understanding of participant behaviour in their natural and authentic context. Observation is the process of gathering open-ended and first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site (Creswell, 2012). Thomas (2011) categorised observation into: (1) structured observation, when a researcher systematically looks for particular kinds of behaviour; and (2) unstructured observation when a researcher watches informally (but methodically) and records important facets of what is happening. According to Creswell (2012), this method is advantageous because it allows the opportunity for a researcher to record information as it occurs in a setting, to study actual behaviour, and for the researcher to study individuals who have trouble verbalizing and articulating their ideas, such as preschool children.

Undertaking an observational method for this study was an appropriate approach for the researcher as she was involved as a coordinator of the program at the research site. The researcher had the advantage of established rapport with participants, as opposed to being a stranger and an outsider. The researcher took the role of a participant observer. As a participant, the researcher assumed the role of an “inside” observer who actually engages in activities with the participants at the study site, and records information (Appendices I and J).

**Participants’ proficiency rating**

The purpose of rating participants’ proficiency level was to identify their ability in using English in their daily lives. The researcher constructed these rating scales based on the proficiency scoring criteria of the International Second Language Proficiency Rating (ISLPR®), (ISLPR, n.d.) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) by the British Council (British...
Council, n.d.). Considering the participants’ English ability, only lower levels/scores of these criteria were used. In constructing the rating scale, the researcher also used her personal knowledge of the general English ability of all the attendees of the conversational English program at the community centre. Proficiency is divided into reading, writing, listening, speaking, and vocabulary skills. The process of rating participants’ proficiency was not in assessment or test form; rather, the researcher evaluated participants’ utterances in casual conversations and interactions inside and outside the English conversational sessions, and from the MALL sessions that they attended. The ratings were awarded on the basis of participants’ ability consistent with the level description of the appropriate scale.

From these ratings, the researcher was able to identify participants’ English knowledge in relation to other case study participants, could compare participants’ self-rating of their English skills with the researcher’s rating, and use these ratings as the basis for analysing differences that occurred, if any, in the ratings pre- and post-non-MALL and pre- and post-MALL. Using a Likert-type scale, the ratings were given by matching skills as closely as possible to the criteria listed in Table 3-3, Table 3-4, Table 3-5, and Table 3-6.

**Table 3-3: Definitions for Likert-type scale rating reading skill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to read (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>struggles to read in general (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to read non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3-4: Definitions for Likert-type scale rating for writing skill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to write (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>able to copy simple words and sentences (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to copy non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3-5: Definitions for Likert-type scale ratings for speaking skill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to communicate, uses occasional isolated words (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>communicates using memorized utterances, interweave with L1 (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to converse face-to-face on familiar topics (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to communicate effectively on topics relating to particular interests, ease in speaking (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-6: Definitions for Likert-type scale rating for listening skill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>no understanding of spoken language, limited to occasional isolated words (very low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension limited to memorized utterances in areas of immediate needs (low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations; miscommunication can occur with both non-complex and complex issues; does not understand native speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (average comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand routine social demands, conversations on work requirements; miscommunication can occur with complex issues; still some difficulty understanding native speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing for explanation; can often detect emotional overtones; shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding (very high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.2 Review of instruments

Review and testing of instruments provided participants with opportunities to practice as they helped to test and refine one or more aspects of a final study such as its design, fieldwork procedures, data collection instruments, or analysis plans (Yin, 2011). It is important that these evaluations are conducted prior to data collection in order to reflect on the suitability of questions and the interview format. This prepares researchers with a “mental rehearsal” (Stake, 1995, p. 65).

In this research, a review was conducted on the semi-structured interview questionnaires and a MALL lesson before the commencement of data collection. The questionnaires (pre-non-MALL, post-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post-MALL) were reviewed by the researcher’s colleague who
was the teacher of the AMEP program that was held at the community centre. She had ten years’
experience teaching English to adult migrants in preparing them to sit for assessments for
Certificates I, II, III and IV in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). The aspects of the interview
reviewed were: the appropriateness and relevance of the interview questions; the interview
procedures to be used; the duration of the interview; whether the questions and words used
would be understood by participants; whether participants interpret the questions similarly;
and whether the language used was simple enough to be understood. Changes were made to the
interview questions such as removal of redundant questions, and rearrangement of questions
into relevant groupings.

A MALL lesson was conducted in one of the regular English conversational sessions before the
study took place. Some of the issues discovered and then addressed in the actual MALL lesson
were: making sure that the tablets were all fully charged; Wi-Fi was connected to all tablets; the
appropriate timings and transitions between components of the MALL lesson; the duration of
each component; making sure to avoid overwhelming the participants; accommodating the
presence of children; and, when possible, to get help from volunteers as the sessions were
expected to be packed and noisy since participants of the regular English conversational
program would also be attending.

3.5 Data analysis

Creswell (2012) suggested that in analysing and interpreting qualitative data, a case study
researcher implements the following steps in the process (though not always in this sequence):

1. preparing and organising the data for analysis;
2. exploring and coding the data;
3. using the codes to develop a general picture of the data through descriptions and
   themes;
4. representing and reporting findings through narratives and visuals; and
5. interpreting the meaning of the findings.

The researcher interpreted these steps into the following ground-up approach (Figure 3-8) as
Figure 3-8: The qualitative process of data analysis

The process was inductive in form, going from the detailed and raw data (e.g., the interview recordings) to the general codes and themes (thematic analysis). It involved a simultaneous process of analysing while the researcher was also collecting data. In this research, the data collection, analysis and the report writing were coordinated activities. Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Creswell (2012) referred to this as ‘constant comparative’ data analysis. When collecting data, the researcher was also analysing other information previously collected, looking for major ideas. This differed from some approaches to quantitative research, in which data collection occurs first, followed by data analysis. The phases were also iterative, where the researcher cycled back and forth between data collection and analysis.

Sometimes, the researcher collected stories from participants and returned for more information to fill gaps in their stories as the analysis of their stories progressed. The researcher analysed her data by reading it several times and interpreted it each time. This developed a deeper understanding about the information supplied by her participants. Miles and Huberman
(1994) stated that in analysing qualitative data, researchers are not bound to follow a single, accepted approach although several guidelines exist for this process. Creswell (2012) described analysis as "an eclectic process". As qualitative research is often interpretive research, the researcher also made a personal assessment as to a description that was consistent with the themes that captured the major categories of information. Creswell (2012) said that interpretation may differ between people. This does not mean that one interpretation is better or more accurate, but simply that each participant brings their own perspective to their interpretation.

The researcher used this process for each case study (identification of the emerging themes and later for the emerging broader themes/factors from the cross-analysis of the three case studies). The researcher also manually analysed the data (colour coded on Microsoft Word documents and in a simple Microsoft Excel spreadsheet) instead of using computer software. Creswell (2012, p. 239) described hand analysis of qualitative data as occurring when researchers "read the data, mark it by hand, and divide it into parts". The researcher used hand analysis as the database was small and files could be easily tracked and located. She also wanted to have a hands-on feel for it without the interference of a computer program.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 173) maintained that one of the reasons for conducting cross analysis of case studies is to enhance generalisability. In a typical case study procedure for multiple cases, each case study is analysed separately, and then a cross-case analysis is conducted to identify common and different themes among all of the cases (Stake, 1995). Researchers generally want to know something about the relevance or applicability of their findings to other similar settings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This can be achieved by adequate sampling of multiple cases with criteria that enable evaluations such as typical, diverse, and unusually effective (or ineffective). When carefully analysed, cross analysis can help researchers to answer the reasonable question, and judge whether the findings make sense beyond the specific case. The second reason for conducting a cross-case analysis, according to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 26), is to deepen understanding and explanation. The multiplicity of cases allows researchers to: find negative cases to strengthen a theory, developed through the examination of similarities and differences across the cases; pin down the specific conditions under which a finding will occur; and form the more general categories of how those conditions may be related. In this study, the researcher conducted the thematic analysis of each case study and cross analysed the three case studies by referring to Creswell (2012), Miles and Huberman (1994), Peshkin (1993), Stake (1995) and Yin (2011a).
3.6 Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter discussed the methodology that was used to investigate the impact of using MALL in vocabulary acquisition, in the context of migrant women in Australia whose L1 was not English, in a non-formal learning setting. The ethnographic case study design was appropriately used, as the researcher was investigating similar culturally themed groups that experienced different conditions of learning, non-MALL, hybrid of non-MALL and MALL, and MALL. These multiple case studies provided deeper understanding of the processes and outcomes, through within-case analyses performed on each case as well as a cross-case study analysis of the three cases. The key strength of the case study approach was that the researcher experienced a progression of understanding which encompassed the problem, nature, and complexity of the process that took place. Valuable insights and perspectives were gained alongside the discovery of emerging themes. The data collection used semi-structured interviews and observations (generative and naturally occurrence approaches) as the research instruments.

Throughout the iterative and simultaneous data analysis processes, the researcher layered the themes to build on the idea of major and minor themes but organized the themes into layers from basic elementary themes to more sophisticated ones (adapted from Asmussen and Creswell (1995)). Layering the analysis meant representing the data using interconnected levels of themes. Minor themes were incorporated within major themes, and major themes were included within broader themes or factors. The entire analysis became more and more complex as the researcher worked upward toward broader levels of constructs.

The researcher collected data from semi-structured interviews with all fifteen participants in Case Study 1, Case Study 2, and Case Study 3, and from her interactions and observations of all the non-MALL and MALL sessions (Layer 1). She then reported and analysed the data to develop a description of participants’ experiences (Layer 2). From this description the researcher then identified the themes arising (Layer 3) and combined these themes into broad perspectives/factors (Layer 4). This layering shows how the researcher began with the details and worked her way up to the more general themes in her analysis. The researcher used these themes to cross analyse the three cases studies in order to identify common and different themes among all of the cases. The following chapter, Chapter 4, reports on the results and analyses of Case Study 1. Figure 3-9 shows how the researcher used four layers, and where and when thematic analysis and cross-case analysis took place.
Figure 3-9: The layers of analysis
CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY 1: Non-Mobile Assisted Language Learning (non-MALL) environment

Ten migrant women participated in Case Study 1, which is referred to as ‘non-MALL’. The researcher was in contact with these participants for two-hour weekly sessions over twenty weeks. However, participants’ attendance was irregular. Participants were interviewed separately, for the majority of time one-on-one. On some occasions, with consent from the participant, someone who was available at the community centre assisted in interpreting the interview questions into participant’s L1. Each participant completed two interviews with the researcher, one before and one after attending 4 to 5 regular conversational English sessions. As such, the interviews before these sessions are called ‘pre-non-MALL’, and interviews after these sessions are called ‘post-non-MALL’ (Figure 4-1). Each interview lasted for 30 to 45 minutes.

Figure 4-1: Case Study 1 participants in non-MALL

4.1 Case Study 1: Results

4.1.1 Demographics

Table 4-1 shows the relevant demographic information for the participants of Case Study 1. Participants’ real names were not used throughout the research, instead pseudonyms were used to protect their confidentiality.
Table 4-1: Demographics for Case Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Years living in Australia</th>
<th>Residency status pre-migration</th>
<th>Residency status in Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suki</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Refugee in Iran</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeda</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lived in Libya</td>
<td>Temporary student visa (spouse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mala</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lived in Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rina</td>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Refugee in Malaysia</td>
<td>Temporary (Protection) Visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>35-39</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Lived in China</td>
<td>Temporary (Bridging) Visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Congo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Refugee in Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liddy</td>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lived in China</td>
<td>Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zehra</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Refugee in Iran</td>
<td>Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lived in Malaysia</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rea</td>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Refugee in Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia</td>
<td>Citizen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants can be grouped into younger (Suki, Feeda, Mala, Rina and Ally) and older (Rose, Liddy, Zehra, Rea and Kay) age range categories. The average number of years they had lived in Australia at the time of the research was 4.25 years. The participants' migration backgrounds were mixed, entering Australia through the humanitarian visa program for refugees, the family reunion visa, or the student's spouse visa. All participants were married and lived with their husbands and children, except for Mala who was a single mother. Their residential status could be grouped into temporary, permanent resident and citizen.

All participants had attended some form of English learning since arriving in Australia. All ten participants were regulars in the conversational English program at the community centre. Among them, Suki and Rose had completed their Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) course, while Mala, Kay and Liddy were still attending theirs.

4.1.2 Participants

**SUKI**

Suki was a refugee from Afghanistan who experienced a delayed and interrupted education. Suki went to an informal religious school in her village and only started formal schooling in the refugee transition camp in Iran at the age of 12. She completed high school at the age of 20, just before she migrated to Australia. In Australia, Suki enrolled in the AMEP and obtained the Level IV Certificate in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). Suki then enrolled in an adult learner preparatory program to obtain Year 11 and 12 qualifications so that she could enrol in a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course. However, she got married one year into the preparatory program and was pregnant soon after. She therefore had to abandon her career.
plans but intends to return to school and find work when her child is older and she can access proper child care.

Even though Suki appeared at ease when talking with anyone, she mentioned that she was quite anxious when having a conversation with a native Australian English speaker as she might not be able to understand and engage properly with them. Suki’s main concern was to be able to speak and be understood, and be able to understand what was said to her. That led Suki to attend the conversational sessions for the “extra practice” in speaking and listening.

**FEEDA**

Feeda, her husband, and their two children aged 5 and 7, came to Australia from Libya. Her husband was on a student visa, while Feeda and their two children were on the family dependent visa. Feeda was pregnant with her third child when she participated in this research. Feeda completed a bachelor’s degree in Mathematics in Libya, but she said she could not use it here as it was in Arabic. Feeda would like to do a master degree and become a teacher; however, she felt that it would only happen if her youngest child were old enough, her permanent residency status were approved, she had sufficient finances and her English was good enough.

According to Feeda, since coming to Australia, her daughters had learned English fairly quickly just from attending school. “My children English are very good. They speak English a lot. Arabic ... less.” The children speak English with each other while using a mixture of English and Arabic when speaking to their parents. Feeda was a little concerned that they might lose interest in their L1. This had instigated Feeda’s motivation to learn English as she wanted play a role in both her children's English and Arabic language development.

**MALA**

Mala came from Sri Lanka and had lived in Australia for 4 years. Mala received her permanent resident status just before her participation in this research. She was a widow in her early thirties, raising a 10-year-old son. Her husband was killed in an accident at his place of employment here in Australia, before she and her son could come and reunite with him. Mala was a very strong woman; she realised that she needed to move on from the terrible tragedy and build a new and stable life for herself and her son. Mala did not have other family members in Australia, but she had a strong support system of close friends and the Sri Lankan community.

When Mala first arrived, it was hard for her to utter English words confidently, even though the words were familiar to her as she had learnt the language when she was in school. She found it
hard to adapt to life in Australia. She was scared that she could not understand the other person, or vice versa, especially when the other person was a native English speaker. At the time of this research, Mala was a regular of the conversational English sessions, was half-way through her AMEP course and was also a volunteer at the community centre. Mala attended the conversational English sessions with the intention of improving her speaking skills. Mala’s ultimate goal was to obtain a trade qualification that would allow her to find a job. Mala planned to work in the baking industry but was unsure whether to specialise in bread, cakes, pastries or biscuits.

**RINA**

Rina and her husband met when both were living in Malaysia. Her husband was a Burmese Rohingya who fled to Malaysia from the war and violence in his country, while Rina came to Malaysia from Indonesia at first as a visitor, but then overstayed to find work. Soon after they were married, Rina had their first child and became a full-time mother. After ten years, they still could not get their residency status legalised, so decided to come to Australia to build a new life and better future for their family. Their oldest son was 10 years old at that time and Rina was pregnant with their second child. They started their journey by boat from Kupang, Indonesia to Christmas Island. Their journey continued as refugees, living in detention centres on the island and in Darwin before they were able to live in Perth under the Humanitarian Protection Visa.

Even though Rina spoke with “broken English”, she spoke confidently. She said that she wanted to improve her conversational skills so that she could communicate better and become able to make right and informed decisions. Accompanying her husband, Rina played a major role in supporting her husband when engaging with the Red Cross (which provided the support for Rina and her family while they resolved their immigration status); the Immigration lawyers, her son’s teachers and school, the housing agent, the doctor, and so forth.

**ALLY**

Ally arrived in Australia 5 months prior to her participating in this research. Ally moved to Australia from China on a bridging visa (in due process of applying for a spouse visa), as she had married an Australian two years previously. Being a fairly recent arrival, Ally was still adjusting to her new life in a western culture and environment. The first time Ally attended the conversational sessions, she did not speak any English. She was struggling to communicate, and most of the time she resorted to talking in Mandarin. Her friend, who spoke English a bit better, interpreted for her. The researcher suggested she memorise answers to questions that were usually asked of migrants:
“What’s your name?”
“Can you spell that please?”
“Where do you come from?”
“What’s your date of birth?”
“How long have you been in Australia?”
“When did you arrive in Australia?”
“Where do you live?”

Ally took these as her homework, and when she came back the following week, she had been able to memorise the answers to these questions.

Ally’s husband was a proficient Mandarin speaker who spent three years learning the language. Ally and her husband spoke Mandarin at home. This became her motivation for attending the conversational English program. In addition to that, she found that she could not understand anything that someone was saying, especially when they spoke in an Australian accent and too fast. Ally wanted to improve her English so that she could communicate with her husband’s family and be able to do courses and eventually find jobs. Ally was not eligible for the AMEP program; therefore, she attended the free programs in various centres. Ally planned to work in the marketing sector when she is ready and after her permanent residency visa is approved.

**ROSE**

Rose, her husband and their five children, fled for safety to Zimbabwe from The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Settling in Perth required them to adjust to life in a new country, adapting to urbanised and modern living, and becoming accustomed to western culture. Nonetheless, Rose and her family’s lives changed for the better. They were happy and felt safe living in Australia. Rose had completed CSWE Level III and Certificate III in a Health Services Assistant course. She worked in the aged-care industry but had to stop working for a while, and had been trying to return to work but could not find a job. Rose planned to return to school and then work in the child services industry.

Rose’s immediate concern was to improve her listening skills because she believed that, by understanding better, she could perform a job more effectively. Generally, Rose could speak English comfortably when the conversation was about children, family, food or other simple things. Rose felt intimidated when engaging in deep conversation or when she could not understand or hear clearly what the other person was saying. Rose was literate in her L2 (French) as it was the national language of the DRC. Rose’s L1 (Lingala) was only used for speaking as it does not have a standard writing system. When speaking English, Rose needed to do some adjustments between French and English.
**Liddy**

Liddy migrated from China to Australia with her husband and twin sons. The reasons they migrated were for better jobs, better education for their sons, and improved quality of life. In Liddy's opinion, the quality of life in Australia was much better because of low pollution levels, no overcrowding of people, and the natural landscapes made it a beautiful place. Before settling in Perth, she and her family lived in New South Wales and Victoria for 6 years and Liddy worked as a meat packer when in Victoria. Liddy wanted to explore a new career in the child care industry but she had to obtain the CSWE Level IV before she could enrol in a child care course. At the time of her participation, Liddy was studying for Level III CSWE.

Liddy could be considered a fluent speaker. Liddy said, "I reckon my speaking is OK, my listening is quite OK too, but my reading and writing not good; they’re terrible". Despite that, Liddy felt strongly that her speaking and listening skills were the ones needing immediate and further improvement because they would be beneficial in her future employment. Liddy said she still felt nervous when talking with someone, depending on the circumstances that she was in, and the person with whom she was conversing; for example, when speaking with an Australian native English speaker whom she had never talked to before and/or someone with a broad accent.

**Zehra**

When Zehra and her husband’s oldest child was 2 years old, they fled Afghanistan and became refugees in Iran. They lived in Iran for more than 20 years where their other four children were born. They were finally able to migrate to Australia in 2007 when their application was accepted. At the time of this research, the family had already been granted Australian citizenship after going through a lengthy process of converting their refugee visa.

Zehra had no experience in formal schooling. Zehra went to informal religious school from when she was 7 until she was 11 years old. She had to leave school when her family moved farther away and it was not safe for her to walk far. In addition to that, in general, girls were not allowed to spend too much time outside of the house. At the age of 15, Zehra was already married and had become a fulltime housewife and mother. According to Zehra, she wanted to improve her English so that she “can talk to people” and “... can understand what people say”. Eventually, she wanted to find work; however, Zehra felt that she was inadequately prepared for work as her English was not good.
**KAY**

Kay was a Malaysian Chinese who married her husband just before moving to Australia. Her husband was a Malaysian Chinese who was an Australian citizen and had lived in Australia for over thirty years. At the time of participating in this research, Kay had just started going to the community centre and attending the conversational sessions after more than two years in ‘isolation’. Kay revealed that being incapable of speaking English made her too shy to speak up. She would feel embarrassed and afraid to make mistakes (saying the wrong things and saying things incorrectly). She also said that, in Australia, the culture and the people are different to where she came from, and not being able to communicate properly made her uncomfortable to meet new people. This made her feel lonely and she did not feel connected to the society around her. Kay found it hard to understand Australian English native speakers. Therefore, she relied a lot on her husband or her stepson to interpret for her.

Kay wanted to find a job as a seamstress as that was her employment for the past 20 years. To work in Australia, Kay needed the vocational English skills qualification and a trade certification. Initially, Kay enrolled in the AMEP course since her permanent residency status had been recently approved. However, Kay found that she could not cope as she felt that the whole process of learning English was “too fast and too overwhelming” and she could not understand most of what being taught. Kay was recommended to take the AMEP home tutoring scheme instead, which was a very slow-paced program. Kay decided to attend the conversational sessions as an addition to her AMEP program. She hoped to overcome her shyness and improve her spoken English.

**REA**

At the time of this research, Rea had already lived in Australia for 12 years. Rea, her husband and five children fled from Iraq in 1997. They spent their lives as refugees in Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia, before they finally arrived in Australia in 2001. Earlier in 2001, the family travelled by boat from Jakarta, Indonesia to Christmas Island. They lived for two months in the Christmas Island’s refugee detention centre. They were then flown to an Immigration detention centre near Adelaide and lived there for 8 months before they were granted temporary visas and opted to settle in Perth, Western Australia. At the time of the interview, all the family members had already been granted Australian citizenship.

Even though eligible, Rea never intended to do AMEP. Rea had decided to stay home and care for her five children. Rea had been in this role since she was young. She dropped out of the religious school at 9 years old because she was not interested in going to school. Her father let
her stay at home helping her mother with housework and looking after her younger siblings.

Rea was married at the age of 15 and had been a full-time mother to her children since.

Rea said the reason she came to the conversational English sessions was to practice speaking English. Rea added that she only needed to learn a little bit so that she could speak basic things (she gestured this with her hand, holding up her index finger and thumb a few centimetres apart). She also emphasised that she liked coming to these sessions because she could meet a few of her friends who were also attending.

### 4.1.3 Participants’ L1/L2/L3

Since arriving in Australia, English was an added language that participants had to learn and be able to use for communicating with the wider Australian community. English became the participants’ L2, L3 or L4. The participants’ language use and the script used for the languages are shown in Table 4-2 except for Rose's L4, English, which is not shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name</th>
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<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Script</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Arabic</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Malay</td>
<td>Roman alphabet</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zehra</td>
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<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Farsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suki</td>
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<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Farsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Lingala</td>
<td>Extended Latin</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Participants’ L1 literacy level**

Burt et al. (2008) categorise the variety of L1 literacy that is typically found in an English class for non-native English speaking adult learners. They are pre-literate, non-literate, semi-literate, non-alphabet literate, non-Roman alphabet literate, and Roman alphabet literate.

**Semi-literate learners:** Rea and Zehra fall under this category that refers to learners who have had limited access to literacy instruction. Rea only attended religious school in Iraq when she
was between 7 and 9 years old; Zehra attended religious school in Afghanistan between the
ages of 7 and 11. The medium of instruction at Rea’s school was Arabic, while Zehra’s was Dari.
Rea and Zehra only developed limited literacy skills: able to recognise alphabets and the
sounds; Zehra could write short sentences and read very slowly; Rea had to sound the letters to
read a word and was generally not able to read and write.

*Non-alphabet literate learners:* Ally, Kay and Liddy fall under this category that refers to learners
who are literate in a language written in a non-alphabetic script (e.g. Chinese and Japanese
logographic). Ally, Kay and Liddy would easily make notes in Mandarin in their notebooks or on
the worksheets that were given. These notes would remind them of the pronunciation, syllables
in English, and so forth.

*Non-Roman alphabet literate learners:* Mala, Feeda and Suki fall under this category that refers
to learners who are literate in a language written in a non-Roman alphabet, Mala’s L1 is Tamil,
Feeda’s L1 is Arabic, while Suki’s is Dari. Mala and Feeda had a complete formal schooling
experience (Mala in Sri Lanka and Feeda in Libya). Suki had a delayed and interrupted
education due to the war, but completed high school in her L2 when she was living as a refugee
in Iran.

*Roman alphabet literate learners:* Rina and Rose fall under this category that refers to learners
who are literate in a language written in a Roman alphabet script (Rina’s L1 is Malay, Rose’s L2
is French) and read from left to right. Malay was the medium for teaching and learning in school
for Rina, while Rose’s was French. Being familiar with the Roman alphabet helped them in
copying from the whiteboard to their notebook and in making their own notes in L1. The
sounds produced when speaking English, Malay and French are different even though they all
use Roman alphabets. English texts are therefore readable to Rina and Rose, as they could use
Malay and French phonetics. Rina and Rose were able to read both simple and complex written
English texts but, most of the time, were not able to comprehend and understand the meaning of
what was being read in the latter.

**Participants’ language skills**

During the pre-non-MALL interview, participants were asked about the languages that they
speak with families and friends. Participants rated their reading, writing, speaking and listening
skills in those languages as well as in the English that has become their added language since
living in Australia. The ratings were represented using symbols (*thumbs-up* and *thumbs-down*)
that were later converted into a Likert-type scale: ☺☺☺☺ (not good at all) = 1; ☺☺☺☺ (not very
good) = 2; ☺☺☺ (somewhat good) = 3; ☺☺ (good) = 4; and ☺ (very good) = 5.
From monolingual to bilingual

Feeda, Rea, Mala and Rina said that they only spoke in their native language/L1 until they moved to Australia. Both Feeda and Rea's L1 was Arabic, while Mala's was Tamil and Rina's was Malay.

Feeda

Figure 4-2 shows Feeda's skills in L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English). Feeda's proficiency in Arabic was at the university level, where she rated all skills as 'very good'. For her L2, Feeda rated her writing skill as 'somewhat good', while the other skills were 'not very good'. Feeda knew the Roman alphabet from some exposure to English at university but she never used the language. Feeda could copy English words and short sentences from the white board on to her notebook. However, Feeda said that she needed to get used to reading and writing in English as it was written from left to right, instead of from right to left like Arabic. Feeda felt less confident and could not write as fast if words or sentences were dictated to her. This was because she was not sure of the spelling and some combination of letters represented confusing sounds to her. This affected her reading as well. For example, some combinations of letters like “s”, “c” and “h” in the word “school” and the letters “f”, “r”, “i” and “e” in the word “friend” caused problems. Feeda also always missed out vowels when trying to spell because generally vowels are not written in Arabic.

Feeda expressed feeling constrained when communicating in English as she could not communicate as fluently as in Arabic. Feeda had to form sentences in Arabic in her mind and translate them into English before she could utter them out loud. She found it even harder to understand someone speaking quickly with a broad Australian accent. Attending the conversational English sessions provided exposure and opportunity for Feeda to practise spoken English.
Rea

Figure 4-3 shows Rea’s language skills for her L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English). For L1, Rea rated her reading and writing skills as ‘not good at all’ while her speaking and listening skills were ‘very good’. For L2, Rea rated her reading, speaking and listening skills as ‘not good at all’ while her writing skill was ‘not very good’.

Rea could recognise the Arabic alphabet and the sounds, but was not able to read very well. Rea could only write short sentences very slowly with assistance. After 12 years that Rea had lived in Australia, she was able to recognise the Roman alphabet and the sounds of the letters. She could write her name, home address, date of birth and phone numbers when filling out forms. She informed the researcher that she had this information memorised as it was always asked of her and she had used it many times. Rea memorised the letters and numbers, what their order was, how they were written and how to pronounce the words. In general, Rea could not read or write in English. Rea could copy simple English words on a piece of paper but very slowly and she seemed unsure of the accuracy. She sometimes missed one or two letters and sometimes mixed up the letters “b”, “d” and “p”. Rea tried to write and read, but she would always give up and eventually just put down her pen and listened. Sometimes she tried to contribute to discussions but quickly her speech turned to Arabic.

Mala

Figure 4-4 shows the ratings that Mala assigned for her L1 (Tamil) and L2 (English). Mala rated her reading, speaking and listening skills in L1 as ‘very good’. She rated her reading and writing skills in L2 as ‘somewhat good’ while her speaking and listening skills as ‘not very good’.
Since coming to Australia, Mala forced herself to use English. In her current situation of being a widow, Mala had to overcome being shy, as she had to be self-reliant for her son. Mala realised that sometimes she could not effectively convey what she wanted to say to other English speakers, especially not to a native speaker. In addition, she found it difficult to understand native speakers because they spoke “too fast” and she could not understand the accent. Mala also felt that she did not know a lot of vocabulary, and that she only used simple and basic words when speaking. Generally, Mala was able understand and read simple texts and able to copy/reprint words, sentences or a paragraph in the Roman alphabet with ease. Mala usually misspelt or missed some letters when writing on her own as she was not sure or did not know the correct spelling.

**Rina**

Rina’s L1 was (Indonesian) Malay, while the researcher’s L1 was (Malaysian) Malay. Most of the time, Rina interacted with the researcher in Malay. Malay is widely spoken in the region of South East Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and Southern Thailand), though with slight variations. Figure 4-5 shows Rina’s L1 and L2 skills.
Rina rated her reading and writing skills in Malay as ‘good’ while her speaking and listening skills were ‘very good’. Rina completed primary and high school in her home country, Indonesia, where Malay is the medium of teaching and learning, and the Roman alphabet is the reading and writing script. Rina rated her reading and speaking skills in L2 (English) as ‘not very good’ while her writing and listening skills were ‘somewhat good’. Rina could copy what was written on the board into her notebook with ease. She was also able to create and write short sentences, though in ‘broken English’. Ever since Rina came to Australia, as she was more proficient than her husband, Rina has had to speak for her family. Rina spoke confidently and tried her best to get her message across, especially when dealing with issues like immigration, health, her children’s school and education, housing and so forth.

From bilingual to trilingual

Ally, Liddy, Kay, Zehra and Suki spoke two languages (Ally and Liddy - Mandarin and Cantonese; Kay – Mandarin and Malay; Zehra and Suki – Dari and Farsi) before engaging with English.

Ally and Liddy

Ally and Liddy came from different provinces in China. Both attended primary and high schools, where Ally completed high school, but Liddy dropped out when she was 15 years old. Mandarin was used as the medium of instruction and learning. Mandarin is the official language in China and is used in government, business, education, TV programs, movies, and radio stations. According to Liddy, the popularity of regional languages like Cantonese was decreasing and they were spoken less frequently.

Ally rated all her L1 (Mandarin) skills as ‘very good’ (Figure 4-6) while her L2 (Cantonese) skills were ‘somewhat good’. For her L3 (English), Ally rated her reading, speaking and listening skills ‘not good at all’ while writing her skill was ‘not very good’.
Ally briefly learnt English at high school and was able to recognise and write the Roman alphabet. Ally had no problem copying what was written on the board in her notebook. However, Ally had trouble sounding the word when the letters were put together, causing her to struggle when reading. Ally made a lot of notes in Mandarin to remind her of the meaning and the pronunciation of words. Ally came to the session well prepared, with her notebook and electronic Chinese-English dictionary handy. Every week, Ally seemed to utter more English words, and made fewer Mandarin interjections in her speech.

Liddy rated all her L1 (Mandarin) skills as ‘very good’ (Figure 4-7). She rated her reading and writing skill for L2 (Cantonese) as ‘somewhat good’, while her speaking and listening were ‘good’. Liddy could read and copy a Cantonese text but it might not be intelligible to her.

For L3, Liddy rated her reading and listening skills as ‘not very good’ while her speaking and writing skills were ‘somewhat good’. From the researcher’s observation, Liddy was quite fluent in spoken English where she seemed comfortable when engaging in conversations with the
researcher, the staff at the community centre and her peers. Liddy could easily utter words with no pauses and gaps. Some of her words were in an Australian accent such as “better” pronounced as /beda:/ instead of /'betə/. Liddy also used the word “mate” instead of “friend”, “aye” for “yes”, “I reckon” for “I think” and “See ya” for “I’ll see you later”. Liddy became an interpreter for her Mandarin speaking peers in the English conversational sessions and also for participants in this research.

When asked how it was that her speech was interspersed with Australian inflections, Liddy said that they occurred naturally, maybe as a result of hearing them from her sons, and hearing and using them every day when she was working at the meat factory. Her co-workers were Australians and Filipinos and the work situation had required her to communicate in English. She said “I keep speaking even if I make mistakes”.

Kay

In Malaysia, Kay went to a Chinese school for her primary education and a mainstream school for her secondary education. In Kay’s mainstream education, Malay was used as the medium of instruction and learning, while English was one of the subjects taught. Figure 4-8 shows Kay’s language skills.

Kay rated her L1’s (Mandarin) reading, writing, speaking and listening skills as ‘very good’. For L2 (Malay) she rated her reading skill as ‘somewhat good’, while her writing, speaking and listening skills were ‘good’. For her L3 (English), Kay rated her reading and listening skills as ‘not very good’ and her writing skill as ‘somewhat good’. Kay did not have a problem copying English texts as the Malay also used the Roman alphabet. Kay could read basic sentences and write/produce short sentences on her own but with structural and grammatical errors. Kay struggled when reading materials such as the community newspaper and real-estate flyers.
Kay rated her speaking skill as ‘not very good at all’. Even though Kay learnt English formally in Malaysia, she had never used the language. English is mainly spoken in the cities and Kay lived in a small town where people either spoke Malay (the national language), Chinese, or Indian. Those living in small towns or villages would not feel comfortable speaking English either because of shyness, or because they were afraid of being jeered at or ridiculed. They would be thought of as being boastful or showing off. Kay spoke Malay to the researcher when talking outside of the conversational sessions, or when she needed help in interpreting when in the middle of group discussion.

Zehra

Figure 4-9 shows how Zehra rated her speaking and listening skills for both her L1 (Dari) and L2 (Farsi) as ‘very good’, while her reading and writing skills were ‘not very good’. Zehra communicates in L1 with her family and friends. She had no problem speaking in L2 when it was required of her. Zehra was able to recognise her L1 and L2 alphabets which were based on the Arabic letters; nevertheless, she was not a fluent reader and did not do much writing.

For her L3 (English), Zehra rated her reading, speaking and listening skills as ‘not good at all’, while her writing skill was ‘not very good’. Outside of the AMEP classroom and the conversational English sessions, Zehra used very little English. Zehra could read simple texts; for example, road signs and grocery flyers (limited to relating the picture of products with their price) but not complex reading material such as the community newspaper. Zehra’s ability to write was limited to copying English words or short sentences from the whiteboard into her notebook. Zehra could verbally construct short sentences in correct contexts by using the vocabulary that she had just learnt, though in ‘broken English’. Of her free will, Zehra wrote these down in her notebook for the researcher to check. Zehra wrote slowly but confidently, and formed her letters carefully. Zehra said she felt uncomfortable speaking English with
strangers for fear of being misunderstood and also for fear that she would not understand what was said to her. Zehra only felt comfortable speaking English to the people that she knew, such as the researcher, her AMEP teacher, and the people and staff at the community centre.

Suki

Suki spoke Dari (L1), Farsi (L2) and English (L3) (Figure 4-10). Suki rated her reading, speaking and listening skills for L1 as ‘very good’, while her writing skill was ‘good’. Suki spoke Dari and Farsi when communicating with her husband, family and friends. She did not do much writing in L1. For L2, Suki rated all her skills as ‘good’. Suki only used L2 when the need arose to communicate with her friends who speak it.

For L3, Suki rated all her skills as ‘somewhat good’. Suki used English comfortably when communicating with her neighbours, the doctor, and government officials, even though she sometimes stumbled. Suki did not need anyone accompanying her or to interpret for her. In fact, Suki had become the interpreter for her mother. Suki thought her reading and writing was "just OK". She did not think these were skills that she should be concerned with. Suki said she could read "short things" and "simple things" such as children’s story book but not “big [thick with difficult words] books”. Suki could write her own simple sentences and create paragraphs. Suki was able to reprint quickly what she saw on the whiteboard into her notebook.

Multilingual

Rose

Rose was quadrilingual. Figure 4-11 shows the languages that Rose used: Lingala (L1), French (L2), Tshiluba (L3) and English (L4).
Rose’s L1 was Lingala which she spoke at home with her family and friends. Rose rated her speaking and listening skills as ‘very good’. Rose's reading and writing skills in L1 was ‘somewhat good’, as she did not do much reading and writing in L1. Rose rated all four skills for her L2 (French) as ‘very good.’ French is the official language of the DRC and it is widely spoken among the educated population. Rose completed her primary and secondary education in French. She used French only in official matters, and used spoken Lingala all the time. For her L3 (Tshiluba), Rose rated her reading and writing skills as ‘not very good’, and judged herself ‘somewhat good’ in her speaking and listening skills. Rose could comfortably converse, but never read or wrote in the language so Rose rated those aspects as ‘not good at all’.

For English (L4), Rose rated her reading and listening skills as ‘not very good’, while her writing and speaking skill were ‘somewhat good’. Rose could speak comfortably when the conversation was about children, family, food or other simple things. Rose felt intimidated when engaging in deep conversation in English or when she could not understand or hear clearly what the other person was saying. These challenges did not stop Rose from interacting with people because it was necessary that she not isolate herself from the outside world. When seeing the doctor or attending an appointment at Centrelink, Rose was able to communicate herself without taking anyone to interpret for her.

Rose found it quite easy to copy English words and sentences from the board since the French language uses the Roman alphabet. Rose could write simple sentences on her own but writing complex sentences was a struggle, as she was not sure of the correct spelling or the words to use. Rose often misspelt English words because French letters produce different sounds compared with English. When reading and speaking, Rose used French pronunciations and accents; for example, Rose would stress /r/ in the word “lorry” and “red” and would omit /h/ in “house”.
4.1.4 Participants' English background

The participants' English background and development pre- and post-migration to Australia can be traced back to their first encounter with the English language (Table 4-3). During the period prior to migration to Australia, all ten participants had some form of education in L1, in their home countries or in transitional refugee camps. Depending on the country, generally, formal schooling was provided for children in public schools by the government. Private bodies or the community provided specialised schools for children, such as religious education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mala</th>
<th>Rina</th>
<th>Kay</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Liddy</th>
<th>Suki</th>
<th>Ally</th>
<th>Feeda</th>
<th>Rea</th>
<th>Zehra</th>
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<tr>
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<td>L</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key: C = Considerable L = Limited

Pre-migration English education refers to the type of English education the participants received prior to migrating to Australia.

**High** refers to situations where English education was embedded in the school curriculum in the public schools and English was taught formally as a subject in primary and high school curricula as well as at university. Participants who experienced this type of English learning were Mala (Sri Lanka), Rina (Indonesia), and Kay (Malaysia). However, they never had the need to use English outside of the classroom. Upon arrival in Australia, they were able to undertake basic interactions, with little confidence, and were not able to engage in deep conversations. They were able to string words into sentences such as introducing their names, where they came from, the number of children they have, and so forth.

**Limited** refers to situations where English was not embedded in the primary and secondary school curricula, but only provided in the form of one-off introductory classes or short courses. This situation applies to Rose (DRC), Liddy (China), Ally (China), and
Feeda (Libya). English was not needed in their everyday interactions. When they first arrived in Australia, they were only able to utter basic English words.

*Low* refers to situations where participants received informal English education, from classes or sessions that were set up ad-hoc or short-term. Zehra attended a few informal English classes, intended for women and young mothers, run by volunteers at the refugee centre in Iran. According to Zehra, due to some problems, the classes were short-lived. When Zehra arrived in Australia, she knew only a few basic words of English.

*None.* Among the ten participants, only Suki and Rea had never been exposed to the English language prior to migration to Australia. Suki received and started her primary and secondary education at 12 years old. This was after she fled her country (Afghanistan) with her family and lived in a refugee camp in Iran. English was not taught in the school that Suki attended. Zehra, Suki and Rea did not speak English at all when they first arrived in Australia.

*Post-migration English education/exposure* refers to situations where participants experience English education and/or work in an English speaking environment since migrating to Australia. Mala, Liddy, Rose and Suki are considered to have received *high* post-migration English education/exposure. Mala and Liddy were still doing the AMEP course at the time of this research, while Rose and Suki had completed their AMEP courses.

Rose and Liddy are considered as having received *high post-migration exposure* because they experienced working in an environment that required them to have some communication capabilities in order to perform the work, understand the work culture and ethics, be able to receive instructions and follow procedures. After completing the AMEP course and a VET course, Rose worked for a while in the aged care industry. Liddy had worked in a meat factory before enrolling in the AMEP. These jobs provided Rose and Liddy with first-hand experiences in interacting and communicating with other Australians. In Suki’s situation, she did not speak English at all when she first arrived in Australia. Being young (20 years old), Suki managed to complete Certificates I, II, III and IV of the CWSE in only 18 months. Suki was planning to further her studies but, due to family commitments, she had to abandon her plans temporarily.

*Limited post-migration English education/exposure* refers to situations where participants had received somewhat structured or non-formal English education after their arrival in Australia. Being participants of the conversational English program, all ten participants fall under this category. The program focused on developing participants’ conversational skills (speaking and
listening). On average, a participant who attended this program for a term (10 weekly meeting of 2 hours each) would receive approximately 20 hours of conversational practice through discussing topics relevant to their lives such as the weather, making medical appointments, describing a person’s facial features and clothes, and shopping at the supermarket. This level of practice is otherwise unattainable by participants on their own as, generally, they have very little interaction with the larger Australian community and they would only speak in L1 at home with family and friends, and within their community. Due to visa restrictions, Rina, Ally, and Feeda were not eligible to enroll in the AMEP, thus they resorted to attending the conversational English program. Kay was eligible for the AMEP; however, she took the home tutoring mode which follows Kay’s own slower learning pace, as she could not cope with the formal full-time in-class mode. Rea and Zehra were eligible to attend the AMEP and other learning opportunities for seniors; however, they did not think they would benefit from these programs as it would be difficult for them to catch up on the English literacy and numeracy due to their poor L1 education background.

Post-migration English usage opportunities refers to participants’ opportunities to use English in their everyday lives. Inevitably, there would always be some situations where a participant could engage in a conversation with someone else, voluntary or otherwise, for a variety of reasons; for example, to ask questions, say hello, interact in official matters, and make small talk. The opportunity to use English can be found within these contexts: the English learning environment such as the conversational English program and the AMEP course; medical settings such as making and attending appointments with GPs, specialists, or midwives; government offices; the workplace; public places such as the grocery stores, cafés, banks, libraries, on the bus, at the post office; child’s school such as primary and high schools, and playgroups; and at home.

Participants in the conversational English and the AMEP programs have considerable opportunity to use English. Learners of these programs could use/apply/practice their English skills by interacting with their peers, teachers and others within those environments. Proactive learners could do this by contributing to discussions, offering opinions, asking questions and being cooperative team members in group work or pair-work. These learners’ initiatives helped to overcome shyness, develop confidence and increase proficiency. All participants attending the conversational English classes used English in varying capacity, some a lot and some very little. Mala, Rose, Liddy, Suki and Kay were also learners in the AMEP program. Table 4-4 shows participants’ engagement with everyday English use.
### Table 4-4: Post-migration - English usage opportunities

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mala</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Liddy</th>
<th>Suki</th>
<th>Kay</th>
<th>Rina</th>
<th>Feeda</th>
<th>Ally</th>
<th>Rea</th>
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<td>Workplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical settings such as making and attending appointments with GPs, specialists, and midwives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government offices, Centrelink, banks</td>
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<td>Public places such as the grocery stores, café, libraries, on the bus, at the post office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child’s school such as primary and high schools, and playgroups</td>
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<td>Post migration - English usage opportunities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- ✓ Use English
- √ Considerable
- C Limited
- L Less
- * Needs interpreter
- = Not applicable

In the context of medical and government offices, participants either were able to attend the appointments themselves or required someone to accompany them as an interpreter. In the context of public places, not all participants felt sufficiently comfortable to engage in conversations with strangers. In the context of their child’s school, Mala, Rose, Liddy, Rina and Feeda said that they tried to be actively involved with their children’s education by helping with homework and communicating with the teachers. Typically, they had the chance to talk with their child’s teacher or the teacher’s assistant at drop-off and pick-up times. Though they struggled when communicating in English, some of the teachers were understanding and spoke in simpler English with them. In the home context, only Liddy, Ally and Feeda had the opportunity to use English to communicate with their children (in a mixture of L1 and English) since the children used English when communicating instead of their parents’ L1.

In summary, each participant’s level of post-migration English usage opportunities was based on the number of contexts that the participant had experience in dealing with: Mala, Rose, Liddy and Suki had considerable opportunity to use English; Rina and Feeda had limited opportunity to use English; and Kay, Rea and Zehra had less opportunity to use English.

### 4.1.5 Participants’ English learning strategy

Participants used various strategies for learning or improving their English, such as finding out the meaning of new vocabulary, watching TV and attending community groups.
Finding out the meaning of new vocabulary

When encountering new vocabulary, interested participants would try to find out the meaning, either by using the dictionary or by asking someone. Suki would find out the meaning of a word and would want to know how to use it in sentences or when speaking. When Suki was doing her AMEP course, and in the conversational sessions, Suki either used the dictionary app (Dari/Farsi–English) that she downloaded on her smartphone, or would ask the researcher. Outside of these strategies, Suki said that usually, if she left her questions too long, she would forget about it altogether.

Kay downloaded a Mandarin-English dictionary onto her iPad that she always brought to class. Kay used the app to find meanings of new vocabulary that she learnt, or would ask the researcher during the conversational sessions. Since Kay was enrolled in the AMEP home tutoring program, Kay could also ask her tutor and, if at home, ask her grown-up step-son. Liddy and Ally brought their electronic Mandarin-English dictionary when attending the conversational English sessions. They would use their dictionary or ask the researcher. If at home, Ally would ask her Australian husband, while Liddy would ask her sons.

For Zehra, when she was in the conversational sessions, she would ask the researcher when she wanted to know more about a new vocabulary. Outside of that, she would usually forget about it especially when she could not relate to the words at all. If she still remembered, she would ask her husband or her grown-up children. For Rose, when she came across new words and wanted to know their meaning, she would ask her husband or her older children, or ask the researcher or her peers if she was in the conversational sessions or, more often than not, she would forget about it.

For Rina, she used whatever was handy for her at that time to find out the meaning of words or phrases; for example, she would ask her 13-year-old son, use an online English-Indonesian dictionary, ask the researcher when attending the conversational English program, or sometimes she got distracted and totally forgot about it.

Watching TV

Rose said she practiced her listening skills by watching and listening to how the people on TV do and say things. At home, Rose’s family enjoyed watching English TV shows. Rose and her husband watched the news and documentaries while their children watched children’s shows. The whole family liked to watch movies, tennis and competitive singing and talent shows; they even had favourites and cheered on certain competitors. Rose liked to watch the drama called Home and Away, cooking, and gardening shows.
Rina, Feeda, Ally, and Mala thought watching TV was a big help for them to learn English, especially for listening practice. They watched a lot of TV shows, ranging from the news, the cooking show *Masterchef*, cartoons, children’s shows, drama, sports, gardening, and films to singing competition shows.

Liddy did not have TV at home; instead, her favourite pastime was watching English movies on her laptop. Other than going to the conversational sessions, Liddy thought watching English movies helped her improve her English.

**Attending community groups**

All participants thought that attending the conversational English sessions was a way for them to learn English, specifically spoken English (speaking and listening). Participants also took part in other programs and activities organised by the community centre. Rose, Rina, Mala and Feeda also took their children to the library to participate in children’s activities. Rina thought that taking her children to a playgroup was a way for her children to interact with other children, while giving her the opportunity to interact and socialise with other Australian mothers and the coordinator of the playgroup. Rina said that the more interactions she had with the same people, the more they got to know her, the more they would speak with her at a level that she could understand.

**4.1.6 Vocabulary acquired from non-MALL sessions**

During the interview, participants were asked to recall the words or phrases that they learnt from the non-MALL sessions. Some participants recalled similar topics.

*Describing the type of hair and a person’s facial features*

Suki and Liddy were interviewed separately on different days. They recalled this topic by memory, without looking at any worksheets or notes at all. Figure 4-12 shows the actual pictures on a worksheet that the researcher used when discussing this topic.
Liddy remembered the words “sideburn”, “part”, “moustache”, “beard” and “jaw”. She said she never knew what these were called before. When asked if she found this topic useful to her, Liddy said “It’s important to know how to say these things; for instance, when you get mugged, you have to tell the police what the mugger look like”. In addition to this, Liddy also remembered a related discussion on how to describe a person’s hair; for example, “black, straight and shoulder-length”, “curly, long and blonde”, “short and spiky”, and “bald”. Liddy said she then knew how to describe her sons’ hair, “My sons have short and spiky hair”.

Suki recalled the words “sideburn”, “blonde”, “long”, “curly” and “wavy”. Suki easily created her own simple sentences using the vocabulary: “The little girl has blonde hair”; “My hair is long and wavy”; and “My husband always trim his sideburn”. Suki also offered “pony tail” and “bun” on her own. When asked if this topic was relevant to her, Suki said “Yea, yea... It’s good to know... this is basic thing we say”. Suki did not write any notes in her L1 to remind her of the pronunciations of the vocabulary.

Ally could not remember any of the vocabulary that she had learnt. Ally had to take out her folder that stored her notebook and the worksheets that were given out in the sessions. All of Ally’s worksheets had handwritten Mandarin logographs next to the English words or pictures. When asked the purpose of her notes, Ally explained that she jotted down the meaning of the English words and the syllables of the words in Mandarin to help her pronounce the words more precisely and also for her reference whenever she needed them. Ally then selected the worksheet about hair and facial features (Figure 4:12). Ally read out the types of hair and the names of the facial parts to the researcher with the help of her notes. Ally said she could not say the words correctly if she did not have her notes. It was observed that instead of trying to
remember the vocabulary, Ally seemed to try to build up her confidence and determination to pronounce the words correctly.

**Expressing feelings/health issues**

With the help of the community centre staff member who spoke Dari, Zehra was able to recall a topic about how to ask someone what they were feeling when they seem to look unhappy or in pain. Zehra remembered the phrases (all phrases were corrected grammatically by the researcher), “What’s wrong?” and “Are you OK?”. Zehra also remembered that the possible answer to these questions would be “I’ve got a headache”, “I’ve got a tooth-ache” or “I had an accident.” In turn, the possible response to these would be “I’m sorry to hear that” or “I hope you get better.” Zehra said that these phrases were new vocabulary to her when she first heard them in the conversational English sessions. She then realised that they were common phrases that people used all the time.

Feeda also recalled a similar topic to Zehra, which was about expressing compassion to someone who is sick or feeling unhappy. Feeda said she would ask that person “Is everything okay?” or “How are you?”, then when he/she answered that they had some kind of pain, for example, “I have a pain in my knee”, Feeda would say “I’m sorry to hear that” or “Oh dear”. Feeda then would ask “Can I help you?” and the other person may say “No, it’s alright”, and “thank you for asking”. According to Feeda, she learnt that these were common and useful expressions but since they were unfamiliar to her, she could not remember to use them.

Rea recalled a topic about describing body parts and illness with Feeda’s assistance in interpreting for Rea. While pointing to parts of her body, she said the words out loud, such as “knee”, “back”, “shoulder”, “chest”, and “thigh”, followed by “back pain”, “shoulder pain”, “stomach ache”, and “head ache”. Rea then tried to recall some phrases but struggled to make sentences (corrected grammatically by the researcher) such as “I have bad back”, “I have pain in my shoulder”, “… very bad pain” and “I have bad headache”. Though struggling, Rea was able to utter these phrases because she was suffering from such illnesses and used them when seeing the doctor. Rea would also use these expressions, though in uncoordinated chunks, when sharing her bad weekend with the conversational group, where she described how she had to stay home due to the pain.

**Being polite**

Rose recalled the topic about asking permission politely and the phrases that had been discussed: “Is it OK if…” “Do you mind if…” “Can I…” and “May I…” Some of the possible answers to these requests would be, “Sure”, ”No problem” or ”It depends”. Part of the lesson was
for participants to make their own questions/requests and the other person to answer, using these phrases. These phrases were new to Rose and most of her peers. Rose found these useful as they made questions sound polite. Rose was also able to use the new vocabulary in the correct context.

Mala recalled a discussion about how to ask for clarification or information politely. Mala said she used the phrases that she had learnt from the session many times. For example, when she did not hear the first time when someone spoke to her, she would say “I'm sorry, could you repeat what you said?”; if she did not understand something, she would say to the person “I'm sorry I didn't understand what you said”; and if someone spoke too fast, Mala would say to that person “Can you speak slower please?”. Mala also learnt that it was good manners to use “Sorry” instead of “What?” Also, when asking for information, a speaker could ask politely by adding auxiliary words in front of the question, such as “Can”, “Could”, “May” and “Would”. Mala asked about the use of the word “please” as she had heard someone use it before. This prompted a spontaneous teaching moment, and provided a beneficial add-on to the topic lesson and new vocabulary. The researcher responded to the whole group by saying they could add ‘please’ to the beginning, middle or end of their request to make it more polite; for example, “Please can I ...”, “Can I please ...,” or “Can I ..., please”. Everyone in the group then attempted to create polite request sentences with the word “please” added in the correct placement of the sentence.

Feeda recalled an example that was notable to her which was about telephoning for a taxi. Feeda remembered that when making any call, it should begin with polite greetings, such as “Good morning” or “Good afternoon”. Next, the caller should request a taxi politely, such as “May I have a taxi...” or “Can you send a taxi to ...” Feeda also remembered a few of the words that had been discussed, such as location, destination, drop off and pick up. Feeda then offered an example of sentences using this vocabulary: “I drop off my children at school before I come here” and “I pick up my children at 3pm.”

Kay was not very confident in giving her answers. It was observed that Kay felt that she was undergoing an assessment. Kay said, “I cannot remember properly.” Kay quickly opened her notebook and looked at the notes she had taken. Kay chose a topic about how to ask permission politely. She read out the list of phrases slowly: “Can I ...”, “Is it OK if ...”, “Do you mind if ...”, and “Would it be OK if”; followed by these sentences: “Can I borrow your book?”, “Is it OK if I use your pen?”, “Do you mind if I sit here?”, and “Would it be OK if I borrowed your pencil?” Kay said the first and second phrases and their sentences were simpler and easy to say and use. However, the third and fourth phrases and their sentences confused her. She was not sure how and when to use them, and she might mix the order of the words. Based on the two simpler
examples, Kay constructed her own sentences: “Can I close the door now?”, “Is it OK if I use your bicycle?” In Kay’s opinion, the vocabulary she had learnt is useful in everyday situations, but she needed more practice before she could get used to it.

**Grocery advertisement**

Rina said the activity that she liked had been the one where the researcher used the community newspaper to look at the weekly advertisements placed by of local supermarkets (Figure 3-5). The activity was for the participants to compare the prices of grocery items, where one is cheaper or more expensive in one store than in the other, while also learning to describe items by their weight or the quantifier/container that they were sold in. Rina said, “We use the newspaper, we compare how much the price and we see which one cheap”. Some words and phrases that Rina recalled were: “one kilo of potato”, “a carton of milk”, “a dozen of eggs” and “shopping list”. Rina was able to use these phrases in a correct context when asked to create sentences. Rina offered these sentences: “I want to buy two bags of potatoes from the grocery store” and “Can you buy for me three cartons of milk?”

Rea and Zehra were together for the post-non-MALL interview. Both recalled this topic. With the researcher’s help they were able to describe that they used a free newspaper to look at pictures of groceries and that some things were “cheap” and some things were “not cheap”. Both had forgotten the word “expensive” that was discussed, thus they used “not cheap” instead. To assist Rea and Zehra to have more points to talk about, the researcher then used the most current community newspaper where the latest grocery advertisement could be found. By referring to the advertisements, both Zehra and Rea were able to talk about the prices of the products and were able to point out which product was cheaper or more expensive. Each was only able to use some of the quantifiers (Zehra: a bottle of …, a bag of …, a packet of …; Rea: a carton of …, a tub of …, and a dozen of …). Some of the sentences Zehra and Rea said were (grammatically corrected by the researcher), Zehra: “Chicken is not cheap here” and “The mangoes are in season”; Rea (not corrected): “Weekend … busy … shopping … buy milk, egg, potatoes, chicken, meat …”

**4.1.7 Pre-non-MALL and post-non-MALL English skills**

The following section reports on participants’ rating of their English skills, at pre- and post-non-MALL.

**Suki**

At the pre-non-MALL interview, Suki indicated that her reading, writing, speaking and listening skills were ‘good’ (Figure 4-13). There was no change in her reading and writing skills at pre-
non-MALL to post-non-MALL stage, but there was a change in her speaking and listening skills, from 'somewhat good' to 'good'.

**Figure 4-13: Suki's perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL**

**Zehra**

Zehra indicated that prior to attending the conversational English sessions, her reading, speaking and listening skills were ‘not very good’ and her writing skill was ‘somewhat good’ (Figure 4-14). Subsequently, at post-non-MALL stage, the only change occurred was in her speaking and listening skills from ‘not very good’ to ‘somewhat good’.

**Figure 4-14: Zehra's perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL**

**Rea**

Rea indicated that there was no change in her reading and writing skills pre- and post-non-MALL, at ‘not good at all’ for her reading and ‘not very good’ for her writing (Figure 4-15). However, she rated her speaking and listening skills as having changed from ‘not good at all’ at pre non-MALL to ‘not very good’ post-non-MALL.
Figure 4-15: Rea’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL

**Feeda**

Figure 4-16 shows Feeda’s perceptions of English skills pre- and post-non-MALL sessions. Feeda’s writing skill remained unchanged at ‘somewhat good’ pre- and post-non-MALL. Feeda’s reading, speaking and listening skills changed from ‘not very good’ at pre-non-MALL and ‘somewhat good’ at post-non-MALL.

Figure 4-16: Feeda’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL

**Mala**

Mala’s perception of her reading and writing skills remained at ‘somewhat good’ pre- and post-non-MALL, while her speaking and listening skills changed from ‘not very good’ at pre-non-MALL, to ‘somewhat good’ at post-non-MALL (Figure 4-17).
Figure 4-17: Mala’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL

*Liddy*

Figure 4-18 shows the changes in Liddy’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL.

Liddy’s perception of her reading skill remained at ‘not very good’ pre- and post-non-MALL, while her writing skill and speaking skills remained ‘somewhat good’, and her listening skill changed from ‘not very good’ to ‘somewhat good’.

*Ally*

Ally’s perception of her writing skill remained unchanged at ‘not very good’ pre- and post-non-MALL. Ally’s reading, speaking and listening skills changed from ‘not good at all’ at pre-non-MALL to ‘not very good’ at post-non-MALL (Figure 4-19).
Figure 4-19: Ally’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL

**Rina**

Figure 4-20 shows the changes in Rina’s perceptions of her English skills throughout this research.

Figure 4-20: Rina's perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL.

Rina’s perception of her reading skill remained at ‘not very good’ pre- and post-non-MALL, while her writing and listening skills remained at ‘somewhat good’ pre- and post-non-MALL. The only change was in her speaking skill, from ‘not very good’ pre-non-MALL to ‘somewhat good’ post-non-MALL.

**Rose**

Rose’s perception of her reading, writing and speaking skills remained unchanged pre- and post-non-MALL (Figure 4-21). Her reading skill remained at ‘not very good’, while her writing and speaking skills remained at ‘somewhat good’. Only Rose’s listening skill changed, from ‘not very good’ at pre-non-MALL to ‘somewhat good’ post-non-MALL.
Figure 4-21: Rose’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL

Kay

Kay’s perception of her reading and listening skill remain unchanged at ‘not very good’ pre- and post-non-MALL; her writing skill remained unchanged at ‘somewhat good’; while her speaking skills changed from ‘not very good at all’ to ‘not very good’ (Figure 4-22).

Figure 4-22: Kay’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-non-MALL

4.1.8 Summary of results

This chapter reports the findings from the data gathered from Case Study 1, which was referred to as non-MALL. The participants could be grouped into younger (Suki, Feeda, Mala, Rina and Ally) and older (Rose, Liddy, Zehra, Rea and Kay) age range categories. The average number of years the participants had lived in Australia at the time of the study was 4.25 years, entering Australia through various streams, and currently holding a variety of visa statuses.

The main reason the participants attended the conversational English program was to improve their spoken English. Generally, they had problems understanding Australian English speakers, due to their broad accents and the quickness of their speech. As such, this program was
designed to help participants to overcome these challenges and provide the opportunity for practice in a non-formal and friendly setting. The flexibility of this program also allowed women who would otherwise be isolated at home to be given a safe learning space and the opportunity to experience some form of learning, while allowing them to bring along their small children.

It was also revealed that participants’ L1 literacy level varied depending on where they came from. Some of the participants had experienced complete schooling, while others either had interrupted education due to a war, or had very little schooling experience. Since migrating to Australia, four of the participants had become bilingual, five became trilingual, while one already spoke three languages and English became her fourth. The participants’ English background (Table 4-3) could be traced back to their pre-migration English education level, their post-migration English education level/exposure, and their post-migration English usage opportunities. The various strategies adopted by participants for learning or improving their English include: by using a dictionary, physical or electronic; through watching TV, as it let them practice their listening skills by watching and listening to how people speak on TV; and attending community programs such as the conversational English sessions or any event that was organised by a community centre.

Four main topics and the related vocabularies were recalled by participants when they were asked to do so during their post-non-MALL interview: (1) describing the type of hair and a person’s facial features; (2) expressing feelings/health issues; (3) being polite; and (4) grocery advertisements. During the interview, participants were asked to recall the words or phrases that they had learnt from the non-MALL sessions. Some participants recalled similar topics. All participants had somehow acquired the vocabulary since they were able to recall and apply the vocabularies in the correct context. Participants provided data about their perceptions on their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills pre- and post-non-MALL. In general, very little change was seen regarding their perceptions on the reading and writing skills, but various changes were identified around participants’ perceptions of speaking and listening skills.

### 4.2 Case Study 1: Analysis

The analysis of this qualitative data provides a platform for the discovery of underlying meanings and patterns of relationships among the data. The aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. Case study 1 was analysed from two major aspects: (1) issues that arose from the non-MALL experience of participants; and (2) participants’ perceptions of their English skills after non-MALL.
4.2.1 Issues arising from non-MALL experience

The issues that arose from the analysis of data were gathered from: the pre-non-MALL and post-non-MALL interviews of Case Study 1 participants; the researcher’s observations of those interviews; and the researcher’s observations of participants’ involvement in non-MALL sessions. The issues can be grouped into five themes: literacy and education background; pronunciation; confidence and speaking proficiency; meaningful contents; and the instructor’s role.

**Literacy and education background**

All participants were regular members of the conversational group (also referred to as ‘non-MALL sessions’ for this research), and participated in both a pre-non-MALL and a post-non-MALL interview, and attended non-MALL sessions in between the interviews. It was observed that participants’ L1 literacy level and schooling experience affected their vocabulary acquisition. Participants’ ability to acquire vocabulary and vocabulary skills reflected how well they could adjust to the differences between their L1 and their English literacy level at the time of study. Despite variations in L1 literacy and English literacy among participants in the group (Table 4-2), the participants demonstrated some levels of pro-activeness towards improving their conversational skills. For example: they copied words from the whiteboard; made notes in L1; used L1/English; attempted to speak English and contributed to discussions (some needed more time to first overcome their shyness and fear); attempted to pronounce vocabularies accurately; and tried to use newly learnt vocabulary in their speech; and so forth.

All participants showed effort in copying words from the whiteboard to their notebooks or on handouts, and would make notes in L1 (except Rea and Zehra). These latter participants were able to copy from the whiteboard, but since they do not do a lot of writing in their daily lives, spelling mistakes and the incorrect copying of sentences were inevitable. Most of the time, low literacy level participants wrote very slowly and were not able to keep up. Contrarywise, higher literacy level participants wrote more extensive notes that helped them progress further and faster. For example: Feeda included information that was not written on the board but was picked-up from elsewhere in the sessions. She wrote notes about spelling that represented confusing sounds (such as, ‘busy’ sounded as /bizi/, ‘island’ sounded as /ˈʌɪlənd/; and ‘receipt’ sounded as /rɪˈsiːt/), took note of this and moved on to acquire more complex words in her vocabulary, such as the word ‘destination’ and ‘location’ which were mentioned in a group discussion. Only Feeda was interested in these ‘big’ words and talked about them with the researcher, while the other participants learnt the words in passing.
In general, the notes created in L1 by the participants helped in providing personal go to references that they could return to, with the meaning and the pronunciation of the syllables of the words, and the translation of sentences that were introduced in the conversational sessions. This became a useful strategy for participants who wanted to gradually incorporate the vocabulary in their interactions.

**Pronunciation**

Sounding certain words unintelligibly caused listeners to be confused or misinterpret the meaning. This happened because participants of particular cultural and linguistic groups had differences in pronouncing certain words, and certain kinds of mistakes were common to the different groups.

- **Example 1:** Participants who’s L1 are Dari/Farsi (Zehra and Suki) and Arabic (Rea and Feeda) had problems differentiating (and as a result swapping) the letters /p/ to /b/ and letters /v/ to /b/ or /f/ at the beginning of words. This was due to the absence of the sounds of /p/ and /v/ in their L1. The word ‘very’ was pronounced as /berry/ and ‘problem’ as /broblem/.
- **Example 2:** Indonesian Malay speaking participants pronounced /f/ and /v/ with lips closed and no airflow, making it sound like /p/ and /b/. Therefore, ‘scarf’ was pronounced as /skap/ and ‘have’ as /heb/. /f/ became /p/ and /sh/ became /s/, thus, ‘fish’ was pronounced as /pis/.

Even though notes in L1 were taken regarding the vocabulary and the syllables following the correct phonemes, it was found that the words and sentences were hard for participants to utter because the sounds were not natural to them and some sounds did not exist at all in their L1. The impact of this on participants' vocabulary acquisition was that they might forget the correct sound and confuse themselves and their listener regarding the words that were intended. The participants who used Roman alphabets for reading and writing in L1 (Rina and Rose) were able to read and sound complex English words using their L1 phonetics, but with no understanding and comprehension of the meaning.

In non-MALL, participants practiced pronunciation and speaking fluency through repetition/drilling of vocabulary and phrases/expressions that were relevant to the topic of the day and also (occasionally) conversational phrases that they could repeatedly use in everyday life. For example, within the subject of personal information, participants learnt to use the following expressions correctly without having to learn the sentence structure:

"My name is ..."
"I come from ..."
"I've lived in Australia for [number of] years."
"I've [number of] children."
"How's your weekend?", "My weekend was fine. And, yours?"
"Could you please repeat that?" or, "Could you please speak slower?"
"Excuse me ...

The goal of this exercise was to teach key phrases and expose participants to their pronunciation, to encourage the use of the expressions with confidence, and for participants to be able to use them to get a conversation going. Some participants only remembered some parts of the expressions, and some showed that they were more comfortable when talking about this subject. These types of exercises resulted in participants feeling more confident and comfortable when talking about subjects that they had already learnt and were familiar with since they now had more ideas on the words to use.

**Confidence**

The participants were described as a confident speaker when they participated more, spoke more, and felt confident that they could communicate effectively in English and could say what they wanted to say. Within this description, confidence was not linked with accuracy; instead, it was about participants’ attitudes, which helped them get their point across, regardless of how many times they made mistakes or stumbled.

It was observed that when participants felt confident, they would go further in making L1 notes, practicing pronunciation, bringing their dictionary into the classroom and using it in the sessions (pocket electronic dictionary or dictionary app on smartphone) and willingly having conversations with peers and English speaking people not only within the group, but at the community centre and beyond. These strategies helped to improve participants’ speaking proficiency. With improved English, they were more ready to seek out further interactions. These interactions were more likely to be successful and help to build their confidence further. Confidence and speaking proficiency therefore depended very closely on one another.

For the participants, the development of their English speaking proficiency could be traced back to their pre- and post-migration English exposure and their English education background, and their post-migration English usage opportunities (Table 4-4). In general, the more opportunities they had to use English and the more interaction they had with other English speakers the more they were exposed to vocabularies. In summary, this would increase the participants’ word bank, thus more choices of words to use in their interactions.
The researcher used her observation of the participants’ interactions with their peers, the researcher and other people at the community centre to tabulate the participants’ varying levels of confidence and speaking proficiencies (summarised in Table 4-5). Participants’ confidence levels are divided into two major groups, general confidence in communicating and situation-specific confidence. These categories are closely related to participants’ speaking proficiency and could be sub-categorised into high, average or low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liddy</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Mala</th>
<th>Suki</th>
<th>Rina</th>
<th>Feeda</th>
<th>Kay</th>
<th>Rea</th>
<th>Zehra</th>
<th>Ally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General confidence in communicating</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation-specific confidence</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking proficiency</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Speaking proficiency | High = able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements | Average = able to converse face-to-face on familiar topics | Low = communicate using memorised utterances, may interweave with L1 |

**General confidence in communicating** participants were the ones who were willing to ‘have a go’ at communicating in most situations (Liddy, Rose, Mala, Suki, and Rina). Their speaking proficiency was high, except for Rina, whose speaking proficiency was average. In this research, high speaking proficiency referred to participants’ conversational fluency and interpersonal communication skills that enabled them to use everyday language to communicate in basic social interaction situations (for example, at the workplace, medical settings, government offices, public places, schools and home). With these skills, participants were capable of joining the workforce, with the condition that the work did not require an understanding of complex instructions. Average speaking proficiency meant participants were able to engage in a face-to-face conversation on topics that they were familiar with, but sometimes stumbled when speaking to people and some pronunciations were unclear, so they had to repeat themselves (Rina and Feeda). Participants seemed comfortable interacting with their peers, and were often the ones who initiated small talk. When discussions were in larger groups, they sometimes paused and needed help finding the right words to use. Their speech improved again after the researcher helped them to use the appropriate words.

Participants who were grouped under the situation-specific confidence level, were only willing to speak in situations where they were confident; for example, speaking to the person next to them.
in the conversational group, staff at the community centre or their child’s teacher (Feeda, Kay, Rea, Zehra and Ally). These participants spoke less in group discussions and only spoke when they were really sure of what they wanted to say. They had less or no confidence at all speaking on the phone with other English speakers and lacked confidence in seeing the doctor by themselves (Ally, Zehra, Kay, and Rea). Shyness was a factor that could underpin a lack of confidence to communicate (Kay). Shyness was caused by limited knowledge of everyday language and thus not knowing the words to use, and fear of pronouncing things incorrectly or saying the wrong things and being laughed at.

Low level proficiency speaking participants sometimes offered their opinions in group discussions but usually they did not speak clearly; thus, the researcher and the rest of the group would help them out by ‘guessing’ what they were saying (Kay, Rea, Zehra and Ally). Some interwove English with their L1 when speaking (Rea and Ally). Outside the given topic for the sessions, the topics that they like to talk about were family, children, and cooking.

As adult learners with unique migration histories, each participant had specific motivations that reflected their life goals for attending the conversational sessions. Participants’ motivations were: to find work (Ally, Liddy, Kay, Mala, Rose, Rina, and Suki); overcoming shyness and becoming independent from relying too much on other people for help (Kay); socializing and getting out of their houses to meet with their friends who attended the group (all participants); the need to get involved with their children’s education and to be able communicate effectively with their children’s teacher (Mala, Feeda and Rina). Generally, participants had similar beliefs in the importance of being able to converse and communicate well for situations such as work, children’s school, doctor’s appointments, and government services.

Though speaking in unstructured English, all participants showed interest and patience in engaging in conversations amongst themselves. This was the dynamic that made the participants (and non-participants) of this research keep coming back to the conversational program, as they felt it was the closest activity that they had to a ‘school’. It was seen that even though they did not learn in accordance with a proper curriculum, and even though they were forgetful, they made a point of attending the sessions to learn at least something that would be useful for them for conversational purposes beyond the group.

**Meaningful contents**

The topics and vocabularies that were planned for discussion in the non-MALL sessions were selected because they could be used by participants when they interacted outside the group. Participants responded well to topics that were relevant and meaningful to them, simple, and
useful for their everyday functional and conversational use. Discussions were mainly based on pre-planned topics but also arose from spontaneous situations. At the post-non-MALL interviews, some participants recalled the pre-planned topics: how to describe people’s hair and facial features; how to ask appropriate questions and provide appropriate responses when asking someone what they were feeling as they seemed to look unhappy or in pain; how to request something politely; and comparing grocery items and prices using grocery advertisements in the free local community newspaper.

Participants were interested in topics that used vocabularies (either in the form of a word, a phrase or a statement) that were easy for them to understand and pronounce as this made it easier for them to recall the content whenever the words were needed. In non-MALL activities, the researcher focused on building and practicing speaking and listening skills, vocabulary learning, verbal fluency (drilling) rather than accuracy of grammar and technicality of language. Participants were not pressured to do any reading or writing exercises, or to prepare for an examination, thus they could focus on practising their spoken English.

**Instructor role**

The researcher’s role as the instructor of the non-MALL session was to become the conduit to the participants’ world of learning spoken English, while providing the support for their learning. The researcher sought to develop a sense of community in the group, despite the participants’ disparate backgrounds, to help them feel that they were on a level playing field. As the coordinator of the program, the researcher’s goal was to help participants develop speaking proficiency by acquiring vocabulary through conversations relevant to their lives. The two-hour slot for the non-MALL sessions included:

- talking about vocabulary - fewer texts were used on the whiteboard as most participants were poor readers, visuals such as coloured pictures, posters, or advertisements in community newspaper, were more memorable and meaningful for them;
- instilling habits by repetition (drilling) - for some of the participants, constant repetition of vocabulary (words/phrases/statements) expanded their range of expressions and word bank. This led participants to use these words with confidence and less hesitation, and to able to insert them in conversations and interactions; and
- having discussions that were framed in context to give participants a background to lean on, as it was much harder to learn isolated words or vocabulary without the appropriate context to remember them by.

The participants’ confidence was increased when the context was one that they were already familiar with, for example the *expressing feelings/health issues* topic. With the explanation of the
vocabulary followed by the drilling and the discussion, participants felt more confident to talk about the topic, and more able to use the vocabulary in the correct context, in the exercise around creating sentences. This process seemed to work because, with their current English language proficiency level, participants learned and comprehended better when the tasks were broken down into smaller components, and not all in “one go”. This seemed to be because the information was processed gradually, but progressively.

4.2.2 Participants’ perceptions pre and post-non-MALL

Participants self-rated their perceptions of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills during pre-non-MALL and post-non-MALL interviews using Likert-type scale ratings. The researcher compared these ratings against her corresponding Likert type scale for each skill (Table 3-3 - Table 3-6). Participants’ changes in perception of these skills are tabulated in Table 4-6, which shows their rating on each skill before and after attending 4 to 5 non-MALL sessions (the researcher’s own rating of individual participant is shown in brackets). In the following sections, these ratings are presented as, for example ‘1-2’ indicating ‘rating 1 at pre-non-MALL, rating 2 at post-non-MALL’.

Table 4-6: Participants’ perception of their English skills pre- and post-non-MALL compared with researcher’s perception (in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ally</td>
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<td>Kay</td>
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<td>Feeda</td>
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<td>Mala</td>
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<td>Liddy</td>
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<td>Rose</td>
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<td>3 (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suki</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Speaking**

Table 4-7 (a duplicate of Table 3-5) provides the definition of each rating value for speaking skill that the researcher used.
### Perceived change occurred

The participants’ perceptions of their speaking skills could be grouped into two - the ones who perceived that change and improvement had occurred and the ones who perceived that no change occurred.

#### Perceived change occurred

The first group who perceived change had occurred can be further sub-grouped:

- **Participants who rated themselves 1-2 (Rea, Ally, Kay)**

  The researcher's rating was similar for Rea and Ally's speaking skill at 1-2, but she rated 2-3 for Kay. At pre-non-MALL, all three were only able to converse about very limited issues (Rea and Ally also interwove their speech with L1 words). After attending non-MALL sessions, these participants were able to at least recall and/or use some of the vocabulary that they learnt; and were able to talk about simple topics other than about themselves, such as cooking and sharing recipes. Even though they struggled and stumbled, they demonstrated ease and a little higher confidence than before. When speaking, Rea and Ally interjected fewer L1 words and used more English. Since ‘coming out from isolation’ and by coming to the community centre, Kay gave herself the opportunity to ‘polish’ and use the English knowledge that she learnt previously, overcame her shyness and spoke more. Kay’s belief about English competence had changed since living in Australia. She was not worried about being ridiculed when she made mistakes or being thought of as showing off when she spoke English.

- **Participants who rated themselves 2-3 (Zehra, Feeda, Mala, Rina)**

  The researcher's rating for Zehra's speaking skill was 2-2, as she was consistent throughout the sessions. Zehra was comfortable talking in the group where she contributed to
discussions and asked questions. Even though speaking with a limited vocabulary, in broken English, and although she was sometimes unclear, Zehra was not shy and was always willing to repeat herself. This contributed to her progress even though that progress was slight.

The researcher’s rating of 2-3 reflected Feeda’s speaking skill. Though highly literate in L1, Feeda had confidence issues as she was not able to communicate as fluently as in Arabic. She found it hard to understand the Australian English speaker who spoke quickly with a broad accent. However, Feeda seemed to adjust and transfer her learning ability to English. Feeda was able to memorise, pronounce and use more difficult vocabulary than her peers, and used her L1 notes to help her. In the later non-MALL sessions, Feeda was seen as gaining more confidence; she spoke more often and contributed more to group discussions.

The researcher rated Rina and Mala’s speaking skill as already 3 at pre-non-MALL and felt they remained at 3-3 post-non-MALL. Both had high confidence levels, spoke more than the rest of their peers, and they were more outspoken with their ideas and opinions in group discussions throughout the non-MALL sessions. They spoke confidently, despite speaking with broken English. Rina’s accent hindered her from pronouncing certain words correctly. Both Rina and Mala were willing to ‘have a go’ at communicating in most situations, because of their role as the ‘spokes-person’ of their family. They self-assuredly inform the person they were speaking with if they needed clarification about anything or if they were unclear, or they needed words to be repeated. In other words, they were able to ‘control’ a conversation to their advantage, even though it was quite hard to do this when speaking with Australian English speaker. Participating in non-MALL sessions had given Rina and Mala more exposure and vocabulary ideas that they could use in their everyday interactions.

- **Participant who rated herself 3-4 (Suki)**

The researcher’s rating was similar to Suki’s self-assessment of her speaking skill. Suki spoke and contributed a great deal in discussions and, on a few occasions, brought in vocabulary that was related to the topic, thus initiating spontaneous discussions in the group. However, even at Suki’s proficiency level, she sometimes stumbled and paused mid-conversation because she was not sure of the correct words to use or simply did not have the appropriate words in her word bank. In this situation, Suki used circumlocution to describe the word she wanted to communicate. Throughout the non-MALL sessions, Suki helped and interpreted for her peers who spoke Dari and Farsi. Suki demonstrated confidence in her speech and herself as the result of her post-migration experience, going to formal adult education in Australia and taking an active involvement in the activities run at the community centre.
No perceived change

The second group perceived that no change had occurred in their speaking skill:

- **Participant who rated themselves at 3-3 (Liddy and Rose):**

  The researcher's rating was similar as Liddy and Rose's in relation to their speaking skills. Both were already confident and fluent in basic communication when they started pre-non-MALL. They were among the proactive group members who offered opinions, and openly asked and answered questions. They were not nervous about talking openly and not afraid of speaking up for themselves. This was the result of their previous exposure to English through working in Australia, with the addition of attendance at an adult education program that they attended (Rose had finished her course, while Liddy was still attending AMEP during this research). They still had problems understanding the accents of Australian English speakers. Their participation in the conversational group was mainly for the added experience.

**Listening**

Table 4-8 (a duplicate of Table 3-6) provides the definition for each rating value for listening skills as used by the researcher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>no understanding of spoken language, limited to occasional isolated words (very low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension limited to memorised utterances in areas of immediate need (low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations; miscommunication can occur with both non-complex and complex issues; does not understand native speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (average comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand routine social demands, conversations about work requirements; miscommunication can occur with complex issues; still some difficulty understanding native speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>has a broad enough vocabulary that she rarely has to ask for paraphrasing for explanation; can often detect emotional overtones; shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding (very high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants' perceptions of their listening skills could be grouped into those who perceived their skills had improved and those who perceived that their skills remained the same pre- and post-non-MALL. All participants had similar comprehension problems when listening to Australian English speakers who spoke fast and had a broad accent.
Perceived change occurred

The first group who perceived change had occurred, could be further sub-grouped:

- **Participants who rated themselves 1-2 (Rea and Ally)**

  The researcher’s rating was similar to Rea and Ally’s with regards to their listening skills. Rea and Ally perceived that they had improved their listening skills because they could understand they listened to at post-non-MALL a little better than before they started the program. At pre-non-MALL, they were only able to have a conversation about limited issues in which they would interweave their speech with L1 words. Rea had a low literacy level in both L1 and English. Ally, though, was literate in L1, but, being somewhat new to Australia, was still developing familiarity with English and trying to absorb the language. At the post-non-MALL assessment, they were able to comprehend and answer simple questions (within familiar topics), with less struggle, with fewer interjections of L1 words, and feeling surer of what they had heard and of how to respond.

- **Participants who rated themselves 2-3 (Zehra, Mala, Feeda, Liddy and Rose)**

  The researcher rated Zehra’s listening skill at 1-2, but Zehra’s own rating was higher, because of her high confidence. Zehra felt comfortable talking, and sometimes shared stories with the researcher and her peers, despite speaking in broken English. As such, Zehra perceived that she had done a considerable amount of listening to the lessons that the researcher delivered, and to people with who she engaged during non-MALL. Zehra maintained this momentum until the completion of the non-MALL. She gained more confidence as the non-MALL session was progressing as her listening and responding speed was increasing. Zehra had shown improvement, but she was still limited to basic communication, and she still stumbled when trying to engage in deep conversation and talking about complex issues.

  The researcher's rating was similar to that of Mala and Feeda’s in terms of their listening skills at 2-3, but she judged Liddy and Rose (and Suki) at 3-4. During early stages of non-MALL, these five participants’ listening and comprehension capacity were focused around areas of immediate need such as being able to engage in conversations regarding themselves, their family or their migration history. During non-MALL, these participants demonstrated that they were able to understand and comprehend conversations related to the topics under discussion, and were able to receive and act upon simple oral instructions and perform the required task as instructed. Suki, Liddy and Rose’s higher level of listening and comprehension skills led them to be able to converse about their work experience. They might have been able to handle job training that involved following simple oral, written and
diagrammatic instructions. Liddy and Rose were available and ready for employment. All five women indicated improvements in their listening skills; however, they still had some difficulty understanding Australian English speakers who spoke very quickly with an accent and/or using slang.

- **Participants who rated themselves 3-4 (Suki)**

  The researcher rated Suki’s listening skill similarly. Please refer to the preceding section regarding Suki’s listening skills.

**No perceived change**

The second group perceived that no change had occurred in their listening skill:

- **Participants who rated themselves at 2-2 (Kay), 3-3 (Rina)**

  The researcher’s rating was similar to Kay and Rina’s ratings for listening skills. They perceived there was no change in their listening skills because their focus was on improving their speaking skills, therefore the other skills (listening, reading and writing) were not given attention. Thus, these participants perceived no improvement. However, the researcher observed improvement in their listening and comprehension ability, even though it was within the same scale pre- and post-non-MALL. Kay and Rina already had some familiarity with the English that they had learnt in school, but had rarely used. They had the ability to listen to and comprehend familiar topics. However, these skills were limited to the basic communication language that they had learnt and were exposed to.

**Reading**

Table 4-9 (a duplicate of Table 3-3) provides the definition of each rating value for reading skill that the researcher used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to read (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>struggles to read in general (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to read non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants’ perceptions of their reading skills could be grouped into those who perceived change had occurred and those who perceived that their skills remained the same.
Perceived change occurred

- **Participants who perceived change had occurred 1-2 (Ally), 2-3 (Feeda)**

  The researcher’s ratings were similar to Ally and Feeda’s assessment of their reading skills. Both participants were developed L1 readers, and they applied some of their reading strategies when reading English. Ally and Feeda perceived improvements in their reading skill because of the amount of effort they put in when reading. They had to adjust their L1 (Chinese and Arabic) reading to English, where the scripting systems were entirely different. However, they could only read simple and basic reading material with confidence, but not complex material. They had to ‘learn to read’ and at the same time comprehend what was read. Both felt they did more ‘reading’ (in the form of reading from the whiteboard, the worksheets and activities such as the community newspaper activity) than they would ever attempted by themselves in their own time.

No perceived change

Participants who perceived no change occurred could be sub-grouped into two categories:

- **Participants who had low literacy in L1 - 1-1 (Rea), 2-2 (Zehra)**

  The researcher rated Rea and Zehra’s reading skills as 1-1. Both participants had very low reading fluency in English, echoing their L1 skills. Their ability to read English was limited to words with few letters (such as “cat”, “boy”, and “good”), road signs and grocery fliers (matching the prices to pictures of products). The non-MALL lessons were focused mostly on discussions of relevant topics and the use of visuals and realia (objects from real life used in the discussions by the researcher to improve participants’ understanding cultural context (and real-life situations) to illustrate vocabulary items. Reading was limited to reading texts on worksheets, which were kept to a minimum.

- **Participants who were high literate in L1 - 2-2 (Kay, Rina, Rose and Liddy), 3-3 (Mala and Suki)**

  The researcher’s ratings were similar for Kay and Rina’s reading skills, and Mala and Suki’s, but she rated for Rose and Liddy’s (3-3) skills higher than they did. All six participants were developed L1 readers, in that they had learnt basic reading skills in L1. Participants applied some of their reading strategies when reading English, therefore, their rate of reading fluency varied. Generally, they were poor readers, even though they maybe near-fluent speakers (Liddy). Minimal reading was required of participants in non-MALL since the focus was upon conversational skills and related to using speaking and listening skills the most.
Participants were only required to read words, phrases and simple sentences but this provided some form of reading practice of varying levels to the individual participants.

**Writing**

All participants perceived that their writing skills remained the same at pre- and post-non-MALL. Table 4-10 (a duplicate of Table 3-4) provides the definition for each rating value for writing skills used by the researcher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to write (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>able to copy simple words and sentences (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to copy non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No perceived change**

The participants can be divided into low proficiency and high proficiency groups.

- **Low proficiency participants - 2-2 (Rea and Ally), 3-3 (Zehra)**

  The researcher’s rating for Rea’s writing skill was 1-1, while Ally was 2-3, and Zehra was 2-2. Rea copied the words or sentences from the whiteboard, letter by letter. Most of the time, Rea was only able to copy some of the words as she was too slow. Rea struggled to read what she had copied. Zehra was able to copy all the words on the board, but sometimes she was only able to read and comprehend a selection of the words. Rea and Zehra were not able to take notes in L1, and therefore had no reference point to go by. Ally, who was highly literate in L1, was able to copy word by word. Ally wrote the fastest among the three because she was used to writing. Ally made notes about the words/vocabulary in L1, which she used as a reference when needed.

- **High proficiency participants - 3-3 (Feeda, Kay, Liddy, Mala, Rina, Rose, and Suki)**

  The researcher’s rating for Feeda, Kay, Liddy, Mala, Rina, and Rose’s writing skill was 3-3, but it was 3-4 for Suki. Generally, all were able to easily and quickly copy from the whiteboard to their notebooks, and they could make their own notes in L1. They used these notes as a reference when needed. Generally, these participants were able to copy non-complex texts, but could not confidently write words or sentences that were dictated to
them, as they did not know or were unsure of the correct spelling. They were also not capable of composing a three to four sentences paragraph. The researcher rated Suki as 3-4 as she was able to write paragraphs, but with a lot of grammatical and spelling mistakes.

4.2.3 Summary of analysis

Five themes emerged from the analysis of this case study related to: literacy and education background; pronunciation; confidence; meaningful contents; and instructor role.

The participants' L1 literacy level played a significant role in their vocabulary acquisition. Two participants (Rea and Zehra) were of low L1 literacy level, while the remaining eight had at least L1 high school education. Drawing upon their educational background, some participants already possessed basic L1 skills when entering non-MALL. The participants transferred some of their prior knowledge of learning to acquiring English language skills in general, and vocabulary skills in particular. For example, making notes in L1 was a useful strategy in retaining new vocabulary because the notes explained the meaning of the words, and the syllables of the words in L1 helped participants in pronounce the new words more precisely, and also provided a translation of sentences or texts. Being literate in L1 also made it easier to use L1-English dictionaries.

As the non-MALL sessions were conducted in a teacher-centred mode, the role of the researcher was two-fold: as a teacher and a session planner. In this mode, the researcher delivered information/knowledge, provided explanations, organised drills, steered discussions, kept order in a range of situations and also provided encouragement and support to the whole group. The researcher selected topics and vocabularies that were relevant and meaningful for participants as adult learners; that is, the learners could use them immediately in their everyday interactions with other English speakers.

Speaking and listening abilities were required for developing and practicing conversational skills in non-MALL. Reading and writing skills were less important for this outcome. Less proficient participants perceived that they made progress in their language skills based on the amount of effort that they put in, and the words/vocabulary that they learnt that they otherwise would not have acquired on their own. More proficient participants perceived fewer significant changes, possibly based on their perception that the sessions were quite easy. They had generally encountered the topics and vocabulary before, and/or that they already had confidence in their speaking and listening skills before commencing non-MALL, but wanted additional experience and social interaction.

Participants generally rated higher on the four skills post-non-MALL because they perceived:
• They did more speaking during non-MALL, whereas in their own time they spoke very little English, or none at all. This somewhat alleviated their nervousness and shyness. Participants were also presented with a greater choice of words to use in interactions through the non-MALL lessons [a speaking skill].
• They had increased their listening skills which they would not have done by themselves. These activities provided exposure to basic topics and vocabulary, helped improved their comprehension (within these topics), and provided more ideas and more vocabulary with which to respond to relevant questions or discussion topics [listening skills].
• they undertook more reading than usual - from the whiteboard, worksheets, and from printed materials such as grocery advertisements [reading skill].

The unchanged ratings from pre-non-MALL to post-non-MALL indicated participants perceived the above changes occurred but were small and took place within the same scale. All five participants rated their writing skills remained the same pre-, and post-non-MALL. None of the participants perceived any decline in their skill levels which indicate that the learning environment was supportive and encouraging, as well as productive.

4.3 Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter documented the results and analyses of data gathered from the Case Study 1 participants. The participants were ten migrant women (Suki, Feeda, Mala, Rea, Zehra, Ally, Kay, Liddy, Rina, and Rose) whose L1 was not English. The results and analyses included demographics about participants' personal backgrounds, migration history, education and language, as well as addressing their experiences with learning vocabulary in non-MALL.

Figure 4-23 shows the data gathering of Case Study 1 (Layer 1), the reporting (Layer 2), the five themes that emerged from the analyses of the case study (Layer 3), and the two factors that impacted the migrant women's vocabulary acquisition (Layer 4).

The two factors that impacted migrant women's vocabulary acquisition in non-MALL were:

1) Vocabulary learning environment. This refers to the setting where vocabulary is taught to and learnt by participants. The themes that fall under this factor are: meaningful content (only relevant and meaningful content should be taught as participants were adult learners); and the researcher’s instructor’s role in terms of the person who planned and executed the teacher-centred non-MALL sessions.
2) Learner characteristics. This refers to the backgrounds of the adult learners. It includes their literacy and education background, pronunciation skills, and their individual confidence.
Figure 4-23: Data gathering, reporting and themes and factors that emerged from the analyses of Case Study 1

These factors are discussed further in Chapter 7. Chapter 5 reports on the results and analyses of Case Study 2.
Case Study 2 participants (Ally, Kay, Liddy, Rina, and Rose) attended sessions in the non-MALL conversational English environment and then extended their learning by participating in the MALL-integrated environment (Figure 5-1).

Each participant was interviewed before they began their first MALL session (pre-MALL) and again after they attended a series of 4 to 5 MALL sessions (post-MALL). They were interviewed separately, with the majority of interviews being one-on-one. Others, with their consent, were accompanied by a peer or someone who was available at the community centre as an interpreter. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. These MALL sessions were attended both by participants of Case Study 2 and other learners (regular attendees of the conversational English program), who did not participate in Case Studies 1 or 2.

5.1 Case Study 2: Results

5.1.1 Demographics

Participants’ demographic information for MALL refers to the participants’ familiarity with and use of digital devices (more information on other aspects of participants’ demographic backgrounds can be found in Chapter 4).
Participants' familiarity with computer and mobile devices

To be able to participate in a modern society that uses data, information and communication technologies (ICTs), adults require skills in digital device use, such as desktop personal computers (PCs), laptops, smartphones and tablets. These are required to access and use digital information effectively. Participants had some familiarity with these devices in their daily lives, having them in their homes but not necessarily using or owning the devices (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1: Participants' familiarity with computers and mobile devices (number of years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Desktop PC</th>
<th>Laptop</th>
<th>Mobile phones (smartphone)</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liddy</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rina</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Did not personally use  ~ Shared with children

Only Liddy and Rose had desktop PCs in their home. These computers were used by their children for homework activities, watching movies, playing games, and general access to the internet (browsing/information searching and social media). However, both participants said that they did not use this device because they did not know how to, they did not need to use it, and also they were too occupied with household chores. Liddy, especially, was busy with 'school work' since she was an AMEP student. Among the five participants, Ally, Rina and Kay owned both a smartphone and a tablet, while Liddy and Rose owned only a smartphone.

All participants had laptops in their homes that they had rarely used personally. Liddy and Ally had laptops in their homes for 10 years, whereas, for the other participants, the acquisition was more recent. Kay's laptop was owned by her adult stepson. For the other participants, the laptops were used by their husbands for a combination of tasks, such as email, job seeking, paying bills, social media, browsing/information searching and to access official websites (Centrelink, Medicare, workplace and children’s school communication websites). Rose’s and Rina’s children were allowed to use the laptop for homework activities, watching movies and playing games.

All participants had owned a mobile phone, specifically smartphones, for 2 to 3 years. Only Ally, Rina and Kay owned and personally used a tablet. Tablets have similar capabilities as smartphones, except for differences in size and the personalisation of use. Smartphones and tablets have built-in language preference settings with a (virtual) keyboard as an input method.
Rose had set her language preference as English, while Rina’s was Malay; therefore, Rose’s and Rina’s smartphone keyboard input was the Roman alphabet script. Liddy, Ally and Kay used Chinese as the language of their smartphone; thus, the keyboard layout and input of the smartphone was set to Chinese logographic. Figure 5-2 (a) shows a smartphone start screen, and (b) an example notepad app, with the language set as Chinese. A tablet that was set with this setting would display a similar screen interface.

![Figure 5-2: Start screen of a smartphone (a), and a notepad app (b)](image)

**Participants’ uses of smartphones and tablets**

Participants used either a smartphone or a tablet, or a combination of both, to make local and international calls and also use messaging. When they were themselves mobile, participants would use the mobile data purchased through a 3G/4G mobile connection plan that included data and Wi-Fi. All texting/SMS (Short Message Service) was generally on a smartphone through mobile plans that could be purchased from various phone companies (e.g. Telstra, Optus, Virgin). Instead of using credit from a mobile plan, other connections such as voice and video calls and iMessage were possible with a Wi-Fi connection using apps such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber and Telegram. Ally, Rina and Kay used tablets when making video calls to their families in their home country. They usually did this at home using their Wi-Fi connectivity. Video call apps such as Skype, Facebook Messenger, Apple Facetime and Viber have been developed for these activities.
### Table 5-2: Participants' uses of smartphones and tablets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Ally</th>
<th>Rina</th>
<th>Kay</th>
<th>Liddy</th>
<th>Rose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice calls</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video calls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texting/SMS</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instant Messaging</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use apps (general, school, online accounts)</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social media</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet browsing</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watch videos</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take pictures</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen to music</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play games</strong></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*S = Smartphone   T = Tablet*

All participants were familiar with the common and pre-installed apps on their smartphones and/or tablets. Some of the common apps tool were internet browser, contact/address book, calendar, calculator, weather and notepad. Other apps could be downloaded for free or purchased from the apps stores (Google Play or Apple Store). Rina, Liddy and Rose used a school communication and information system app on their smartphones to communicate with their children’s school teachers and administration (e.g. Skoolbag, COOLSIS). Rose, Liddy and Kay used apps downloaded to their smartphones to maintain government-related online accounts such as Centrelink, Mygov and Medicare. Only Ally, Rina and Kay used social media accounts such as Facebook on both their smartphones and tablets. Among the five participants in MALL, Rina was the only one who used the Google map app on her smartphone to find routes and the location of places. Other participants said that they never used any maps personally as they relied on their husbands or children.

All participants had email accounts but only Ally and Rina knew how to use email. Ally used her tablet for email because the screen was larger so it was easier to read. Rina used her smartphone rather than tablet for email, as her small children used the latter a lot and she feared they might accidentally delete her email messages.

Ally, Kay and Rina used both their smartphones and tablet, whichever was handy at the time, for internet browsing, while Liddy and Rose used their smartphones for this. All participants used the internet for reading the current news about their home countries, searching for recipes,
sometimes browsing grocery and departmental store catalogues, or simply searching for information they needed. All participants used the internet to watch online videos through the YouTube or Dailymotion apps, or from their branded websites. Ally and Rina would use either their smartphone or tablet to watch videos, while Kay used her tablet because she had poor eyesight. The larger screen of the tablet let her see the videos more clearly. Liddy and Rose used their smartphones to watch online videos, though only occasionally.

All participants preferred to use smartphones to take pictures as they were smaller, easier to carry around and hold, and produced higher picture quality than the tablet. Ally and Kay occasionally used their tablets to take pictures. Ally, Rina and Liddy liked to listen to music and used their smartphones with earphones. Ally and Rina also liked to play games on either their smartphones or tablets. Ally would play games when she had free time, while Rina only played games, either on her smartphone or tablet, with her young children.

5.1.2 Participants’ experience with MALL

The MALL sessions were attended both by participants of this case study (Liddy, Rose, Rina, Ally and Kay) and non-participants (other regular attendees of the conversational program). The participants’ ratings of their perceptions of their English skills after the post-non-MALL stage were reused as their pre-MALL ratings. As described in Chapter 3, each MALL session was organised into three steps:

• Step 1 Pre-teach vocabulary, which was for participants to know the meaning and become familiar with certain vocabularies so that they could advance to the following stage and focus on the use of the vocabulary in different contexts. Participants were also asked to create their own sentences using these vocabulary words.
• Step 2 Drilling, which was to help participants practice fluency and become familiar with how words were pronounced and how they were used in sentences.
• Step 3 App activity and exercise, when each participant was given a tablet to work with (using the app) and paired with another participant or non-participant.

Liddy

In her post-MALL interview, Liddy recalled the topic Describing people. Liddy mentioned that this topic was quite similar to a topic that was discussed in a non-MALL session (Figure 4-12). The difference was that there were activities and exercises using the tablet. With the tablet, Liddy watched videos while listening to the conversations and also attempted the matching vocabulary to pictures exercises and the flashcards exercises. The vocabularies were embedded
with corresponding audios. From her recollection of the topic, Liddy offered her version of statements (corrected grammatically by the researcher): “She has blonde hair”; “He has short and spiky hair”; “That man has a beard and a moustache”; “He’s tall and young.” All the exercises that Liddy attempted were automatically scored. Liddy repeated the activities and exercises until she was satisfied with her scores. Figure 5-3 shows the exercise on the app that Liddy was referring to: (a) unattempt exercise; and (b) completed exercise with scores.

Liddy did not own a tablet, but after the first MALL session she was considering purchasing one for herself. She thought owning one would be convenient, “so that I can learn something in my spare time.” She found the tablet easy to use since it had similar features to her smartphone. She said the size of the tablet made it easy to carry around and she could just slip it in her handbag, or even use it in bed.

When there were not too many attendees in the MALL session, Liddy was able to use the tablet herself. This let Liddy work more productively and she was able to progress to the harder parts of the app on her own. When there were many attendees, tablets needed to be shared between two people. Liddy did not mind sharing a tablet with a partner and would willingly assist if her partner was less conversant in English and in using the tablet. Liddy had an issue with the noise during app activities. The noise came from the children, the participants, and the tablets (when the volume of all ten tablet were put on high since all users were using the audio facility of their tablets). Liddy thought that the presence of the researcher as the “teacher” was important, as sometimes she needed to ask questions about the vocabulary or anything related to the session.
Figure 5-4 shows Liddy’s perception of her English skills at pre-non-MALL, followed by pre-MALL after she attended the non-MALL sessions (at this stage, the data was also considered as pre-MALL). This was then followed by Liddy attending the MALL sessions and then her data was collected at post-MALL. Liddy rated a change in her perception of her reading skill from ‘2 = not very good’ at pre-non-MALL and pre-MALL, to ‘3 = somewhat good’ at post-MALL, while her writing skill remained at ‘somewhat good’ throughout. Liddy’s perception of her speaking skill remained at ‘3 = somewhat good’ at pre-non-MALL and pre-MALL, and changed to ‘good’ at post-MALL. Liddy perceived her listening skills changed from ‘2 = not very good’ at pre-non-MALL, to ‘3 = somewhat good’ at pre-MALL to ‘4 = good’ at post-MALL.

**Figure 5-4: Liddy’s perception of her English skills at pre-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post MALL**

**Rose**

Rose recalled watching a video about ordering from a café (Figure 5-5 (a)). Rose used the transcript activity by tapping on the Transcript tab on the app to read what was talked about in the conversation, and attempted to match the vocabulary with meaning exercises (Figure 5-5 (b)). Rose’s version of vocabulary use was (corrected grammatically by the researcher): "Can I have my receipt, please?"; "What would you like today?"; "I’d like a cup of coffee, please?"; “Have here”; and “Takeaway, please.” She also recalled attempting the section of this topic called Practice speaking (Figure 5-6), which let her check her pronunciation by recording her voice giving one-line answers to questions asked by the café assistant, as if she was having a two-way conversation.
After her experience with the tablet in the MALL sessions, Rose thought that it was easy to use, even though she had never owned or used a tablet before. Rose said, "It's easy to use ... quite same with my phone. But it's bigger, I can read the Bible". Rose added, "The tablet like the laptop but cannot type letters. I can get Internet ... I can get a lot of information and answers ..."
can watch YouTube too. Can watch how they speak English in the videos.” Rose thought it was good that there were many exercises and she could repeat them numerous times. Rose also said that she did not have to write anything down for the exercises; instead, she could select the right answer just by tapping on a picture or icon, or she could drag an answer to match the question or just swipe when practicing with the flashcard.

Rose commented that she could not focus much on the tasks because the room was too noisy when the group was using the tablet. Rose also could not focus on her app activity because she had to keep an eye on her friend’s two children whom she babysat and brought with her. The two children were playing with other children in the corner of the room. Rose was hoping they would not play rough or fight over a toy. In Rose’s words, "I cannot focus so much. I always think about my children [her own children as well as her friend’s children]. I’m always aware of things because I’m a mother. And there’s too much stuff in my head.” Rose thought that if her surroundings were peaceful and quiet, she would be able to concentrate better on her language tasks. Rose also preferred to do the app activities on her own. She did not mind sharing a tablet with a partner or working in a small group if that was a requirement, however, she thought that when she was paired with a partner who could not read or use the tablet, she felt obliged to help her partner, and this slowed her down.

Figure 5-7 shows that Rose perceived that her reading skill remained at ‘2 = not very good’ from pre-non-MALL to pre-MALL, and changed to ‘3 = somewhat good’ at post-MALL. Rose indicated that her writing skill remained ‘3 = somewhat good’ throughout all three stages. Rose perceived her listening skills changed from ‘2 = not very good’ at pre-non-MALL, to ‘3 = somewhat good’ at pre-MALL stage, to ‘4 = good’ at post-MALL.’

![Figure 5-7: Rose's perception of her English skills at pre-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post-MALL](image-url)
Rina talked about a video that she had watched in which two women were talking, “One is older, she has knee and hip problem, she got arthritis.” Rina said she watched the video a few times because she did not catch everything that was said (Figure 5-8 (a)). She then tapped on the Transcript tab and was able to see the written dialogue at the same time she was listening to it. Rina also recalled that she did a lot of matching exercises where she could hear the audio while “dragging” a statement across to match an answer (Figure 5-8 (b)). Rina said she could see the people’s faces while they were talking and hear how they pronounced words. She could pause or replay certain parts she missed or that she did not hear properly. Rina also attempted the flashcards exercises, which she liked because they had pictures with audio. Rina recalled these statements (under the topic Feeling sick): “I have sore throat”; “I have headache”; “I have stomach ache”; and “I have back pain.”

Rina commented that, “It’s easy to use this tablet. My children have them ... like my phone”. Rina said she preferred to use the tablet rather than books for learning English because “I can just use one tablet ... I don’t have to carry many books ... heavy. We can find a lot of things from the tablet, like the big computer, it has internet”. Rina used the tablet interchangeably with her smartphone when finding online information such as recipes and reading the news about Indonesia and Myanmar. Rina proudly added that she sometimes used the Indonesian-English dictionary app that she downloaded on her tablet and smartphone.
When in the MALL group, Rina always paired with the person sitting next to her who was not a proficient reader and not used to using a tablet. This slowed Rina down as she had to intermittently explain what to do and help her partner. Rina preferred to work by herself and at her own pace “... sometime I can do very fast, sometimes my friend is too slow”. Rina thought it would be easier if her partner also knew how to read and use the tablet, so they could learn faster by doing more activities. Rina added that she did not give her full attention to the MALL lesson as she had to also watch her son, making sure he did not fight with other children or cry. The noise created in the room did not bother Rina that much. When asked if she could do the exercises on the app independently, Rina said that she might be able to do them at home but was not sure that she would do them. She added that she would need a teacher figure and a classroom-like environment to be able to feel like she was learning.

Rina perceived that there was no change in her reading skill from the pre-non-MALL to pre-MALL stage, where she rated it as ‘2 = not very good’ (Figure 5-9). After attending the MALL sessions, however, Rina rated her reading skill as changed to ‘3 = somewhat good’. Rina’s perception of her writing skill remained at the ‘somewhat good’ level throughout the study. She perceived her speaking skill prior to attending non-MALL sessions as ‘2 = not very good’, changed to ‘3 = somewhat good’ at pre-MALL, and to ‘4 = good’ at post-MALL. Rina perceived her listening skills both at the pre-non-MALL and pre-MALL as ‘3 = somewhat good’, but this changed to ‘4 = good’ after participating in the MALL sessions.

![Figure 5-9: Rina’s perception of her English skills at pre-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post-MALL](image)

**Ally**

With the help of a friend interpreting for her, Ally recalled vocabulary related to a topic about ordering at a café. Ally shared the following (sentences corrected grammatically by the researcher): “menu”; “have here or take away?”; “Can I have a coffee, please?”; “Can I have a
juice, please?”; “I’d like...”; and “I’ll have...” Ally also mentioned the vocabulary activity (Figure 5-10) and the flashcards exercise that she attempted (Figure 5-11).

Figure 5-10: An interface of the app showing a quiz-like vocabulary activity

Figure 5-11: An interface of the flashcards exercise on the app

Ally owned a tablet but said she had never thought to use it for learning English. The language that Ally used on her tablet was Chinese. Ally thought that the tablet was “replacing” her husband’s laptop and it was more convenient as she could just slip the tablet in her handbag. Ally showed familiarity with the functions of the tablet during the MALL sessions (locating the power and volume button, use of play/stop/repeat icons, tapping, swiping, dragging and so forth), but struggled when she was reading instructions or information for the exercises on the app. Working with a partner who could read better than she could helped Ally tremendously. When Ally did not have a partner to work with, she used a lot of ‘guesswork’ in attempting the
app exercises to see if they were right. She could replay dialogues and redo the exercises as many times as she needed. Ally seemed interested in the matching statement and picture exercises, and flashcard exercises because of the embedded audio facility. Ally was very satisfied with the audio feature because she could practice her listening skills by listening and watching videos and practice her pronunciation using the recording facility in the app.

Ally said she preferred to do the MALL activities in a classroom-like environment. She also felt that the presence of a teacher or tutor provided her with more confidence because she would have a point of reference if she had any questions to ask. Ally said the only distractions she had were from the noise when all the tablets were in use.

Figure 5-12 shows Ally's perception that her reading, speaking and listening skills were at '1 = not good at all' prior to attending the non-MALL sessions. At pre-MALL, Ally rated these skills as changed to '2 = not very good'. Ally's perception these skills further changed to '3 = somewhat good' at post-MALL. Ally rated her writing skill as 'not very good' from the start through to the end of the study.

![Figure 5-12: Ally's perception of her English skills at pre-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post-MALL](image)

**Kay**

Kay took out the notes that she had made during the previous MALL sessions. These notes were taken during the *pre-teaching vocabulary* and *drilling*. Kay recalled Step 3 in the App activity from a topic *Problems at home* (Figure 5-13) that talked about things that commonly break at home. Kay remembered watching a conversation where a couple were talking about a leaking faucet. Kay spoke English with a few Malay words woven throughout the interview. With the researcher's help, Kay tried to remember the statements that she had encountered during the matching statement exercise. These statements were (sentences corrected grammatically by the
researcher): “The toilet’s overflowing”; “The lock is broken”; “The computer will not start”; “The tap is leaking”, and “The stove is not working.” Kay said that it was good for her to know these statements because they were things that always broke down in her house and needed repair.

Figure 5-13: An interface of the app showing quiz-like exercise and matching sentences (with audio) to pictures

Kay already owned a tablet which she used for watching YouTube videos, taking pictures and posting on Facebook for connecting with family and friends. Kay said, “I like (the) tablet. (It’s) easy to use. I always take it in my bag. I can find information anytime. I can take pictures and videos.” All these were functions accessed through apps that were pre-installed on her tablet. The language that Kay used on her tablet was Chinese. In Kay’s opinion, the tablet was better than her phone because the screen was larger and she could see photos and movies better. Kay thought the size was just right as it could fit in her handbag.

When doing the MALL exercises, Kay demonstrated that she was comfortable operating the tablet supplied as she was familiar with the general functionality of a tablet. However, Kay struggled with reading instructions and the contents of the exercises. Kay usually worked with a partner (a close friend of hers) who knew less than she did about how to operate a tablet, and also had a lower English proficiency than she did. Kay helped her partner as much as she could. She said, “Sometimes I like to learn by myself, sometimes with friends because it’s nice to share.”
Whenever Kay encountered any problems or had any questions regarding the exercises, she either asked the researcher to clarify, asked her other peers, or continued her attempt by guesswork until the issue was solved. The presence of the researcher was somewhat needed by Kay. In Kay’s words, “I like teacher to teach me … teacher can confirm whether I do things right or not”.

Figure 5-14 depicts Kay’s perception of her reading and listening skills as rated at ‘2 = not very good’ at both pre non-MALL and pre-MALL. At post MALL, Kay rated her reading skill as remaining at ‘2’ while her speaking and listening skills changed to ‘3 = somewhat good’.

![Figure 5-14: Kay’s perception of her English skills at pre-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post-MALL](image)

Kay’s perception of her writing skill remained at ‘3 = somewhat good’, while her speaking skill was ‘1 = not good at all’ at pre non-MALL; changing to ‘2 = not very good’ at pre-MALL and ‘3 = somewhat good’ at post-MALL.

### 5.1.3 Summary of results

This section reports the findings from the data gathered from Case Study 2, which was referred to as ‘hybrid’. The participants for this case study were five women (Liddy, Rose, Rina, Kay and Ally) who also participated in the non-MALL learning environment before proceeding to the MALL learning environment. Participants were interviewed prior to and after participating in 4 to 5 MALL sessions.

All participants were familiar with having computing and mobile devices in their homes. No participant used PCs and laptops, but they all owned and used a smartphone and were able to download apps. Only Ally, Rina and Kay used a tablet but they had never fully utilised its full potential, and never used their tablets for learning purposes, such as language learning.
All participants had acquired vocabulary through the app use since they were able to recall and/or apply the vocabularies in the correct contexts. This was supported through a combination of pre-teaching vocabulary and drilling, and word acquisition was enriched and enhanced with the app activities and exercises. Four main topics and their related vocabularies were recalled by participants: describing people (Liddy), ordering at a café (Rose and Ally), expressing feelings/health issues (Rina), and describing broken things at home (Kay). There were issues arising from noise and partnerships/app sharing arising in the MALL sessions.

No participants perceived a change in their writing skills from the pre-MALL baseline to post-MALL, but some experienced some change in reading, and most experienced changes in their speaking and listening skills. The app activities and exercises allowed participants to experience interactive learning and the benefit from multimedia presentation of materials through the use of videos and audios. Participants also received added exposure to English through watching videos and listening to audios by Australian English speakers. These videos were presented in various contexts of everyday modern Australian life.

5.2 Case Study 2: Analysis

Case Study 2 participants (Rina, Ally, Rose, Liddy and Kay) had experiencing learning vocabulary in non-MALL before participating in the MALL environment. Both sessions were deliberately conducted in non-formal learning settings, considering the migrant women’s background as well as their learning and flexibility requirements. The data analysed was from pre-MALL and post-MALL interviews of Case Study 2 participants, the researcher’s observations from those interviews, and observations and data from the MALL sessions that the participants attended.

5.2.1 Issues that arose from MALL experience

The issues that arose from this analysis can be grouped into eight themes: literacy and education background; pronunciation; confidence; meaningful contents; learner grouping; learning distractions; instructor role; and features of the tablet and app.

**Literacy and education background**

Participants’ L1 and English literacy at the time of the study contributed to their vocabulary acquisition in MALL (Table 4-3). Participants in this group were all literate in L1 (all had at least completed high school, except Liddy). Participants continued to take notes during Step 1 - Pre-teaching of vocabulary and Step 2 - Drilling. The materials in Step 1 and Step 2 were deliberately planned to connect with the contents in Step 3 App activities and exercises, in order to help
participants better understand what they were going to encounter in Step 3. However a limited number of new words was selected for Step 1 due to the restricted time available.

In Step 3, participants worked on the app and used the tablet collaboratively with a partner, or worked independently (when a tablet was available). In contrast, Step 1 and Step 2 were steered by the researcher. Participants had more control over their learning when using the tablet and app. The issue that arose from this was that participants had varying levels of reading fluency (mostly low level) thus, to some, app use was a struggle unless their partner was a better reader and able to help.

The topics on the app varied in degrees of complexity in terms of their contents and vocabularies. Participants were able to independently navigate and comprehend non-complex topics and they went on to attempt the activities and exercises. When the vocabularies were not pre-taught to them and they were not prepared, participants would encounter difficulty when attempting complex topics and contents, finding it difficult to understand dialogue and conversations. They could use guesswork but this had the potential to cause boredom since there was little or no understanding and comprehension. Therefore, participants felt (and said) they needed some form of guidance from an instructor/tutor to eventually acquire the vocabularies.

**Pronunciation**

The participants needed to improve their pronunciation for clarity, and to be understood in a conversation. This case study comprised participants from three different linguistic groups (French, Malay and Mandarin) who had noticeable differences in pronouncing certain words, and this resulted in similar pronunciation mistakes in each group (for example: Mandarin – the word ‘very’ could be mistaken as ‘weary’; Indonesian Malay –’fish’ as ‘piece’; French – ‘think’ as ‘sink’).

Pronunciation mistakes potentially impede being understood and affect an outcome when engaged in conversations at school, at work, or in business. Despite having no exposure to English prior to migration, people can learn and improve their pronunciation if they take advantage of the considerable opportunities to communicate with diverse and varied English speakers, particularly if migrants have lived in Australia for several years and worked in an English speaking environment (as experienced by Liddy and Rose; where the positive impact was more obvious in Liddy, than in Rose). Participants who had learnt English as a second language at school during pre-migration but had never used it (Kay and Rina), and participants
who had not received English exposure at all (Ally), found speaking English difficult. They needed to make extra effort to adjust their natural L1 sound to English.

Pronunciation exercises were incorporated in Steps 1, 2, and 3 in the MALL sessions to help participants develop correct pronunciation and become familiar with the basic use of the vocabularies. These exercises were:

- **Step 1** - During the pre-teaching of four to five words or phrases that were considered to be significant for an understanding of the topic for the session, the pronunciation exercise occurred when participants were taught how to articulate individual sounds (of the word or phrase) that included pronunciation tips, voicing, stress, intonation, blending and omission of sounds. A ‘repeating sounds’ activity was also included where participants listened to the researcher saying the vocabulary, then repeated it after her. This was usually reiterated four to five times until participants became fluent with the utterance. Even so, participants were usually forgetful and these exercises would need to be done frequently in order to be retained).

- **Step 2** – During the drilling of simple sentences/statements/expressions that demonstrated how the vocabularies were used in context, pronunciation exercises occurred similar to Step 1 were undertaken with some additions, such as the blending of two words (for example, ‘She’s got’ and ‘I’d like’), and the build-up of longer sentences (for example, from ‘He’s got short hair’ to ‘He’s got short and spiky hair’).

- **Step 3** – During app activities and exercises, the videos and audios provided authentic and varied language sources for participants, not just to watch but also for listening practice. Listening to these real-life conversations enabled participants to understand the context more fully since the language was interpreted in a full visual context, using natural gestures, expressions and an authentic flow of speech. These visual cues supported the verbal messages and provided a focus of attention. The activities undertaken enabled participants to make an adjustment to the differences between their own sound systems and the English sound system.

**Confidence**

As previously discussed (Table 4-6), participants had already developed some confidence in communicating at the start of their participation in the research, varying from high, to average, to low. In non-MALL, participants’ confidence was seen through their openness in making conversations with their peers, and with English speaking people (with some fear and reservation with Australian English speakers) at the community centre. Conversational confidence was continued at varying levels of progress into MALL and especially obvious in the
low speaking proficiency participants (Kay and Ally). Lower proficiency participants gained more confidence, but also benefited when working on the app with a higher level proficiency partner. In MALL, all participants showed increased confidence and commitment when engaging in Step 1 and Step 2. In Step 3, being able to operate the app also added to the participants’ feeling of confidence, with attention being fully given to the content of the app.

Participants benefited from the app’s sound repetition activities as well as the listening and pronunciation activities and practice. This was because constant repetition allowed participants to gain familiarity of the sound/pronunciation and patterns of the words, phrases or expressions. Being confident of accuracy, the participants used familiar patterns in conversations with greater surety and less hesitation.

Participants’ varying motivations for attending the conversational English sessions remained the same: in the short term, they sought to improve their conversational skills, to overcome fear and shyness, and to become more involved in their children’s education and/or to become more independent. In the long term, they aimed to find better jobs and to be able to adjust fully to their life in Australia. The app provided a variety of topics and learning content pertaining to Australian life and society.

**Meaningful contents**

In this research, vocabulary acquisition was characterised by the participants’ ability to do one or more of the following with the vocabulary to which they were exposed to: directly recall the vocabulary or part of a phrase/statement; use circumlocution to describe a word if they could not recall it directly; and/or create their own sentences or statements that included vocabulary items, indicating that they were able to use the vocabulary in correct contexts. All Case Study 2 (non-MALL and MALL) participants had, to some extent, acquired the necessary vocabulary.

Participants recalled topics or vocabulary items they found relevant and meaningful, simple, and useful for their everyday functional and conversational use. The topics and the related vocabulary items were recalled by participants when they were asked to do so during the post-MALL interview were: describing people (Liddy); ordering at a café (Rose and Ally); expressing feelings/health issues (Rina); and describing broken things at home (Kay).

Participants recalled a topic when it was relevant to them. One of the non-MALL topics was deliberately planned by the researcher to have similar content and vocabulary to the MALL topic *Describing people*. The similarity of the topics and how additional activities could be undertaken using the app, such as watching videos, listening to and practicing pronunciation, and doing vocabulary exercises, was remarked upon by Liddy. In a MALL session, activities
similar to non-MALL occurred in Step 1 and Step 2, to be followed by Step 3, App activity and exercises. The interactivity and the re-playability of Step 3 resulted in more vocabulary being retained.

Participants recalled topics and or vocabulary items that were useful for everyday conversations such as expressions for being polite (Rose), expressing feelings/health issues (Rina) and describing broken things at home (Kay). The videos were appealing to participants because the story was enacted in a way that they could follow and understand, and the dialogue was spoken slowly and articulately. The videos were re-playable with transcript features and quiz-like questions. Many simpler vocabularies words and phrases were introduced along the way that also showed how words could be used interchangeably to describe the same issue; for example, in the context of computing, words such as “broken”, “not working”, and “won't start”. Participants added this knowledge into their word bank, and therefore had a greater choice of words to use if they were in a position where those words were needed.

**Instructor role**

The role of the researcher as the instructor was to plan the MALL sessions and ensure that: the topics and vocabulary items were relevant and meaningful; the app activities and exercises were easy to read and comprehend; and these elements together were useful for participants' basic interaction skills. The researcher planned the material for each 90-minute slot for the MALL sessions around key topics from the beginner level of the app. The beginner level was suitable for the MALL participants given their education and reading proficiency levels. In order to pre-teach vocabulary effectively, in Step 1, the researcher identified what the participants already knew and what words/vocabulary might cause problems. If time permitted, participants created their own sentences using the vocabulary items. This stage was followed by practicing fluency through drilling (Step 2), and finally by completing app activities and exercises (Step 3). More time was spent in Step 3 as it reinforced participants' understanding of the topics and vocabularies through the use of interactive and multimedia learning material.

The researcher played the conventional teacher role in Steps 1 and 2, and a facilitator role in Step 3. The teacher role was similar in both non-MALL and MALL. The researcher’s facilitator role in MALL was to support the participants in explaining the instructions and/or content of the app, answer questions, and resolve any issues. The researcher, and the participants who could read a little better than their peer, assisted participants who needed help in reading and comprehending the instructions and contents of the app. On some occasions, they used L1 when helping interpret for people who used the same L1. The researcher also had a role in helping participants to develop familiarity with the tablet if they were not used to operating it. In
general, it did not take long for the participants to get used to the tablet, because operating the tablet was similar to their already established use of smartphones.

The researcher also had a secondary role in assisting participants in navigating the app. It was important for participants to recognise the patterns and organization of the app’s levels, sublevels and the topics covered under each sublevel, and the activities and exercises under each topic (Figure 3-7). As participants were low fluency readers in English (although they were proficient L1 readers), the visuals accompanying each heading were helpful as a form of reference. Navigating the app was initially confusing to some participants but eventually they were able to navigate to the screen they needed once they identified the use of markers (tablet home screen and app home screen) and learned to use the back/return button.

**Learner grouping**

Ten tablets were provided by the community centre to be shared among the attendees of the conversational English/MALL sessions. These tablets were only used during Step 3 of MALL. When there were not many attendees, participants were able to use the tablet individually, whereas when there were many attendees, a tablet was mostly shared between two people.

Some participants (Liddy, Rina and Rose) were able to use the tablet and work on the apps individually and independently, because they could read and comprehend non-complex instructions and access the contents of the app. They only needed occasional help from the researcher to clarify something, or sometimes they just guessed and carried on. By working individually, they had the choice of attempting the activities and exercises at their own pace or attempting as much as they wanted and then moving on quickly to the next phase.

Working with a partner of lower literacy who was not conversant with using the tablet slowed some participants’ progress as they felt obliged to help translate and explain to their partner about the content of the exercises, the vocabulary, and/or “how- to” in using the tablet. On the other hand, when by working with a partner who was at least the same level of literacy and who had familiarity with a tablet, the learning experience was improved as both learners could discuss and share ideas, and work faster. Participants who were only conversant with the functions of the tablet but struggled with English and reading (Kay and Ally) preferred to work with partners who were more proficient so that they could get the help they needed.

Working in pairs gave individual participants (and non-participants) more speaking time. Generally, when working together, participants would have more confidence than when working individually. The benefits included: both peers had the opportunity to speak to each other in English thus maximising their talking time and minimising the researcher’s talking
time; interacting socially using English so that the stronger learner could help the weaker learner; practicing more language; sharing opinions and experiences with each other; learning how to use digital apps; and feeling a sense of community.

**Features of the tablet and app**

None of the participants had considered using their mobile devices as a learning tool. They were only aware of the existence of language learning apps, as a result of their involvement in the MALL research. Some saw the benefit and convenience of using the tablet for language learning and expressed their intention of downloading learning apps on their smartphones or tablets.

The benefits of using the tablet for language learning included its ease of use as most of its features were similar to smartphones. The tablet was portable in terms of size and significantly less bulky than laptops which had to be used with their peripherals. The tablet was also portable in terms of its accessibility online and offline, and could be connected to Wi-Fi and/or 3G/4G mobile-enabled networks and internet connections. The app had already been downloaded onto the tablets, thus participants could learn without constraint, anytime and anywhere, provided the tablet had battery life available. The tablet also had a larger touch screen than a smartphone. This allowed for convenient operation and interactive multimedia functions which was activated by tapping, dragging or swiping across the touch screen interface.

A few significant benefits for the participants when using the app as an element of MALL include: the interactivity and multimedia features of the app which allowed for repeated attempts at language activities and exercises, complete with scoring systems; the audios and visuals provided richness in learning where participants could see the actors’ gestures and displays of emotion and listen to dialogue that demonstrated the various sounds of realistic Australian accents; and the ease of navigation within various levels and topics that allowed participants to have the choice of personalizing their learning, focus more on areas that needed work.

**Learning distractions**

Participants identified a range of MALL-associated learning distractions. The first distraction was more personalised and experienced by mothers who brought their children along (Rina and Rose). They had to divide their attention between the MALL session and their children, whether the children played quietly, or whether they fought or cried. Participants who did not have children (Liddy, Ally and Kay) could focus their full attention on the MALL sessions, even though the children’s play added to the background noise. The second distraction was seen in Step 3 of MALL, and was caused by noise from the app activity and exercises when the volume of all ten
tablets was on high and the sound from each tablet interfered with the others. The third
distraction was from the participants and non-participants themselves who were talking and/or
discussing the work they were doing.

The noise sometimes overshadowed the in-app activities (usually unintentionally), causing
annoyance to some people, and the researcher had to remind all the women to keep their noise
(and their children’s noise) down. There appeared to be tolerance and understanding among
the group, particularly regarding the noise that came from the children and the tablets. Despite
the distractions, all women demonstrated the capacity for compromise and understood that the
conversational program was a shared learning space and was provided by the community
centre for free. Regardless of their social, cultural, educational and migration backgrounds,
everybody’s presence was motivated by similar learning goals, which were to improve their
English conversational skills and engage more fully in Australian life. Typically, the 90-minute
session slots encompassed Steps 1, 2 and 3, and the noise and distractions did not seem to affect
participants’ learning in a major way.

5.2.2 Participants’ perceptions after non-MALL and MALL

Participants self-rated their perceptions of their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills
during pre-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post-MALL interviews (Table 5-3). The participants’ post-
non-MALL ratings of their perceptions of their skills were used for their pre-MALL ratings, and
the researcher’s own rating of individual participant is shown in brackets. These ratings were
based on a Likert-type scale for each skill (Table 3-3 - Table 3-6). In the following sections, the
ratings of perceptions of language skills are presented as, for example ‘1-2-3’ indicating ‘rating 1
at pre-non-MALL, rating 2 at pre-MALL, rating 3 at post-MALL’.

Table 5-3: Participants’ perception of English skills pre-non-MALL, pre-MALL and post-
MALL compared with researcher’s perception (in brackets)

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<th>Speaking</th>
<th></th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th></th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th></th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-non-MALL</td>
<td>Pre-MALL</td>
<td>Post-MALL</td>
<td>Pre-non-MALL</td>
<td>Pre-MALL</td>
<td>Post-MALL</td>
<td>Pre-non-MALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rina</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liddy</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Speaking**

Table 5-4 (a duplicate of Table 3-5) provides the definition of each rating value used by the researcher for evaluating speaking skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to communicate, uses occasional isolated words (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>communicates using memorised utterances, interweaves with L1 (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to converse face-to-face on familiar topics (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to communicate effectively on topics relating to particular interest, ease in speaking (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants’ ratings of their speaking skills could be grouped into two: those who perceived that progressive change and improvement had occurred; and those who perceived that changes only occurred during MALL.

**Perceived change occurred progressively**

- *Participants who perceived progressive changes in their speaking skills: 1-2-3 (Ally and Kay) and 2-3-4 (Rina)*

  Ally and Kay perceived their ratings as getting higher because they could see the improvements that they had made since their participation in non-MALL through to MALL. The researcher rated Ally and Kay’s speaking skill similarly, because they demonstrated that they had gained more confidence. They were able to speak beyond the topic and about themselves using pre-formulated answers and some of the vocabulary they learnt in their interactions. The researcher rated Rina as 3-3-4 as, at the initial stage of participation in the research, she demonstrated high confidence in speaking, was not shy of making mistakes, and was able to communicate using the basic vocabulary at her disposal. Rina remained at the same scale throughout non-MALL, in the researcher’s evaluation, but improved in her own. At post-MALL, all participants in this group (and the researcher) rated higher, as they perceived improvement when speaking. They spoke more English, could string more words into sentences, demonstrated ease and even higher confidence than previously, interwove fewer L1 words into their speech (Ally and Kay), and experienced less shyness and anxiety (Kay).
Perceived change occurred only during MALL

- Participants who perceived that changes in their speaking skills only occurred during MALL: 3-3-4 (Liddy and Rose)

  The researcher rated at the same levels as they did Liddy and Rose's speaking skills. This was based on these learners’ fluency and confidence levels due to prior exposure to English through their workplace environment and the completion of AMEP course (only Rose). Liddy and Rose were familiar with most of the topics being discussed up to pre-MALL, thus perceiving that not much difference had occurred in their speaking skill.

All five participants had already had some form of confidence in speaking before entering the MALL sessions as they had already progressed through non-MALL. During Steps 1 and 2, all participants became more comfortable with the learning environment, the researcher and each other. The lower confident participants became more willing to speak up and ask questions, did not worry about making mistakes and were more open in offering opinions. During Step 3, speaking and discussion occurred when participants worked collaboratively with a partner because they would naturally try to solve issues or questions themselves before bringing them to the researcher’s attention.

Pronunciation was a common issue for these participants (except for Liddy) as some English sounds do not exist in their natural phonetics. Another issue that persisted for these participants was a feeling of anxiety when speaking with other English speakers in general, and Australian English speakers in particular. The participants found it problematic to understand and/or ‘catch’ what Australian English speakers were saying. The MALL activities provided exposure to a variety of sample dialogues in videos and audios covering wide-ranging topics about Australian society, and also the actors’ pronunciation varied. The activities also provided additional vocabulary as well and pronunciation exercises. MALL sessions not only provided exposure and familiarity, as but developed the speaking and comprehension skills required in ‘real’ and deep conversations. Participants became more likely to: attempt the more difficult levels in the app; use other language apps for more variety; watch English language videos and TV shows; communicate with more English speakers, especially Australian English speakers communitywide; and seize the opportunity to speak English whenever it existed. MALL sessions became one of the learning spaces for participants that provided additional English exposure and new knowledge, particularly in vocabulary. Participating in the programs at the community centre helped increase participants’ vocabulary knowledge, gave them opportunities for practice with the goal of achieving higher conversational skills and fluency levels, and somewhat helped prepare them for social interaction beyond the community centre.
**Listening**

Table 5-5 (duplicate of Table 3-6) provides the definition of each rating value used by the researcher for listening skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>no understanding of spoken language, limited to occasional isolated words (very low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension limited to memorised utterances in areas of immediate need (low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations; miscommunication can occur with both non-complex and complex issues; does not understand Australian English speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (average comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand routine social demands, conversations about work requirements, and discussions on concrete topics related to a particular interest; miscommunication can occur with complex issues; have some difficulty understanding Australian speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing or explanation; can often detect emotional overtone; shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding (very high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants’ rating of their perceptions of their listening skills can be grouped into participants who perceived that progressive change had occurred from pre-non-MALL onwards, and participants who perceived changes only occurred during MALL.

**Perceived change occurred progressively**

- **Participants who perceived progressive change occurred 1-2-3 (Ally), 2-3-4 (Liddy and Rose)**

  The researcher’s ratings were similar in these cases to the participants’ ratings. Ally experienced significant change in her listening skills where she started off in non-MALL with ‘very low comprehension’ to ‘low comprehension’ and then progressed to ‘somewhat good’ post-MALL. All three participants perceived progressive changes in their listening skills because their ‘listening to English’ activities increased when they started participating in non-MALL, and continued through to MALL.

**Perceived change occurred only during MALL**

- **Participants who perceived changes only occurred during MALL 2-2-3 (Kay), 3-3-4 (Rina)**

  The researcher’s ratings were similar to the participants’ ratings. Participants perceived that substantial change in their listening skills only occurred during MALL, while changes
during non-MALL were not as significant. From the researcher’s observation, all participants experienced change, and this was most evident with low proficiency participants throughout their participation. For some, however, the skill level remained within the same scale at certain points of their participation.

Participants considered that paying attention and listening to the researcher talking (delivering the planned lesson for the day, providing explanations or descriptions, encouraging speaking and eliciting ideas and opinions from the group as a whole) were *listening activities*. The researcher communicated key information (in verbal form, not much writing) to everyone in the group - participants, regulars and newcomers. The clearer the information, the greater the likelihood that participants would learn from it. This happened in both non-MALL and *Steps 1 and 2 of MALL*. Participants’ listening activities increased considerably in MALL with the addition of the app activities and exercises in *Step 3*. The app was designed with specific *listening practice* exercises for every topic. These exercises provided ideas for ways of speaking, pronouncing things and responding in conversations and further built participants’ vocabulary bank. Improved listening and comprehension meant participants could provide more meaningful responses in conversation. A speaker could gradually (but very slowly, for some) become more fluent and engaged.

Participants’ listening skills improved as was demonstrated in their interactions within the group. They were able to comprehend what they heard more than previously and were able to provide the appropriate response when needed. These improved interactions developed gradually, depending on the complexity of the conversation topics, and each participant’s experience relative to the topic and her individual capability. Higher level confidence participants spoke more (Liddy, Rose, Rina), while the others spoke less as they listened and at the same time tried to comprehend what they heard. Some responded appropriately, while some were too shy and thus remained silent. The listening practice was critical for participants because it reinforced previously learnt material, built familiarity and confidence, and help improved pronunciation skills.

**Reading**

Table 5-6 (a duplicate of Table 3-3) provides the definition used by the researcher for each rating value for reading skills.

The participants’ rating of their reading skills can be grouped into: one who perceived progressive changes throughout her participation; those who perceived that change only occurred during MALL; and one who perceived no change at all.
Table 5-6: Definitions for Likert-type scale rating reading skill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to read (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>struggles to read in general (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to read non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceived change occurred progressively

- **Participant who perceived progressive changes 1-2-3 (Ally)**

  Ally perceived her reading skill as changing progressively throughout her participation in non-MALL and MALL. Compared to her previous encounter with the English language that had been brief and negligible, the exposure Ally received and the attention she paid to reading in English, and the challenges faced in the process seemed remarkable to her. The researcher rated Ally's reading skill as 2-2-3 because she was able to read (though she struggled), and her skill seemed consistent during non-MALL, but improved during MALL. Ally was highly literate in L1, but had to learn how to read in English. In non-MALL, the challenge for Ally's reading was to familiarise herself with the sounds of the Roman alphabet and read sentences while at the same time comprehending the individual meaning of words in context. In Step 3 of MALL, these challenges were augmented to include reading and comprehending of information, instructions, and the contents of the app. However, Ally's understanding and comprehension were aided and made more effective by the audio and visual features of the app. Ally perceived these experiences had progressively improved her reading skill.

Perceived change occurred only during MALL

- **Participants who perceived changes only occurred during MALL 2-2-3 (Rina, Liddy, Rose)**

  The researcher's rating was similar to these participants' ratings. Rina, Liddy and Rose perceived that changes in their reading skill only occurred during MALL because they considered the reading activities in non-MALL as minimal. All participants had developed their reading skill but their comprehension when reading complex English texts was limited, (Liddy and Rose's reading comprehension skills were at a higher level than Rina's as they had post-migration formal adult English education and work experience). Even though all three participants were confident speakers, they were poor readers, and their reading skill levels were similar to Kay's. During Step 3 of MALL, by using the app, the participants'
reading activities were increased, thus increasing the chances of improved comprehension of what was being read.

No perceived change

- **Participant who perceived no change at all 2-2-2 (Kay)**

The researcher rated Kay's reading skill as 2-2-3. Kay had previously learnt English; therefore, she had developed a basic English reading skill. Kay perceived that there was no change in her reading skill because, although she was able to read non-complex texts, she still struggled when reading complex texts, even at the end of MALL. The researcher observed that Kay's reading ability was limited to being able to read English texts and pronounce English words using previously learnt phonetics, but her comprehension ability was limited to simple sentences and texts at a beginner level of English. In Step 3 of MALL, even though she was still struggling, Kay was able to read and comprehend the instructions and content on the app and used the Transcript feature of the app. The audio and visual feature of the app and the increased amount of reading helped Kay to get the practice needed to comprehend more of the app contents.

All five participants were literate in L1 and each was a developed L1 reader. Using these prior skills they applied some of their reading strategies when reading English. The app provided additional facilities through the visual and audio, transcript/read-along and recording functions, where participants could use these to adjust their developed L1 to English, which contributed to the changes and the long-term development of their English language skills.

**Writing**

Table 5-7 (duplicate of Table 3-4) provides the researcher's definition for each rating value for writing skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to write (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>able to copy simple words and sentences (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to copy non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No participants perceived change in their writing skills throughout non-MALL and MALL (2-2-2 for Ally; 3-3-3 for Liddy, Kay, Rose and Rina), while the researcher rated all participants as 3-3-
3. These language learning sessions were not intended to include writing activities; however, since the participants were all literate in L1, during non-MALL and Steps 1 and 2 of MALL, and of their own accord, they copied words and sentences from the whiteboard to their notebooks and made their own notes in L1. In Step 3 of the MALL session, participants did not take notes as they were occupied with using the tablet and working on app activities and exercises. The researcher rated all participants’ writing skills as already at 3 at pre-non-MALL, and as remaining the same at post-MALL. Participants’ writing skill remained the same as their writing ability was not developed as part of the program. Participants were not able to write words or sentences confidently when these were dictated to them, as they did not know or were unsure of the correct spelling, and they were not capable of producing written sentences or paragraphs on their own.

The benefits of Step 3 as a component of MALL was that no written work or note-taking was required of participants as all information, instruction and content needed for vocabulary learning was accessible through the app. Once the app was downloaded on the tablet, participants could use it anytime and anywhere. Participants could focus on using the app for practicing speaking, listening and pronunciation and to develop the conversational skills required in everyday interaction.

5.2.3 Summary of analysis

The participants in this case study experienced hybrid vocabulary learning, which combined 4 to 5 MALL sessions in addition to the previous 4 to 5 non-MALL sessions. The issues that arose from participants’ experience in learning vocabulary in MALL were grouped into eight themes: literacy and education background; pronunciation; confidence; meaningful content; instructor role; learner grouping; learning distractions; and features of tablet and app (Figure 5-15).

The participants used their L1 literacy skills when acquiring vocabulary (for example, making notes in L1 during Step 1 and Step 2), and they applied their knowledge of reading in L1 to strategies for reading English texts. The requirements for reading were minimal during non-MALL, and during Step 1 and Step 2 of MALL. However, during Step 3 of MALL, the ability to read and comprehend basic English was essential for participants to attempt the beginner level activities and exercises on the app. Reading English texts was not an everyday activity for participants, thus the app provided some challenges as well as exposure and practice.

Participants’ spoken fluency varied and was limited to basic language commonly used for interpersonal communication. Some participants already had high basic fluency entering the program, so attending the conversational sessions was a means for improving their
conversational skills, and avoiding a decline in their English skills. For the low fluency speakers, who mostly lacked confidence, attending the sessions was regarded as an opportunity to overcome the shyness that inhibited them from speaking while at the same time developing and building their confidence.

MALL helped participants’ build their vocabulary as it expanded the size of their word bank by using both the traditional teacher-centred approach and the use of a mobile device and app. The whole approach provided English exposure and practice that helped expand participants’ vocabulary knowledge, with a digital repository that offered more word choices to use in conversations, developed pronunciation skills, and supported participants developing confidence. Listening to dialogue with the authentic accents of Australian English speakers prepared participants with experience of what they could expect to encounter when interacting outside the group (the researcher was not an L1 Australian English speaker). Confidence developed and this created a rewarding feeling and pride in progress made, encouraging participants to keep improving.

The researcher had dual roles in MALL. She operated as the teacher in Step 1 and Step 2, in a somewhat similar way to the non-MALL teacher-centred approach. She was a facilitator in Step 3, in a student-centred approach. The scope of planning and preparation for the MALL sessions therefore involved more work than for non-MALL. Step 3 added the use of the app on the tablet, which changed the dynamics and atmosphere of the sessions. The app encouraged participants to solve problems. The vocabulary learning took place when participants performed the in-app activities and exercises, especially while working in pairs. Although using the tablet encouraged independence, the researcher’s presence in the room remained critical as a source of information and guidance for participants.

By the end of Case Study 2, which included hybrid learning experiences, participants fell into three groups and perceived the following:

- When their speaking, listening and reading skills improved progressively from pre-non-MALL to post-non-MALL/pre-MALL to post-MALL, this was because:
  - Their speaking experience in non-MALL was an improvement as they (Ally and Kay) gained confidence, overcame fear, shyness and nervousness (for example, speaking in front of a big group) and had more ideas and words to use for interaction than before. By post-MALL, these participants perceived greater speaking improvement, as a result of the learning experiences. This was then reinforced in Step 3 in MALL, aided by using the tablet and app. Here, the participants engaged in pronunciation
and listening activities and practices, with additional speaking time when they worked in pairs, and they also had further interaction with the researcher.

- Their *listening* to English activities increased throughout their non-MALL and MALL participation. In non-MALL, their listening comprehension ability (within the prescribed topics) was improved along with their vocabulary and they had more ideas to use in interactions. Their listening activities were multiplied and enriched in MALL with *Step 1* and *Step 2*, and also with the audio, video, quizzes and pronunciation exercises accessed through the use of the tablet and app in *Step 3*.

- Their *reading* activities had increased substantially from the usual baseline. At non-MALL, and *Step 1* and *Step 2* of MALL, the reading sources were from the whiteboard, worksheets, or printed materials such as the community newspaper. In *Step 3*, the reading sources were the contents of the app. The reading material from the app was multi-topic, interactive and enriched with video, audio, animation, text, and pictures.

  - When their skills only improved during MALL, this was because:
    - Their fluency and *speaking* confidence and their *listening* and comprehension ability were already at high level basic communication during non-MALL, so they were familiar with most of the topics being discussed. In MALL they perceived their learning and *reading* experiences were enhanced and reinforced with: more varied topics and vocabulary in *Steps 1 and 2*; the contents, activities and exercises in *Step 3* that were interactive and multimedia, enabled by the tablet and the app; and collaborative working with a partner.

  - When their skills remained the same throughout non-MALL through to post-MALL, this was because:
    - Participants perceived changes were small and took place within the same scale. Some participants rated their reading skills as the same, while all five participants rated their writing skills unchanged from pre-non-MALL to post-MALL.

### 5.3 Summary of Case Study 2

This chapter documented the results and analyses of data gathered from Case Study 2 participants (Ally, Kay, Liddy, Rina, and Rose), who also participated in non-MALL. These data included demographics about their familiarity with computer and mobile devices and their everyday uses of these devices, followed by their experiences while undertaking the MALL sessions. Figure 5-15 shows the data gathering of Case Study 2 (Layer 1), the reporting (Layer 2), eight themes emerging from the analyses of the case study (Layer 3), and the three broader
factors that emerged as the impact on these migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition during a hybrid of the non-MALL and MALL learning environments (Layer 4).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5-15: Data gathering, reporting and themes and factors that emerged from the analyses of Case Study 2**

The three factors that impacted migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition were:

1) **Vocabulary learning environment** refers to the setting where vocabulary is taught to and learnt by participants. The themes under this factor were: meaningful content (only relevant and meaningful content should be taught as participants are adult learners); learner grouping (participants working as individual, in a pair, or in a big group); and instructor as facilitator role (planning and execution of combined student-centred and teacher-centred MALL sessions).

2) **Learner characteristics** refers to the backgrounds of individual learners as adult learners. These characteristics included the participant’s literacy and education background, pronunciation, distraction issues, and individual confidence.

3) **Technology** refers to the use of the tablet and app as the tool for enhancing participants’ vocabulary learning through interactive activities and exercises.

These factors are discussed further in Chapter 7. Chapter 6 reports on the results and analyses of Case Study 3.
CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY 3: Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) only environment

Five new migrant women (Ika, Yuni, Ami, Li, and Midah) participated in Case Study 3 which was conducted after Case Study 2 (Figure 6-1).

The MALL sessions, which were held in the weekly slot of the conversational English program at the community centre, were attended by participants and non-participants (regular attendees of the conversational English program). The characteristics of the participants of Case Study 3 were: new migrant women attending the conversational English program at the community centre; never experienced learning in any non-MALL and/or MALL environments; and English was not their L1.

Each participant had two interviews with the researcher, one before (pre-MALL) and one after attending 4 to 5 MALL sessions (post-MALL). Participants were interviewed one-on-one, except for one participant who preferred to have another person present to assist in interpreting. Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes.
6.1 Case Study 3 – Results

6.1.1 Demographics

Table 6-1 shows the demographic information for the participants of Case Study 3 (as for previous case studies, pseudonyms were used to protect participants’ confidentiality).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Years living in Australia</th>
<th>Residency status pre-migration</th>
<th>Residency status in Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lived in Malaysia</td>
<td>Temporary (skilled worker) visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuni</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Refugee in Malaysia</td>
<td>Temporary (protection) visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ami</td>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Lived in Japan</td>
<td>Temporary (student) visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lived in China</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midah</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Lived in Malaysia</td>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants can be grouped into younger (Ika, Yuni and Ami) and older (Li and Midah) age range categories. Midah had lived in Australia for 24 years at the time of the research. The average number of years the other participants had lived in Australia at the time of the study was 3.4 years. The participants’ migration backgrounds were mixed, entering Australia through the humanitarian visa program for refugees, the family reunion visa, or the student’s spouse visa. All participants were married and lived with their husbands and children. Their residential status included both temporary and permanent residency.

6.1.2 Participants

Li

Li, her husband and her stepson came from China and had lived in Australia for seven years. Since they arrived, Li’s husband worked as a chef at a restaurant while her stepson completed high school, went to university and worked at a chemical plant. Li had been working at a Chinese restaurant as a kitchen-hand for the past five years. Li and her husband’s only child was four years old when this study was conducted. Li said, even though she lived for many years in Australia, she spoke very little English because there was no need for her to speak English at work or at home.

During the pre-MALL and post-MALL interviews, another Mandarin speaking participant, whose English was a little better than Li’s, helped interpret for her. Li’s husband or her stepson usually helped interpret for her when she went to see the doctor, the pharmacy or to attend to official...
matters. Li realised ever since her son started kindergarten that, to become independent, she needed to be able to speak English. She was not able to communicate adequately with her son’s teacher, and also could not understand what being said most of the time. Li wanted to improve her speaking skills so that she could communicate better and be able to help her son with his homework when he started primary school. Li also was thinking of finding another job if she could improve her English until it was “good enough”.

AMI

Ami and her husband came to Australia from Japan 18 months earlier with their 3½ year old son and 5 month-old daughter. They came under the student visa as Ami’s husband was studying at a local university. Ami and her husband completed their bachelor’s degree in Japan, where Ami majored in Agriculture. She would have liked to use her qualification to find a job in Australia but was hindered due to financial restraints, the English language proficiency requirement, and her visa status. Both Ami and her husband would like to apply for permanent residency and eventually Australian citizenship.

Ami came to the conversational English sessions because she wanted to improve her spoken English. She felt that her English was not good enough because she had problems when speaking with Australian English speakers. Sometimes she thought that they spoke too fast; other times, she did not understand what they were saying. The other reasons for attending the sessions were the flexibility of the program that allowed her to bring along her 2-year-old daughter with her, and the sessions were free of charge. Ami said that in the other places that she went for English classes, “... my daughter is not welcome because she is too hyper compared to other children ... Here they give her toys to play and she can play with other kids.” Regarding the duration of the sessions, Ami said “The time is not too short or too long ... enough for me because my daughter cannot stay at one place for a long time.”

MIDAH

Midah was a Malaysian Malay who had lived in Australia for 24 years. Her husband was a Malay from Christmas Island and a citizen of Australia, while Midah was a permanent resident. His English level was of an Australian English speaker, but he spoke Malay to Midah and their 10-year-old daughter. The interviews with Midah were conducted in Malay because Midah was not comfortable speaking English.

Midah attended AMEP briefly, but she dropped out because she felt that the classes were very long, the teacher spoke very fast, and she had to learn a lot in a short period of time. Midah thought the duration of the conversational English session was adequate for her as she did not
like to stay out of the house for too long, and she did not think she could “take in too much” at any one time. Midah’s motivation for attending the conversational English sessions was just to have a break from her everyday routine at home. Other than that, she said she wanted to practice her spoken English and meet other women that she had become friends with through the program. Midah also did not feel any pressure because everyone had the same purpose for attending the session and she did not have to compete with anyone.

Midah was naturally a shy person even among her Malay speaking cohort. She had very limited interaction with Australian English speakers. Midah did communicate as needed with her daughter’s teachers; however, she would require her husband or a friend to accompany her when seeing the doctor or going to government offices. When she was younger, Midah had some experience working in Malaysia but, since moving to Australia, she had never worked.

**IKA**

The interviews with Ika were conducted in Malay because she could not understand spoken English well. Ika came to Australia from Malaysia two years previously under the family reunion visa when she married her husband. Her husband was also a Malaysian Malay, who had been working in Australia for several years as a Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) worker in the mining industry. They had an 18 months-old daughter at the time Ika participated in this research. Since arriving in Australia, Ika’s time was spent mostly at home with her child. She did not have any other family in Australia but she had a small circle of friends from the Malay community.

Ika only ran errands with her husband when her husband was home. Since Ika mostly stayed home, she hardly conversed with English speakers and was nervous about answering the phone. Ika came to the conversational sessions because she realised that she needed to learn English to become independent when her husband was away. The flexibility of the program, where she could bring her daughter along, helped enormously as she did not need to find a babysitter. Ika also wanted to be involved with her daughter’s education when she started school. Ika planned to take her driver’s license test so she could do errands and drive her daughter to school.

**YUNI**

Yuni came to Australia two years previously with her husband and two daughters, aged 6 and 10, as refugees. They travelled from Malaysia to Kupang, Indonesia, with another participant of this study (Rina). They then travelled by boat from Kupang where they were caught on Australian waters and sent to the Christmas Island detention centre for a few months. They were then sent to another detention centre in Darwin for few more months before they were
allowed to move to Perth and integrate with Australian society. Yuni had also had another child since arriving in Australia. At the time of the interviews, Yuni and her family were still under the Temporary Protection visa and received help and support from the Australian Red Cross. Under this visa, there were some restrictions imposed on them, such as not being allowed to work or receive government benefits until they were granted permanent residency.

Yuni and her husband took turns caring for their children when one of them went to English classes at public libraries or community centres. Since her children were going to school in Australia, she realised the importance of her and her husband being able to speak English, at least at a basic level. Yuni believed that English was important for work, children's school, government, housing, health, and so forth. Even though Yuni learnt English when she was in primary and secondary school in Indonesia, she could not remember much of it because it was not important for her to be good at the subject at that time. Her purpose in coming to the conversational group was to practice speaking English so that she could communicate better, especially with her daughters’ teachers. Yuni spoke English confidently, even though not very fluently, and with limited vocabulary. Yuni was one of the group members who contributed a lot in discussions and was always willing to help other members in the group.

6.1.3 Familiarity with computers and mobile devices

Participants had some familiarity with desktop personal computers (PCs), laptops, smartphones or tablets, having them in their homes but not necessarily using or owning these devices (Table 6-2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Desktop PC</th>
<th>Laptop</th>
<th>Mobile phones (Smartphone)</th>
<th>Tablet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ami</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midah</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuni</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3~</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Did not personally use  ~Shared with children

Only Midah had a desktop computer in her home but it was used by her husband and daughter. Her husband used it for email, work purposes and paying bills. Her daughter used it for homework activities, watching movies, playing games, and for general access to the Internet (browsing/information searching and social media). Midah did not use the computer because there was not the need for her to do so, thus she did not know how to use it.
Li, Ami, Ika and Yuni had laptops in their homes that they rarely used personally. Li had had laptops in her home for 10 years, Ami and Ika for 8 years, and Yuni for 2 years. Generally, the participants’ husbands owned and used the laptop for paying bills, browsing and information searching, social media or to access official websites (Medicare, job searching, and children’s school communication websites). In Li’s home, the laptops were owned by her husband and stepson. Ami’s husband used the laptop mainly for university work, while Yuni’s husband used it for job seeking.

**Participants’ uses of smartphones and tablets**

All five participants owned a smartphone (on average for 2.4 years) and a tablet (on average 2.8 years) and used them for varying purposes (Table 6-3). Li, Ami, Ika and Yuni shared their tablet with their small children, mostly for playing games and watching YouTube videos. Though Midah was not sharing her tablet with anyone, she only used it for watching YouTube videos, so did not explore other uses of her tablet fully. The participants had different language preferences for their smartphones and tablets. Li used Mandarin, Ami used English, and Midah, Ika and Yuni used Malay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6-3: Participants’ uses of smartphones and tablets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Device</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice calls</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video calls</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texting/SMS (Short Message Service)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instant Messaging (iMessage)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use apps (general, school, online accounts)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social media</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet browsing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watch videos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take pictures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen to music</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play games</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*S = Smartphone   T = Tablet*

Participants used their smartphone or tablet, or a combination of both, to make local/international calls and messaging. They used the mobile data purchased through their mobile plan and also connected to Wi-Fi. Participants texted on their smartphone through these
mobile plans when they themselves were mobile and, when there was Wi-Fi, they texted and make video calls using apps such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber and Telegram.

Ami, Midah and Yuni used school communication and information system apps (e.g. Skoolbag and COOLSIS) on their smartphones to communicate with their children’s school teachers and administrators. Ami, Midah, Ika and Yuni used social media accounts such as Facebook on both their smartphones and tablets. Ami was the only participant who used the Google map app and email on her smartphone.

Ami, Ika and Yuni used both their smartphones and their tablets for internet browsing. They read the current news about their home countries, sometimes they looked for cooking ideas and recipes, and sometimes they browsed for information they needed. All participants used both their smartphone and tablet to watch online videos through the pre-installed YouTube app. Li and Midah did not know how to use the Internet, but they used the YouTube app to search for the videos they wanted to watch.

Smartphones, being smaller, more portable and lightweight, were preferred by participants for taking photos. They also perceived that smartphones produced better picture quality than the tablet. Li, Ami and Yuni liked to listen to music using earphones with either their smartphone or tablet. All participants except Midah shared their tablet with their young children, and allowed them to play games, even playing with them sometimes.

6.1.4 Participants’ L1/L2

English has become an added language that participants feel they have to learn to be able to communicating with the wider Australian community. As all participants were monolingual, English became their L2 (Table 6-4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name</th>
<th>L1 Language</th>
<th>L1 Script</th>
<th>L2 Language</th>
<th>L2 Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Logographic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ami</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Logo-phonetic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midah</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuni</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Roman Alphabet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ L1 literacy level

Li and Ami were *non-alphabet literate learners* as they were literate in a language written in a non-alphabetic script. Li only completed Grade 5 of primary school but she could read and write non-complex text in her L1 (Mandarin). Ami completed her education up to university level in her L1 (Japanese). In the conversational sessions, Li and Ami made notes in their L1 in their notebooks or on the worksheets that were given to them. Li’s notes were short, while Ami made extensive and detailed notes. These notes were about the meaning, pronunciation and syllables of a vocabulary item, phrase or statement that was discussed in the sessions. They would use their notes as a reference when needed.

Midah, Ika and Yuni were *Roman alphabet literate learners* as both the Malaysian Malay and Indonesian Malay languages use the Roman alphabet in their script. They copied what was written on the whiteboard into their notebooks fairly quickly as they were familiar with the Roman alphabet. They could read English texts, whether simple or complex, using the phonetics; however, they did not always comprehend and understand what was read.

Participants’ language skills

Participants rated their L1 and L2 skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing using symbols (*thumbs-up* and *thumbs-down*) as responses, converted into a Likert-type scale: 

- 1: "not good at all"
- 2: "not very good"
- 3: "somewhat good"
- 4: "good"
- 5: "very good"

All five participants said that they only spoke their native language (L1) until they moved to Australia.

Li’s L1 was Mandarin and L2 was English (Figure 6-2). Li only completed Grade 5 of primary school in China. Li could read and write basic Mandarin. She said she had not done much reading and writing since she left school. Li rated her L1 reading and writing skills as ‘somewhat good’ and her speaking and listening skills as ‘very good’.

Li said she briefly learned English in school but could not remember much as she never used it again. Li rated her writing skill as ‘not very good’ because she could write the Roman alphabet but was not sure of the sounds that they made. Li rated her reading, speaking and listening skills as ‘not good at all.’ Li could recognise some road signs or simple words like *ball*, *book*, *can*, *go*, *I*, and *school*, but she could not read English texts, whether short or long.
Ami’s L1 was Japanese and her L2 was English (Figure 6-3). Ami spoke Japanese with her family and friends. Ami and her husband made a rule for their children that they only speak Japanese with each other because they want their children to not lose the ability to speak Japanese. Ami rated all her four skills in Japanese as ‘very good’. Ami used the Japanese script. These scripts encompass Kanji (logographic), Hiragana and Katakana (syllabic), and Rōmaji (alphabetic).

For her L2 (English), Ami rated her writing skill as ‘good’, which was the highest among the four skills. She rated her reading and listening skills as ‘somewhat good’, while her speaking skill was rated as ‘not very good’. Ami said she was not confident when speaking with Australian English speakers because she thought that sometimes they spoke too fast for her or she found it hard to understand what they were saying.
Midah’s L1 was Malay and her L2 was English (Figure 6-4). Midah spoke Malay with her family and friends with some English words used sparingly. Midah rated her L1 reading and writing skills as ‘good’ and her speaking and listening skills as ‘very good.’ Midah completed primary and secondary education in Malaysia, with English as a second language subject.

![Figure 6-4: Midah’s L1 and L2 skills](image)

Midah rated her English writing skill as ‘somewhat good’. She could quickly copy what was written on the whiteboard, and she could write quickly if she already knew the spelling of words. Midah rated her reading, speaking and listening skills as ‘not very good.’ She read very little English material. She said it was hard for her to understand when someone was speaking too fast, and she could not respond appropriately because she did not catch what the other person was talking about, and most of the time she did not know what response to give. This was even harder for Midah since she has a shy personality, where it is difficult for her to be assertive and ask the other person for clarification, or to repeat themselves.

Ika’s L1 was Malay and her L2 was English (Figure 6-5). She rated all her L1 skills as ‘good’. For her L2, Ika rated her writing skill as ‘not very good’, while her reading, speaking and listening skills were ‘not good at all’. Like Midah, Ika had a completed her schooling primary and secondary levels.
English is taught as a second language in Malaysian schools. Ika did not remember what she had learnt, but she knew basic English words and was able to read basic children's story books. Ika was able to read complex English text based on the Malay phonetics, but might not able to pronounce the words properly and might not understand the text being read. Ika was too shy to speak so she would sit quietly during group discussions. When asked to give her opinions she spoke very softly.

Yuni’s L1 was Malay and her L2 was English (Figure 6-6). She rated her L1 reading and writing skills as ‘good’ while her speaking and listening skills were ‘very good’.

For her L2, Yuni rated all four skills as ‘not very good.’ When Yuni was younger, she lived with her family in a village in Indonesia where she went to government public schools. Yuni completed her primary and high school education, but she said there was no pressure for her to get good grades. This was because at that time she thought that she would remain in the village after she finished school, which was the norm for her family. Also, her family did not have the...
money to send her for higher education. Yuni learnt English as a subject in school but she did not remember much as she had never thought it was important to be proficient. Yuni remembered that the only people she knew in her village or nearby city who understood and used English were the teachers who taught it in her school.

6.1.5 Participants’ English background

Prior to migration to Australia, all five participants had experience of formal education in L1 in their home countries. Their education was provided by the government through their public schools. Participants’ exposure to English language could be traced back to before and after they migrated to Australia (Table 6-5).

Table 6-5: Participants’ pre- and post-migration English exposure and post-migration English usage opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Midah</th>
<th>Ika</th>
<th>Yuni</th>
<th>Ami</th>
<th>Li</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-migration English education</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-migration English education/exposure</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-migration English usage opportunities</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pre-migration English education* refers to the type of English education the participants received prior to migrating to Australia. Midah, Ika and Yuni were ranked as *high* because they received English education that was embedded in their primary and high school curricula (Midah and Ika in Malaysia, Yuni in Indonesia). However, they never had the need to use English outside the classroom. Li and Ami were considered as having *limited pre-migration English education*. Li received basic English education only to Grade 5, which enabled her to recognise and write using the Roman alphabet. Ami took short English courses in Japan, in preparation for coming to Australia and, being highly educated, she was able to quickly read and write in English.

All five participants were considered as having *limited post-migration English education/exposure* because they had not enrolled in any formal English education, such as the AMEP. Midah and Li were eligible to enroll in AMEP but they opted not to, whereas Ami, Ika and Yuni were not eligible due to their visa status. All five participants had only received non-formal English education from the conversational English program at the centre.
Post-migration English usage opportunities refers to participants’ opportunities to use English in their everyday lives. Table 6-6 shows whether participants used the opportunities within the contexts listed.

Table 6-6: Participants’ opportunities to use English post-migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ami</th>
<th>Yuni</th>
<th>Li</th>
<th>Midah</th>
<th>Ika</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversational English program</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical settings such as making and attending appointments with GPs, specialists, and midwives</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government offices, Centrelink, banks</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public places such as the grocery stores, café, libraries, on the bus, at the post office</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s school such as primary and high schools, and playgroups</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-migration English usage opportunities</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ Use English

- Did not use English at all

* Needs interpreter

= Not applicable

Participants in the conversational English program had considerable opportunities to use English by interacting with their peers, the researcher and others within the environment. Among the five participants, only Yuni and Ami were proactive learners because they were willing to contribute to discussions, ask questions and assist their partners in group or pair work. In the workplace context, Li was the only participant who could have had the opportunity to use English, but her work environment used Mandarin for communication. Li worked in the kitchen among other Mandarin speaking colleagues thus there was no need for her to speak English.

In the medical and government offices context, only Ami and Yuni would see and interact with doctors themselves. Li, Midah and Ika needed someone to come with them for appointments and act as interpreter and for support. Li usually tried to get appointments with a Mandarin speaking doctor, while Midah and Ika sought Malay speaking doctors. They said that they were scared to see English speaking doctors because they would not understand what the doctors were saying.

In the public places context, only Ami and Yuni were comfortable enough to engage in conversations with strangers, with Yuni having more confidence than Ami. In the children’s
school context, Li, Ami, Midah and Yuni had at least some interaction with their children’s teachers. They wanted to be involved with their children’s education by being able to communicate with the teachers, the schools and the children themselves. Li usually had basic interactions with her son’s teacher. Other than saying ‘Hi’ or ‘Good morning’, she would ask whether her son had been good or whether he took a nap during rest time. Ami said her son’s teacher spoke very fast, thus she had only basic interactions with the teacher. Ami’s husband communicated with the teacher using e-mail. When Ami dropped off and picked up her son from school, she engaged in small talk with her son’s friends’ mothers who were also second language speakers from India and China. Midah communicated using simple English with her daughter’s teacher; most of the time, her daughter helped interpret for her.

Each participant’s level of post-migration English usage opportunity was based on the number of contexts the participants had experience in dealing with. As such, Ami and Yuni were considered to have had limited English usage opportunities, while Li, Midah and Ika had fewer English usage opportunities.

6.1.6 Participants’ English learning strategy

Participants used various strategies in learning and improving their English. These included using dictionaries, watching TV, and attending community groups.

Using dictionary

When in sessions, all five participants would ask the researcher when they had any questions or when there were words that confused them. At home, when these situations occurred, they used a physical or pocket electronic dictionary. They used the dictionary to find the English translation of a word in L1. They would also use the dictionary to find out the meaning of an English word in L1. Li owned a Mandarin-English-Mandarin dictionary that she regularly used. Sometimes, Li would just ask her husband, her adult stepson or her stepson’s wife. Ami, Ika and Yuni used Google Translate that they had downloaded onto their smartphone. Ami used English/Japanese, Ika used English/Malay, while Yuni used English/Indonesian. Midah had a Malay/English dictionary at her home. She hardly used it because she mainly depended on her husband and 10-year-old daughter to translate for her. Depending on what was more convenient, Ami either used the dictionary app or just asked her husband. In contrast, Yuni’s husband depended on her to find meanings of English words in Indonesian, or the translation of his L1 words. Yuni used the dictionary app on her smartphone for these purposes. Yuni was more literate and her English was much better than her husband’s.
Watching TV

Li, Ami and Yuni watched a lot of children’s show on TV as they had small children. Their children picked up the English language fairly quickly. All three women agreed that watching these shows helped them practice pronunciation because the shows used a lot of repetition of words, and the characters spoke clearly and articulately. Watching television was also beneficial to them because they knew what their children were watching and listening to, thus they had things in common to talk about with their children. Ami said she also liked to watch the news, cooking shows and movies, when possible, with English subtitles. Midah liked to watch cooking shows and Malay TV shows, and she usually watched the six o’clock news and football games with her husband.

Attending community groups

Attending the conversational English sessions was a way for all five participants to learn English skills, specifically speaking and listening. The women also took part in programs and activities organised by other community centres and public libraries. Within this community centre, there were other programs that they attended that offered opportunities to interact with other second language speakers, and also Australian English speakers. Examples of community programs include term-long programs, such as computer classes and arts and crafts; or one-off programs, such as cooking classes and excursions (e.g. a bus trip to the Sculpture by the Sea at Cottesloe Beach).

6.1.7 Participants’ experience with MALL

Case Study 3 participants underwent similar MALL learning sessions as Case Study 2 participants, with the sessions organised into Step 1 – Pre-teach vocabulary, Step 2 – Drilling, and Step 3 – App activity and exercise using the Think English! app.

Li

Li recalled the topic Describing people because the vocabulary that was discussed included basic words that she found useful. For example, Li compared her hair to her son’s, “My son’s hair is spiky and my hair is straight.” Other words that Li mentioned were "blonde hair", “wear glasses”, “tall” and "short". Li also remembered superlatives that were not on the app but were discussed spontaneously in the session. One of the pictures on the app was of three young men with different heights; the picture of the tallest man was highlighted in colour, while the other two men were in black and white. A matching statement for the picture was “He is tall.” Li remembered the discussion elicited from these statements, “A is taller than B”, and "B is shorter than A".
Li was familiar with using the tablet in the MALL session because she already owned a tablet at home. Li knew the functionalities of the tablet and used the interactions such as *dragging* for the matching statement to picture and *swiping* for the flashcards exercises. Li’s tablet was mostly used by her 4 year-old son for playing games. She usually brought the tablet along when her son was with her. Li said the size of the tablet made it convenient to carry around in her handbag.

Li said the MALL sessions did not bore her because the topics were interesting and the tablet had pictures, sounds and videos. Li was a very keen and enthusiastic learner. She made notes in her notebook in Mandarin about the words and sentences that were written on the whiteboard during *Steps 1 and 2*. Li was seen willingly repeating the words/phrases/statements during the drilling stage (*Step 2*), though she had difficulty pronouncing certain sounds. The app activities and exercises (*Step 3*) were challenging for Li because she was a poor reader and was only familiar with the vocabulary items that had been introduced to her in *Step 1*. She had never heard of many common English words that were used. In most of the exercises, Li just guessed the answers and checked if her guesses were correct. Sometimes, Li would only ask the researcher for help if she saw the researcher was available and not occupied with something else. Li preferred to do the exercises with a friend, so that she could get help when she needed it. Li was also happy that the researcher was her “teacher” because she thought the researcher was approachable and patient, making Li feel confident enough to ask questions. Li said that she always had a lot of questions to ask because “I don’t understand a lot of things”. Li usually did not ask questions during large group discussions. Li was more comfortable raising her hand after the discussions and asking her questions on one-on-one basis. Li was also very conscious of her surroundings because she was also watching her son playing with other children to ensure he did not cause trouble while the MALL sessions were going on.

Figure 6-7 shows Li’s perception that her reading and speaking skills remained at ‘not good at all’ pre-MALL as well as post-MALL. Li’s writing skill also remained at ‘not very good’, but there was change in her listening skill where it went from ‘not good at all’ at pre-MALL, to ‘not very good’ at post-MALL.
Ami remembered watching a video of a man and a woman talking about the leaking tap in their kitchen. The man was then seen calling the real estate agent so that they could send a plumber to fix the problem. Another dialogue was about the conversation between the man and the real estate office where he left a message with the receptionist for the real estate agent. Ami remembered these phrases "Can I take a message?" and "Can I leave a message for ..." Ami also learnt that sentences could be said many ways to describe similar things (circumlocution), for example, “We haven’t got any ...” could be used in place of “We don’t have any ...” and also, “She’s got blonde hair” with “She has blonde hair” or “Her hair is blonde”. Ami attempted the exercises that matched statements with the correct pictures. She then explored activities and exercises in other topics and said the earlier topics were less complex and the later ones became harder and more complex.

According to Ami, the tablet was easy to use and control, just like her smartphone. Since she also owned a tablet, she was used to its functionalities, such as which buttons to touch. Ami’s familiarity with English helped her to navigate within the app with ease. She thought the size of the tablet was just right and handy; it was thin and not too heavy, and could easily slip into her handbag or her children’s backpacks.

The MALL sessions did not bore Ami because her motivation for attending was to learn, so she made full use of her time. The centre was the only place that Ami went for English learning. Ami said the duration of the sessions suited her as she could not stay very long. When learning, Ami said she preferred to “learn by myself or with friends whose English is like me.” Ami thought that it was easier to work on the app activities and exercises with a partner who had at least the same English proficiency level as she did. Ami also liked the researcher to be present during the
MALL sessions, with the especially harder topics, so that she could ask questions or clarify things.

Ami said she could not focus that much during the MALL sessions because she had to be aware of her daughter who was playing with other children in the corner of the room. Ami said, “I was worried my daughter did not behave ... or the children hurt each other.” Ami was also aware of the noise in the room during the app activity. “The room was loud, I can hear other people talking ... the tablet ... The children were noisy. But it’s OK. We just come to learn something and have some fun.”

Ami perceived her reading and writing skills remained unchanged at pre-MALL and post-MALL, where she rated them as ‘somewhat good’ for reading, and ‘good’ for writing (Figure 6-8). However, there was a change in her speaking skill from ‘not very good’ to ‘somewhat good’, and in her listening skill from ‘somewhat good’ to ‘good’.

![Figure 6-8: Ami's perception of her English skills pre- and post-MALL](image)

**Midah**

Midah recalled a topic about ordering food at a café. She said this topic was easy to remember because she was familiar with a lot of things that were talked about. Also, the vocabulary gave her ideas of how to communicate in such situations. She said she was feeling surer of what to say or ask when making an order at cafés and eating places. Midah also commented how some of the words in the exercise had similar names in Malay but differed slightly in spelling and pronunciation, such as “menu”, “receipt”, “muffin”, “coffee”, “tea”, and “orange”. From the exercises, Midah said she learnt how to use words and phrases that could make a request or question become more polite, such as “Please”, “I’d like to ...”, “May I ...”, and “Can I ...”. Phrases that Midah found particularly useful and she could use were “have here”, “I’ll have”, and “Can we order?”
Before participating in MALL, Midah only used her tablet for watching videos on the YouTube app that was pre-installed on her tablet. Midah revealed that as a result of participating in this research, she realised she could download free apps for learning English (some apps were free whilst others may offer free trial contents with in-app purchases where, with a fee, a user could get access to complete contents or features). Midah also thought the app was easy to navigate and the topics were interesting as she could relate to some of them. Her only problem was that some topics were difficult and she had a hard time understanding some videos and reading the contents of the topics. She used a lot of guesswork, including when she was doing the exercises. She explored other exercises within the beginner level on the app on her own after she completed the assigned tasks, and repeated some exercises until she achieved a perfect score. Midah was also seen trying to explore “other things” on the tablet. She asked the researcher about using Google Translate as her understanding was that it was an online dictionary. Midah had never used the Internet and had very little knowledge about it. However, Google Translate was a tool that could be used without the need for Midah to be proficient in using the Internet browser. After a few attempts, Midah was able to use the tool to translate words, phrases or statements from Malay to English and vice versa.

Figure 6-9 shows that Midah’s perception of her reading and speaking skills remained unchanged at ‘not very good’ throughout pre-MALL through to post-MALL. Her writing skills were also unchanged at ‘somewhat good’. Midah’s perception of her listening skill, however, changed from ‘not very good’ at pre-MALL to ‘somewhat good’ at post-MALL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-MALL</th>
<th>Post MALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6-9: Midah’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-MALL**

**Ika**

Both the pre-MALL and post MALL interviews with Ika were done in Malay as she was not comfortable speaking English. She said she was too embarrassed to speak in English as it would
“sound weird” to her listener and even to herself. Furthermore, she did not think that she could express herself in English. With the researcher’s help, Ika recalled the topic *Describing people* where she talked about listening to an audio announcement about a missing child in a mall. The child was a 6-year-old Chinese boy with spiky hair. She did the follow up exercise on matching statements with the correct pictures. She said that it was easy to do because she just had to *drag and drop* and did not need to use pen and paper to write anything. Ika offered these statements that she remembered on how to describe a person (grammatically corrected by the researcher): “The man has a moustache”, “The boy has spiky hair” and “The man wears glasses.”

Ika said using the tablet was like using her smartphone as they worked quite similarly in terms of the functions of the buttons and the screen icons. The tablet was very handy as she could take it anywhere in her handbag or backpack, mostly for her daughter to play games on. Ika’s problem when doing the MALL exercises was that she could not read English very well. Ika thus did a lot of “trial and error”, especially in matching words/statements with pictures or meaning. She did these exercises many times until she achieved the perfect score. Ika said she and her partner had the same problems in listening to the audio and also watching other videos because they did not catch what was said, so they had to repeat the dialogue and read the transcript many times. Ika and her partner did their app activities and exercises at a slower pace than the rest of the group so they did not have much time to explore other levels on the app for each session.

Ika said that she was happy attending MALL because she learnt many useful words but, unfortunately, she might not always remember to use them as she had limited practice opportunities and limited contact with English speakers. However, Ika thought it was important that she attend the sessions and attempt the exercises so that she had some practices and exposure to English language. Ika could not focus well on her lessons and was aware of her surroundings in the MALL sessions because the environment during the app activity was noisy and Ika had to attend to her daughter. Her daughter did not want to play with the other children and wanted to sit in her stroller next to Ika. She played with her own toys and, when she got bored, Ika had to take her child out of the stroller and put her child on her lap.

Figure 6-10 indicates that Ika’s perception of her reading, speaking and listening skills changed from ‘not good at all’ at pre-MALL to ‘not very good’ at post-MALL. Ika’s perception of her writing skills remained at ‘not very good’, in both pre- and post-MALL.
The interviews with Yuni were done in a mixture of Malay and English. Yuni was quite comfortable speaking, though with broken English, but sometimes she paused and asked the researcher to translate a Malay word that she wanted to say. Though Yuni spoke with missing words in between, she managed to get her message across. Yuni recalled the topic on describing broken things at home. She required some help in translating the vocabulary from Malay to English, such as "The computer won’t start", "The lock is broken", and "The toilet is overflowing". Yuni also recalled and talked about the dialogue that she had listened to, where someone called the real estate agent to report that something was broken at their rental property. Yuni said that she liked the video part of the app because she could listen to how Australians talk and pronounce things.

Yuni said that the activities before starting the tablet exercise were useful for her because the researcher introduced the vocabulary first (pre-teaching vocabulary) and let the participants repeat the vocabulary out loud (drilling). It was then easier for her to understand the dialogue part of the exercise, rather than trying to figure out what was said in the dialogue. She could focus on listening to how the vocabulary was pronounced and used in the dialogues in the exercises. She repeated the exercises many times.

Yuni thought that learning vocabulary using the tablet was very convenient for her. If at home, she had to share her tablet with her children. She said she intended to download the app on her tablet and would find time to do the exercises. Yuni thought that in her situation, learning English using the tablet was the best option for her. She believed that if she knew more words, it would help her to hold a conversation longer and better.
Yuni said the lessons were interesting and did not bore her because she learned a lot of new things from the activities and by doing the exercises. She also said that she learned from her friends in the group and the researcher as well. Yuni was very happy that the researcher could interpret for her whenever she did not understand some things, and that the researcher spoke clearly when she was teaching. Yuni’s only problem was that she had to focus on two things at once, the lessons and watching her son playing with other children in the corner of the room. She did not mind the noise that was filling the room.

Yuni perceived that her reading and writing skills were unchanged at ‘not very good’ at both pre-MALL and post-MALL assessments (Figure 6-11). Yuni’s speaking and listening skills changed from 'not very good' to 'somewhat good' at post-MALL.

![Figure 6-11: Yuni’s perception of her English skills pre- and post-MALL](image)

6.1.8 Summary of results

This chapter reports the findings from the data gathered from Case Study 3. The participants for this case study were five new migrant women who participated only in these MALL sessions, which were conducted in the weekly slot of the conversational English program at the community centre after the completion of Case Study 2. These MALL sessions were attended by both by participants of Case Study 3 and also non-participants.

The participants provided valuable data regarding their demographics, which included age, country of origin, years living in Australia, residency status pre-migration and residency status in Australia, and their familiarity with computers and mobile devices. Participants could be grouped into younger (Ika, Yuni and Ami) and older (Li and Midah) age range categories. The average number of years they had lived in Australia at the time of the study was 3.4 years (excluding Midah who had lived in Australia for 24 years). They entered Australia through the
humanitarian visa program for refugees (Yuni), the family reunion visa (Li, Ika and Midah), and the student’s spouse visa (Ami).

Participants revealed that the main reason for attending the conversational English program was to improve their spoken English. Generally, all participants had problems in understanding English speakers, particularly Australian English speakers, due to the unfamiliar accent and the use of slang words. L1 literacy played a significant role and helped participants in learning English. Since migrating to Australia, all participants had become bilingual, where English became their L2. All participants were literate in L1 acquired in their home countries.

Participants used various strategies in learning or improving their English: by making notes in L1; by using a dictionary, physical or electronic, to find meaning for new words and vocabulary; through practicing their listening, speaking and pronunciation skills by watching TV; and attending community programs such as the conversational English sessions. All participants had computing and mobile devices in their homes. They did not personally use PCs and laptops, but they owned a smartphone and a tablet. However, these devices were not fully utilised to their full potential: for example, using them to download and use a learning app for themselves.

At post-MALL, these following topics and vocabulary were recalled by participants: ordering at a café (Midah); describing broken things at home (Yuni); describing people (Li and Ika); and talking on the phone using polite expressions (Ami). Participants demonstrated that they acquired vocabulary from MALL since they were able to recall and/or apply words and phrases in the correct context. Participants acquired vocabulary through Step 1 (pre-teaching of vocabulary) and Step 2 (drilling), as well as from their learning experience. Learning was enriched and enhanced with Step 3 (the app activities and exercises). Participants had additional exposure to spoken English from watching videos and listening to conversations by Australian English speakers, presented in various contexts of everyday modern Australian life. Participants perceived that, at the end of MALL, they had not experienced much change in their reading and writing skills but changes had occurred in their speaking and listening skills.

6.2 Case Study 3 - Analysis

Case Study 3 participants (Li, Ami, Midah, Ika and Yuni) only experienced learning vocabulary only in the MALL setting. These MALL sessions were conducted in a non-formal learning atmosphere, reflecting participants’ socio-cultural background, and learning and flexibility requirements. Case Study 3 participants were newcomers to the conversational English program, and their joining the program coincided with the start of MALL. Unlike Case Study 2 participants who experienced both non-MALL and MALL sessions, Case Study 3 participants only had MALL sessions. Each participant attended 4 to 5 MALL sessions.
was organised into *Steps 1, 2 and 3*. More time was spent in executing *Step 3*, however, so as to reinforce participants’ understanding of the topics and vocabulary.

### 6.2.1 Issues arising from MALL experience

The issues that arose from the analysis of data gathered from Case Study 3 participants can be grouped into the following themes: literacy and education background; pronunciation; meaningful content; learner grouping; confidence; learning distractions; instructor role; and features of the tablet and app.

**Literacy and education background**

Table 6-4 shows that four of the five participants had completed at least high school education in their home countries (Li only had up to Grade 5). Similar to Case Study 1 and Case Study 2, the participants in this case study wrote notes in L1 as a strategy to acquire vocabulary (even though this was not reinforced) during *Step 1* and *Step 2* of MALL. Higher literacy participants wrote quickly and wrote detailed notes. The participants who were conversant in Roman alphabets and familiar with basic English (Midah, Ika, Yuni) wrote faster and focused their attention on the next task. The information they wrote was about the meaning of the vocabulary, pronunciation of the syllables and translation of sentences. This was a useful strategy for participants to retain the vocabulary and recall items when needed. L1-English dictionary use was another popular strategy to acquire vocabulary. In *Steps 1* and 2, participants sometimes used either their pocket electronic dictionary or the dictionary app on their smartphone to find the meaning of English words in L1, to find the English word for an L1 word, or find the pronunciation of English words. In *Step 3*, the app incorporated had these functions (except the L1 parts) incorporated all these functions (except the L1 parts), with additional video and audio features, accompanied by vocabulary and pronunciation activities and exercises.

The participants were usually eager to explore other activities and exercises within the same level, or topics in other levels; however, with lower English proficiency, and poor reading ability, they had limited choice of topics that they could attempt. The topics had varying degrees of complexity in terms of the content and vocabulary. Except for Ami, all participants faced reading challenges when attempting the activities and exercises on the app, which consequently affected their ability to comprehend what was being read. Participants were able to read and comprehend more if they were familiar with or had encountered the topics and/or vocabulary items before, were prepared with some *pre-teaching vocabulary* activity, or had the presence of an instructor/tutor as a source of information.
Pronunciation

Participants in this case study came from the Malay, Mandarin and Japanese linguistic groups and had learnt English either briefly or through a school curriculum, but had never used it outside the classroom. Participants from the Malay and Mandarin linguistic groups faced typical difficulties when pronouncing certain English words and found it hard to adjust their natural L1 sound system. Ami also had pronunciation issues of a typical Japanese speaker (for example, in pronouncing /l/ and /r/). Ami had only learnt English formally through short courses before coming to Australia but had already made significant progress by herself. She spoke using textbook language and sometimes paused to think of the words to use. In general, she uttered her words clearly and her speech was fluent and seemed well thought out. Ami was observed using her pocket-sized electronic Japanese-English dictionary, which had an audio pronunciation feature. Li also used her electronic Mandarin-English dictionary but not as naturally as Ami did.

Incorrect pronunciation impedes a successful conversation because the listener might not catch the words, might misunderstand or might be misled into thinking of an entirely different event or context. It was therefore important for participants to be able to pronounce words and vocabulary items correctly, even with an accent, to get their message across. Mispronunciation could also cause confusion in learning a vocabulary, and might lead to memorizing words with the wrong meaning, and vice versa. The videos and audios in the app provided authentic and varied spoken language material where a participant could learn how words were pronounced in ‘real’ conversations by Australian English speakers. Some participants recorded their own voices and then compared them with how Australian English speakers sounded. A transcript facility was also available but, being poor readers, participants generally avoided it. The multimedia activities enabled learners like Midah, Ika, Yuni and Li to make adjustments to the differences between their L1 sound systems and the English sound system, even though a longer time and a lot of practice would be required for the adjustment to be complete.

Confidence

The participants’ level of confidence was indicated by their willingness to speak, to participate in activities, and their feeling of self-assuredness that they could make the points they wished to despite errors. Participants’ pre-migration and post-migration English exposure, their education background, and their post-migration English usage opportunities were the factors that most influenced their current proficiency levels (see Table 6-6). Only participants who proactively sought and used these opportunities increased their chances of expanding the size of their word bank, which gave them more word choices when interacting with other English speakers. These factors also impacted participants’ confidence and proficiency in speaking.
Based on participants’ interactions with their peers, the researcher and other people at the community centre, as well as their involvement in MALL, the participants’ levels of confidence and their speaking proficiency are summarised in Table 6-7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ami</th>
<th>Yuni</th>
<th>Li</th>
<th>Midah</th>
<th>Ika</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General confidence in communicating</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Situation-specific confidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking proficiency</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<td>Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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</table>

High = able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements  
Average = able to converse face-to-face on familiar topics  
Low = communicates using memorized utterances, may interweave with L1

The *general confidence in communicating* group referred to participants who were willing to ‘have a go’ at communicating in most situations (Ami and Yuni). *High speaking proficiency* referred to having conversational fluency and interpersonal communication skills for basic social interaction (Ami), while *average speaking proficiency* referred to having the ability to engage in a conversation when face-to-face, concentrating on familiar topics (Yuni). Ami stumbled a bit when speaking but she spoke coherently and pronounced word clearly, whereas Yuni stumbled when speaking and her pronunciations were unclear so she often had to repeat herself.

The *situation-specific confidence* group (Midah, Ika and Li) only spoke in situations in which they had confidence and only with people they were comfortable with (such as with the person next to them in the group, or with the researcher). They spoke very little in most of the sessions and would only speak when asked. They were not confident in talking on the phone or making appointments. Their *speaking proficiency* was grouped as *low*, as they did not usually speak clearly and were unable to have deep conversations. Factors that inhibited them from speaking up were their shyness and lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and a limited choices of words to use.

*Step 1* offered opportunities for participants to develop confidence; for example, by engaging in group discussions, or by sharing or expressing opinions. It was usually the participants who were proactive or who already had the confidence to come to the sessions, who responded to the researcher’s elicitations. Given that the shy ones did not usually respond, the researcher had to address specific participants in order to give them the opportunity to speak. In *Step 2*, there was little opportunity for conversation as it was mainly a *drilling* session; however, this helped...
participants develop confidence by practicing correct pronunciation, and by familiarizing themselves with and becoming sure of common speech patterns. In Step 3, participants were exposed to visuals and audio in English and became familiar with the natural gestures, expressions and flow of everyday speech. Working in pairs encouraged more talking time between partners, and low proficiency participants gained some confidence when working with more proficient peers.

*Meaningful content*

All Case Study 3 participants, to some extent, had acquired vocabulary from their participation in MALL. Participants were observed as being able to recall topics or vocabulary that they found meaningful, simple, and relevant for everyday functional and conversational use. There were certain types of vocabulary items that participants found easier to remember:

- words that were similar in their L1;
- words that were presented in videos (participants could see 'language-in-use' and this aided comprehension because the expressions and gestures in these videos conveyed general meaning and moods, and also allowed observation of how intonation matched facial expressions);
- common words that participants were not sure about using, but after MALL activities such as watching videos, drilling or using the flashcards, they felt more confident about the things to say or ask;
- circumlocution (specific to Ami); and
- words, phrases or statements that could be used or applied immediately, such as saying things more politely and courteously, or the ability to compare things using the learnt vocabulary (for example, comparing a son's spiky hair with their own wavy hair).

*Instructor role*

All participants faced similar challenges in communicating with English speakers, particularly with Australian English speakers. Participants had difficulty engaging in a conversation with the latter because it was hard for second language speakers to understand the broad accent, and thus they were not able to respond or respond effectively. The researcher’s goal as the instructor was to help participants develop their conversational skills by acquiring vocabulary through MALL. The researcher’s role was to plan Steps 1, 2 and 3 of each MALL session, and ensure that Steps 1 and 2 corresponded to the app activities and exercises in Step 3.

In the initial stage, the researcher helped participants who were low proficiency readers to navigate the app by recognising the patterns and organisation of the different levels, topics,
activities and exercises. After a few attempts, participants were able to: identify the pattern and organisation; use the tablet’s home screen, the app home screen, and the back/return button; and navigate from one level to another and also within each level. No participants had a problem using the tablet as they owned and used one outside the class.

The researcher’s role was also to ensure that the materials selected for Step 3 were relevant and meaningful, and easy for participants to read and comprehend. In addition, the selected vocabularies for drilling had to be useful in aiding comprehension in Step 3, and also valuable for participants’ interaction beyond MALL. More time and support were provided in Step 3 as this reinforced participants’ understanding of the topics and vocabulary items with the aid of the app’s audio and video features. Language was also reinforced. This was also when participants worked on the app, either independently or with a partner.

In Steps 1 and 2, the researcher’s role was to act as a teacher. Step 3, though, was meant to support independent learning by individuals or pairs and the researcher’s role became that of a facilitator. The researcher assisted any attendees needing help, but most of the time pair-work encouraged talking, discussion and problem solving among participants with referral to the researcher being the last resort. In assisting participants, L1 interpreters might also be used to help deliver information for those who used the same L1.

**Learner grouping**

During Step 3, all participants had the experience of using the tablet either individually or through sharing with a partner. Some participants (Yuni and Ami) did not have the opportunity to work with partners whose English proficiency was better than their own. Highly literate participants (e.g. Ami) were better off either working individually or with partners at the same level or at a higher proficiency. In this situation, they could contribute equally and the learning experience would be more advantageous as they could discuss/share ideas and work faster. When working individually, Ami only needed occasional help from the researcher as she would seek meaning and information first. She had the choice of attempting the activities and exercises at her own pace. Other participants were more advantaged when they worked with partners who were of a higher proficiency than themselves. Except for Ami, all participants struggled in reading, so by working with higher proficiency partners, they felt more comfortable asking questions and asking each other for help. This was also a way of gaining confidence, compared to working individually, where they could feel lost and demotivated when attempting the activities and exercises.
**Learning distractions**

Similar to Case Study 2, there were issues with noise that was generated, particularly in Step 3. Ami, Yuni, Li and Ika mentioned this issue in their post-MALL interviews. They were not really bothered with it, but thought that it would be better if the situation could be improved. Even though they were distracted, they did not mind the noise as there was no other option than to keeping their children in the same room with them while attending the sessions. They had to divide their attention between the MALL sessions and watching their children playing (or fighting) with the other children who were there. Midah did not have any children with her so she was able to focus her attention entirely on the MALL sessions. All the attendees, whether with or without children, seemed to tolerate the noise. The researcher managed to control the situation by reminding the women to keep their noise (and their children’s) down. In spite of the distractions, attendees compromised and understood.

**Features of the tablet and app**

The app was designed for *beginner, post-beginner, and intermediate* level adult English learners, specifically for the Australian context, but could be used universally. The researcher had to be selective in choosing suitable topics as some were too complex for participants. Generally, the interactive feature of the user interface helped to ease participants’ learning:

- The video and audio demonstrated various sounds of realistic Australian accents. These could be used as a vocabulary development tool through listening and pronunciation practice. Participants could also self-drill vocabulary with the recording facility.
- The video could be replayed, paused or forwarded, with transcript features available for reference. With videos, participants could see the actors’ gestures and display of emotions and listen to their conversations.
- The embedded audio features were beneficial as they reminded the participants of the pronunciation of the vocabulary items. Participants could just tap on the play button to listen to the audio, which helped in memorising the vocabulary. These embedded audio features were associated with the matching exercises and flashcards.
- Participants interacted with the touch screen interface by tapping, dragging or swiping their fingers on a button or a bar, which eliminated the need for hand-written work.
- The exercises on the app could be refreshed and repeated as many times as needed. The app was designed with scoring methods and cues for when participants had completed an exercise and were ready to move on to the next level.

The features of the tablet allowed apps to be designed for language learners’ ease of use. They provided learners with choices around personalizing their language acquisition where more
focus could be given to areas that learners needed to focus on, such as vocabulary development, reading, listening practice, or any combination of these.

6.2.2 Participants’ perception of their English skills after MALL

Participants self-rated their perceptions of their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills during pre-MALL and post-MALL interviews. These ratings were based on a corresponding Likert-type scale for each skill (Table 3-3 - Table 3-6). Changes in participants’ perceptions of their English skills are tabulated in Table 6-8 and shows participants’ ratings on each skill pre-MALL (before attending any MALL sessions) and post-MALL (after attending 4 to 5 MALL sessions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
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<td>Ika</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midah</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td>3(3)</td>
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<td>2(2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ami</td>
<td>2(3)</td>
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<td>3(3)</td>
<td>4(4)</td>
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<td>3(3)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the following sections, the participants’ changes in their perceptions of language skills are presented as ‘1-2’, which indicates ‘rating 1 at pre-MALL, rating 2 at post-MALL’.

**Speaking**

Table 6-9 (duplicate of Table 3-5) provides the definition of each rating value for speaking skill that the researcher used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to communicate, uses occasional isolated words (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>communicates using memorised utterances, interweaves with L1 (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to converse face-to-face on familiar topics (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to communicate effectively on topics relating to particular interest, ease in speaking (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All five participants faced similar speaking challenges when communicating, particularly with Australian English speakers. Participants had difficulty engaging in a conversation as they find it hard to understand broad accents and slang words, and were therefore unable to respond effectively. The participants’ perceptions of their speaking skills can be grouped into those who perceived their speaking skills had changed and improved, and those who perceived their speaking skills as remaining unchanged.

**Perceived change occurred**

- **Participants who perceived their speaking skills had changed and improved: 1-2 (Ika), 2-3 (Yuni and Ami)**

  The researcher rated Ika's speaking skill at 2-2. At pre-MALL, Ika hardly spoke and showed very low confidence. Her shyness might be the cause of her nervousness when talking. In later sessions, she appeared more comfortable with her peers and the environment, and more willing to speak, but she still offered very little input into group discussions. Ika was more engaged in drilling sessions, however. She worked with a partner who was more proficient and took the active role in doing the app activities and exercises, which caused Ika to become a passive but co-operative partner. This kind of dynamic worked in the partnership as both were understanding and tolerant, but caused them to move at a slower pace than the rest of the group. Ika felt she had “learnt something”, as she was not pressured to finish quickly or to compete with anyone. Ika was also able to recall the topics and vocabularies that she learnt, and this confirmed her perception of improved speaking skills.

  The researcher rated Yuni’s speaking skill at 2-3, as did Yuni, but Ami at 3-3. Both already had high confidence in speaking at pre-MALL. Both were also proactive learners. They did not have any problem speaking about basic everyday issues and engaging in small talk with their peers. Ami’s high-level literacy, tertiary education experience and her significant interest in English had led to her learning the language more easily. Ami naturally used her pocket electronic Japanese-English dictionary, her dictionary app or Google Translate on her smartphone. Yuni also used the dictionary app on her smartphone when needed. They both already had digital skills, which contributed to their ease and progress when learning in the MALL sessions, leading to the more straightforward acquisition of new vocabulary items.

**No perceived change**

- **Participants who perceived their speaking skills remained unchanged: 1-1 (Li), 2-2 (Midah)**

  Li and Midah perceived their speaking skills as remaining unchanged because they did not feel that they spoke as much as the other participants. However, the researcher rated both
participants as making progress, where Li improved a little (1-2) and Midah improved slightly but within the same scale (2-2). At the outset, both spoke very little. Li substituted English words and sentences with Mandarin; Midah, being shy, preferred to talk less. Both were able to give three- to four-word, one- to two-sentence answers but would struggle to produce a subsequent third and fourth sentence response. Both uttered the words during drilling, read the instructions on the app using their 'quiet voice', and attempted the app recording activities. In the later MALL sessions, both became more comfortable and confident at speaking.

The MALL sessions provided participants with a new learning experience that exposed and familiarised them with various topics about Australian society. The app activities and exercises provided additional knowledge in the form of authentic dialogues where participants saw ‘language in use’ and how the vocabulary items that they learnt during pre-teaching and drilling were used in context. These experiences: helped increase their vocabulary knowledge; provided the opportunity to practice speaking and interacting with others; and somewhat gave them confidence and an ideas of what to expect when interacting with other Australian speakers.

**Listening**

Table 6-10 (duplicate of Table 5-4 Table 3-6) provides the definition of each rating value for listening skill that the researcher used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>no understanding of spoken language, limited to occasional isolated words (very low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension limited to memorised utterances in areas of immediate needs (low comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations; miscommunication can occur with both non-complex and complex issues; does not understand Australian speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (average comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>sufficient comprehension to understand routine social demands, conversations about work requirements, and discussions on concrete topics related to particular interest; miscommunication can occur with complex issues; have some difficulty understanding Australian English speakers if they speak very quickly or use slang (high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing for explanation; can often detect emotional overtone; shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding (very high comprehension)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relative to their speaking skills, all five had difficulty comprehending what they heard, especially broad Australian accents and slang words, and thus they were unable to respond
effectively. However, all perceived some progress in their listening skills from pre-MALL to post-MALL.

**Perceived change occurred**

- **Participants who perceived their listening skills changed and improved: 1-2 (Li and Ika)**

  The researcher rated both Li and Ika’s listening skills as at 2-2. From the start of the MALL sessions, they had some basic understanding of spoken English. The researcher usually had to repeat her questions a few times before they could provide an answer. Li and Ika were able to comprehend very simple and clear vocabulary items when involved in or listening to a conversation; for example, they were able to ‘catch’ the common word and were able to respond to basic questions with simple one-to-two word answers. Both had limited vocabulary and did not know the words to use when conversations became longer and more complex. Ika had more familiarity and knew more words than Li did because she had learnt English in school. Both displayed slightly more confidence when speaking in the later MALL sessions.

- **Participants who perceived their listening skills changed and improved: 2-3 (Midah and Yuni)**

  The researcher rated at the same levels that they did Midah and Yuni’s listening skills. Midah and Yuni were able to comprehend and respond to basic questions that required basic answers, such as “How old are you?”, and “How long have you been in Australia?” However, Yuni had the capability to hold a conversation longer than Midah as she knew more words and expressions. This may be because she had become the spokesperson on behalf of her husband and children, even with her broken English. Midah’s comprehension skills were adequate but limited to basic and familiar words and strings of words that she heard every day and vocabulary items that had already been memorised. Midah and Yuni had listening practice through the videos and audio from the app. Both were interested in pronunciation as they realised this needed improvement along with their conversational skills.

- **Participants who perceived their listening skills changed and improved: 3-4 (Ami)**

  The researcher rated Ami’s listening skills at the level that Ami did. Ami perceived that her listening skills had improved because of the amount of attention she paid in the MALL session and the listening practice she gained from the app. Ami had sufficient comprehension ability to understand short conversations and non-complex issues. Ami worked with a partner who was less proficient than she was, and provided the help that her partner needed. When Ami had the opportunity to use the tablet on her own, she not only
attempted activities and exercises assigned on the day, but also explored the other levels on the app. It slowed her down when she encountered complex topics and vocabularies. Ami liked watching videos, listening to the dialogue and to how words were pronounced, and putting these together with the visual expressions and gestures. All five MALL sessions in which Ami participated provided her with an exposure to a variety of vocabulary and knowledge about the Australian English language which she would not otherwise have achieved or been able to focus on in her own time.

As with Case Study 2 participants, Case Study 3 participants considered paying attention to and listening to the researcher’s delivery in Step 1 and Step 2 as part of their listening activities. These listening activities increased substantially in Step 3 with the app activities and exercises. Participants perceived their listening comprehension was better than it had been, and they were able to provide the appropriate responses. However, these responses depended on the type of conversation topics they were engaged in and their familiarity with the topic. Listening practice strengthened participants’ understanding of the vocabulary, on its own, and in context.

**Reading**

Table 6-11 (duplicate of Table 3-3) provides the definition of each rating value for reading skill that the researcher used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to read (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>struggles to read in general (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to read non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to read and comprehend complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants’ perceptions of their reading skills could be grouped into the persons who perceived change had occurred on the one hand and those who perceived their skills remained unchanged.
Perceived change occurred

- Participant who perceived change occurred 1-2 (Ika)

  The researcher rated Ika’s reading skills as 2-2. Ika perceived that her reading skills had improved because she experienced a significant increase in reading English as part of participating in MALL sessions. Ika would not have done the reading in her own time, since her reading materials were only in L1, printed or online. The researcher rated Ika as 2 at pre-MALL because she could generally read English texts using her L1 phonemes, but she struggled in fluency and comprehension. Ika made progress in her reading skills but stayed within the same skill range.

No perceived change

- Participants who perceived no change occurred 1-1 (Li), 2-2 (Midah and Yuni), 3-3 (Ami)

  The researcher rated similar to all four participants’ reading skills at the same level as they did. Minor changes and improvement had occurred, but the reading skills were still within the same rating scale.

  Li’s reading ability was limited to basic words and very short sentences. In Steps 1 and 2, the requirement for Li to do her own reading was minimal as the session was mostly guided by the researcher. In Step 3, Li struggled in reading and comprehending the instructions and contents of the app. Li’s partner was more proficient and helped her to do the activities and exercises, so Li perceived her own reading skill had not progressed by the end of the MALL sessions.

  Midah and Yuni were able to read and comprehend simple English words and sentences. When encountering complex words, sentences or paragraphs, Midah and Yuni used their L1 phonemes, but lacked comprehension when the texts became more complex. There was not much intensive reading during Step 1 and Step 2. At Step 3, they worked with partners who were less proficient than they were. At other times, they worked individually. In both situations, they struggled when reading the more complex contents of the app. To avoid persistently calling the researcher for help, they used guesswork when attempting the exercises. Due to these reasons, they did not perceive change or improvement in their reading skills.

  Ami’s only pre-migration exposure to English was the short courses she took as preparation before coming to Australia, which helped develop her basic reading skill. Steps 1 and 2 of MALL were easy for Ami. In Step 3, the beginner level was not considered a challenge for
Ami as the multimedia features (e.g. audio, video, transcripts, flashcards, exercises, and scoring system) were there to aid her understanding. Even though Ami perceived no change in her reading skills, the MALL sessions were useful and beneficial for advanced learners like Ami to practice their reading fluency, and to develop and enhance comprehension skills.

**Writing**

Table 6-12 (duplicate of Table 3-4) provides the definition of each rating value used by the researcher for writing skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not good at all</td>
<td>not able to write (very low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = not very good</td>
<td>able to copy simple words and sentences (low fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = somewhat good</td>
<td>able to copy non-complex texts (average fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) non-complex texts (high fluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = very good</td>
<td>able to write (produce) complex texts (very high fluency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All participants perceived their writing skills remained unchanged pre- and post-MALL - 2-2 (Li, Ika, Yuni), 3-3 (Midah), and 4-4 (Ami). The researcher’s ratings were similar to the participants’, except Yuni was rated higher, at 3-3. Even though participants were not required to do any writing, they felt the importance of taking notes. They made their own notes in L1 regarding the meaning of the words or sentences, the sounds of the syllables, and the translation of sentences. The participants perceived the same rating pre-, and post-MALL because they felt the writing was easy as they were not creating or producing the written work themselves. Ami wrote her notes more extensively than the others. Other participants could not confidently write words or sentences that were dictated to them since their spelling was poor. Consequently, composing written sentences or paragraphs on their own would require a lot of effort and support.

### 6.2.3 Summary of analysis

All participants in this case study were newcomers to the conversational English program and their engagement coincided with the start of MALL. The issues that arose from participants’ experiences in learning vocabulary in MALL were grouped into eight themes: literacy and education background; pronunciation; confidence; meaningful content; instructor role; learner grouping; learning distractions; and features of the tablet and app (Figure 6-12).

The participants in this case study had varying L1 literacy level: primary school (Li); high school (Yuni, Midah, Ika); and university (Ami). As such, they used their basic skills of understanding,
and using and producing textual information, to acquire vocabulary. One strategy they used was making notes in L1 during Step 1 and Step 2 of MALL. The extent of these notes reflected their level of L1 literacy. Participants also used L1-English dictionaries with pronunciation features (either a pocket electronic dictionary, a dictionary app downloaded on their smartphones, or an online dictionary accessed through the Internet on their smartphones) to assist them throughout the MALL sessions. Participants also applied their knowledge of reading in L1 to the reading of English texts. However, this did not work for Li since her reading level in L1 was low. The reading requirements were minimal in Steps 1 and 2 of MALL. However, during Step 3 of MALL, basic reading and comprehension was essential for work on the app. Three participants (Yuni, Ika, Ami) perceived that progress had occurred in their speaking and listening skills. All participants indicated that no significant or only minor changes occurred in their reading and writing skills. Three participants were shy and reserved at first (Li, Ika, Midah), but had overcome those issues and gained some confidence by the later sessions, as they were more comfortable with the group and the learning environment.

Participants seemed interested in the drilling sessions because they thought of it as intensive listening and pronunciation practice. They listened to a few model sentences organised by the researcher and repeated them after the researcher. These exercises helped them memorise common language patterns without having to learn the how and why of the structure and grammar. Their listening and pronunciation practice was further enriched and enhanced in Step 3 where they watched and listened to conversations by Australian English speakers on various topics, and attempted the exercises that were used as a means to (informally) assess participants’ understanding and comprehension. These experiences helped expand the size of their word bank and their pronunciation skills, which consequently helped develop speaking confidence that encouraged them to keep progressing.

The role of the researcher as the instructor in MALL was two-fold, as a teacher and as a facilitator. Steps 1 and 2 were conducted in a teacher-centred mode, while Step 3 was delivered in a student-centred mode. In the teacher-centred role, the researcher delivered information/knowledge, provided explanation, organised drills, steered discussions, and motivated the whole group. In the student-centred mode, participants were given the tablet and worked on the app. This strategy encouraged independent learning, exploration and problem solving. The researcher’s facilitative role included becoming the resource who provided information and help when needed. All participants felt that the presence of the researcher was critical in the MALL sessions.

Participants rated their language skills higher at post-MALL for a number of reasons:
• **Speaking skills** They spoke more English during MALL than they did in their own time, in which they seldom or never spoke English at all. The MALL setup, which was non-formal and flexible, provided a space where participants had the opportunity to speak and interact, which somewhat lessened their nervousness and shyness, and slowly developed their speaking confidence. Speaking opportunities were achieved through interaction among peers and specifically during Step 3, where they worked in pairs and had more interaction with the researcher.

• **Listening skills** Their ‘listening to English’ activities increased substantially throughout MALL compared to what they had achieved on their own (indicated by the higher rating in this area by all five participants). These activities included listening and paying attention to the researcher’s delivery in Step 1 and Step 2, and working on the app in Step 3, which enriched participants’ learning with audio, videos, quizzes, and pronunciation practice and exercises. These resources provided exposure to a variety of vocabulary items and knowledge about the Australian English language, exercises promoting their comprehension ability, and ideas for words to use when communicating.

• **Reading skills** Their ‘reading English’ activities increased significantly after participating in MALL. This was not an experience they would have had on their own. The contents of the app provided a wide variety of reading materials on various topics, enriched with interactive multimedia.

Where the participants’ ratings of their skills remained unchanged from pre-MALL to post-MALL, this was because they perceived changes had occurred, but the changes were small. No participants perceived improvement in their writing skills while not all participants thought their reading and speaking skills were better.

### 6.3 Summary of Case Study 3

This chapter discussed the results and analyses of data gathered from the five Case Study 3 participants (Li, Ami, Midah, Ika, and Yuni) who were only involved in MALL, and whose L1 was not English. The results reported the demographics of the participants’ backgrounds, familiarity with computing and mobile devices, language background, English learning strategy, and pre-MALL/post-MALL experiences.

Figure 6-12 shows the data collection approach for Case Study 3 (Layer 1), the reporting (Layer 2), eight themes emerging from the analyses of the case study (Layer 3), and three broader factors that impacted these migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition in MALL (Layer 4).
The three factors that impacted Case Study 3 participants’ vocabulary acquisition were similar to Case Study 2: Vocabulary learning environment; Learner characteristics; and technology. These factors are discussed further in Chapter 7, where Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 are cross-analysed.

Figure 6-12: Data collection, reporting, themes and factors that emerged from the analyses of Case Study 3
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

This chapter presents cross-case analyses of Case Studies 1, 2 and 3. The steps taken in these analyses include an examination and comparison of the themes emerging from each within-case analysis, a search for commonalities and differences, and a synthesis of these discoveries. The outcomes of the cross-case analyses are presented in this chapter. First, the similarities and differences of the three learning environments (MALL; non-MALL and MALL; and non-MALL) are compared. This is followed by a discussion of the challenges and benefits observed during the implementation of these learning environments. The subsequent and final discussion focuses on three key impacts of integrating MALL that affect a L2 or subsequent language learner’s vocabulary acquisition.

7.1 Comparisons of MALL, hybrid and non-MALL

The Case Study 1 learning environment was non-MALL (regular conversational sessions), thus the vocabulary learning experience of the ten participants involved was limited to learning without the assistance of technology. The Case Study 2 and Case Study 3 learning environments were MALL, which were assisted by a mobile device (tablet) and a mobile language app. The Case Study 2 participants’ learning experience was hybrid, as they consecutively experienced learning vocabulary in non-MALL and MALL environments. Case Study 3 participants were new attendees to the conversational program; therefore, their vocabulary learning experience was in a MALL environment alone.

7.1.1 Similarities in learning environments

The implementation of each of the three learning environments retained the regular setup of the conversational English program that was prescribed by the community centre. This included keeping the sessions as non-formal and flexible as possible so as to not put pressure on attendees, who comprised participants in this research, as well as non-participants. Certain aspects of the program, such as the learning goals, the instructional settings, and the activities, were also retained during the implementation of the non-MALL, hybrid and MALL learning environments.

The learning goals of all case study participants in all three learning environments were to improve their conversational and spoken skills. To achieve these goals, the language learning components emphasised were vocabulary (as the language item), and speaking and active
listening skills. Attention was paid to comprehension and fluency, rather than accuracy of grammar and the technicality of the English language. The vocabulary lessons were planned around participants’ needs for basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), by developing topics that exposed participants to a variety of everyday functional and conversational language use within the Australian context.

The regular conversational English program loosely followed the *teacher-centred* concept (Hirumi, 2002; Nunan, 1995) or, in the language learning domain, this approach is referred to as the *structure-based instructional setting* (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The teacher-fronted approach, where the interaction is between the teacher and the whole group of students, was found to be acceptable for non-MALL, and *Step 1* and *Step 2* of the hybrid and MALL environments. Even though the setting was not a formal classroom, participants needed the ‘classroom feel’ where the teacher (the role taken by the researcher) delivers the knowledge, provides instruction, prescribes activities, and teaches the entire group. As typical in a structure-based instructional setting, the teacher was the only proficient speaker in the classroom. The researcher had to modify her language when communicating with or giving instructions to the participants in order to ensure comprehension and/or compliance on the part of her listeners. Even so, there was little pressure to participants to perform at high levels of accuracy.

*Pre-teaching of vocabulary* and *drilling* activities were conducted in deliberate ways to provide familiarity and traditional scaffolding (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978) for non-MALL participants prior to the discussion of the selected weekly topic, and to hybrid and MALL participants prior to working on the app. These types of activities are identified as *language-focused learning/input* in Nation and Newton’s (2009, p. 7) Four Strands theory. The ultimate aim of this approach is to deal with messages, but the short-term aim is to learn language items. For all participants, learning vocabulary and participating in drilling had two effects (out of the four that Nation and Newton (2009, p. 8) suggested). They added directly to participants’ implicit knowledge; and they raised consciousness to help in later learning. It was also observed that the conditions that caused these effects were: the topic was familiar to participants, not complex; and it strengthened the knowledge that they already had about the topic; and the vocabulary (in the form of word, phrase or expression) was simple and not dependent on developmental knowledge that the learners did not have, was easy to remember and was usable for their immediate everyday interaction.

Group discussions were conducted to involve participants in listening and speaking activities and to demonstrate how the pre-taught vocabulary and drillings could be applied in conversation. The goal was also for participants to talk about things that they were familiar with
and to convey information to other people in the group. In Nation and Newton’s (2009) Four Strands theory, the participants’ listening activities are identified as *meaning-focused input* and the speaking activities as *meaning-focused output*. The participants’ meaning-focused input was increased, as they paid attention to the researcher’s input whilst trying to comprehend what they heard. When speaking, a participant’s attention was on conveying ideas and messages to another person (meaning-focused output). Providing appropriate responses (by speaking up) in discussions was a struggle for some participants because they either were not able to comprehend what they heard, did not have or did not know the appropriate words to use, were shy, or lacked confidence. Only confident participants were actively involved at first, while the others required more time to gain the confidence and courage to speak up in front of a big group. Finally, the *building sentences* exercise falls under Nation and Newton’s (2009) *develop fluency* strand. This let participants demonstrate that they were able to use the learnt vocabulary in the right context in the sentences they created.

### 7.1.2 Differences in learning environments

The main difference between the three learning environments was that the hybrid and MALL scenarios included a technology component in *Step 3*, to assist participants in acquiring vocabulary through the use of a tablet and mobile language app (*Think English!*). The mobile element had instigated a *student-centred* instructional setting (Hirumi, 2002; Nunan, 1995; Tudor, 1993), specifically the *communicative* approach (Harmer, 2007, p. 69; Lightbown & Spada, 2013), in place of the teacher-centred learning environment of non-MALL. In a student-centred instructional approach, the learners’ needs and experiences are central to the learning and, at the same time, the teacher’s role transitions into a facilitator’s role (Harmer, 2007; Hirumi, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Nunan, 1995). This setting promotes learners as active knowledge seekers, constructing their own knowledge and meaning. For example, even though the participants were assigned a topic of the day, they were not restricted from exploring other topics on the app, or from looking for additional information on the internet; in other words, the learning was self-paced, and participants were given direct access and freedom to choose topics and/or activities that interested them, or that they felt were relevant for their learning. To the participants, the teacher’s facilitator role included becoming the resource who provided information, help and support when needed.

*Step 3* placed the emphasis on interactions and conversations between the teacher and the participants (*teacher-student*), and between the participants in pair-work (*student-student*). Vocabulary items were delivered in the form of *meaning-focused input* (Nation and Newton, 2009) via the app, where participants paid attention to the ideas and messages conveyed by the
language; that is, through listening to dialogue, watching videos, and being a listener in a conversation. Participants then assessed their comprehension of what had been presented to them by means of scored exercises alongside the app activities. The features of the mobile app allowed for repeatable activities and exercises and offered numerous language resources that were accessible off-line (once downloaded to a mobile device). These features increased the likelihood that learning and vocabulary would be acquired by the participants, as opposed to non-MALL settings where discourse material and opportunities for learning were limited to delivery by the teacher, the presence of the teacher, and participants’ attendance in the non-MALL sessions.

7.2 Challenges

In implementing the learning environments, a few challenges were observed that include: group learning; difficulty understanding and comprehending Australian English; reading comprehension; and intelligible pronunciation.

7.2.1 Group learning

Every session was attended by an average of 15 learners (participants and non-participants). Thus, non-MALL sessions, and Steps 1 and 2 of MALL sessions, were delivered to a large group with a teacher/learner ratio of 1:15. It is argued that a whole class grouping reinforces a sense of belonging amongst the learners (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 97) as they are involved in the same activities, may have common points of reference to talk about, receive the same instructions and material from the teacher (teacher-centred), and have the opportunity to share stories and emotions (happiness or amusement).

However, in the context of this research, not all participants were proactive and responsive, so there were limitations and challenges with this large group learning.

- Individual participants did not have much of a chance to say anything on their own. As the teacher determined the direction of the discourse, it was natural that there was more teacher-talking time (TTT) than student-talking time (STT). Individual participants had very little opportunity to produce language within this time and, when they did, it was usually in the form of a short response to the teacher’s question. The most typical response was the Initiation/Response/Evaluation (IRE) exchange, where the teacher asked a question, participants answered, and the teacher evaluated the response (Cazden, 1988).
- The participants lacked interest in discovering/researching for themselves, as knowledge was transmitted or ‘given’ to them.
• Communication between individual participants was more difficult in a large group of fifteen, compared to smaller groups where they could speak quietly and less formally.
• Some participants refused to speak in front of the whole group due to shyness or through wanting to avoid a public failure.
• The classroom was the only contact that some participants had with English, and many did not continue learning or speaking English outside the classroom.
• For some participants, irregularity of attendance became a setback in otherwise continuous one-week-interval conversational group meetings. This resulted in the progression towards participants’ word bank expansion taking longer. More improvements could have been made in participants’ listening comprehension and speaking skills if they had been more consistent in attendance.

7.2.2 Difficulty understanding and comprehending Australian English

As migrants in Australia, English became an additional language that participants had to be able to use for communicating with the wider Australian community. For non-MALL participants, English became their L2, L3 or L4, while for hybrid and MALL participants, English was their L2. A common problem participants faced was the difficulty of communicating with Australian English speakers, particularly those with a broad accent, as they found it hard to comprehend what they heard. As a consequence, they were not able to respond appropriately; for example, they would provide an incomplete response, respond in error because they misunderstood the entire message, understood only part of the message, might not respond at all because they feared making a mistake, did not have any response to offer as they did not know any usable words, or had some things to say but were unable to express them.

The discourses in non-MALL and Steps 1 and 2 of MALL were somewhat controlled, where the topics were familiar to the participants and easy to understand. This allowed participants to feel confident enough to speak up and to share their ideas. However, participants who lacked confidence would keep quiet and the questions they might have were left unanswered. Participants who spoke Malay, which is the teacher’s L1, benefitted as they could speak with the teacher in Malay, and occasionally the teacher helped them to understand better through translation or simplified explanations. Using L1 in adult ESL classroom to assist understanding was advantageous for these participants, as suggested by Erben et al. (2009) and Miralles-Lombardo et al. (2008), as the learners and the instructor were able to discuss complex lessons or issues in L1, leading to higher levels of understanding. However, this could not be applied too frequently in the sessions as the case study participants were multilinguals, the sessions were
contained within a restricted time frame, and the teacher wanted to provide equal attention to all participants within this allocated time.

When performing the activities and undertaking exercises on the app, all hybrid and MALL participants faced similar challenges of comprehending dialogue and conversations on the ‘first go’. However, several features of the app provided solutions to this problem as participants were able to replay the dialogue and videos as many times as needed, or use the Transcript facility.

7.2.3 Reading comprehension

All hybrid and MALL participants were literate in L1 and the majority were established L1 readers. In general, participants did not do much English reading in their own time, and reading was limited to basic and simple everyday materials such as store fliers, menus and other non-complex texts. As a result, they found that the reading they had to do when using the app in MALL was ‘extensive’. They found it difficult to read and comprehend texts (instructions and information about the app activities and exercises), even though some had previous English education. All participants struggled and were generally poor English readers. Some had to re-learn to read, and began with familiarising themselves with the sounds of the Roman alphabet. They needed to read sentences while at the same time comprehending individual meanings of words and, where possible, making the connection in context. Others, who had previous English knowledge, had to ‘brush-up’ their reading skills. The app facilities, such as the visual and audio, and transcript/read-along and recording, could be used by participants to adjust their developed L1 reading skills to English, and to get the practice they needed to develop comprehension. Only a few participants were capable of using these facilities, and it was beyond the scope of this research to evaluate the effectiveness of these features in developing participants’ reading skills.

7.2.4 Intelligible pronunciation

Pre-teaching of vocabulary and drilling in all learning environments included some elements of pronunciation practice to make participants aware of the different sounds and sound features/stresses that could help improve their speaking. This awareness provided extra information about spoken English and helped achieve improved comprehension and intelligibility (able to use pronunciation which was good enough to be understood). In everyday life, a lack of intelligibility results in a failure to communicate effectively. Pronunciation was a challenge for most participants because of differences between the sound system of their L1 and English. According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), it is widely believed that the degree of
difference between the learner’s L1 and the target language can lead to greater difficulty, and learners can take longer to pronounce the target language vocabulary accurately and fluently. As adults, it was more difficult for participants to pick up the English sounds than for young children. This is in line with Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle’s (1978) view that the critical period for language acquisition is the first few years of life with language learning becoming much more difficult and less successful beyond this period.

The participants came from Arabic, Dari/Farsi, French, Malay, Mandarin and Japanese linguistic groups, all of which had noticeable differences in pronouncing certain words, resulting in similar pronunciation mistakes in each group. However, according to Munro and Derwing (1995), the presence of a strong foreign accent is not the cause of reduced intelligibility or comprehensibility. The use of the app as a repeat practice tool in the hybrid and MALL helped some participants to increase intelligibility and comprehensibility. This supports Lightbown and Spada’s (2013) proposition that an effective pronunciation instruction requires a combination of de-contextualisation (learning about a single/standalone vocabulary) and contextualisation (learning the vocabulary in context), exposure, experience, and motivation. It is important to note that, for the participants, the purpose of improving their conversational skill is not to achieve an Australian-like speaking ability but to be able to pronounce their words intelligibly so that their speech could be understood. This can support meaningful conversations with other English speakers.

A study conducted by Purcell and Suter (1980) on 61 non-native speakers of English who were all post-critical period learners, examined twenty factors that might affect learning of the English sound system and found that the factors most strongly related to success in pronunciation were the number of years the learner had lived in an English-speaking country, the number of months the learner had lived with native English speakers, the learner's first language, the learner's desire to have accurate pronunciation, and the learner's skill at mimicry. In general, they found that classroom factors, like the quantity of English lessons and whether the teachers were native English speakers, were not important. In the context of this research, the number of years the participants had lived in Australia had little impact on their improvement in pronunciation. Of greater impact was their own efforts in taking advantage of the considerable opportunities to communicate and interact with diverse and varied English speakers. Also, in contrast to Purcell and Suter’s finding, classroom attendance and participation were important factors for participants as that was the only time they were able to focus their attention on learning and practicing pronunciation. Particularly for hybrid and MALL participants, this was also the only opportunity they had to use the language app as a tool for pronunciation practice.
7.3 Benefits

Some benefits were observed from implementing a range of different learning environments. These include: student-centred learning; meaningful content as an aid for vocabulary acquisition; and opportunity for repeat practice.

7.3.1 Student-centred learning

Hybrid and MALL learning environment participants experienced learning vocabulary in a student-centred instructional setting in Step 3. The teacher was not at the front of the whole group as they sat back and listened. Instead, the teacher’s role transformed into a facilitator, moving among the participants and interacting with them while they were working on a tablet. This allowed the teacher time to work with one or two pairs while the other participants continued working. Participants were aware that the teacher was available for support and assistance, and the teacher walked around the room helping to resolve participants’ issues and offering solutions. In other words, the facilitating teacher provided support or scaffolding (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978) to the participants. As the participants were able to interact with the teacher individually or in pairs on a more personal level, the amount of speaking/talking time any one participant received in class increased (that is, less TTT and more STT).

Interaction also occurred in pair work between a participant and her partner. The student-centred setting encouraged negotiation (Erben et al., 2009; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Nation & Newton, 2009), which is an essential component of conversational skill and development. Nation and Newton (2009, p. 98) describe the benefits of interaction as they relate to negotiation of meaning between partners,

> Overall, interaction helps language learning by providing opportunities to learn from others, often through negotiation, and by speakers having to adjust their output to communicate with others. This interaction helps learning by providing plenty of comprehensible input, by encouraging pushed output, by making learners aware of what they do not know, and by helping learners develop the language and strategies needed for interaction.

MALL participants were seen negotiating meaning when interacting with each other through speaking (output) and active listening (input), where both worked to understand each other and work together on the app. Negotiation of meaning occurred in pair work despite different levels of proficiency between the partners, whether beginner, intermediate or advanced. Erben et al. (2009, p. 85) listed communication strategies used by advanced speakers when negotiating, for example: when requesting help ("How do you say...?"); clarification checks ("Did you mean...?"); self-corrections ("No, no...let me explain..."); comprehension checks ("Let
me repeat that so we are on the same page...”); confirmation checks (“I get it now…”); circumlocutions (“You know... that air ball thingy in the sky...”); redundancies (“The big, large, huge traffic jam...”); and so forth. This process is also identified as peer-to-peer scaffolding (Bull et al., 1999; Gutierrez, 2006; Hsieh, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). However, for MALL participants who were generally of lower level proficiencies, the strategies used were limited and the language used for interaction and negotiation was basic; for example, they used “How to say...?”, “What?”, “This OK?”, “This right?”, “This correct?”, and “Can repeat?” Even though at a very basic level, and not free from errors, these strategies increased participants’ speaking, listening and comprehension activities. Jenkins (2002) notes that communication activities between English learners with different L1 are a good way of encouraging intelligibility, as they focus on understanding each other in order to get their message across. In the hybrid and MALL learning environments, this pair-work interaction was meaningful, and for shy participants lacking confidence, this interaction avoided the embarrassment of being corrected in public.

In this student-centred learning setting, participants were left to work and interact independently without the necessary and total guidance of the teacher, thus promoting learner independence and cooperation, and helping make the hybrid and MALL learning environments more relaxed and friendly. To maintain the relaxed and non-formal atmosphere of all three learning environments, the teacher did not use corrective feedback as in formal classrooms. Corrective feedback is appropriate if the goal is to provide learners with explicit, form-focused instruction and immediate correction of errors so that learners are aware of mistakes. This helps prevent the formation of bad habits (Erben et al., 2009; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In the context of this research, however, participants did not benefit from sophisticated linguistic explanations as they were not necessary, would result in a loss of valuable time, and might cause embarrassment to some, and thus discourage them from speaking. In addition, immediate reaction to errors was not conducive, as one objective of the conversational program was to develop fluency in an oral communication setting for BICS. Lynch (1996), Harmer (2007) and Lightbown and Spada (2013) argue that it is unnecessary to interrupt students when they are engaging in communicative activities because it might interrupt their conversational flow, while the act of communicating itself helps the language learning process. In all the learning sessions (non-MALL, hybrid, and MALL), a participant’s error was only corrected when the error was persistent and especially when it was shared by the others in the group, at which time it was important to bring the matter to their attention.
In all three learning environments, assessment of participants’ progress was not as appropriate as in formal classrooms implementing teacher-centred or student-centred instructional approaches. It was difficult to assess and monitor participants’ performance due to limitations in time, and participants not maintaining continuity in attending sessions. This approach also benefitted participants, as less pressure was imposed on them to study or to complete homework. Yates et al. (2015) argue that assessment is an important ingredient in developing confidence in language learners because, through it, they are able to see and keep track of their progress, understand and making sense of the learning process as a whole, and keep motivated on their learning journey. The closest participants came to assessment was the scoring of the quizzes or exercises on the app that the hybrid and MALL participants attempted, which indicated the number of right answers successfully achieved. Participants experienced a sense of achievement and reward whenever they achieved a perfect score and some participants were willing to attempt an activity many times before getting all the answers correct.

### 7.3.2 Meaningful content aids vocabulary acquisition

One of the roles of the researcher as the teacher was to plan and deliver meaningful and useful content for participants to acquire vocabulary for use in their interactions. Participants in all three learning environments responded well to topics that were simple and relevant for their everyday functional conversational use (BICS). Generally, participants acquired vocabulary items that were non-complex, easily understood, and easily pronounced, which made it easier for them to remember and recall whenever the words were needed. In non-MALL, the vocabulary that the participants acquired was from pre-planned topics and also from spontaneous situations that occurred along the way. The lessons planned for non-MALL were more flexible when compared to hybrid and MALL. For the latter environments, the researcher planned the lessons around the pre-set topics on the app, and executed the lessons following the Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 sequence. All three environments emphasised participants’ vocabulary acquisition, to help improve their conversational abilities (speaking and listening skills, and comprehension).

Vocabulary acquisition occurred when the words were deliberately learnt by or taught to participants, or when the participants received input or information about the words from their interactions (incidental learning). Newton’s (1993) study suggested that when learners discuss the meanings of vocabulary from a textual source with each other, for the majority of the words discussed, the most useful information about the words is provided by the learners themselves. Some of the participants in this research already knew basic and high frequency words, and some might have known or been familiar with many other words through previous encounters.
This knowledge, that was already possessed, helped in learning the new vocabulary. The sources of information about vocabulary items (mainly the meanings) came from: the teacher while steering the discussion with the whole group; textual context provided on the worksheet; drilling activities; interaction by the group members with the teacher and with each other; and group members themselves when they shared the sentences that they attempted to make, using the vocabulary/words that they learnt for the day. There was usually some possibility that a participant or a group member already knew something about the vocabulary. The hybrid and MALL participants received information through similar processes as non-MALL participants (in Step 1 and Step 2 of MALL), with additional information received in Step 3, from the app activities and exercises.

The app was designed to provide adult English language learners with sources of material that was meaningful, rich and authentic in an Australian context. This was achieved with the aid of interactive images and videos; audio that linked texts with their visual representation, as well as visuals of gestures and displays of different emotions in videos, and dialogue that demonstrated various sounds of realistic Australian accents (K. S. Ahmad, Sudweeks, & Armarego, 2017). A substantial source of vocabulary from sixty topics and subtopics was accessible on the app for the participants to use. If participants downloaded the app onto their own tablet, the learning material would be accessible to them 24/7, which allowed them unlimited practice, anytime and anywhere. Erben et al. (2009, p. 141) state that the use of a wide range of authentic language sources exposes learners to real language use in context and also to cultural information. In addition, learners who listen to authentic oral material exhibit greater overall listening comprehension (Vandergrift, 2006). The app therefore became a valuable teaching resource for the researcher in her role as a facilitator, who, as a non-native English speaker, was unable to provide authentic pronunciation and nuances of the language, particularly in Australian English. The app had a collection of dialogues that demonstrated Australian language in use, vocabulary that was used in context, and topics common to everyday language practices in Australia, which were the examples that participants would find most beneficial outside the conversational program.

7.3.3 Opportunity for repeat practice

The level of complexity of a topic and its related vocabulary is exclusive to an individual learner based on the noticing factor (Ellis, 1990; Nation & Newton, 2009; Schmidt, 1990); that is, exposure or non-exposure before encountering the topic in a group discussion/conversation (non-MALL) or on the app (hybrid and MALL). Some participants found some vocabulary items more difficult to understand, while others did not, as they already had some knowledge about
the topic. The advantage of using the app was that the activities and exercises could be repeated as many times as required, and the scoring of the exercises provided scaffolding and led to familiarisation with and retaining of the vocabulary. With the varied levels of reading ability and comprehension, it was hard to know how much of the material the participants actually understood on the first attempt and the number of repetitions needed to reach meaningful comprehension. With more time and opportunity for repeat practice, comprehension and retention improved through noticing and retrieval (Baddeley, 1997) factors. Participants also had the choice of personalising their learning by choosing the activities and exercises they were interested in, to self-pace, and to focus on areas that needed more work. The consolidation of all the app activities and exercises that the hybrid and MALL participants attempted through the 4 to 5 MALL lessons resulted in an enriched learning experience, and exposure to and familiarity with a myriad of topics and vocabulary items. These participants used the app as a ‘reusable’ resource for pronunciation practice, listening practice, and reading comprehension, unlike non-MALL where participants had to depend solely on the researcher’s prescribed learning material of the day. The hybrid learning participants had the added advantage of learning four to five additional topics from the non-MALL sessions, prior to commencing their learning in MALL.

### 7.4 Impact of MALL

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the themes emerging from learning environment (see Figure 4-23 – non-MALL, Figure 5-15 - Hybrid and Figure 6-12 - MALL) were grouped into the key factors (Figure 7-1) of vocabulary learning environment, learner characteristics, and technology.

![Figure 7-1: Factors impacting migrant women's vocabulary learning](image-url)
The first factor, the *Vocabulary learning environment*, refers to the learning setting where vocabulary was taught to and learnt by participants. The second factor, *Learner characteristics*, refers to individual differences that are inherent in the participants who were second (third or fourth) language adult learners. Finally, the third factor, *Technology*, refers to the integration of the tablet (mobile device), and the language app (mobile application) as the learning tool in assisting and enhancing the learning experience (hybrid and MALL).

### 7.4.1 Vocabulary learning environment

The type of learning environment where the vocabulary lessons were delivered to participants (non-MALL, hybrid, or MALL), affected their acquisition, as each environment offered different attributes (Table 7:1).

| Table 7-1: Vocabulary Learning Environment attributes |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                 | Non-MALL        | Hybrid          | MALL            |
| Instructor role | Teacher         | Teacher (Step 1 and Step 2 MALL) | Teacher (Step 1 and Step 2 MALL) |
|                 |                  | Facilitator (Step 3 MALL)           | Facilitator (Step 3 MALL)         |
| Meaningful content | Teacher plans and delivers vocabulary lesson based on the selected topic for group discussion | Teacher plans and delivers vocabulary lesson based on the selected topic for group discussion (non-MALL session) | Teacher plans and delivers vocabulary lesson to support the day's app topic (Step 1 and Step 2 MALL) |
|                  |                  | Teacher plans and delivers vocabulary lesson to support the day's app topic (Step 1 and Step 2 MALL) | Participants work on the content (activities and exercises) on the day's app topic (Step 3 of MALL) |
|                  |                  | Participants work on the content (activities and exercises) on the day's app topic (Step 3 of MALL) |
| Learner grouping | Group learning   | Group learning (non-MALL)            | Group learning (Step 1 and Step 2 MALL) |
|                  |                  | Group learning (Step 1 and Step 2 MALL) | Group learning (Step 1 and Step 2 MALL) |
|                  |                  | Pair-work (Step 3 MALL)              | Pair-work (Step 3 MALL)           |
|                  |                  |                                |                                |

The researcher, being the coordinator of the conversational English program at the community centre, took on the teacher role in the non-MALL, hybrid, and MALL learning environments conducted in the regular conversational program slot. With a dual role as a bilingual/bicultural staff member of the community centre and as a teacher, the researcher also helped to provide a safe and familiar learning environment for the participants. According to Miralles-Lombardo et al. (2008) and Yates et al. (2015), learning in a relaxed and informal learning environment with a bilingual/bicultural teacher/interlocutor helps provide feelings of ease for adult English.
learners of multicultural background, as they perceive that the teacher provides support and understanding that is in tune with the different needs of their community. Some of the participants had known the researcher prior to their involvement in the research, which established a form of connection and trust. The researcher was also able to gauge and understand the participants’ learning needs and the level of complexity of a topic and vocabulary that they could comprehend.

The role of the researcher transformed from that of being a teacher, teaching the whole group of learners in the non-MALL learning environment, into a facilitator in the hybrid and MALL learning environments. The presence of the researcher was viewed as important by all participants as she provided them with support in her teacher/facilitator role, ‘being there for them’: in other words, she provided them with the scaffolding that they needed. In general, the MALL Step 3 participants could be considered as independent learners because they work in pairs, and they approached the researcher in her role as teacher only when they encountered operational or language-related problems when working on the app. Some higher proficiency participants preferred to work individually. Most participants did not seem to be interested in working on the app at home, by themselves, in their own time, as they did not have the presence of the teacher to ask questions or to help resolve any problem or issues they might encounter.

When working in pairs, there was inevitable imbalance in proficiency levels between the learner partners. Some of the observations regarding this disparity were: a higher level participant felt that she could learn faster if paired with a similar level or higher proficiency partner; a lower proficiency partner felt confident when working with a higher proficiency partner; and a higher proficiency partner was usually willing to assist their partner. In addition, a few advantages were found with this arrangement, as indicated in Thompson’s (1996) list of three advantages of pair-work: (i) pair-work activities provide the learners with safe opportunities to try out ideas before sharing them in public; (ii) partnership leads to more developed ideas, and therefore greater confidence and more effective communication; and (iii) partners can provide knowledge and skills that may complement their partner’s, which in turn leads to greater success in doing tasks. The hybrid and MALL participants demonstrated that they felt free to express their ideas and opinions, because they were comfortable working with their peers whom they thought had similar or higher level of language proficiency and knowledge. This feeling developed their level of confidence and self-esteem helping them to speak and produce more accurate and appropriate language, which in turn provided more input for their counterpart. As previously noted, the hybrid and MALL learning settings also encouraged negotiation between partners (Erben et al., 2009; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 2013;
Nation & Newton, 2009), teacher-learner scaffolding (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978); and peer-to-peer scaffolding (Bull et al., 1999; Gutierrez, 2006; Hsieh, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978).

The non-MALL environment was more flexible and allowed the teacher more opportunities to include spontaneous and contextually sensitive teaching moments when delivering the lessons. This provided a beneficial add-on to the topic lesson, and participants learnt new vocabulary ‘on the fly’. In contrast, with the lessons in hybrid and MALL, the teacher was restricted to align Steps 1 and 2 with pre-set app topics and vocabulary items in Step 3, within the limited time period of approximately 100 minutes for each session. The researcher had to ensure that the components of a MALL sessions were completed within their allocated time frame. However, the add-on advantage of hybrid and MALL learning was that the app feature provided a myriad of learning resources, in the form of visual, textual and aural elements that enriched participants’ vocabulary learning.

### 7.4.2 Learner characteristics

The participants’ individual characteristics (L1 and English literacy/education background, the learning distractions they encountered, confidence level and pronunciation capabilities) played important roles in their vocabulary acquisition.

**L1 and English literacy/education background**

The participants’ L1 and English literacy levels affected their vocabulary acquisition of English as their second, third or fourth language. This supports the findings of Bigelow and Tarone (2004) and Tarone et al. (2007) that the acquisition of English as a second language might be impacted by the level of oral and written proficiency in L1 and in English, and exposure to and experience with literacy in and outside of formal education settings (for example, the number of years of formal schooling in the home country).

The participants’ L1 literacy backgrounds were mixed (Table 7-2). They had varying levels of English literacy (Table 4-3 and Table 6-5): no exposure to and/or knowledge of English at pre-migration; learnt English formally in school in their home country but did not have enough practice and thus unable to use it in Australia; or, since arriving in Australia, gained the knowledge, familiarisation, or practice through formal adult education, the workplace, domestic surroundings, or interaction with other people.
Table 7-2: Participants’ diverse L1 literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-MALL</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>MALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-literate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-alphabet literate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Roman alphabet literate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman alphabet literate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The typology of L1 literacy adapted from Burt, Peyton, and Adams (2003) and Burt et al. (2008)*

Except for two semi-literate learners in non-MALL, all participants were L1 literate and possessed basic L1 skills, and were able to draw on the knowledge that they already had. The influence and effects of a learner’s L1 knowledge on their target language use and knowledge is referred to as *transfer* or *interference* (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). However, what is transferred is primarily conceptual knowledge rather than specific linguistic elements (Cummins, 1991). According to Kellerman (1986), over time, learners can develop intuitions about which language features they can transfer from their L1 to the target language and which are less likely to be transferable. This becomes more apparent as more is learned about the target language leading to a stronger intuition, and learners are able to identify similarities that they had not perceived at an earlier stage (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In this research, it was observed that participants whose L1 was Malay and French (who used the Roman alphabet and learnt English in school) acquired the concepts and transferred with more ease, as there are some similarities between Malay and French, and the English language. In comparison, Arabic and Mandarin are not like English and use the Roman alphabet, making transfer more complicated or unlikely. However, participants seemed able to use the knowledge that they already had to help make sense of what they were currently learning.

An example of a transfer process in non-MALL and MALL was when participants made notes to retain new vocabulary items (in non-MALL, and Steps 1 and 2 in MALL). The rate of writing and the extent and the amount of notes a participant made varied depending on her L1 literacy level and her familiarity with writing and reading using the Roman alphabet. Nation and Newton (2009) posit that, in a formal classroom, note-taking is a *meaning-focused* listening activity and serves two purposes: it stores information for later use; and it provides the opportunity to encode information. These are called the storage effect and the encoding effect. The encoding effect meant changing from one form of organisation of ideas to another form of organisation. The participants wrote their own notes based on what they felt was important and useful for them to refer to again. L1 notes were a useful resource for participants as they serve as a
scaffold (Ochi, 2009; Schmitt, 2000) to support new knowledge acquisition before working on the app. The impact of working on the app was that participants were not required to write any notes; instead, they applied the knowledge that they gained in the previous steps and focused on the activities, their reading comprehension and their listening comprehension (listening to and watching videos, comprehending the message alongside reading the information, and attempting the exercises on the app).

**Learning distractions**

There were five main issues that distracted participants from learning. First, distraction was experienced by mothers who brought their children along to the MALL sessions, where they had to divide their attention between the MALL session and their children. Second, high noise levels were a distraction from activities in *Step 3* of MALL; for example, the tablet itself, the children, and the pair-work grouping of participants and non-participants (who were talking and/or discussing the work they were doing on the app). Usually, and unintentionally, the noise was overwhelming and bothered some people. However, participants were tolerant and cooperated when reminded to keep their noise level down. Third, specifically during pair-work, it could be distracting when participants of the same L1 worked together causing them to veer away from the point of an exercise, and talk about something else completely. The chances of 'misbehaviour’ were greater with pair-work than in the teacher-fronted/whole group learning setting (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The fourth distraction occurred during the brief period of adjustment at the beginning of the tablet use, as the participants had varying experience with using technologies such as the tablet as a tool for learning in a classroom. Participants had to familiarise themselves with navigating the app. This distraction was soon resolved when participants identified the functions of navigation buttons and became familiar with the organisation of the topics and sub-topics of the app, and also realised that the functionality of the tablet was similar to the smartphone. The final distraction, which also challenged the participants, was that they had to do intensive reading when using the app. This reflected the fact that many were struggling readers. To resolve this, participants either received help from the teacher or from their higher proficiency peer, or applied guesswork until they achieved the right answer, or just skipped that part of the exercise.

**Confidence level and pronunciation capability**

Some participants already possessed a high level of self-confidence, where they voluntarily spoke, asked questions, or shared jokes and stories, despite using only broken English with a limited choice of words. Some participants required more time to adjust and gain self-confidence before being able to speak in a large group. The participants’ confidence level and
English proficiency levels were influenced by their pre-migration and post-migration English exposure, their education background, and their post-migration English usage opportunities (K. S. Ahmad et al., 2017). The participants who proactively sought and took advantage of the opportunities to use and speak English were more likely to expand their word bank; therefore, they had more words to choose from when interacting with other English speakers.

According to Yates et al. (2015), some people become very anxious when they are learning a language, thus allaying these fears and anxieties is a very important part of building confidence, in addition to building positive feelings of security, competence, a sense of belonging, a strong sense of identity, and a sense of purpose. In this research, it was hard to measure whether these various positives had been achieved. However, from the researcher’s rapport with the participants, it appeared that participants who had slowly gained self-confidence were speaking more, with greater self-assurance, and could communicate their point without worrying if they made errors. In other words, their participation in non-MALL and/or MALL had led to some form of confidence. Some examples of activities that encouraged confidence were memorising personal phrases and vocabulary (memorised question and answer monologues about themselves which led to participants being able to confidently hold a conversation about themselves, or ask questions to/about others, or provide information about themselves when on official business), drilling (a classic technique for building confidence in participants by memorising chunks of language, formulaic expressions, patterns and practicing vocalisation of the new language), and working with a partner. Compared to the non-MALL and MALL-only learning environments, the hybrid learning environment helped increase participants’ confidence because they had extended learning time that was enriched through using the app in addition to the non-MALL learning.

The guided drilling sessions for the non-MALL participants were usually limited to four to five sentences. The hybrid and MALL participants had more advantages than the non-MALL participants because they had the opportunity to extend their practice beyond the guided drilling initiated by the researcher in Step 2, by using the app in Step 3. The participants could not only use the specific sections such as Practice Speaking or self-drill, but they had abundant samples of speech/expressions to listen to from the app that could be used for self-practice pronunciation. The videos and audio in the app provided authentic and varied material for participants to learn how words are pronounced and the ‘real pattern’ of expression in conversations by Australian English speakers.
7.4.3 Technology

The integration of MALL changed the dynamics of the learning environment of the regular conversational English program at the community centre. The participants of the hybrid and MALL learning environments appeared to be adapting well (in varying degrees) to the idea and the use of the tablet and app in Step 3. Step 3 became more relaxed and lively as opposed to Steps 1 and 2 (or non-MALL), where the settings were teacher-fronted and the participants sat back and had the choice of whether they wanted to participate in the Initiation/Response/Evaluation (IRE) exchange with the teacher (teacher asked a question, participants answered, and the teacher evaluated the response). In Step 3, participants (and non-participants) were fully occupied as they worked with their partners on the app while the teacher went around the classroom and attended to questions about operating the tablet, navigating the app, or just general questions regarding the activities and exercises on the app. All hybrid and MALL participants gradually adapted to operating the tablet as its functions were similar to those of their smartphones. As discussed previously, one of the challenges participants faced was reading and comprehending the English texts on the app. The scaffolding provided by the teacher included the *noticing* factor (Ellis, 1990; Nation & Newton, 2009; Schmidt, 1990) that was in play in Steps 1 and 2, and the *retrieval* factor (Baddeley, 1997) when participants performed repeat practices of app activities and exercises. These scaffolding strategies helped participants improve their comprehension of what they read, and what they saw and heard on the videos and audio.

*Scaffolding*

When learning in a MALL environment, participants were given ‘temporary support’ that helped them to complete the activities and exercises or tasks that the app provided. Inexperienced learners learned from working with someone more experienced than themselves, so they were ‘scaffolded’ by the knowledge and expertise of the latter (Hsieh, 2017). Different examples of scaffolding were found throughout the implementation of MALL, including digital, peer-to-peer, multi-directional, and individual scaffolding.

The in-built scaffolding on the app let participants interact with key learning and design supports, such as transcripts, hints, glossaries, *back* button, *play* button, definitions, *talking* flashcard, *talking* phrases, and others. These features are viewed as digital or technical scaffolds with the potential to support learners learn “… by facilitating understanding and problem solving” (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012, p. 21). Another form of digital scaffolding is when participants go online to a dictionary website (e.g. Google Translate) or switch to an alternative other downloaded L1-English dictionary app, to find meanings of words. The use of online
resources has been widely acknowledged as providing benefits and scaffolding in helping language learners to construct knowledge (Hughes, 2013; Marchionini, 2006). When participant accesses a digital scaffold and uses it to help her partner better understand vocabulary or language or construct knowledge, this is referred to as peer-to-peer scaffolding. The available resources played the role of an expert that empowered one learner to scaffold the other towards correct language use (Hsieh, 2017).

When two participants in pair-work obtain scaffolding from offline and online resources and then use these to support each other’s understanding as they engage in the meaning-making process, this type of scaffolding pattern reinforces the co-construction of shared understanding and is known as multi-directional scaffolding (Hsieh, 2017). Individual scaffolding occurs when a participant uses digital scaffolds, for example, the *Practice Speaking* section of the app, to practice her speaking and pronunciation, resulting in self-correction. As such, self-correction represents language learning in progress. In a traditional collaborative learning activity, students and teachers are a source of scaffolding, but in a MALL learning environment, the sources of scaffolding are greatly expanded to include the app’s online and offline resources. Hannafin and Land (1997, p. 194) claim that, in such an environment, “Scaffolding ... is not limited solely to student-student and teacher-student interactions. Rather, technology-enhanced environments often provide the conceptual scaffolding and means (resources, tools) to promote personal and individual reflection.”

The digital scaffolds present in mobile-assisted language learning and the utilisation of these scaffolds enriched participants’ learning and became a contributing factor in participants’ vocabulary acquisition, and their language learning in general. Simultaneously, participants’ confidence in using these vocabulary items in their speech, and their confidence in speaking, were increased through features of the app. As participants undertook practice, completing the exercises successfully and satisfactorily, they had the option of attempting other topics at the same level, or moving up through the levels.

**Self-regulated/personalised learning**

The combination of the portability and affordability of the tablet enabled participants’ independent learning, or ‘proceed at your own pace’ learning outside the classroom. However, in the context of this research, this opportunity was difficult to realise, as participants were uncomfortable with setting their own agenda, and not confident enough to learn on their own, without the support or presence of the teacher. One of the problems they faced was that not all participants were able to read and understand technical instructions; for example, following the step-by-step guide to record their voice in the *Practice Speaking* section of the app. Participants...
also struggled with reading a transcript of a video conversation, as there were always words that they encountered and did not know.

However, in general, participants were able to follow through the app when: topics were non-complex; the language was simple and comprehensible; the accent in videos and audio were intelligible; and/or the vocabularies were easy to understand, pronounce and remember. When solving app exercises or resolving problems, participants and their partners negotiated with each other, consulted the teacher, or just used guesswork. The tablet and app promoted active participation and provided hands-on experience for participants in the hybrid and MALL learning environments, rather than participants just sitting back and observing, as in non-MALL sessions.

High proficiency participants had the option to download the app on their tablet or smartphone, and self-regulate their learning, in addition to using available scaffolds, even in the absence of an instructor’s support. This potential supports Falloon’s (2007) and Burston’s (2017) view that the combination of the portability and affordability features of mobile devices means that teachers and researchers are no longer tied to laboratory settings for exploring technology’s role in supporting learning. Because of the portability of the tablet, the hybrid and the MALL learning environments could be set up anywhere. While all the learning in this research study took place in the community centre building, it would have been possible to conduct lessons outside the building. In addition, when downloaded on a personal tablet there was the potential for language learning to continue occurring at participants’ own convenience of place and time, outside formal sessions.

**Tablet and app features**

The features of a tablet that drive educators to consider their use in the classroom include: portability and conveniently sized to fit in a medium-sized handbag; touch interface that is interactive, accessible to thousands of apps; built-in functionalities; and connectivity to the Internet via a wireless network (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). Applying the concept of affordances (Gibson, 1986) in regards to using an Android tablet (similar concept to an Android smartphone), these devices are easy to use, where a user intuitively knows the home button, that the single side-button is for unlocking the device, the double side-button is for the volume control for sound, the arrows within apps are for left and right movement, and so forth. These natural affordances are generally recognised by adults and young children who are non-readers, and help facilitate Android use, even with little to no technical support (Geist, 2012). This is similar situation to that of the hybrid and MALL participants, where these affordances helped them successfully operate the tablet. Additionally, the tablet display can be changed into
various languages and keyboard characters, which allows for customisation for non-English speaking learners or enrichment in teaching new languages. Another possibility for language learning enrichment is the presentation of vocabulary to the learner/participants in MALL where learning includes the use of text, image, animations, videos, and sound. In addition to the apps that are downloadable on to the tablet to support language learning, the tablet’s built-in camera, video capabilities, audio facility, and recording features makes it an all-in-one mobile and multimedia device, not only practical for use in a hybrid and MALL learning environment, but also in a self-regulated learning setting and/or when using another language app.

7.5 Summary

This chapter presented a cross-case analysis of non-MALL (Case Study 1), hybrid (Case Study 2), and MALL (Case Study 3) learning environments. The analyses involved an examination of the themes emerging from each within-case analysis, followed by the search for commonalities and differences across these cases, and finally a synthesis of these discoveries.

The similarities discovered include the non-formal nature of learning across the environments, and some of the learning activities experienced by participants. Each participant’s learning goal was to improve her spoken English, while the goal of the learning environment was to assist participants to acquire vocabulary to expand their word bank, which ultimately helped improve their spoken skills. The difference in the hybrid and MALL learning environments was the integration of the MALL element (the tablet and the language app) which transitioned the learning environment from a teacher-centred setting (non-MALL) to a student-centred (communicative) setting (MALL). The participants’ learning in MALL was enriched and more ‘hands-on’, with the app providing an additional source of material for learning vocabulary in particular, and the English language in general.

The challenges discovered during the implementation of the learning environments include: (i) participants commonly experienced problems in comprehending Australian English speech leading to avoidance and feeling shy when communicating with Australian English speakers; (ii) there were limited opportunities available for participants in the teacher-centred approach, as there was more TTT and less STT, resulting in a lack of confidence, with shy participants staying quiet and less active compared to higher proficiency, higher confidence participants (who need the practice less); (iii) the need for higher reading fluency by participants for more effective learning when using the app, as reading textual information was found generally to be a struggle among participants; and (iv) the need for participants to be able to pronounce their words intelligibly, so that their speech could be understood, to make engaging in conversation more meaningful.
A few benefits were discovered during the implementation of the learning environments. These include: (i) interactions and negotiations occurred more productively between teacher-student and student-student in hybrid and MALL settings, instigating the teacher role being transitioned into a facilitator role; (ii) there was less pressure on participants compared with learning in a formal learning classroom, as no corrective feedback or assessments was put in place; (iii) scaffolding provided support for participants' vocabulary learning; and (v) the tablet and the language app assisted both the teacher and the participants in the hybrid and MALL learning environment, as the digital device became a repository of rich and useful teaching and learning material, with various topics and content, available in textual form, videos, audio, and exercises, which are repeatable. These resources are relevant to everyday conversational topics, within the Australian context.

From the cross-case analysis, Vocabulary learning environment, Learner characteristics, and Technology, were identified as the key factors affecting migrant women's vocabulary acquisition.

- The type of vocabulary learning environment (non-MALL, hybrid, or MALL) where the vocabulary lessons were delivered, offered different attributes and learning experiences. Based on learners'/participants' literacy background and English literacy level, they may have different preferences for the type of learning environment that suits them.

- Learner characteristics, refers to participants' unique and individual backgrounds and these influence their vocabulary acquisition, entering non-MALL, hybrid, or MALL. These characteristics include: (i) participants' L1 and English literacy/education background which determines how easy or difficult their learning in these environments will be; (ii) the learning distractions impacting the learning process; and (iii) participants' varying confidence level and pronunciation capabilities were improved in all three learning environments, but the richer mobile language learning element helped participants to "improve more quickly".

- Technology refers to the integration of the tablet (mobile device), and the app (mobile application) as the digital tool assisting and enhancing participants' learning experiences in the hybrid and MALL learning environments. The teacher and the app provided the scaffolding for participants to complete the activities and exercises on the app. The combination of the rich content (that shows what language sounds like, looks like, and means) with a repeatability feature, the portability and affordability of the tablet, and the unlimited access to the learning resource, should have enabled participants' independent learning, inside and outside of the classroom. However, in the context of this research, this
was not achieved, as participants perceived they needed the support and presence of the teacher in their learning.

The following chapter concludes the thesis with an overview, research findings, limitations and a discussion of further research directions.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of the research and its findings. The aim of this research, as outlined in Chapter 1, was to investigate the impact of utilising MALL for migrant women English learner's vocabulary acquisition and its effects on the women's conversational skills. Leading to this chapter, the research developed a feasible framework of integrating MALL in non-formal English learning settings for migrant women learners. This framework helped develop learners' vocabulary acquisition and prompted increased overall improvement in their conversational fluency.

This chapter also discusses the implications of this research for the body of knowledge and the stakeholders, revisits the research questions, addresses the strengths and limitations of the research, and, finally, suggests possible areas for further research.

8.1 Overview of the research

This research is based on the underlying premise that MALL has been successful in improving language learning (Afzali et al., 2017; Burston, 2014c, 2017; Stockwell, 2008). However, the potential of MALL has not been fully utilised in informal English learning, particularly for migrant women. This research successfully integrates the use of MALL technology (a tablet and a language app) into a non-formal learning environment to support migrant women's English learning, paying particular attention to vocabulary acquisition. Improvement in vocabulary is claimed to increase learners' confidence, leading to overall improvement in conversational fluency (J. Ahmad, 2011; Elgort, 2011; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Nation & Newton, 2009).

The findings of this research were from the data collected and analysed from three case studies conducted on fifteen women: ten women in Case Study 1, who experienced learning vocabulary in an environment not assisted by technology (non-MALL); five women in Case Study 2, who experienced learning vocabulary in the same non-MALL environment, followed by learning vocabulary in an environment assisted by a language app on a tablet (hybrid); and five women in Case Study 3, who experienced learning vocabulary only in an environment assisted with a language app on a tablet (MALL). These environments provided learning experiences that impacted positively on each woman's vocabulary knowledge and acquisition, as the time spent and the effort dedicated to learning the vocabulary and attending the sessions enabled them (at varying levels and capabilities) to recall and/or pronounce the vocabulary (in the form of a word, a phrase or a simple statement) and be able to use it in a correct context or conversation.
The ease of acquisition depended on the individual’s own experience with the vocabulary, either as something new or vaguely familiar, thus learning about it expanded or enhanced their knowledge (Ellis, 1990; Nation & Newton, 2009; Schmidt, 1990).

The advantage of learning in a hybrid or MALL environment was that the use of the tablet and app enhanced learning. The interactive and multimedia features of these mobile technologies provided the women with a variety of enriching materials for learning vocabulary, and the teacher with more choices of material for teaching. The use of the tablet and the app also transitioned the learning environment from a traditional teacher-fronted setting to a student-centred setting. The latter, which was communicative in nature, encouraged a lot of negotiation of meaning (Erben et al., 2009; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Nation & Newton, 2009) between a learner and their partner, and with the teacher, even though with limited English capacity. Negotiation between pairs increased speaking opportunities, which was then translated into the confidence seen in the women in their interactions and conversations with their peers, the researcher, and other people at the community centre.

The framework for the hybrid and MALL learning environments created for this research effectively exploited mobile technologies, as it was implemented following Burston’s (2017) proposition. According to Burston, the MALL environment should be grounded in learning theory in general, and the principles of second language acquisition in particular, while the learners’ activities were student-centred, and encouraged learners to work collaboratively and communicatively. The research also identified the key factors that impacted the women’s vocabulary acquisition: the type of learning environment (with or without MALL); the women’s own individual characteristics; and the mobile technologies used to assist learning.

8.2 Research questions revisited

This section discusses the research questions posed in Chapter 1 in light of the findings discussed in the previous chapters.

RQ1: How is MALL integrated into the non-formal conversational English classroom for second language migrant women learners?

The conversational English program retained the original idea of non-formal and flexibility whilst integrating MALL. The premise of the conversational English program was to provide a learning space for people who struggle with English so that they could practice speaking in a relaxed and ‘safe’ setting. The flexibility aspects of the program referred to situations where learners: could attend the program regardless of L1 or English literacy levels; were allowed to
bring along their young children to the classroom; were not burdened with homework, examinations or assessments, or the need to take part in all activities; and were not forced to attend classes every week.

The long-running conversational English program loosely followed the teacher-centred instructional approach, where learners were considered ‘passive’. One of the MALL learning environment components required that learners work on the app activities and exercises, which inevitably transformed them into ‘active’ learners, and, overall, the instructional approach also transitioned to student-centred. As the teacher, the researcher planned the MALL learning environment to accommodate this change with as little surprise as possible to the migrant women learners. As such, the MALL learning environment combined a traditional teacher-centred instructional approach in the first half of the MALL session (Steps 1 and 2), with a student-centred approach in the second half of the MALL session (Step 3). Vocabulary, as the language item, was pre-taught in Steps 1 and 2 to the whole group of learners, for the purpose of familiarizing them with the vocabulary items, while further enhancement of understanding and comprehension took place in Step 3 when learners worked with a partner on the app activities and exercises. The content for Steps 1 and 2 was planned and designed by the researcher to be seamlessly connected to the content of Step 3.

**RQ2: What MALL factors affect migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition?**

In this research, MALL factors refer to the components that constitute a MALL learning environment and which include the use of a mobile device and a language app, the interactive and multimedia learning contents, and the enriched learning experience of the learners. The combination of the mobile device and the app created an effective tool to convey meaning to migrant women learners, through the use of rich multimedia content that provided visual and aural support for instruction.

The tablet is lightweight and portable, with features and functionalities such as connectivity, context sensitivity, individuality and social interactivity (Klopfer et al., 2002; Kukulska-Hulme, 2013; Nisbet & Austin, 2013), and is an all-in-one device that can replace the need for a language laboratory (Burston, 2017). With these factors combined, the tablet and the app were used effectively in the MALL learning environments to benefit the language learning of the migrant women. The concept of affordances (Geist, 2012; Gibson, 1986), where the women found the tablet familiar to use since it has similar features and functions as a smartphone, helped facilitate its use, so that the women were able to focus on the app activities and exercises. The use of tablet and app transformed the teacher-centred instructional approach to student-
centred, and initiated increased opportunities for scaffolding (individual, digital, peer to peer, and multi-directional), which play an important role in supporting the women’s progression in acquiring vocabulary.

The MALL factors positively affected migrant women’s vocabulary acquisition because it made possible an enriched presentation of vocabulary with the following features:

- the topics were non-complex;
- the language was simple and comprehensible;
- the accents in videos and audio were intelligible; and
- the vocabulary were easy to understand, pronounce, remember, and could be used immediately in daily interaction and conversations.

As a result, vocabulary acquisition was more readily available to the migrant women. In general, the experience of enriched learning helped increase the women's vocabulary knowledge and acquisition and improved comprehension skills (at varying levels), leading to an increase in learners’ speaking confidence and, consequently, contributing to their conversational fluency.

**RQ3: What socio-cultural factors affect migrant women's vocabulary acquisition?**

In this research, the concept of the MALL learning environment followed the socio-cultural theories of Halliday (2004) and Vygotsky (1978), who emphasised that language learning is primarily a social activity and that the learners should be involved in negotiating and making meaning in authentic social and cultural activities. The learners should also become familiar with the social norms and discourse of the target language (Grabinger et al., 2007). MALL provided the migrant women with an opportunity to acquire the meaning and knowledge of the language item (vocabulary), to be able to use new vocabulary for meaningful communication, and also to construct knowledge through interactions and engagement with each other. Martin and Rose (2005) emphasised that co-construction of knowledge makes new learning possible within continuing practice and the social environment. Therefore, successful communication requires participation in a social practice and involves all the traits of an individual’s sense of identity (cultural factors), and their environment (social factors). The socio-cultural factors that affect migrant women learners' vocabulary acquisition can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic.

**Intrinsic factors**

Intrinsic factors refer to internal and personal elements that the individual migrant woman learner brings with her to the learning environment.
The women's L1 and their English literacy background were found to determine the level of complexity they experienced in learning in the non-MALL, hybrid, and MALL environments, and in the transferability of their L1 skills to learning English. It also emerged that hybrid and MALL participants needed to advance their reading skills so that they could use the app effectively. The women’s lack of reading outside their research participation and/or their comprehension skills in general, delayed their progress with the app activities and exercises. The women’s familiarity and affordance with technology (smartphone and tablet) helped resolved the operational barriers, thus focus and attention could be given to the tasks on the app. However, the main distractions affecting the women's focus and attention were issues such as: the presence of their children, the noise generated in their surroundings, and the social chatter of their peers. These distractions, along with their specific comprehension and technological skills, affected the women’s progress in acquiring vocabulary.

In the context of this research, the women’s confidence, shyness and fear levels were shaped by aspects of their personality, and the struggle/frustrations or accomplishments that had impacted their settlement in Australia. These internal feelings, together with their pronunciation capabilities were improved (at varying levels) in all three learning environments, but the richer MALL integrated learning setting helped women reach higher levels of achievement due to more exposure to a variety of vocabulary learning material, the unlimited repeatability of exercises undertaken, and the pair-work experiences they had in a student-centred learning setting. This level of advancement was otherwise unattainable in their own time.

**Extrinsic factors**

Extrinsic factors refer to external elements that surround the individual migrant woman learner.

The non-formal learning environment and the flexibility factors offered by the community centre were essential for migrant women learners, as observed across the non-MALL, hybrid and MALL learning environments. The ‘unstructuredness’ of the classroom was an important factor that attracted the women to attend the conversational sessions. The non-formal and flexible learning setting (which allowed children to attend, non-compulsory attendance, no-fees, no homework or assessment, no reading and writing requirements) made dealing with their internal issues (confidence, shyness, and fear) more manageable, and created more room for improvement. Hybrid and MALL learning environments allowed even greater improvement as the women had more opportunity to practice listening and reading comprehension through the app activities and exercises, and to practice conversational skills (listening comprehension and speaking skills) with
their peers and the researcher. These opportunities were generally lacking in their everyday lives and the women could not create such opportunities by themselves.

The type of learning environment (non-MALL, hybrid, or MALL) where the vocabulary lessons were delivered offered different features and learning experiences. Participants’ general literacy background and English literacy level, led to different preferences in learning environment. Older learners with low digital literacy found that they were better suited to and productive in learning new vocabulary in a traditional teacher-fronted environment, with no intervention of technology, as they felt technology was more of a barrier than an advantage. They also preferred learning in a big group, where the teacher retained full control of the classroom and its activities, the students were quiet, and the classroom remained orderly. Younger learners who were more used to technology preferred to learn in a hybrid/MALL environment, where the mobile device and app made an effective learning tool and allowed them to be more active and productive learners. They also preferred learning individually or in pairs, at their own pace, and independently rather than in a big group.

The lessons planned and delivered to the women, whether in the non-MALL, hybrid, or MALL learning environments, were relevant for them, and enriched their learning experiences, through the use of scaffolding with the new vocabulary usable immediately in their day-to-day interactions and conversations. Specifically, the contents of the apps were designed in such a way that the app provided examples of the Australian language and culture through learning vocabulary.

### 8.3 Implications of research

This section discusses the implications of this research to stakeholders:

**To migrant women learners**

Even though non-formal, the learning experience in MALL was significant for migrant women learners because, they acquired knowledge of vocabulary from MALL, resulting in increased ability in speaking and listening comprehension. As a result, MALL helped participants increase their independence and self-empowerment levels. This can lead to social inclusiveness within the Australian society. The women, to varying degrees, achieved their primary goal of improving their conversational skills, putting them in a better position to achieve their secondary goals, such as being more involved with their children’s education, more able to make informed decisions, more capable of undertaking further education, and more able to enter the workforce.
To teachers of English language adult learners

The cross-case analyses of the three case studies broadens the understanding of the roles of teachers of English language for adult learners regarding the similarities and differences, and the benefits and challenges, of planning and implementing feasible learning environments, whether non-MALL or MALL. By considering the learner’s learning needs (personal, social, and cultural), an environment can be created that is conducive to learning. In turn, this encourages learners’ interest and their potential to develop basic interpersonal communicative skills. The teacher has to meet the goals of learners, of the organisation that is being represented, and the teacher’s own goals. For this research, as the teacher, the researcher’s goals included connecting English language with the women’s own culture and the real world and, as an outcome, for the women to be able to produce and use language in their conversations and interactions using the vocabulary that was taught in the MALL environment.

To community-based organisation

This research creates an awareness of the feasibility of marrying MALL and non-formal learning in community language programs to help develop conversational proficiency for non-English speaking background migrant learners. The program not only serves as a meeting place to socialise, but also, with the integration of MALL, a beneficial and conducive learning space. The program delivered an enriched, valuable, and useful English language learning experience for learners. Participation by women from migrant communities increases the potential for a community organisation to receive funding from the government or other funding bodies. Increased funding for community organisations enables more activities and programs for migrant women to improve their life-skills and social and economic life, and helps the organisation to support and build stronger, more sustainable and inclusive communities.

To the wider research community

This research provides an understanding of migrant women’s English learning needs and the effects of MALL on their vocabulary acquisition. With this understanding, appropriate elements can be integrated in non-formal conversational English classrooms to create a suitable MALL learning environment. This framework is tailored to the women’s learning needs (personal, social, and cultural) in learning English, allowing them to understand and comprehend what is learnt, and enabling them to participate in conversational exchanges. The mobile device and a language app became the resource for MALL authentic learning materials providing an enriched learning experience to learners.
8.4 MALL-enhanced framework

The research demonstrated the feasible integration of the components of MALL into the non-formal conversational English classroom leading to the development of a MALL-enhanced framework for vocabulary learning suitable for migrant women. The key factors that impacted the women's vocabulary acquisition were identified from the cross-case analyses of the three learning environments. These factors became the core components of the framework: Learning environment; Learner characteristics; and Technology. The framework is illustrated in Figure 8-1.

![Figure 8-1: MALL-Enhanced Framework for a non-formal learning environment for migrant women's vocabulary acquisition](image)

The Learning environment component refers to the non-formal learning environment set forth for the learners. The teacher assumes the traditional teacher role in Step 1 and Step 2, and the facilitator role in Step 3 (when the dynamics of learning changes to student-centred due to the use of mobile device and app). The Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 sequence of the MALL vocabulary
lesson ensures that the learner vocabulary learning experience is enriched and inclusive (pre-teaching, drilling, and app activities and exercises). The learning setting should also retain the informality of environment to be as natural as possible (for example mothers feel the need to have their small children sit with them in the classroom) by not enforcing formal classroom or school rules.

The Learner characteristics component of the framework ensures that the learners’ unique and individual characteristics are well considered, so that the actual learning needs of learners can be met. For example, understanding the learners’ motivation for learning and their L1 literacy and English proficiency levels provides a guide in designing meaningful, relevant and authentic vocabulary learning content. This understanding and information is also useful in selecting the appropriate content that can aid learners develop and enhance their comprehension ability, pronunciation intelligibility, and the expansion of their individual word bank: these are the essential elements of conversational proficiency and fluency.

The Technology component emphasises the mobile device and app as an aspect of the MALL learning framework. The features and affordances of the digital device are the elements that enhance and enrich learners’ learning experiences, and at the same time allow learners to personalise their learning. Based upon the Learner characteristics component, an appropriate app level can be selected and implemented in MALL lessons (downloaded for free, subscribed to, or purchased).

This framework also emphasises the importance of learners being given opportunities to use English. For example, one of the learners’ needs is to improve their speaking skill (Learner characteristics). This is met through the planning of the Learning environment, through speaking activities, interactions and negotiations, and drilling activities in Steps 1 and 2; and also through the activities and exercises embedded in the contents of the app (Technology component). The presence of scaffolding provides valuable support to learners and is identifiable across the framework.

8.5 Limitations of the research

Despite the strengths noted above, the research reported here has some limitations:

The women in this research were generally low level English readers, and therefore struggled when reading and comprehending complex contents on the app, even though some had previous English education. Their reading struggles led the women to spend time in ‘spelling, sounding and comprehending’ what was being read; that became a challenge as well as a distraction in itself. The app features, such as visual and audio, transcript/read-along and
recording, could be used by the women to adjust their developed L1 reading skills with English, and to get the practice needed to develop comprehension. However, only a few of the women had higher levels of proficiency and not all of them were able to use these features. Therefore, some progressed faster than their peers. All the women in this research needed to advance their reading skills before so that the app could be a maximally effective tool for their learning.

Throughout the research, the sessions were attended by women only (participants and non-participants) even though the regular weekly program was opened to everyone. The presence of male learners could have provided practice and familiarity, as interactions in the real world happen with both men and women. On the other hand, their presence may have made the women feel uncomfortable and unwilling to speak.

The time the women spent learning vocabulary in the MALL environment was limited to 4 or 5 lessons. Whether more time and lessons would have really improved the women’s English was not possible to demonstrate, as so many factors are involved in second language acquisition. That question was not within the scope of this research. Given this limited timeframe, it was considered a positive and effective outcome that the women perceived that some of their English skills had improved.

Irregular attendance, due to most women juggling family and other commitments, impacted the learning experience and was an issue. Long-term absences were not uncommon, caused by, for example, being sick, doctor’s appointments and a lack of transport.

An unstructured interview might have worked better in terms of if it had involved a qualified interpreter. With participants’ literacy levels, it was difficult to phrase questions at an appropriate literacy level. Interview data were typically collected from direct and individual interactions, and questions were often rephrased as a personal story or example. Participants’ often-spontaneous narratives and direct observations provided the researcher with an intimate understanding of participants’ struggles and needs. As such, informal conversation-styled interviews that are tailored to the individual may be more appropriate in the circumstance.

A language barrier existed between the women and the researcher (except participants whose L1 was similar to the researcher’s). Although an interpreter was present to help with questions and responses during the interviews, the resulting data was not comparable to the researcher being able to communicate directly with the women, as the interpreter could change the meanings communicated. Interpreters (other people in the conversational group who could speak better English than the women, or people available at the community centre who spoke similar L1 to the women) were used during the research interviews, but the women themselves were unable to elaborate on their answers and offer extra information, even after probing. This
supports the view of Davies (2008), that interpreting has the possibility of causing meanings to get lost in translation. According to Patton (2002), direct translation is hard to achieve when the interpreter summarizes the interviewee’s words, or if the words have different cultural meanings. These factors will have impacted the findings.

Although it may be perceived that the longer duration of Case Study 2 participants’ learning biased the results, the experience of these participants who underwent both environments provided the opportunity to make a comparison between the value of learning in the different learning conditions, and for greater insight. These learning environments (non-MALL, hybrid, and MALL-only) offered an exclusive value of benefits and challenges to the learners (in acquiring vocabulary, developing their word bank and eventually improving their spoken skills), as well as to the teacher/facilitator in terms of providing the appropriate and effective instructional material, given: the confines of the learning time frame the learners were able to commit; the characteristics of the learners (educational background, L1 and English literacy levels, and socio-cultural factors); and the requirements on flexibility and non-formal learning setting by the learners. Valuable insights and perspectives were gained from the within-case and cross-case analyses of these studies alongside the discovery of emerging themes that were identified as impacting learners’ vocabulary acquisition.

8.6 Recommendations for future work

This section suggests potential future research directions that can be undertaken within this research area. Firstly, the scope of this study could be opened to a larger number of migrant women with a range of L1 literacy (semi-literate, literate) and English proficiency levels. There is an expectation that higher L1 literate learners could make better use of the app features, thus the effectiveness of MALL features in developing participants’ language or vocabulary skills could be investigated across a range of literacy levels. A standardised approach could be developed to measure effectiveness. If, in addition, the digital devices could be supplied to learners to take home, then learners’ independence in informal learning settings could also be investigated.

The second recommendation regards an extension to the current features of the app, which is to include additional L1 support for learners in form of personalised in-app L1 dictionary, or a direct link to an online dictionary such as Google Translate (an online word and sentence translating service provided by Google). The learners would then have a way to be able to access info/annotation in L1 within the app when they need it.

The third recommendation is to conduct MALL lessons for learners where the teacher and learners come from a similar cultural background and speak the same or similar L1. This will
make it easier for the teacher to explain or describe things in L1, and for the learners to comprehend what is delivered to them.

The final recommendation is for a review of a language apps to match the learners’ needs with available apps depending on the skills that they want to improve; that is, reading, writing, speaking, listening, or a combination. An alternative could be to use a language app that focuses on improving reading skills before using the Think English! app.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter summarised the journey of this research from its inception through to completion, beginning with an overview of the research, a revisiting of the research questions, a discussion of the implications of the research (to migrant women learners, teachers of English language to adult learners, community-based organisations, and the wider research community), and the development of a MALL-enhanced framework. It also addressed the limitations of the research and recommended possible areas for further investigation.

This research identified a gap in the existing knowledge of how to integrate mobile technology to assist migrant women as they struggle to learn the language of the new country, even though some of the women were literate in L1. This research addressed that gap in the Australian context. One of the major strengths of the research is that, in the form of a case study, the researcher was able to explore a progressive understanding of the problem, and the nature and complexity of the vocabulary acquisition process for migrant women in three different learning environments: non-MALL, hybrid and MALL. The research was conducted in real-world conditions, where the women were in their natural and authentic learning setting.

The findings of this research revealed that hybrid and MALL learning environments provided enriched learning processes and experiences for the women migrant learners due to the introduction and integration of the language learning app. The combination of both traditional teacher-centred and learner-centred instructional approaches delivered an optimum learning environment and opportunities for learners to acquire vocabulary more effectively. However, the hybrid environment was found to be more effective than the MALL environment due to the longer duration of participation (4 to 5 non-MALL sessions followed by 4 to 5 MALL sessions), more exposure to English and opportunities to use it, more practice undertaken from app activities and exercises, and more topics explored. The app is a ‘reusable’, accessible, and rich resource for learning, not only for vocabulary, but also for listening and reading comprehension, and pronunciation practice (unlike in traditional/non-MALL setting where learners depend solely on the teacher’s prescribed learning material).
The findings of this research led to the development of a framework (Figure 8-1) that feasibly integrates MALL, but does not veer away from the original premise of providing education to this segment of the community in non-formal, flexible, and inclusive ways. Through this framework, the women are able to develop their vocabulary acquisition; enhance, enrich, and expand their vocabulary knowledge; and improve their overall conversational fluency (at varying personal levels), whilst their learning needs personally, socially, and culturally, are addressed.

The framework is based on supported from research that represents the views, ideas and perspectives of the migrant women participants and reveals the contextual conditions that influence their vocabulary acquisition. This contributes insights into existing concepts that help address gaps and enables the proposal of propose feasible enhancements. This framework is replicable to similar situations of second language acquisition across the world, though with some modifications. It is beneficial for teachers of migrant adult learners who seek to acquire English language skills and for people responsible for creating community learning programs. It will assist in the practical planning and implementation of appropriate MALL learning environments for migrant English learners in general, and women in particular.
References


Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008). An overview of mobile assisted language learning: From content delivery to supported collaboration and interaction. *Recall, 20*(3), 271-289. doi:10.1017/S0958344008000335


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Appendices

A: Ethics Approval

Friday, 21 March 2014

Dr Jocelyn Armarego
School of Engineering and Information Technology
Murdoch University

Dear Jocelyn,

Project No. 2013/224
Project Title Factors of Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL) for Integration into a Non-Formal Learning Environment to support Migrant Women’s Vocabulary Acquisition

Thank you for addressing the conditions placed on the above application to the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee. On behalf of the Committee, I am pleased to advise the application now has:

OUTRIGHT APPROVAL

Approval is granted on the understanding that research will be conducted according the standards of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and Murdoch University policies at all times. You must also abide by the Human Research Ethics Committee’s standard conditions of approval (see attached). All reporting forms are available on the Research Ethics web-site.

I wish you every success for your research.

Please quote your ethics project number in all correspondence.

Kind Regards,

Dr. Erich von Dietze
Manager of Research Ethics

cc: Dr Fay Sudweeks and Kham Sila Ahmed
Human Research Ethics Committee: Standard Conditions of Approval

a) The project must be conducted in accordance with the approved application, including any conditions and amendments that have been approved. You must comply with all of the conditions imposed by the HREC, and any subsequent conditions that the HREC may require.
b) You must report immediately anything which might affect ethical acceptance of your project, including:
   • Adverse effects on participants
   • Significant unexpected events
   • Other matters that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
c) Where approval has been given pending copies of documents such as letters of support / consent from other organisations or approvals from third parties, these must be provided to the Research Ethics Office before the research may commence at each relevant location.
d) Proposed changes or amendments to the research must be applied for, using an Amendment Application form, and approved by the HREC before these may be implemented.
e) An annual Report must be provided by the due date specified each year (usually the anniversary of approval) for the project to have continuing approval.
f) A closure report must be provided at the conclusion of the project.
g) If, for any reason, the project does not proceed or is discontinued, you must advise the committee in writing, using a Closure Report form.
h) If an extension is required beyond the approved end date of the project, an extension application should be made allowing sufficient time for its consideration by the committee. Extensions cannot be granted retrospectively.
i) You must advise the HREC immediately, in writing, if any complaint is made about the conduct of the project.
j) Any equipment used must meet current safety standards. Purpose built equipment must be tested and certified by independent experts for compliance with safety standards.
k) Higher degree students must have both Candidacy and Program of Study approved prior to commencing data collection.
l) You must notify the Research Ethics Office of any changes in contact details including address, phone number and email address.
m) The HREC may conduct random audits and / or require additional reports concerning the research project.

Failure to comply with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and with the conditions of approval may result in the suspension or withdrawal of approval for the project.

The HREC seeks to support researchers in achieving strong results and positive outcomes.
The HREC promotes a research culture in which ethics is considered and discussed at all stages of the research.
If you have any issues you wish to raise, please contact the Research Ethics Office in the first instance.
PhD Research – Kham Sila Ahmad:
Factors of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for Integration into Non-Formal Learning Environment to support Migrant Women’s Vocabulary Acquisition

My supervisors, Dr Joce1yn Arma1ego, Dr Fay Sudweeks, and I am seeking your permission to conduct research on the above topic at your organization, as fulfilment of the requirements for my PhD degree in Information Technology at Murdoch University, Australia.

Mobile communication devices such as mobile phones, smart phones and tablets have become a valued and important part of people’s lives. They play a substantial role in one’s personal, business, social and educational undertakings. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a language learning setting where mobile devices are applied to support language learning. These devices are appealing to the public and research has shown they are potentially effective in language learning due to their wide availability, convenience, portability, accessibility, multimedia capability, internet connectivity and cost efficiency as compared to desktop or laptop computers.

Your centre has been providing the non-formal conversational English program [REDACTED] to the local community for a number of years. This program has been providing a valuable avenue for learning English to disadvantaged community members, particularly of migrant and refugee background. It is well-regarded by the participants as a significant learning opportunity.

We conceive that utilising MALL as a teaching and learning tool in the PMP program should enrich, benefit and provide meaningful and effective language learning outcomes for the women who are the majority of the program’s participants. MALL-integrated lessons with a focus on vocabulary will be developed and the teaching and learning will be supported by the use of tablets. Studies have shown that vocabulary is an essential skill to be developed in acquiring proficiency and it facilitates fluency in speaking and effective writing.
As such, our research will investigate the factors of MALL that should be integrated into vocabulary learning of non-English speaking women, within a non-formal learning context. The participants will undergo the following stages of the research:

- **Stage 1** - Complete a pre-intervention survey
- **Stage 2** - Ad-hoc training for participants who have no prior experience using a tablet, so as for them to become familiar with the functions and to use the app installed on the tablet
- **Stage 3** - MALL intervention where participants will complete a minimum of 5 out of 10 prepared MALL-integrated lessons.
- **Stage 4** - Complete a post-intervention survey.

The output of this research will potentially help the learning endeavour of people who are starting to learn English and people who are still struggling with English even after living here for some years. It will also benefit your centre and other facilities that provide non-formal education with effective and mobile-supported language teaching and learning resources.

Therefore, we are seeking approval from your organisation to take part in this research. If you are willing for your organisation to be involved in this research, please confirm, in writing, addressed to my Principal Supervisor, Dr Jocelyn Armarego. I have attached a pro forma organizational consent letter. Kindly submit a signed copy of this letter on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this research at your institution.

I have also attached an information and consent form which will be provided to each participant in the research.

Please note that your organisation will not have access to the data gathered, other than the summary of the research findings.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kham Sila Ahmad  
PhD Candidate  
(61) 42393 1135  
syll70@yahoo.com

Dr. Jocelyn Armarego  
Principal Supervisor  
School of Engineering and Information Technology,  
(61) 8 9360 7351  
J.Amarego@murdoch.edu.au

Dr. Fay Sudweeks  
Co-Supervisor  
School of Engineering and Information Technology,  
(61) 8 9360 2364  
F.Sudweeks@murdoch.edu.au
Organisational Consent

Factors of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for Integration into Non-Formal Learning Environment to support Migrant Women’s Vocabulary Acquisition

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Kham Sila Ahmad of the School of Engineering and Information Technology at Murdoch University.

I acknowledge that contacting the clients of __________________ is necessary for the development and implementation of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in the research.

I further acknowledge that interviews and surveys will be conducted and MALL-integrated lessons will be delivered by Kham Sila Ahmad during the undertaking of her research.

I understand that the research will be done by Kham Sila Ahmad and she will collect personal information or data, and we will not have access to the collected data. We will have access to the final results and summary of the research only.

Name: ___________________________  Researcher’s Name: Kham Sila Ahmad

Role: ___________________________

Signature: _______________________

Date: ___________________________  Date: Feb. 11, 2014
Factors of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for Integration into Non-Formal Learning Environment to support Migrant Women’s Vocabulary Acquisition

Dear Participant

We invite you to take part in our study. We want to find out if using a mobile device called a tablet can help you learn English words better so that you can speak English more easily. This research is part of my PhD degree in Information Technology. My supervisors are Dr. Jocelyn Armarego and Dr. Fay Sudweeks at Murdoch University.

About the Study

A tablet is a type of mobile device that is very popular, with many people using it to find information on the internet, listen to music, play games, watch videos and movies, do banking and online shopping. Tablets are small, easy to carry, easy to use, connect easily to the Internet and are cheaper than a computer.

In this study we are finding out how we can use tablets to help women who know little English, learn new words so that they can speak English more easily, even though they do not go to full-time school. This study is designed for people whose first language is not English and for those who want to improve their English.

If you agree to take part in this study, you need to know what the study is about and the things you need to do for the study. Please ask any questions you may have, and that all your questions have been answered before you agree to take part.

What you have to do in the study:

i. What you have to do (you can complete these between May 2014 and December 2014):
   - Answer the first interview. This will take 15-30 minutes. I will read the questions to you and write down your answers for you.
   - Take 5 to 10 lessons. Each lesson will take 30-45 minutes. There will be no exams.
   - Answer the second interview. This will take 15-30 minutes. I will read the questions to you and write down your answers for you.

ii. I will:
   - Not record your real name or any other identifying information.
   - Record what you say so I can use it to write my research report (thesis).
   - Not refer to anyone by name in my report.
   - Erase the tape recordings as soon as I finished writing the transcript.
   - Keep the your name and contact information until the study is complete.
   - Destroy your name and contact information when the study is complete.

iii. You can:
   - See and read what I have written from your recording and make changes to it before I use it in the study and to write my report.
   - Contact me or my supervisors whenever you have any questions.
Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

You are a volunteer and you can withdraw (stop for breaks or cancel) any time you want. If you cancel [withdraw] in the middle of the study, we will not use the answers that you have given us and we will destroy them. If you complete the surveys and submit them, it means that you have agreed to take part in this study. You can attend the lessons even if you do not take part in the study.

Privacy

All of your information will be kept secret and will not be given to anyone else even you choose not to participate. The William Langford Community House, Inc. will not know that you take part in the study. They can only see the final report of the study. No one can identify you and you will not be identified in any publication from this study.

Benefits of the Study

1. The lessons will help your vocabulary skills because you will learn new words, learn the pronunciation and listen to people talking using these words. Knowing a lot of English vocabulary helps you to speak more easily in the Australian society.
2. You will also learn mobile computer skills because you use the tablet.

Possible Risks

We see no risks if you take part in this study.

If you have any questions about this project please feel free to contact either myself, Kham Sila Ahmad on mobile phone 04 2393 1135 or my email syi170@yahoo.com, or my supervisors, Dr Jocelyn Armarego, at LArmarego@Murdoch.edu.au and Dr. Fay Sudweeks at FSudweeks@Murdoch.edu.au. My supervisors and I are happy to discuss with you any concerns you may have about this study.

If you are willing to consent to take part in this study, please complete the Consent Form.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kham Sila Ahmad

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2013/224xxx). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University’s Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 (for overseas studies, +61 8 9360 6677) or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
E: Participant’s Consent

Factors of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for Integration into Non-Formal Learning Environment to support Migrant Women’s Vocabulary Acquisition

[Please tick (√) where you agree with the statement(s) below]

1. □ The information in the Participant Information sheet was read and explained to me. All my questions were answered and a copy of the sheet has been given to me to keep.

2. □ I am happy to take part in your study. I understand that I do not have to answer some questions if I do not want to, and I can stop at any time without giving reason and without affecting me.

3. □ I agree for you to record the interviews and then write them down [NOTE: Interview will not be audio recorded if this is un-ticked].

4. □ I agree that the results of the study that you publish will not include my name and anything that can identify me.

5. □ I understand that you will keep all of my information safely and will not share it with anyone else, except when it is needed by the law.

6. □ I am told that you will let me see and read what you have written from my recording, and I can make changes on it, before you use it for your report.

Participant’s name: ______________________

Signature of Participant: ___________________ Date: ______/_____/_______

I confirm that I have provided the Information Letter concerning this study to the above participant; I have explained the study and have answered all questions asked of me.

Signature of researcher: ___________________ Date: ______/_____/_______
Demographic and General Interview Questionnaire

Code name:

Date:

Reminder to participants:

i. I will read the questions to you and write down the answers for you.
ii. I will record this session.
iii. You can ask me questions anytime you want.
iv. You can stop for breaks or you can stop from doing this interview anytime.

Demographics

Migration to Australia

1) When did you arrive in Australia? _________________________

2) What is your home country? _____________________________

3) How old are you?

☐ 15-19   ☐ 35-39   ☐ 55-59
☐ 20-24   ☐ 40-44   ☐ 60-64
☐ 25-29   ☐ 45-49   ☐ 65-69
☐ 30-34   ☐ 50-54   ☐ 70 and over

Everyday language use

4) What language/s do you speak at home (L1)? The writing (script) of L1?

5) What are your L2, L3, L4? The writing (script) of L2, L3, L4?

   i) A,B,C ..Z  
      (Roman alphabet e.g. Indonesian, French, German) 
   ii) Non-Roman alphabet (e.g. Arabic, Greek, Korean, Russian, Thai, Sanskrit) 
   iii) Non-alphabetic script (e.g. Mandarin, Chinese)

6) Your L1, L2, L3 skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Script</th>
<th>Reading skill</th>
<th>Writing skill</th>
<th>Speaking skill</th>
<th>Listening skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not good at all   Not very good   Somewhat good   Good   Very Good

1
### Schooling experience
Schooling - before migrating to Australia (parts ii and iii and b and c are only asked if required)

| a) Primary school | i) Did you go to primary school? Yes / No  
|                   | ii) Did you finish primary school? Yes / No. If No, why?  
|                   | iii) Did you learn English there? Yes / No. If yes, how much? (as a subject?)  

| b) Secondary school | i) Did you go to secondary school? Yes / No  
|                    | ii) Did you finish secondary school? Yes / No  
|                    | iii) Did you learn English there? Yes / No. If yes, how much? (as a subject?)  

| c) Tertiary education | i) Did you go to college or university? Yes / No  
|                       | ii) Did you finish college or university? Yes / No  
|                       | iii) Did you use English there? Yes / No. If yes, how much? (as a subject?)  

### English language acquisition

#### 1) Your English skills

| a) Which is your best skill? | □ Listening  
|                             | □ Reading  
|                             | □ Writing  
|                             | □ Speaking  

| b) From the list in a), which is the most important to the least important for you to be good at (rank 1 to 4)? | ( ) Listening  
|                                                                                     | ( ) Reading  
|                                                                                     | ( ) Writing  
|                                                                                     | ( ) Speaking  

| c) Why do you need to be "good at speaking English"? |

| d) How do you rate your English skills? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not good at all</th>
<th>Not very good</th>
<th>Somewhat good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2) Ways you learn English

| a) Ways you learn English | □ Practice speaking with family  
|                          | □ Watch TV  
|                          | □ Read books; What kind of books?  
|                          | □ Go to class/course. Name of course? Complete the course?  
|                          | □ Other  

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b) How do you find meaning of new words?
   - Not interested in finding out
   - Use a dictionary: book/online
   - Internet
   - Ask someone

c) What kind of English TV shows do you watch?
   - Do not watch TV
   - Do not watch English TV
   - News
   - Cooking
   - Cartoons
   - Competitions (singing/talent show)
   - Drama
   - Sports
   - Movies
   - Gardening
   - Other

3) Talking to other people

a) When you meet with people who speaks L1, do you speak L1 or English with them?
   - L1
   - some English
   - a lot of English

b) When you meet with other people from other country, what language do you use to speak with them/how do you communicate with them?

c) Do people around you (children, husband, family, friends) speak English? Y/N
   Do you speak English to them? Y/N. Why?
   Do they speak English to you? Y/N. Why?

d) How do you communicate with these people when you see them:
   - Do you try your best to speak English?
     (Yes/No - with some elaboration)
   - Do you get someone to translate/interpret for you? Yes/No. If Yes, who?

   i. the doctor
   ii. your child’s teacher
   iii. your neighbours
   iv. government officials
   v. the bus driver/chemist

Future plans
What are your plans in the future, here in Australia?

a) No plan
b) To work - What kind of work would you like to do?
   When do you plan to start looking for work?
c) To study - What area are you going to study?
   When do you plan to start?
d) To set up business - What kind of business? When do you plan to do it?

Thank You
G: Post-non-MALL Interview Questionnaire

Post-non-MALL Interview Questionnaire

Code name:

Date:

Reminder to participants:

1. I will read the questions to you and write down the answers for you.
2. I will record this session.
3. You can ask me questions anytime you want.
4. You can stop for breaks or you can stop from doing this interview anytime.

English language acquisition

1) Your English skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Which is your best skill?</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b) From the list in a), which is the most important to the least important for you to be good at (rank 1 to 4)?</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c) Why do you need to be &quot;good at speaking English&quot;?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d) How do you rate your English skills after attending the conversational sessions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Ways you learn English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Ways you learn English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice speaking with family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read books; kind of books?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to class/course. Name of course? Complete the course?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b) How do you find meaning of new words?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in finding out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a dictionary: book/online</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c) What kind of English TV shows do you watch?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do not watch TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not watch English TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) Talking to other people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>When you meet with people who speak L1, do you speak L1 or English with them?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ L1  ☐ some English  ☐ a lot of English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| b) | When you meet with other people from other country, what language do you use to speak with them/how do you communicate with them? |

| c) | Do people around you (children, husband, family, friends) speak English? Y/N |
|    | Do you speak English to them? Y/N. Why?                                      |
|    | Do you speak English to you? Y/N. Why?                                        |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d)</th>
<th>How do you communicate with these people when you see them?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>the doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>your child’s teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>your neighbours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>government officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>the bus driver/chemist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is</th>
<th>Do you try your best to speak English? (Yes/No - with some elaboration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Do you get someone to translate/interpret for you? Y/No. If Yes, who? |

Learning outcome from non-MALL sessions

1) Can you give me examples of some words or phrases or contexts that you have learned?

2) What you would like to change in the program?

3) New things you want to see or learn in the program?:

4) Can you tell me some of the reasons why you can not/did not come to the program?

Thank You
H: Pre-MALL Interview Questionnaire

Pre-MALL Interview Questionnaire

Code name:

Date:

Reminder to participants:

i. I will read the questions to you and write down the answers for you.
ii. I will record this session.
iii. You can ask me questions anytime you want.
iv. You can stop for breaks or you can stop from doing this interview anytime.

1. Familiarity with computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Do you have any of the computers below in your home? Y/N. If yes, what kind of computer?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Gaming console</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Smartphones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you use any of them? Y/N. If yes, which one?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you use the desktop computer or the laptop, what do you use it for?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Homework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you do not use any of the computers above, who in your household use/uses it/them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b) Have you taken any computer classes, courses or trainings since you have been in Australia? Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Mobile things that you use

**Smartphone and tablet use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Do you own and use:</th>
<th>☐ mobile or smartphone</th>
<th>☐ tablet</th>
<th>☐ none or not using any more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) How long have you been using it?</td>
<td>☐ less than 3 months</td>
<td>☐ 3 - 6 months</td>
<td>☐ 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) What do you use it for?</td>
<td>☐ calling</td>
<td>☐ internet</td>
<td>☐ send email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) What are the language and script you use on it?</td>
<td>Language:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank You

2
I: Post-MALL Interview Questionnaire

Post-MALL Interview Questionnaire

Code name: 

Date: 

Reminder to participants: 

i. I will read the questions to you and write down the answers for you.
ii. I will record this session.
iii. You can ask me questions anytime you want.
iv. You can stop for breaks or you can stop from doing this interview anytime.

Perceptions of English skills

1. What do you think of your English after the lessons that include the tablet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot worse</th>
<th>A little worse</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>A little better</th>
<th>A lot better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Which skills have you improved most to the least (rank):

a) Which is the most improved skill?
   - Listening
   - Writing
   - Reading
   - Speaking

b) From the list in a), which one you think you have improved the most to the least improved.
   i) □
   ii) □
   iii) □
   iv) □

Potential changes in learning English from now on?

1) Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways you learn English</th>
<th>□ Practice speaking with family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Watch TV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Read books; What kind of books?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Go to class/course; Name of course? Complete the course?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you find meaning of new words?</th>
<th>☐ Not interested in finding out</th>
<th>☐ Internet</th>
<th>☐ Ask someone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Use a dictionary: book/online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What kind of English TV shows do you watch?</th>
<th>☐ Do not watch TV</th>
<th>☐ Drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Do not watch English TV</td>
<td>☐ Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ News</td>
<td>☐ Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Cooking</td>
<td>☐ Gardening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Cartoons</td>
<td>☐ Competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Other</td>
<td>(singing/talent show)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Talking to other people

a) When you meet with people who speaks L1, do you speak L1 or English with them?
   ☐ L1                  ☐ some English         ☐ a lot of English

b) When you meet with other people from other country, what language do you use to speak with them/how do you communicate with them?

c) Do people around you (children, husband, family, friends) speak English? Y/N
   Do you speak English to them? Y/N. Why?
   Do they speak English to you? Y/N. Why?

d) How do you communicate with these people when you see them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the doctor</th>
<th>Do you try your best to speak English? (Yes/No - with some elaboration)</th>
<th>Do you get someone to translate/interpret for you? (Yes/No. If Yes, who?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your child’s teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your neighbours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the bus driver/chemist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Learning Outcome from MALL

#### 1) Experience of using the tablet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was it easy to use? Yes / No</td>
<td>[Control]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you think about other things? Y / N</td>
<td>[Attention, focus, and engagement]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you notice other people around you? Y / N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you like to use the tablet? Y / N</td>
<td>[Curiosity and imagination]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you want to learn more on how to use the tablet? Y / N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you want to use the tablet for other things? Y / N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did it bore you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was it interesting [experience]?</td>
<td>[Interest]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was it fun [experience]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2) Learning outcome

##### a) Can you give examples of some words or phrases that you have learned?

##### b) When you learn English, what do you like to use? Why?

- ☐ a tablet
- ☐ a book
- ☐ other

##### c) When you used a tablet to learn English, do you think you learn... & why?

- ☐ a lot less things
- ☐ less things
- ☐ no difference
- ☐ more things
- ☐ a lot more things

##### d) What helped you learn better (or worse) when you used the tablet? (you can choose more than 1 answer)

- ☐ the size
- ☐ the colourful pictures
- ☐ the sounds [audio capacity]
- ☐ the videos
- ☐ when you can ‘move’, ‘draw’, ‘change’
- ☐ other?

or ‘erase’ things [interactivity]

##### e) Do you think if you take more lessons, you can speak for yourself, and you don’t need someone else to speak for you [confidence in own English ability]? Y / N
3) Learning preferences
   a) When learning using a tablet, do you like to learn:
      ☐ by yourself ☐ with a friend ☐ in a small group
      Why?
   b) When you were learning and using the tablet, did you want your teacher to be in the class with you? Yes / No. If Yes, why? If No, go to c)
   c) You said you don’t need the teacher to be there, why?
      [possible answer – 1) feel confident because they can collaborate with peer, 2) feel confident because tablet has clear instruction and easy to use, 3) doesn’t even need peer]

4) Comments about MALL lessons
   a) Did you like the lessons? Y/N
   b) If Yes, why? [possible answer – the tablet, the teacher, the technology, and etc.]
   c) Do you want to change anything about the lessons?
   d) Is there anything you want to add [features] or remove from the tablet?

Future plans
What are your plans in the future, here in Australia?
   a) No plan
   b) To work - What kind of work would you like to do? When do you plan to start looking for work?
   c) To study - What area are you going to study? When do you plan to start?
   d) To set up business - What kind of business? When do you plan to do it?

Thank You
## J: Sample of a non-MALL lesson

### Regular conversational English session (Non-MALL Lesson 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance:</th>
<th>Learning outcomes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CS1: Suki, Zehra, Rea, Feeda | • To be able to understand and fill out official forms such as registration forms and conventions of writing names, home address, phone numbers, block letters, capitalisation, requirements such as to circle or to tick.  
• Able to distinguish numbers that can sound alike and pronouncing clearly  
Note: First day back after the school holidays |
| CS2: Ally, Rina |  |
| Others: Three other attendees, two volunteers and five children |  |
| **Date:** 29-4-14 | **Time:** 10am to 12.00pm |

| Date: |  |
|-------|  |
| **Time:** |  |
| 29-4-14 | 10am to 12.00pm |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson:</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Warmers – What everyone did during the holidays, share stories</td>
<td>• First day back after two-week school term break. Everyone was excited seeing each other again, and eager to start the new sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussed the program registration form and filled out form together: Conventions of writing: names; home address; phone numbers; instructions usually found in forms such as to circle; to tick or to cross off. How name, address should be written, the use of capitalization, commas, and spaces between words.</td>
<td>• Received new member. Only arrived 3 months before from Afghanistan to join her son. Did not speak any English, not literate in L1 either. L1 was Dari. Responded questions in Dari. Others who spoke Dari helped interpret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussed numbers that sound alike: 13, 30; 14, 40; 15, 50; 16, 60; 17, 70; 18, 80; 19, 90.</td>
<td>• Low literate participants and non-participants took longer time to fill out form because they rarely write, could not form the letters properly. They memorise the letters and numbers in their name, phone number, date of birth and home addresses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussed where numbers were used: date of birth; time; postcode; house number; phone number; children and family members’ age and birthday; bus number; and Centrelink reference number.</td>
<td>• Practiced pronunciation – said numbers correctly. They were interested to get it right. Practiced saying birthdate, home address, time. Everyone tried to say their birthdate. Some didn't have one, only knew the year. Some said that just for formality, the authority just made up the dates for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regulars were more chatty. Spoke L1 among each other. Comfortable with each other and the learning room environment. Helped set up tables &amp;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
chair and pack away when session finished.

- Sometimes children made a lot of noise (laugh, fight, run around the room)

K: Sample of a MALL Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALL I - Lesson 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study participant (CS2): Liddy, Rose, Ally and Key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other attendees (plus children):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: At the post-office (<em>Think English!</em> app/Beginner/At the shops/At the post-office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcome: To become familiar with the vocabulary commonly used at the post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: 12-8-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 10am - 12pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Plan</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction &amp; pre-teach vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elicit discussion on the post-office - What we do when we go there, what it is for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using pen and the whiteboard – cash, EFTPOS, change, receipt, stamps, next please!, post, ID, how much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALL (use tablet)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listen to section dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocabulary activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Part 1 of 4 (<em>What’s in the post-office?</em>) and part 2 of 4 (<em>What you can see and do</em>) - listen to audio, match vocabulary with pictures (<em>EFTPOS, cash, cheque, stamps, envelopes, stationery, receipt, bubble-wrap, pay a bill, post some letters</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Explain and discuss vocabulary and phrases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Part 4 of 4 – Flashcard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Includes listening and pronunciation practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make sentences using vocabulary, elicit follow-up questions and responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note (things to look for)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How the lesson went; interactions; reactions participants-participants, reactions, participants-researcher; sociocultural issues; use of L1 and L2, interest in topic, distractions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of tablet – working on app; reactions; problems occurred?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocabulary: use of flashcards on app; Able to make sentences in correct context?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Only able to write down these notes after the session.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A busy and noisy session. Participants plus children. No volunteer. I had to set the room up by myself and the snack for morning tea.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Started the session by taking the attendance of the participants and their children-CS2 and other participants- (following the safety policy of the centre).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Didn’t have enough time to switch-on all the tablets by the time the session started. Liddy and Ally offered to help and set the page on the tablets to the lesson of the day. Started at 10.15am.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some distractions from the children – two children were fighting over a toy. One cried. Session had to be paused until child settled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A lot of chatters in L1 among participants – on topic and off-topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The general pace was slowed down as some participants were not conversant using the tablet so either other participants or I had to attend to them.

Use of tablet
- Some participants needed to learn and get use to using the relevant functionality of the tablet e.g:
  - How to switch the tablet back on when it goes into the stand-by/sleep mode (by pressing the power button to reactivate when the display screen goes dark)
  - How to use the volume button
  - Using the tap, drag, and swipe gestures to interact with the content of the app (e.g. tap the play button to listen to audio, tap the arrow button to go to the next or the previous page within the app)
- Session was very noisy once all tablets started playing the audio of Part 1 – Dialogue, and the children started to make noise as well. Some smaller groups moved away from the main table and brought their chairs and sat in other spot in the room so that they can hear the audio better and not get distracted by other groups.

CS2
- Liddy and Rose did not own a tablet, but own and use smartphones. Thus were able to adapt to using the tablets, though they seemed cautious. Ally and Key own tablets but never used them for learning English. This learning concept fascinated all CS2s.
  - They did initially get lost when navigating the app. As soon as they were able to make sense of the structure of the app, they seemed confident and able to focus on the content of the app.

Interaction with peers:
- It was co-incidental that CS2 participants were paired with other participants in the session. Two persons had to share one tablet. Everyone was tolerant to each other.

Interest in topic:
- Participants showed interest in the topic as it was useful and relevant to their lives. Though they don't usually deal at the post-office themselves.
Vocabulary:
CS2 were able to make short and simple sentences e.g. (corrected):
- Rose: I want to buy some stamps, please.
- Liddy: She posted a letter to her mother in China.
- Ally: I want to pay cash.
- Key: How much is the stamp to Malaysia?
- Yuni: I sent a parcel to Indonesia.
- Rina: I went to the post-office to buy envelopes and stamps.

The flashcards on the app was useful for other participants i.e. checking whether they can remember the picture by hearing the word/phrases. By tapping the play button, they can listen to the word/phrases, by tapping anywhere on the card, the card flips and shows a picture. CS2 found this exercise as easy. Other participants found the swiping and tapping interaction as confusing.