

**Hanging in the balance:
When refugee learners' naturalization depends on their acquisition of
cultural knowledge and English language proficiency**

A dissertation submitted

by

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Abstract

This research investigated the educational, social, political and philosophical constructs of the Australian Citizenship Test (ACT) test, which were found to be problematic in design, and exclusionary in effect on African Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants (RHEs) from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB), who begin with limited or no print literacy skills in their first language (L1) and have limited literacy skills in English language (L2), yet these immigrants need Australian citizenship the most. It explored and interpreted the role of the ACT in determining the factors and conditions this subgroup perceived as affecting their integration into Australian society. In a case study approach, first, 30 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), from 15 institutions, participated in a survey. Second, in one regional area, ten teachers were interviewed, classroom observations were made, and students interviewed. Finally, eight NESB, RHEs were purposively selected to investigate their individual literacy difficulties, and their perceptions of the challenge of social integration. This subgroup of refugees was found to have such an impoverished knowledge of first language literacy skills and learning skills that they were unable to build sufficient literacy in a time frame that was conducive to the need for citizenship and its accompanying benefits. Being in this ‘catch-twenty-two’ situation and combined with their lack of empowerment through English literacy, contributed to feelings of frustration, and being overwhelmed and depressed. The findings indicated that this group with limited or no print literacy skills in L1 and no literacy skills in L2 faced a number of social exclusionary practices in their integration process. Key recommendations advised: (i) typical ESL pedagogical practices need to be more invitational for this group and better designed to take account of their literacy development within the context of their refugee life experiences and personal histories, and (ii) the initial curriculum needs to include (a) a deeper appreciation of their lack of preparedness to become proficient in the English language and be able to read and write, and (b) the language, cultural, social and emotional barriers that mitigate preparing for the ACT. Overall, these findings suggest there is an optimum time for awarding full citizenship rights, which point to the need for a different type of test or process, that can ensure such refugees ‘societal advantage’ rather than them being left ‘hanging in the balance.’

CERTIFICATE OF DISSERTATION

The work submitted in this dissertation is original, except as acknowledged in the text. The material herein has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any other award at this or other university except where acknowledged.

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Dedication

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Related works

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List of Acronyms

ACA	Australian Citizenship Amendment
ACT	Australian Citizenship Test
AHP	Australia's Humanitarian Program
AHRC	Australian Human rights Commission
ALTE	Association of Language Testers in Europe
AMEP	Adult Migrant Education Program
AMES	Adult Migrants Education service
ASR	Australian Survey Research
ASLPR	Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings Scale
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CA	Content Analysis
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background Migrants
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CCM	Constant Comparative Method
CEFR,	Common European Framework of Reference
CoE	Council of Europe
CPSU	Community and Public sector Union
CPSWE	Certificate of Preliminary Spoken and Written English
CSA	Civil Service Association
CSWE	Certificate in Spoken and Written English
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DIMA	Department of Immigration & Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs
ESB	English-speaking background
ECCV	Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
ECCQ	Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland
ESL	English as a Second Language
<u>FECCA</u>	Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
<u>FASSTT</u>	Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma
<u>HREOC</u>	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ISLPR	International Second Language Proficiency Rating scale
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LESLLA	Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition
NESB	Non-English speaking background
NNS	Non-native speakers
NSWTF	New South Wales Teachers' Federation
PET	Preliminary English Test (PET)
RCOA	Refugee Council of Australia
RHE	Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants
RSHP	Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program
RWZ	Refugee Welcome Zone
SHP	Special Humanitarian Program
SIOP	Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol
SSCLCA	Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TPVs	Temporary Protection Visa holders
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UG	Universal Grammar

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates the integration of adult African non-English speaking background (NESB) former refugee and humanitarian entrants (RHE) to Australia, who have limited or no print literacy skills in their first language (L1) and no literacy skills in English (L2), in relation to their need to pass the Australian Citizenship Test (ACT). Passing the ACT is required before they are able to vote, apply for an Australian passport, sponsor a close relative for family reunion, receive help from an Australian consulate while overseas (some are unable to travel without an Australian passport), or join the Australian Defence Force or work in the Australian Public Service. It is an attempt to explore and interpret the role of the ACT to determine the factors and conditions as perceived by this subgroup that affect their integration into Australian society.

This introductory chapter sets the context for the study by providing a brief overview of the profile of the post refugee and humanitarian entrants who are REFERRED by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to Australia as forced migrants. Secondly, it highlights the pedagogical issues currently experienced by the Australian Migrant Education Program (AMEP) along with the challenges associated with those refugee learners who have no formal literacy skills in both L1 and L2. Thirdly, it describes the overall research problem and outlines the research purpose, and identifies the main questions. The chapter ends with a brief outline of what will be covered in the proceeding chapters of the dissertation.

1.2 Background context

1.2.1 Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants

The displacement of people due to war, persecution and conflict represents one of the most significant challenges facing the world today. At the end of 2011, there were

42.5 million people displaced worldwide, and 26.4 million internally displaced persons, including 15.2 million refugees and 895,000 asylum seekers. Of the 15.2 million refugees, 10.4 million were refugees under the UNHCR mandate. The UNHCR estimated that almost three quarters of the refugees under its care (more than 7.1 million) were trapped in situations with limited hope of resettlement in the foreseeable future (Rothfield, 2013, p. 19). Thus, when considering the refugee and humanitarian entrant group in Australia it is important to define the meaning of refugee in relation to this group and understand the associated legislation and provisions.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the only global legal instruments that explicitly define who is a refugee, and explain the kind of legal protection and social rights they should receive from the host country they have signed up with. Article 1 of the Convention defines a refugee as:

A person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country or to return there, for fear of persecution (Convention and Protocol in relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1, p. 14).

According to the core principles of the 1951 Convention, (UNHCR - The 1951 Refugee Convention) refugees deserve the full rights to enjoy protection against refoulement, or the forcible return to their country of origin (Article, 33). They should also be protected from verbal or physical abuse, discrimination and degrading treatment by officials (Article, 3). The host country is required to protect them from criminal violence and they should have access to the court system (Article 16). They are entitled to freedom of movement (Article, 26), similar to certain extent of host country nationals, and are entitled to education (Article, 22), social security benefits (Article, 24) and shelter (Article, 21). The host country also has an obligation to issue identity documents and/or travel documents (Article, 28), which ensure that their rights are protected both in the host country and in countries party to the Convention and/or Protocol.

There are currently 145 Contracting States to the 1951 Convention and 146 Contracting States to the 1967 Protocol. Australia was among the earliest states parties to the Refugee Convention, acceding to the treaty on 22 January 1954. Australia ratified the 1967 Protocol on 13 December 1973. The 1951 Convention is reported to have shown a great deal of resilience over the last 60 years despite the nature of conflict and the changing patterns of migration. In 1977 a comprehensive policy on refugees was adopted by a Coalition government led by Malcolm Fraser, which outlined the following principles that remain in place today (McMaster, 2001; Smit, 2010).

- Australia fully recognises its humanitarian commitment and responsibility to admit refugees for resettlement.
- The decision to accept refugees must always remain with the Government of Australia.
- Special assistance will often need to be provided for the movement of refugees in designated situations or for their resettlement in Australia.
- It may not be in the interest of some refugees to settle in Australia. Their interests may be better served by resettlement elsewhere (Mackellar, 1977)

Directly relevant to the target group in this research is the fact that Australia is an active member of UNHCR, since signing both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1954, and the 1967 Protocol Relating to Refugees in 1973 and so is fully recognised as having a humanitarian commitment to admit refugees into the country for resettlement in its Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

1.2.2 Australia's Humanitarian Program (AHP)

As with most countries, Australia had a fairly ad hoc process of accepting refugees until the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was ratified in 1951. In the 1930s Australia accepted more than 7,000 Jewish people who were fleeing the Nazi regime. In the 1940s and 1950s, Australia continued to accept more than 170,000 refugees mainly as a result of World War II with the largest groups being from Poland, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Later, the Vietnam War led to the first significant increase in non-

European refugees (RCOA, 2009a, p. 11), which was a major shift in policy (Foulkes, 2012). According to the data of the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA, 2010a), the policy had been to accept refugees mainly from Europe and Western European, since they were perceived to be useful to Australia in being able to contribute to its economic growth (RCOA, 2010a).

However, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s as many as 94,000 refugees were accepted from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, which included about 2,000 who arrived by boat (RCOA, 2009a, p.11). This was followed by an emphasis on refugees from Bosnia and Croatia in the 1990s because of the war in the Balkan region. As RCOA (2011a) reports, there were also significant numbers arriving from the Middle East and South Asia at this time thus reflecting a major policy change. This period also saw the influx of people from many different ethnic and religious minority groups. These included those fleeing from the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. Nevertheless, the turn of the century saw the majority of Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program entrants coming from Africa, and particularly Sudan although refugees continued from the Middle East and South East Asia. According to Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP, Fact Sheet 60), the UNHCR estimated that there were 43.7 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2010, which was the highest reported number in 15 years. Australia provides protection for such refugees its current Humanitarian Program under the two categories of refugee and special humanitarian:

- (1) The Refugee Category is for people who are subject to persecution in their home country and who are in need of resettlement. The majority of applicants who are considered under this category are identified and referred by UNHCR to Australia.
- (2) The Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) is for people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination and are supported by a sponsor in Australia. This is also the visa category that is commonly used for family reunion for humanitarian entrants People who have arrived through such offshore Refugee and Special Humanitarian category are given permanent visas and have access to government settlement and other support systems (DIAC, 2009b, Fact Sheet 60).

Thousands of refugees and humanitarian entrants who have been officially recognised by the UNHCR and the Australian Government currently live as permanent residents in Australia (see Table 1.1 and Table 1. 2). In the 2008-2009 program the top ten countries of origin of offshore Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program entrants were from Iraq (2,874), Burma (2,412), Afghanistan (847), Sudan (631), Bhutan (616), Ethiopia (478), Democratic Republic of Congo (463), Somalia (456), Liberia (387) and Sierra Leone (363) (RCOA, 2010b, p.15). In 2008-2009, 3493 Africans were granted humanitarian visas, including 1756 visas granted under the Refugee category and 1737 visas granted under the offshore Special Humanitarian. As shown in Table 1.1, RCOA current statistics on Australia's current Refugee and Humanitarian Program shows figures for the number of visas granted in the various categories, and Table 1.2 indicates the top five countries of origin for Humanitarian entrants by visa stream, 2007-2008 to 2012-2013. In its recognition of displaced populations having typically more complex resettlement needs the Australian Humanitarian Program (AHP) sets out to offer a wide range of Settlement Support Services. These include provision of basic on-arrival accommodation and assistance, translation services and English language classes to promote initial settlement. Refugee communities assisted under the humanitarian program include people from Africa, Iraq, and Afghanistan, including Ethiopia, as well as stateless people e.g. those born in the former republic of Yugoslavia.

Table 1.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Program visa grants by stream, 2007-08 to 2012-13

Visa sub-class	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
Offshore Refugee visas						
Refugee (visa subclass 200)	5,653	5,173	5,211	5,140	10,238	31,415
In-country Special Humanitarian (201)	54	24	26	43	71	218
Emergency Rescue (203)	4	-	2	-	30	36
Woman at Risk (204)	788	806	759	821	1,673	4,847
Offshore Special Humanitarian visas						
Global Special Humanitarian (202)	4,511	3,233	2,973	714	503	11,934
- 202 visas granted by ministerial intervention	75	11	8	2	-	96
Onshore Protection visas						
Onshore Temporary Protection (785)	9	-	-	-	-	9
Resolution of Status (851)	39	8	2	1	4	54
Onshore Permanent Protection (866)	2,369	4,515	4,818	7,038	7,504	26,244
Temporary Humanitarian Concern (786)	5	-	-	-	-	5
TOTAL	13,507	13,770	13,799	13,759	20,023	74,858

(RCOA, 2014a, p. 31)

Table 1.2: Top five countries of origin for onshore Protection Visa holders, 2007-08 to 2012-13

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Sri Lanka	China	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
China	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Iran	Iran	Iran
Iraq	Afghanistan	China	Stateless	Stateless	Pakistan
Pakistan	Zimbabwe	Iraq	Iraq	Iraq	Stateless
Iran	Iraq	Iran	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka

(RCOA, 2014a, p. 32)

The demographic background of refugees and humanitarian entrants to Australia has been changed over recent decades. Many refugees arriving in Australia have experienced some form of torture, including rape and physical assault, and/or extensive periods of living in fear due to war, poverty or from natural or man-made disasters (FECCA, 2010). These refugees have had a range of experiences and the background and journey of each individual may be quite different. In addition, some refugees have experienced years of conflict, some have faced deeply distressing and traumatic experiences and have survived a range of physical, psychological and emotional ordeals in countries such as Ethiopia and Eritrea prior to finding their way to Australia (Hatoss, 2012; 2013). Many have been displaced in their own countries such as the Assyrians in Iraq and the Sudanese in Egypt as they have had to flee for their lives without having the opportunity to farewell their families and friends or their families are dead or also displaced and their whereabouts unknown. Also, some have been subjected to siege conditions in their hometowns and cities, as in Burma,

or have lived throughout the terror of total anarchy, as in Somalia (Ministry of Health, 2012, p. 2). Most of the refugees have experienced and survived a range of trauma associated with war, political turmoil, severe hardship, hunger and poverty, persecution, detention, torture, beatings, sexual violence, death or disappearance of loved ones, imprisonment without trial, and severe harassment by authorities, land confiscation, and tribal conflicts, besides years or even decades spent living in refugee camps. These refugees, who survived and arrived in Australia, have then struggled to adapt to a new environment and rebuild their shattered lives (Crowley, 2009; Fisher, 2009; Murray et al, 2008).

Although Australia operates a dedicated Humanitarian Program, which offers resettlement and protection for RHE who currently live in Australia, according to Gebre-Selassie (2008, p. 4), “. . . as one of the major countries in the world to allocate many resources to settle refugees . . . the efficiency of the settlement program and the integration component of the settlement process still require further improvement in order to achieve better outcomes.” This view has been supported by Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA, 2010) and refugee advocates in the community, who claim Australia has not been adequately prepared to cope with the special needs of African refugees arriving with poor education, poor health, poor language skills and a history of brutalization and trauma from years of civil wars and refugee camp experiences.

Meanwhile, research over the last decade has shown that settlement outcomes for refugees appear to have deteriorated (Balfour & Woodrow, 2013). The main reasons for this are identified as the difficulties associated with the approaches to settlement and the way they are translated into effective programs. The provision of services such as the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is not straightforward and there is no coordinated and specific focus on the needs of subgroups, including the group at the focus of this study. This has resulted in substantial gaps in the service domain (Liebig, 2006; RCOA, 2010a). In particular, people whose first language is not English and who have little or no literacy in their first language face particular challenges in settling into Australian society (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012; Ma, 2009).

1.2.3 Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

The AMEP is the Australian Government's largest settlement program, which is administered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. AMEP has over 60 years of experience providing English language classes nationwide for English as a Second Language (ESL) migrants and refugees. Currently AMEP is delivered at more than 250 locations around Australia to help recently arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants to develop the English language skills they need to access services in the general community, and is the main stay of providing a pathway to employment, training or further study and participation in other government programs (DIBP, 2014a). The AMEP also assists clients, through experiential learning, to become independent in managing day-to-day situations, however it is important to understand the rules in terms of number of free hours of tuition according to learner circumstances (AMES, 2013).

The AMEP provides up to 910 hours of free English tuition to those under the age of 25 who have English language proficiency below the functional level assessed against the International Second Language Proficiency Rating scale (ISLPR) (Ingram & Wylie, 1979/1999). Those who are over the age of 25 with low levels of schooling are entitled to up to 610 hours of free tuition, and all other migrants receive up to a maximum of 510 hours of free English tuition. All learners are required to register with the program within 3 months of arrival, start their tuition within 1 year and complete within 3 years (DIBP, 2014a). The *Immigration (Education) Act 1971* and the *Immigration (Education) Regulations 1992* provide the legislative basis for the AMEP. In June 2010, the parliament introduced changes to the Act to provide greater settlement support, flexibility and clarity for clients. Clients are now able to register for the program within six months of arrival, rather than three months, which enables them to better concentrate on establishing themselves and their families when they first arrive in Australia (DIAC Annual report, 2010-2011, for AMEP administration). Classes are operated at different times and locations mainly at Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges across Australia, and delivered through different modes: on campus, distance-learning, a home-tutor scheme and independent-learning centres. English language provision is competency based and uses the International Second Language Proficiency Scales (ISLPR) as the curriculum framework and

assessment. This underpins the *Certificate in Spoken and Written English* (CSWE) at all four levels – I, II, III, and IV (Ingram, 1980). The recent introduction of the Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English (CPSWE) (PET Fact Sheet, October, 2010) is designed to cater for the linguistic needs of learners with lower levels of English, or who have had interrupted learning or no prior schooling as those at the focus of this study. Ingram (1980) introduced the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings Scale (ASLPR), subsequently transformed by Wylie and Ingram (1995; 1999) into the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings Scale (ISLPR), which is used as an initial placement procedure in the AMEP. The levels of the International Second Language Proficiency ratings (ISLPR) (Wylie & Ingram, 1999, p.7) correspond to entry into each of the CSWE levels are displayed in Table 3.1.

Table 1.3: Correspondence between English proficiency entry levels and CSWE levels

ISLPR Level		CSWE Level	
ISLPR – 0	————→ Beginner	————→	CSWE Certificate 1
ISLPR – 0	————→ Pre-beginner	————→	Pre-CSWE
ISLPR- 1	————→ Post beginner	————→	CSWE Certificate 11
ISLPR- 1+	————→ Intermediate	————→	CSWE Certificate 111

(Cited in Wylie & Ingram, 1999, p.7)

Although levels are well established the AMEP providers are constantly working to better match their courses with the needs of their clients (RCOA, 2008, p. 41). For example the provision of free childcare and the incorporation of home tuition schemes have been adopted in response to concerns that the program was not delivering on its promises for clients. Yet, RCOA (2008) notes that the fact that many refugees and humanitarian entrants arriving in Australia are still struggling with grasping the most basic level of conversational English after exiting from the AMEP seems an enigma.

1.2.4 Australian Citizenship Test (ACT)

When Prime Minister Howard's government Immigration Minister, Kevin Andrews, introduced the Citizenship Bill (2007) and the test into Parliament, he claimed:

the test will encourage prospective citizens to obtain the knowledge they need to support successful integration into Australian society. The citizenship test will provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate in an objective way that they have the required knowledge of Australia, including the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, and a basic knowledge and comprehension of English (Andrews, 2007, p. 6).

“Language is central to many of the challenges posed by migration, especially integration and the maintenance of social cohesion” (Little, 2008, p.2). Encouraging integration through language testing continues in many countries however it is important to be aware of whether the design of a language test realistically contributes to achieving the purpose of integration, citizenship and social cohesion in keeping with the policy intent. When the ACT was first introduced, scholars and professionals in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) debated the concept and purpose of language testing for naturalisation (Mcnamara & Ryan, 2011; Piller & Mcnamara, 2007). Most organizations that closely work for the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees such as the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) have argued that humanitarian entrants are particularly disadvantaged by the test as most of them do not come from English speaking backgrounds. (AMES, 2007; RCOA, 2008). Their concerns were substantiated by the test results released by the DIAC Snapshot Report (DIAC, 2008) that showed a significant failure rate for the humanitarian group compared with the skilled migrants and family stream migrants. In addition, the COA Citizenship Factsheet (RCOA, 2011b, para 4) reveals that, “of the 2,068 humanitarian entrants who sat the test between July and September 2009 only 1, 016 (49.1%) participants passed on their first attempt. This was well below the average of 76.5% for all migration streams, and 85.6% for all migration streams excluding humanitarian entrants.” Importantly, it was found that “on average, humanitarian entrants sat the citizenship test 1.7 times, compared to the average of 1.2 times for all other migration streams”. This lower performance of the

humanitarian group may not be surprising given their different background experience and lack of education. However, without research into the situation no firm conclusion may be made.

1.3 The research problem

The Australian Humanitarian Program (AHP) offers resettlement to humanitarian refugees who are in need of humanitarian resettlement. Its purpose is to provide protection to refugees who cannot find such protection as citizens of their countries of origin and who are effectively stateless as a result of violations of human rights. Recent Australian immigration policies have shown a trend to promote regional resettlement, through strengthening the role of employers and state governments in steering refugee and humanitarian entrants to areas of labour demand and through dispersing refugee settlement to different regional areas in Australia (Boese, 2010; Taylor, 2004). Flanagan (2007, p.16) notes refugees arriving in Australia make up one particularly disadvantaged group in the community. They encounter extreme financial, psychological and physical hardship, which has significant on-going consequences during their early settlement phase and major implications for the services they use.

Refugees arriving from Africa have had extended stays in camps and have experienced high vulnerability and are considered to be highly traumatised (Hatoss, 2013). The majority of them have experienced interruption to their education or may have had no education at all. Campbell and Julian (2009, p. 12) reported the average number of years of education for refugees from Africa, who are over five years of age, is six years. At least 42% have poor or no literacy in their own language, and 64% require an English language interpreter. Of relevance also is the fact that the DIAC has settled most of African humanitarian entrants in the regional areas of Australia. These include the Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Cairns, and Townsville in Queensland; Goulburn, Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Wollongong and Newcastle in New South Wales; Launceston and the North Coast in Tasmania; Geelong in Victoria and Mandurah in Western Australia (McDonald et al., 2008, p.15). This is in keeping with the policy developed in 2005 that aims to assist the humanitarian entrants gain employment and create social and economic benefits for rural and

regional communities (RCOA, 2010a). As noted by Campbell (2007, p.16) “. . . a regional settlement context is a very different context to that of metropolitan settlement. Overall, neither is better or worse for the communities being settled or the host communities”. However, there is criticism in terms of the geography of disadvantage when that is combined with locational poverty, where there is reduction of service or loss of service provision. This may create inequality between regions and Metropolitan areas, which in turn may impact on successful regional settlement (Birrell, 2003, p. 16-17) see also Mission Australia (2006). People settled in this context, who have no formal schooling, no print literacy skills in their native language (L1), and low literacy skills in the English language need access to programs that assist them to learn the English language in the host community at the conversational level and for gaining and sustaining employment. Importantly, without adequate levels of social integration they have difficulty in acquiring the sense of belonging that is so necessary to being able to make a successful transition to a new homeland. Chatin, Linstroth and Hiller (2009) note immigrants go through a process called community making that is necessary to establish a sense of belonging in the host country. A sense of belonging is defined as when immigrants reach a point where “a sense of community is considered to reflect ‘feelings of belonging and identification with . . . [their] participation’” (Sarson, 1974, cited in Sonn, 2002, p. 206). Without the requisite language and cultural knowledge of the host society they are unable to fully participate in that society with regard to obtaining work/applying for jobs, accessing education and social support, and achieving citizenship to gain access to the benefits afforded to Australian citizens by the Australian government. Thus, people in the humanitarian group need access to programs that assist them to learn the English language and understand Australian culture but the current acculturation experience of humanitarian refugees appears limiting with respect to learning and understanding the English language and culture well enough to effectively participate and socially integrate into their local Australian community.

Also, since 2008, RHEs have faced the hurdle of passing the ACT, which claims to test English proficiency and knowledge of Australian history culture and values. Obtaining Australian citizenship is vital for these people to fully participate in

Australian society and make a healthy and successful transition to the new and very different culture. Without the benefits of citizenship people remain disadvantaged and excluded from equal participation in Australian society. The attainment of Australian Citizenship therefore, can be extremely difficult for such migrants and can take several years, since this subgroup may have greater challenges to face in adjusting to the new community, in addition to learning the English language. Even though the AMEP provides English language classes nationwide for ESL migrants and refugees, due to the intake of an increased number of humanitarian refugees, who have little or no literacy in their first language, the AMEP has found difficulties in catering for this subgroup. As Moore (2007, p.25) noted, they are “. . . often unfamiliar with the written word as a semiotic system and the basic motor skills of writing, and lack of exposure to formal classroom instruction and assessment instruments”. In addition, the ACT has been called into question by the Submission of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre Inc. to the Citizenship Test Review Committee (2008) and it was noted that “the test establishes a new and more onerous requirement of ‘knowledge’, which includes not only adequate knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship, but also requires the far broader and ill-defined ‘adequate knowledge of Australia’. The question is whether this new benchmark is necessary in order to test eligibility for citizenship and enjoyment of its rights and responsibilities, and if so, on what basis?” Under Article 34 of the Refugees Convention, “. . . the Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings”.

Yet for this subgroup, the attainment of Australian Citizenship can be extremely difficult and take several years as they have greater challenges to face while adjusting to a new community, in addition to learning English (NSWTF, 2008). Further, these circumstances mean that members of this subgroup are likely to remain outsiders and excluded from equal participation in society. Remaining an outsider in the long term can be expected to impact negatively on people’s aspirations, hopes for the future, self-concept and sense of cultural identity, and so their general wellbeing. Without a sense of belonging to a community and a

meaningful pathway to citizenship, they may experience feelings of alienation, intimidation and isolation, which is inconsistent with international human rights treaty obligations of non-discriminatory treatment. This is noted in the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, besides Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (AHRC, 2012, p.15-23).

Consequently feelings of alienation, intimidation and isolation could most probably increase social disharmony and diversiveness instead of creating the social cohesion that is intended (Ndhlovu, 2013). Similarly, it could damage Australia's reputation in its well-established success integrating refugees as well as the past practice of relatively large annual intakes. Nevertheless, there are clearly many issues involved in what appears to be a multifaceted, complex problem that is not easy to resolve (Gebre-Selassie, 2008). The test in particular acts as a gatekeeper to this target group acquiring the much-needed benefits of citizenship (Copeland, 2010; Mcnamara, & Ryan, 2011).

The validity of the ACT has been criticized. For instance, the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre Inc. (2008, Submission to review the citizenship test, Item12e) has argued that:

The likelihood of legal invalidity [of the ACT] is not a mere esoteric or technical legal point. Rather, it goes to the heart of the fundamentally flawed nature of the test in so far as it appears to set the bar in relation to language proficiency higher than was permitted by Parliament. These standards have an important and controversial history in Australia, and serious implications for inclusion or otherwise.

It is problematic for RHEs because the impact of their displacement is so debilitating. In addition, making the acquisition of English language and literacy the major focus and demand following arrival of their arrival, despite the extended time does not appear to be a solution to facilitating this group's acculturation and integration into Australian society. It also seems problematic that within this context, the AMEP teachers, whose prime target is to teach the English language, seem to be

left with the task of addressing issues of citizenship policy, settlement policy and immigration policy to some extent if students' needs are to be fully addressed. The challenge is further complicated by the special nature of this group of learners (RHEs), who clearly have varying needs yet have to acquire English proficiency within a set time frame in order to meet the requirements of survival/work and education.

This does not bode well with the fact that this particular group of testees need the benefits of citizenship but are in the worst position to obtain it. Thus, this research seeks to explore this problem in-depth in relation to the particular group of adult African humanitarian migrants to Australia who are caught in the bind of needing to achieve citizenship to have full rights in Australia, but do not bring an appropriate base for literacy skills acquisition and the associated acculturation into Australian society in a time optimum to a reasonably smooth transition.

1.3 Purpose of the study and research questions

Many questions motivated the researcher to undertake this study along with the findings of her previous research on the plight of refugee women who had insufficient English skills for participation in their local community after eight years or more in Australia (Hewagodage & O'Neill, 2010). What is really required to achieve successful integration and citizenship status for this group in Australia? Should language testing be a part of it when this group have so far to go in achieving sufficiently high levels of reading and writing since they bring limited or no print literacy skills in both L1 and English Language (L2)? Can they learn English well enough to sit for the ACT after participating in the given free hours of access to AMEP? Therefore, the overall purpose of this study is to explore the experience of members of the subgroup of NESBs humanitarian refugees in relation to their social integration, citizenship and the ACT and the Australian Citizenship Policy drawn from a regional city in Australia. It explores their journey from permanent residency status to citizenship status, seeking to identify how the ACT impacted on achieving their goal of Citizenship in Australia. The research aims to provide insights into how Australian Citizenship Policy and its relationship to this subgroup of immigrants impacted in practice in terms of delivering the most appropriate support for refugees

and humanitarian entrants and maximising their opportunities to become active Australian citizens. Thus, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the barriers and success factors that impact most on humanitarian NESB refugees, who have limited literacy skills, in becoming acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?
2. How do humanitarian refugees with little or no literacy in their first language best acquire proficiency in English and become acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?

How can NESB humanitarian refugee learners with limited literacy skills in their first language best be assisted to develop a feeling of belonging and cope with their new cultural identity and become citizens within an appropriate timeframe?

1.4 Research methodology

Within the qualitative and quantitative paradigms in educational research there exists a number of research methods. Also there are a variety of potential techniques for collecting data. According to Wiersma and Jurs (2009), educational research is a complex and sophisticated field that may contribute to both knowledge about education and education practice. To successfully carry out this research the researcher employed both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms to undertake an analysis of the problem at hand, since the concern of this study has been to explore the experiences of the target group's journey to citizenship. Because of the persistent nature of the difficulty in achieving the required English language proficiency level for the target subgroup, the focus is on understanding this particular phenomenon rather than generalizing it to the whole refugee population. To obtain insights into the problem from a variety of perspectives data were collected through a survey to AMEP teachers, observations of ESL lessons, in-depth interviews with teachers, and a focus on a case study of a sample of humanitarian refugee students' journeys and experiences.

1.5 Significance of the study

Given the growing number of refugees arriving in Australia from Africa, it is also important for their wellbeing and their integration into the community that they are provided with the best possible support available. Specifically, refugees from Africa

in this target group “are a diverse group educationally with some having tertiary qualifications” (Benseman, 2012, p. 4) but “. . . many have had no formal education and may never have held a pencil, read a book, or have had access to any other educational resources even in their first language” (Naidoo, 2012, p.146). Importantly, it is this group of humanitarian refugees that the present research is concerned, because those who have low levels of literacy skills in their first language, combined with their traumatic histories appear to be the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in transition. Their capacity to acquire English language and literacy skills is seen as weak such that they are likely to be in limbo or “hanging in the balance.” From both a social justice and humanitarian perspective this research is highly significant in helping to ensure that this group’s needs are addressed in the best way possible. However, without research this group’s situation would be unlikely to improve in the near future. Also no significant research has been undertaken regarding the impact of language testing for naturalisation in the Australian context, and for this target group, yet the ACT was introduced six years ago. In addition, there is continuing controversy about it that is highlighted in the media despite changes being made to the test after the Australian Government, Citizenship Test Review (2008) committee chaired by Richard Woolcott. This review was undertaken to assist the government in examining aspects of the content and operation of the first citizenship test to ensure that it was achieving its purpose of providing an effective pathway for residents to become Australian citizens. Committee review included key findings and recommendations that led to consideration of this research. Some of the key findings were, (1) the present test is flawed, intimidating to some and discriminatory, (2) it needs substantial reform (3), alternative and improved education pathways to acquire citizenship need to be established for different categories of people seeking citizenship, and (4) the special situations of refugee and humanitarian entrants and other disadvantaged and vulnerable people seeking citizenship must be addressed (the Australian Government, Citizenship Test Review, 2008. p. 3). Similarly, perusal of media reports highlights some of the challenges of social integration of African refugees. For instance, Innes (2010) takes the view that African Australians have much to contribute if given a chance, stating:

just for a moment, imagine that you live in an unstable, war-torn country. For as long as you can remember you and your family have lived in fear. People close to you have been harassed, intimidated and even tortured. Life around you has so obviously deteriorated that you have to find a safer place for your family. So you migrate to a country that is renowned internationally as a safe, just and lucky country - a place that takes pride in giving people 'a fair go' but when you get there you find a lack of housing, limited employment opportunities and barriers to accessing education.

This study therefore provides the opportunity for humanitarian refugees to voice their own opinions, together with those responsible for the provision of English language development, acculturation and social integration/citizenship education e.g. ESL teachers at AMEP. The research outcomes form the basis for improving strategies for this subgroup to become proficient in English and understand Australian culture, history and values necessary for them to become effective citizens in a timely manner. It also seeks to make recommendations that are applicable to the refugees themselves and also to those who have the power and the resources to make a difference in terms of ELL skills development, policy and practice regarding the provision of citizenship capacity and the best advice to effective settlement developed under optimum conditions.

1.6 Definition of terms

There is a great deal of confusion about the terms that are used in the immigration context. However, the Fact Sheet 61 (DIBP, 2014) is quite specific in differentiating between terms. Firstly, an immigrant is defined as a person who enters a country different from his or her mother country (where he or she has citizenship), with the purpose of setting up a permanent residence in the new country, while receiving visa and clearance to enter the new country and settle legally. In contrast, a migrant is a person who has made a conscious choice to leave his or her mother country to make a new life in another country. His or her journey is planned and they are able to farewell family and friends. On the other hand an asylum seeker is someone who is

seeking international protection but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. In contrast, a refugee is someone who has been recognised under the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees to be a refugee, and the term humanitarian entrant refers to people who are accepted by the host countries on humanitarian grounds.

Having recognised refugee and humanitarian entrants face additional challenges given their unique experiences with the legal system, uncertainty over their tenure in Australia, and the limitations to government support available to them, the present researcher has chosen them as a unique subgroup. The two terms ‘refugee’ and ‘humanitarian entrant’, coexist and are used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study the researcher will adopt the term “humanitarian refugee” to refer to the former refugee status of the individual’s life. They are legal arrivals that fit the offshore Refugee and Special Humanitarian category and live as a permanent resident in Australia.

This study does not refer to people who are Temporary Protection Visa holders (TPVs) living in detention centres or unauthorized entrants such as asylum seekers arriving by boat, which has been controversial in the past decade. Hence, this study strictly focuses only on Australia’s Humanitarian Program, which includes UNHCR referrals, to the off shore Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program (RSHP) visa holders, who are granted permanent resident status in Australia. Additionally, this study selected a unique subgroup of adult African humanitarian refugees, aged between 25 to 60 years, who have been residents for four years in Australia prior to the research study, but had arrived from non-English speaking backgrounds with limited or no print literacy skills in L1 and L2. The term ‘limited’ here includes having ‘no formal or [having] interrupted education in homeland’. Meaning of ‘no literacy skills’ is simply referred to as the inability to read and write in any language. The term ‘Africans’, which has been referred as part of a single ‘African community’ needs to be viewed carefully. ‘ESL literacy’ is used to describe literacy programs for people who are perceived as having a reasonably functional, but not necessarily standard levels of spoken English and have not acquired English literacy skills. For the purpose of the study the term ESL learner is

often applied to long-term residents of Australia but who were not born in Australia and who have a language background other than English. Similarly, the classification of ‘Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)’ covers non-native speakers (NNS) of English, who use a language other than English at home, have an overseas background and have learned, or are learning, English in adulthood. Also the term NESB strongly relates to the more recent categorisation of culturally and linguistically diverse background migrants (CALD) but does not encompass the experiences of Indigenous Australians and the people who have migrated to Australia from English speaking countries. Here the author reminds adaptation of the term LESLLA for Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition. “This term is now used to describe a group or demographic of adult learners who have had limited or no access to education in their country of origin, who have limited literacy in their first language, and who are now learning to read and write for the first time in a language they are learning to speak as well” (Wall & Leon, 2009, p.1). Thus LESLLA represents the learner with no or limited print literacy skills in L1 and no literacy skills in L2 may belong to one of the category of pre literate semi-literate or Non-literate.

The classification of the terms ‘regional’, ‘rural’, ‘remote’ and ‘isolated’ is based on primarily population numbers and an index of remoteness, as well as a country or agricultural location with a small population and as living outside the city and at least two hour drive from the nearest TAFE College.

1.7 Limitations of the study

As the research focuses on one particular group of immigrants as a case study situated in a regional area in one state, it is acknowledged that it was unable to include the study of other members of this group’s experiences elsewhere and interstate. To broaden the data gathering, at least from the AMEP teachers’ perspectives, the incorporation of a survey to a total of 36 AMEP providers in Refugee Welcome Zones (RWZ) in Qld, Victoria, NSW and WA were targeted, and 30 ESL teachers, which delivered a small sample that was distributed across the

states, returned responses. The research was also strengthened through the breadth and depth of data in the case study of one group of refugees, who were observed and interviewed. The facts that an interpreter was required for the interviews also imposed some limitations as the researcher had to depend on the accuracy of this person's work and trust that they themselves did not facilitate cultural bias. Against this there was no choice other than to engage the interpreter that everyone was familiar with and was respected by the staff of AMEP. The researcher would not have been able to conduct the research without the assistance of the interpreter, who was open to discussing the research and the importance of allowing the interviewee to tell their story and say what they thought without fear of exposure. It was important to have an interpreter to explain the research invitation and ethical considerations and guarantee of confidentiality. Therefore, the researcher endeavoured to gather detailed and accurate data through the use of an interpreter (an employee who had been working as a liaison to AMEP and the local Refugee Humanitarian Program) and was able to contribute to transcribing and translation of taped interviews.

1.8 Organisation of the dissertation

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the thesis and overview of the study by setting out the context through brief introduction of the Australian Citizenship Test (ACT), Refugee and humanitarian entrants (RHE) and Adult Migrant English Program. Then the chapter provides the statement of the problem, the purpose, and the research questions and briefly describes the methodology and significance of the study. Chapter Two, presents the research conceptual framework and a review of the literature, pertaining to humanitarian refugees, including the most recent research on refugee integration and settlement in Australian context (e.g. Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010, 2009; Colic-Peisker; 2009; Fozdar & Hartley, 2012; Hartley, 2012; Hatoss, 2013, 2012; Hatoss, Ibrahim, et al., 2010; O'Neill, & Eacersall, 2012; Hugo, 2011; Khoo, 2012; Ndhlovu, 2013). In addition, this chapter reviews the introduction of ACT and justification of its use in terms social integration and social cohesion and theoretical constructs of integration and acculturation relevant to low literate refugee immigrants the theory of second language acquisition and the theoretical framework for language testing in

relation to the design of the ACT and their relevance to low literate refugee immigrants are further discussed at the centre of this study.

Chapter three continues the literature review in relation to Australian citizenship, the concepts of naturalisation and citizenship, including an overview of the historical development of the ACT, the test's purpose, subject matter, format, ideology, and the role it plays in the process of humanitarian refugees becoming Australian citizens. Also this chapter inquires into the linguistic level of the citizenship resource book and the outcome of the first Australian Citizenship Test. Further this chapter identifies the comparative analysis of test materials of both, sequential citizenship tests introduced in 2007 and 2009. Then the chapter focuses on specific attention to language testing for naturalisation, including literature on fairness, validity and principles of language testing (Bachman, 2005; Mcnamara, 2009, 2013; Shohamy & Mcnamara, 2009),

Chapter four describes the methodology used in the study, including justification of the research paradigm adopted, and explains the study design and methods of gathering data and its analysis. This covers the definition and selection of the sample of participants, the study's background context, and the ethical procedures, and limitations of the study.

Chapter five reports the analysis of the results of the research: the anonymous survey to AMEP teachers and the interviews that made space for dialoguing with 10 AMEP teachers on an individual basis. It contained both qualitative and quantitative data about the nature of existing provisions of ESL pedagogy, external and additional constraints placed on teachers, their experiences with low literate refugee learners and the perception and beliefs about L2 acquisition. In addition, the results of classroom observations are presented that illuminate the classroom practices and provide insights into the challenge this target group of pre-beginners' face in acquiring English literacy.

Chapter six continues reporting the results of this study. It presents the responses to interviews with the humanitarian refugees and includes the narratives of eight case

studies, and recognises the association between the survey results and the responses to their interviews. Chapter seven provides summary of the study and a discussion of the research findings in relation to the research questions. This concluding chapter identifies the implications of the research for policy and practice, contribution to the knowledge and contains a conceptual framework that could be adopted for the integration of humanitarian refugees who belong to the LESLLA category.

CHAPTER 2 INTEGRATION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research conceptual framework for the study and reviews the literature on integration and acculturation as it applies to the target group to understand the theoretical bases of the study. In particular, it examines bioecological systems theory as a way of understanding the challenges faced by humanitarian refugees in the context of their struggle to settle in the host country. It also examines why the citizenship test has been introduced and through a brief analysis of the concepts of social cohesion, African refugee and humanitarian living in Australia, the chapter further explores what constitute integration and how acculturation occurs from a theoretical point of view. Following a further analysis of the theoretical framework for second language acquisition and L2 proficiency as a key indicator for social integration this chapter suggests the most appropriate approach for teaching low literate in L1 and L2 (LESLLA) learners. It concludes with more details about the target group in relation to their second language acquisition and their development providing further justification for the present research and its design.

2.1.1 Australian citizenship test dilemma

When the Howard government introduced the Australian Citizenship test policy in 2007, with the terms ‘integration’ and ‘social cohesion’ for ‘would be citizens’, the Government explained that: “a formal citizenship test could be an important part of ensuring that migrants are fully ready to participate in the Australian community as it could provide a real incentive to learn English and to understand the Australian way of life” (DIMA, 2006, p. 11). However, one wonders who these citizens are supposed to be. According to Australian Citizenship Amendment (ACA, 2007), they are the immigrants who had spent two years permanent residents in the 5 years before 01 July 2007, and who had applied on or before 30 June 2010. Regardless of their migration experience, or their racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic background they

can be either “migrants [who] come from English speaking background” or “migrants [who] come from non-English speaking background” but live in Australia as permanent residents within four consecutive years. In terms of two categories of these immigrants, people who arrived from non-English speaking background are often perceived as having difficulties in English language proficiency (Hewagodage & O’Neill, 2010).

2.2 Research conceptual framework

According to Cohen et al (2000, p. 13), “. . . concepts enable us to impose some sort of meaning on the world; through them reality is given sense, order and coherence. They are the means by which we are able to come to terms with our experience”. As cited in Lester (2010, p.73), Eisenhart (1991) has described conceptual framework as “an argument that the concepts chosen for investigation, and any anticipated relationships among them, will be appropriate and useful given the research problem under investigation”. Additionally, Miles and Huberman (1994) defined a conceptual framework as a visual or written product, one that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied the key factors, concepts, or variables and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 18).

The starting point in the conceptual framework for this research is the low literate former refugee and humanitarian immigrants living in Australia as permanent residents who are waiting to be citizens in Australia. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, the concepts contained in the circles in the framework underpin this study and indicate the overall structure and the relationships within and between. Central to the study is the conceptual dimension of ‘social integration’ and its relationship to ‘language testing and the ‘citizenship test’, in the refugees need to acquire the L2 of English, and become acculturated into Australian society. In so doing, the conceptual framework recognises the need for citizenship education and the way this relates to the situation.

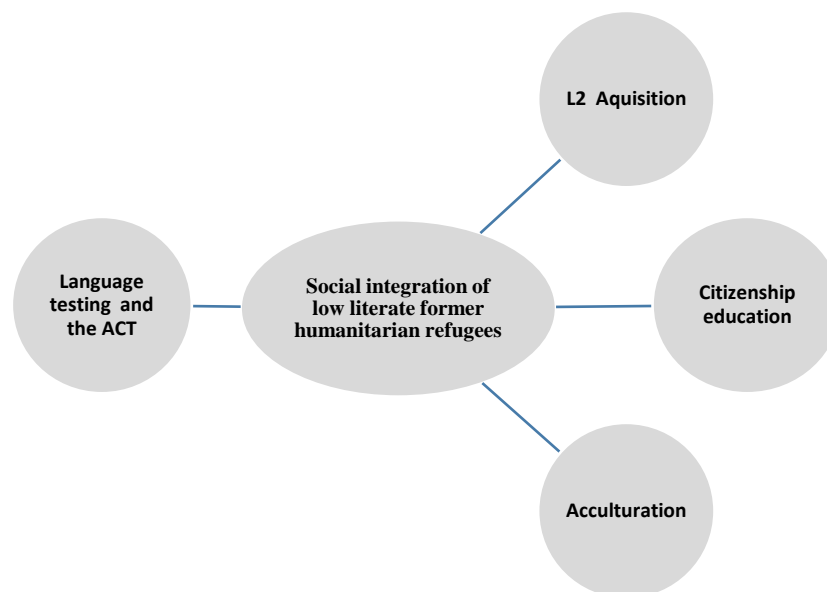


Figure 2.1: Overview of the research conceptual framework

2.3 Why countries opt for a citizenship test for immigrants

Over the past few years, many countries in the world have introduced citizenship tests. In late 2007, countries that implemented a formal citizenship testing procedure included: United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Australia, and France (Etzioni, 2007; Wrights, 2008). The idea of implementing a test in the naturalisation process has its roots in the United States, where a literacy test was first introduced in late 1880, and was later accepted as part of their immigration policies (Björk, 2011). Many scholars described this trend as ‘reevaluation of citizenship’ (De Hart & Van Oers, 2006; Joppke & Morawska, 2003). Also, Joppke and Morawska (2003, p.1) note this is a way to “reaffirm citizenship as the dominant membership principle”. But Wright (2008, p. 1) questions “why at this precise point in time are so many states requiring would-be citizens to pass entrance tests?” In response, some political theorists like Michalowski, (2011, pp. 573–574) and Joppke (2010), argue that a citizenship test is a transformation of political liberalism and is therefore inevitable. Other scholars (Jupp, 2002, pp. 8–9; Mcnamara & Roevers, 2006, pp. 160–161) argue the testing component of the citizenship policy initiative is to limit and control migration. “Indeed, tests have historically been introduced or tightened in response to political or populist pressures to limit immigration in general, or certain kinds of immigration

in particular” (Etzioni, 2007, p. 354) and so become high stakes gate keepers. Wright (2008, p. 1) meanwhile provides two explanations for introduction of citizenship tests in Europe: These were, (1) fears for security and what she calls the issue of ‘critical mass’ in the wake of 9/11 and, (2) the rise of global fears about militant Islam, following the attack on New York. If we really examine what provoked Australia to introduce the ACT, there appears to be a combination of several reasons to consider. For example, due to the rapid expansion and intake of immigrants in Australia, tensions in social cohesion have begun to surface in recent years (Cahill, 2003; Jakubowicz, 2009a, Jakubowicz, 2009b, Jakubowicz, 2010). Incidents such as the ‘Children Overboard’ on October 6, 2001 (Aas & Bosworth, 2013), ‘Bali bombings’ on October 1, 2005, ‘Madrid train bombings’ on March 11, 2004, ‘London bombings’ on July 7, 2005 and claims that such terrorists are active in Australia (Betts & Birrell, 2007, p. 53) when connected are seen as a source of threatening fragments to be cautious regarding the security level in Australia. The situation has also been contextualized through incidents such as the ‘Cronulla riots’ between young white Australians and Lebanese people on the beaches of Sydney in 2005, “what the Australian media had constructed as a blatant attack on an Aussie Icon” (Evers, 2008, p. 419).

When the Howard government came to power in 1996 (1996-2007), it set out to rewrite multicultural policy, producing “Multicultural Australia: the Way Forward (1997), Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness (1999), A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia (1999) and United in Diversity (2003), then updating the 1999 information to a new agenda for a multicultural Australia for 2003 to 2006 (Jingjing, 2009, pp 20-37). In its policy manual (3) government reaffirmed its commitment to promote “diversity, understanding and tolerance in all areas of endeavour”. To justify the government’s position it further stated, “. . . these actions are especially important given the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the United States of America and 12 October 2002 in Bali, and the changed global environment in which we live” (p. 1). But it was at this time that there was episode of racist violence against young men of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’ at Cronulla beach, in Sydney, in December 2005 (Poynting, 2006, Jakubowicz, 2009a), which attracted national and international media attention. The

media reported the behaviour of this group as ‘threatening’ Australian values and Australian identity. As Collins, (2007, p.61) discusses these riots, combined with instances of ethnic conflicts in Europe and North America, were interpreted as confirmation of immigrant minorities inevitably bringing conflict to their host country, threatening social cohesion and dividing the nation, particularly when they included minorities from Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Prime Minister Howard in his address to the National Press Club on Australia Day, in 2006 raised the concerns about social cohesion at the practical political level and the importance of the maintenance of social cohesion as a key issue for Australia in the 21st century, stating in his speech:

Australia’s ethnic diversity is one of the enduring strengths of our nation. Yet our celebration of diversity must not be at the expense of the common values that bind us together as one people respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, a commitment to the rule of law, the equality of men and women and a spirit of egalitarianism that embraces tolerance, fair play and compassion for those in need” (Howard, 2006, p. 3-4).

The Prime Minister Howard was of the opinion that the nation should be based on one culture. In his interview with Radio 3AW, Melbourne, 24 February 2006 he said:

We are tolerant to people of different backgrounds but over the years at its zenith, the more zealous multiculturalism basically said that this country should be a federation of cultures. You can’t have a nation with a federation of cultures. You can have a nation where a whole variety of cultures influence and mould and change and blend in with the mainstream culture . . . you have to recognise that there is a core set of values in this country.

Further, as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald (26/2/06) he took the position that, “When you come to Australia you become Australian”. In the same article, Mr. Costello, former Treasurer to the Howard Government was quoted as saying even more forcefully, “before becoming an Australian, you will be asked to subscribe to certain values. If you have strong objections to those values, don’t come to Australia”. This means prospective citizens need to embrace the values of Australia. Because “as important as the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, these values provide the everyday guideposts for living in Australia, for participating fully

in our national life and for making the most of the opportunities that Australia has to offer” (Becoming an Australian Citizen, 2007, p. 4).

It appears that the Howard government may have perceived the need to formalize the conditions for social cohesion for a better society, following trends in Britain, Canada, USA and the Netherlands by favouring adherence to the national values and understanding of political, historical and cultural practices by introducing the Australian citizenship test (ACT) to highlight the importance of ‘social cohesion’ and ‘integration’. Thus, a Bill for an Act to amend the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 was introduced and the Australian citizenship test that based upon information on Australian history, culture and values was introduced as a mechanism that would enhance the social cohesion by integrating aspiring citizens into the community. However, as Witcomb (2009) argues:

It is very clear from the former Prime Minister’s public discourse that he wanted to make Anglo-Australian values the core of Australian identity in what was very clearly a direct challenge to the notion that cultural diversity lay at the heart of Australian identity. For Howard, there was a mainstream, dominant Australian identity and cultural diversity, to the extent that it was supported, was the icing on the cake—but not the cake itself (p. 60).

However government’s interpretation of social cohesion “betrays some of the rather unreasonable expectations that immigrants should be able to adjust to the “Australian way of life” and that failure to do so results in violence and loss of social cohesion” (Ndhlovu 2013, p. 9). In this way it might be the case, as stated by Fozdar and Spittles (2009, p. 498), that “the Howard Government’s initiatives were designed to use citizenship as a tool for social inclusion by increasing the value of citizenship by restricting access to it and by more clearly articulating what it means to be “Australian”. A key consideration is, as Spencer (March, 2011, p. 5) argues, in the UK context, refugees are the only group that has been targeted and affected by these integration policies. Family migrants have not been identified as a target for integration, nor labour migrants or students.

2.4 Social cohesion

Integration and social cohesion are associated with a complex set of issues that relate to historical and political discourses in the Australian context (Collins, 2007; Jakubowicz, 2009b). “The heart of this is a conceptual difficulty that means that many things are unhelpfully bundled together under the headings of integration and cohesion” (Saggar et al., 2012, p. 12).

From the theoretical point of view, Chan et al (2006, p. 275) see the work of Émile Durkheim’ (Palumbo & Scott, 2005, pp. 40-62) as the “intellectual origin” for the concept of social cohesion. Broadly speaking, it has been used to describe social relations. In Chan et al’s (2006) terms:

Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations (p. 290).

However, Kostakopoulou (2014, p. 129) raises the political dimension, making the observation that the use of a political vocabulary containing terms such as ‘societal existence,’ ‘survival,’ ‘adaptation,’ ‘adjustment’ and ‘maladjustment,’ ‘assimilation,’ and ‘integration’ is more compatible with illiberal socio-political realities and indifferent to the fluidity of majority/minority positions. Interestingly, the Council of Europe’s (2010) definition accounts for minorities by noting social cohesion as “the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation – to manage differences and divisions and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all members” (p. 2). However, as Kearns and Forrest (2000, p. 997) point out “. . . a socially cohesive society is one in which the members share common values, which enable them to identify common aims and objectives, and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another.” This supports Kostakopoulou’s (2014) argument that their needs to be spontaneous collective action where members of society value living together and individuals have an interest in cooperation.

Social cohesion as a concept, therefore, involves shared values, identities and norms. This is reinforced by Norton and de Haan (2013, p. 9) who state, “a degree of social consensus on norms and values is not just associated with, but actually inherent and constitutive of social cohesion.” Kantzara, (2011, p. 40), also supports this by arguing, “. . . [a] process view of community based on relations of interdependence allows for extensive and flexible membership with a view to nurturing mutually productive communities of relationships. In this view, reciprocity is societal or comprehensive – and not co-national or co-ethnic, because political communities are not communions.”

However, the ACT policy does not provide any explanation to support the fact that civic knowledge can contribute to the protection of the Australian way of life or promote social cohesion. This suggests that if Australian immigrants do not have an understanding of the basic history and political system of the country, a sense of shared values, proficiency in the language of the nation, and the uniqueness of the national culture, they will not be able to be integrated into the society. Interestingly, if the ACT is able to promote social cohesion it could be argued that the acquisition of civic knowledge affects immigrants’ commitment to Australian values and, as a result, the ACT helps to keep social cohesion in Australian society. But currently, there appears to be no empirical evidence available to support the claim that civic knowledge, unique national culture and commitment to values, will create social cohesion. However, if this is the case then it may be argued that all immigrants regardless of their visa status should sit the test. In this respect, several scholars (Fozdar & Spittles, 2009; Tate, 2009; Tilbury, 2007) in their attempts to identify how civic knowledge, unique national culture and commitment to societal values create social cohesion have found that the ACT policy has served as a mechanism for exclusion. They conclude that the Howard government used the terms ‘social cohesion’ and ‘integration’ to politically justify placing restrictions on immigration. This is elaborated upon by Ndhlovu (2013), who asserts: “In making a link between assimilation to ‘Australian values’ and social cohesion, integration as a policy objective and method of migration management is apparent. Expedient cultural change and conformity is expected from immigrants under the

assimilation/integration model, which can create unwarranted antagonism and alienation of new immigrants who need resettlement support regardless of their cultural values (p. 9). Like Ndhlovu (2013), Kostakopoulou (2014), also argues that, “such conceptions are nothing else than narratives of legitimisation of political control and of restrictive migration policies” (p. 135).

2.5 Integration

For the purposes of this study there is a need to understand contemporary views of integration. As a concept it has been defined in different ways by different authors. As Castles et al (2002, p. 112) suggest, “. . . meanings [of integration] vary from country to country, change overtime, and depend on the interests, values and perspectives of the people concerned”. However, cited in (Reiner, 2010, p. 10), the UNHCR states: “local integration in the context of refugees as a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process, which requires efforts by all parties concerned, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of the host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the need of diverse population.” Rudiger and Spencer (2003, p. 5) consider integration as a part of the process of nation-building. They point out that this makes it attractive to policymakers, who aim for stability and order. But they also warn that “while it can impede the recognition and acceptance of difference, the normative dimension of integration often remains concealed, when access to the services and institutions of a society is conceived as a procedural matter, with the public sphere acting as a neutral arbiter of universal needs.” Therefore, not surprisingly, Ager and Strang (2008) do not attempt to define integration because of its complexity, but importantly Castles et al (2002, p. 114) emphasise: “[t]here is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration. The concept continues to be controversial and hotly debated.” Nevertheless, given the experience of Europe the European Commission has identified various factors believed to be crucial in contributing to the process. The European Commission (2003, p.17-18 states:

Integration should be understood as a two-way process based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations of legally resident third country

nationals and the host society, which provides for full participation of the immigrant. This implies on the one hand that it is the responsibility of the host society to ensure that the formal rights of immigrants are in social, cultural and civil life and on the other, that immigrants respect the fundamental norms and values of the host society and participate actively in the integration process, without having to relinquish their own identity (cited in Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, p. 17).

Both, European Commission and UNHCR suggest immigrants adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose their own cultural identity and deliver the message to welcome the immigrants and refugees to host countries, communities and public institutions. This suggests that when the structure of the host country and the immigrant communities are connected and aligned through interactions, the immigrants will be able to mobilise, and when host country's support services come into play the needs of immigrants to create a better life will be met. However, when the host country's policy framework for integration is restrictive in practice there will be some who suffer (Kostakopoulou, 2014). As a result racism and xenophobia can emerge as a major obstacle to integration for some groups because it fosters insecurity, isolation and hostility (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003).

2.6 Can integration be measured?

Different conceptual approaches, terminology and indicators have been used at various times in different countries to measure the integration outcome of immigrants and refugees. For example, in 1960, intermarriage was one of the indicators that sociologists and demographers used to measure assimilation into the receiving society (Khoo, 2012). In 2008, in the United Kingdom, Ager and Strang (2008, p. 175) developed a conceptual framework to assess integration and its key components. As shown in the Figure 2.2, this framework is structured into ten key domains. Having the language and cultural knowledge and being stable and safe is seen as facilitating citizenship, but there is a need to build social bridges, and develop bonds and make links as well. The top of the diagram shows that this is achieved through gaining employment, acquiring housing, becoming educated and

maintaining good health. These domains reflect the importance of human dignity, equality, and freedom of cultural choice, justice, security and independence. Most importantly ‘rights and citizenship’ underpin all other aspects of integration and “the foundation of integration policy, to which governments is accountable.”

In Australia DIAC also used a similar approach to assess integration of immigrants (Fozdar & Hartley, 2009). Professor Graeme Hugo from the University of Adelaide, on behalf of DIAC, investigated the ‘economic, civic and social contributions of refugee and humanitarian entrants to Australia’ (Hugo, 2011). Also the longitudinal surveys of immigrants to Australia LSIA 1 (1994-1999), LSIA 2 (2000-2002) and LSIA 3 (2005-2006), which are the most comprehensive surveys on migrants and humanitarian entrants undertaken by DIAC (DIBP, 2014b) to explore their integration, found no evidence that integration outcomes could be predicted using exact indicators.

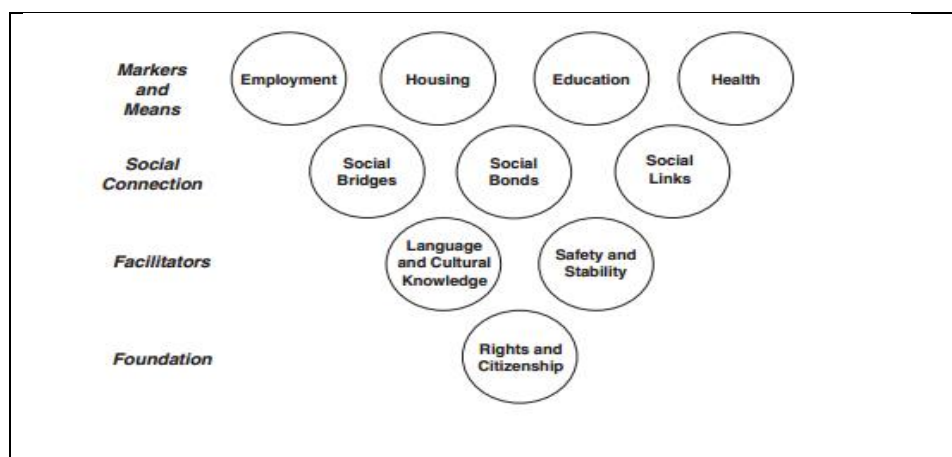


Figure 2.2: A conceptual framework defining core domains of integration

(Cited in Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 175)

In addition, a collaborative study undertaken by a team of Victorian health promotion foundation researchers on refugees’ resettlement in regional and rural Victoria concluded that integration does not adhere to any standard formula but occurs differently for each person. On this basis it could be assumed that quantitative indicators such as economic participation and labour force outcomes, occupational status, level of income do not reflect the actual individual integration accurately. In supporting UNHCR (2013) ensures that, “there is no exact measurement to determine at what point a newcomer is fully integrated, and there is no single, set

prescription for the establishment and delivery of an integration programme” (p. 8). Based on the above literature the argument for immigrant integration into the society cannot be directly measured. Also based on actual examples of different immigrants’ journeys, it shows the application of suggested indicators does not provide a simple solution. For instance, the example of the results of a nationwide survey in Canada showed that immigrants to Canada claim a stronger knowledge of the country's history than their native born counterparts, such that Boswell (2011) suggests that it might follow those immigrants in Canada are integrated more successfully than native born Canadians. A second example raises the issue of the extent to which language proficiency level may be an indicator of an immigrant’s propensity to be a good citizen. Banulescu-Bogdan (August 2, 2012) reports that in 2008, the Finnish Minister of Migration and European Affairs reported that in Finland, applicants could fail the official language proficiency test yet they had a sufficient command of Finnish to succeed in their everyday lives. The complexity involved in deciding on skills for citizenship and the ability to integrate in the host country society is highlighted in the case of Mohamed Atta, one of the 9/11 terrorist pilots (Wright-Neville, 2010, p. 41). He successfully integrated in to German society, becoming fluent in German and earning an academic degree in Germany. Subsequently, he held several jobs in Hamburg, working at one point in urban planning. However, in spite of this he engaged in terrorism (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, p.160-161).

A fourth example provides another perspective on immigrants across society in Australia. ABS data shows a fewer percentage of overseas-born residents are in prison across Australia compared with Australia-born residents (ABS, 2010). When considered together these examples, as Atfield, Brahmhatt, and O’Toole (2007, p. 12) note, contribute to “a great deal of disagreement about what constitutes integration, how one determines whether strategies for promoting integration are successful, or what the features of an integrated society are.” This view was also that of Bennett and Taitt (2008) who argue that integration is a complex social and cultural process and as an aspirational concept it could take variable forms, and also lengths of time to achieve. They also argue that the success rate for integration cannot be quantified.

2.7 Integration and language proficiency

Researchers in different disciplines argue that testing language skills for citizenship is neither encouraging nor supportive for achieving integration or social cohesion. It is argued that the testing approach tends to create an obstacle to integration and is seen as a gate-keeping device (Etzioni, 2007; Jurado, 2008; Shohamy & Mcnamara 2009). Undoubtedly, the Howard Government's effort to encourage integration through requiring proficiency in the English language has the potential to enhance immigrant participation in society but this does not mean that people's lack of linguistic competence makes integration impossible. In other words there is evidence across the world that shows successful citizenship does not necessarily depend primarily on language. For example, the submission to DIAC (RCOA, 2010a) reports:

The Vietnamese refugees who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s have flourished remarkably after settling in Australia, despite the significant language barriers and cultural adjustment they faced on arrival. Today, the Vietnamese are well represented in the business sector and also play an important role in broadening social, cultural and business relationships between Australia and South-East Asia (p. 8).

This is also the case for other NESB migrant groups including Italian, Greek, Chinese and Taiwanese to name but a few. Mcnamara (2005; 2010; 2012; 2013), whose expertise is in language testing, has concluded through his research on the social and political context of language testing in immigration and citizenship, supports this view, and argues that people can participate successfully in society even if they are not fluent in the host country's national language. In this respect, Tainer (1988), gathered empirical evidence in the US context, which showed that educated Koreans in the US have relatively poor English but they earn high incomes through being engaged in highly skilled work. Similarly, Rogers (2007, p. 166) also points out: "it is certainly not true that the exercise of citizenship cannot be carried out without learning literacy". While the development of digital communication technologies may support this argument, on the other hand with access to the Internet requiring English proficiency and societal participation, some language is needed in public life. However, Kostakopoulou (2010) and Mcnamara and Ryan (2011) also

note that a lack of linguistic competence does not make political participation impossible. But, the big issue, as Shohamy (2006) argues is the unethical nature of condemning those immigrants who are not proficient in the host country language to a life where they are prevented from being able to fully participate in the society. This represents the case for the target group of the present research, whose circumstances are such that passing the test in a reasonable timeframe is a remote possibility, and in the meantime lack of citizenship robs them of being qualified for Enrolment and Voting (Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918), participation in Jury Service (Jury Exemption Act 1965), Mobility Rights and obtaining an Australian Passport (The Passport Act 1938), working rights in the public service (The Public Service Act 1922), consular assistance when travelling overseas, and “sponsoring relatives as migrants, and almost complete immunity from deportation” (Betts & Birrell, 2007, p. 48).

2.8 African refugees in Australia

While previous refugees have experienced successful integration into Australian society, African refugees who come to Australia on humanitarian grounds tend to have extra difficulty in integrating into wider society (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Gebre-Selassie, 2008). Reiner (2010, p. 12) argues this is mainly, owing to the fact that Australia is: “[not] . . . adequately prepared to cope with the special needs of African refugees, who commonly arrived with poor education, poor health, poor language skills and a history of brutalisation and trauma from years of civil wars and experiences in refugee camps.” Thus, as Ndhlovu (2013, pp. 1-2) points out, for these reasons it is inevitable that, “. . . post-refugee Africans living in Australia have increasingly attracted a significant amount of political, legislative and media attention. In the last decade, the Australian media has been awash with discourses on African migrants and their ‘failure to integrate’ into mainstream Australian society” This is reinforced by the fact that in 2007 the government reduced the intake of African refugees owing to them being seen as failing to integrate into Australian society. The former Howard government’s Minister for Immigration, Kevin Andrews, publicly announced in the Australian newspaper *Age* (October 3, 2007):

We know that they [African refugees] have on average low levels of education, lower levels of education than almost any other group of refugees that have come to Australia. We know that many of them, if not most of them, have spent up to a decade in refugee camps and they've spent much of their lives in very much a war-torn, conflicted situation. And on top of that they have the challenges of resettling in a culture which is vastly different from the one which they came from, I don't think anybody really denies that this is a challenge, it's really a matter of how we respond to that challenge and putting our head in the sand and pretending it's not there is not going to help the people concerned, and it's not going to help Australia.

Over the last 60 years the various governments, have committed to serve immigrant refugees and humanitarian entrants and provide them with support ranging from basic accommodation and assistance on arrival to more intensive support programs to address their specific needs (Reiner, 2010). However, current political attitudes and policies appear to be based on the current settlement services in establishing the conditions for integration of African refugee and humanitarian entrants. To date, there has been few comprehensive research studies conducted on the post refugee situation and local integration of African refugees in Australia. However, such studies as the Australian Human Rights Commission (2010; 2009), Colic-Peisker (2009); Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, (2007); Hatoss (2013, 2012; Hatoss and Huijser (2010), Hugo (2011); Ibrahim, et al., (2010); Khoo (2012); and Ndhlovu (2013), indicate that refugee and humanitarian entrants are the worst affected and have the greatest risk of social exclusion owing to unemployment, welfare dependency and poverty. Reasons for poor economic participation of humanitarian entrants include low English proficiency and under-resourcing of education in English and ESL (Boese, 2009; Carrington et al., 2007; Gebre-Selassie, 2008, Taylor & Stanovic, 2005). Recent research conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2010; 2009), Ndhlovu (2013), and Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) has confirmed racism and discrimination against black African-Australians has prevented them from successfully accessing employment over the past few years. Recent case studies of the Eritrea, African immigrant refugees' labour market access in Australia (Ibrahim et al., 2010) and the study of 76 humanitarian entrants' resettlement in

Western Australia (Fozdar & Hartley, 2012) reveal a number of key contributing factors that significantly impact on the integration of African refugees and humanitarian entrants to the wider society. These include, English language proficiency, further education and training, strength of links to community organizations, gender and the type of job assistance services received. Also it is important to note that some African refugee subgroups living in regional areas in Australia lack appropriate and sufficient support programs that are targeted to their needs. This contributes to preventing their integration and results in greater marginalization in the wider community/rural areas. This research showed that females in particular, living in isolated areas might not be able to communicate in English and have little opportunity to communicate in their own language (Hewagodage & O'Neill, 2010; Reiner, 2010). Reiner (2010, p. 12-13) analysed the characteristics of the current settlement programs and found: (a) The recent large and rapid influx of African refugees did not allow programs, designed for small groups, to adjust quickly enough, (b) the programs were not dynamic enough to adjust to the different needs of a new community, (c) service providers did not anticipate the need to adjust program strategies for the different cultural backgrounds of participants, and service providers did not understand the African context and cultures well enough to make appropriate adjustments. This situation militates against African refugees and humanitarian entrants becoming integrated.

2.9 Bioecological systems theory and integration

In order to explore the situation for this target group further the present research considers Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. He defines this in terms of 'ecological environment [that] is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls' (p. 3). This is presented in Figure 2.3. His explanation that a "person's development is profoundly affected by events occurring in settings in which the person is not even present" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3) assists in illuminating the problem that humanitarian refugees face in trying to become integrated when the situation is shaped by diversity of social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore it is necessary to examine how integration works by theoretical point of view. Thus, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory allows for

exploration of varied contextual factors from a system-based approach that explicitly takes into account the different layers of individual and broader social context that impact upon people.

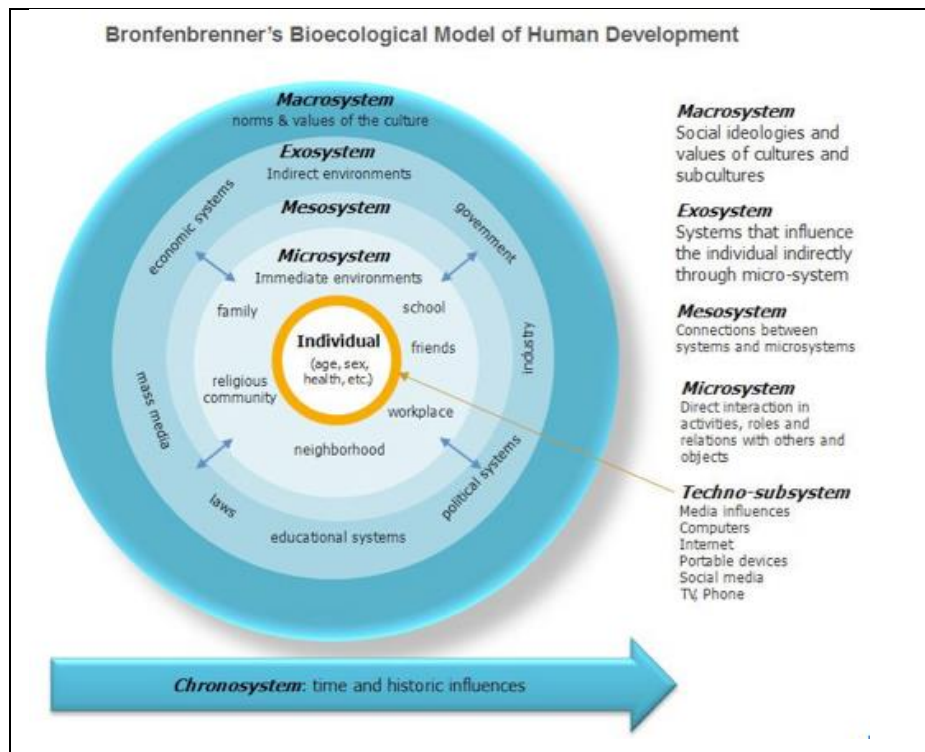


Figure 2.3: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model

As seen in Figure 2.3, (Litchenberger, 2012) the ecological systems theory describes six nested systems of contextual influence representing both proximal and distal influential environments: (1) individual system, (2) microsystem, (3), mesosystem, (4) exosystem, (5) macrosystem, and (6) chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This theory “. . . brings into the foreground the developing person and the education-designed environment and the people in this environment with all intertwining personal relationships, roles, actions and processes . . . and is not aimed at the phenomenon of education itself, which is studied by the education science and pedagogies (Härkönen, 2007, p. 6).

According to ecological systems theory the individual system includes age, gender, ethnicity, health, and personality traits and language. With respect to the micro system Bronfenbrenner (1989) defines this as “a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features, and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief” (p. 227). For example, a setting is defined as a place with particular physical features

in which the participants engage in particular activities in particular roles such as daughter, parent, teacher and employee for particular periods of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 514). The third structure, the mesosystem is described as comprising the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person at a particular point in his or her life” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). This system is seen as bonding with one or more of the various aspects in the microsystem. However, the exosystem is concerned with the connection between a social setting in which an individual does not have an active role and the individual's immediate context. From Bronfenbrenner’s (1977, p. 515) perspective, “the exosystem is an extension of the mesosystem embracing other specific social structure, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate setting in which that person is found”.

The sixth structure is the chronosystem that “can refer to both short- and long-term time dimensions of the individual over the course of a lifespan, as well as the socio-historical time dimension of the macrosystem in which the individual lives” (Johnson, 2008, p. 3). Bronfenbrenner developed the chronosystem to represent the time factor (Bronfenbrenner, 2002, pp. 223-224). He explains how he adopted Kurt Lewin’s (1935), ‘classical field theory behaviour formula’ of $B=f(P,E)$, meaning that behaviour is a joint function of person and environment. In a sophisticated way he defines human development as $D=f(P,E)$, where developing (D) is the result (f) of interactions between person (P) and environment (E). Since development changes with time Bronfenbrenner redesigned this formula as: $D_t = f(t-p)(P,E)(t-p)$, where ‘t’ is time under which the result of development (D) is observed and ‘t-p’ is the period or periods in the course of which the powers that are related to person and environment act together, leading in the course of time to a result that is observed at a certain moment of time. ‘t-p’. In the formula this represents the process that produces the developmental change over the course of time. For example, when a child acquires the first language it is observed as different when he or she acquires a second language as an adult. As explained by Härkönen (2007), this formula leads to the following definition of human development:

Development is a series of such processes that intermedate the interaction of the qualities of person and environment in order to produce permanency and change in a person’s qualities in the course of life. The researcher’s task is to

find out what are exactly the personal and environmental qualities that must be treated as the products and the producers of development (p.5).

Bronfenbrenner's theory is particularly useful for considering the experiences of humanitarian refugees since their stories and journeys can fit into the development formula. The individual system which includes age, ethnicity, and level of education, and gender, has specific applicability to the next level of Bronfenbrenner's theory which is the microsystem, the most important structure and immediate proximal setting to which refugees have been exposed. In this sense, one might identify the potential barriers that hinder their ability to be integrated into Australian wider society.

Application of the microsystem may reveal lack of interaction with the immediate environmental or institutional settings and local community. Study of the mesosystem is able to explore the interrelationship between the individual system and microsystem, which can occur in two ways – from the refugees and towards the refugees. For example, first, a person's gender may influence them to adopt certain beliefs and practices that prevent them from participating in the different host society, which in turn may prevent the person from receiving his or her entitlement. Actions towards refugees may be likened to the case of Australian government or community services not being aware of refugees' social and cultural values and requirements, which in turn does not meet their needs. This may relate to lack of funding where the service provided by any organisation may become restricted and may not be culturally sensitive. For example, inquiry into the role of Technical and Further Education System and its operation submission, CPSU/CSA (2013), reports that "[recent] . . . funding cuts totalling \$300 million, in the Victorian TAFE system have resulted in thousands of TAFE staff losing their jobs, a significant number of courses not being offered any longer, course costs increasing severely, as well as a significant number of TAFE campuses, particularly in regional areas being closed" (p. 4). Bronfenbrenner's theory would assist in interpreting how the quality of services may not be compatible with the requirements of refugees' individual systems.

Similarly, application of the exosystem can assist in understanding how refugees lack an active role in their immediate social context and the potential conflict between

their cultural values that differ from the mainstream and the added lack of interaction with their immediate social context (microsystem). The refugee's macrosystem includes cultural ideologies stemming from the family background "with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards and life course options" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Again this helps understand the difficulty with becoming acculturated.

Finally, when the chronosystem is considered, which includes time and conditions that impact on integration, it can be appreciated how what occurs in a change in time, combined with changes in government policies and the socioeconomic situation, and in places of residence may have an impact (Ormrod, 2006, p. 41). Thus, it can be seen that Bronfenbrenner's ecological model presents a series of concepts that assist in understanding the challenge of refugee acculturation process and potential to integrate into the host society (Aretakis, 2011; McBrien & Day, 2012).

To summarize Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective is an appropriate tool to explore refugees' integration process. In this sense, to make an adequate assessment of their integration a social worker or an educator needs to be aware of the "transactional relationships between [Bronfenbrenner's] systems" (Härkönen, 2007, p. 10). As Yamniuk (2011) discusses, ". . . the value of using this approach in a multi-ethnic classroom is that it includes a holistic approach" and ". . . the ecological approach works well to look at a diverse group of populations with the same lens" (p.10). The more knowledge the worker has about person-in-environment interaction, the better informed he or she is and the better able to identify system strengths that will enhance or restore the client's social functioning (Brandell, 2011, p. 19). Hence, to integrate refugee immigrants into Australian society their needs to be a focus on the exploration of each level of their ecological systems and how the interconnectedness between each system operates.

2.10 How acculturation works

Researchers have typically measured integration in the host society through the study of cultural, social, economic and political dimensions (Ager & Strang, 2008; Berry 1997; Hugo, 2010; 2011; Khoo, 2012; Phillimore, 2011). These are the classical dimensions of integration (Hamberger, 2009, p. 5). Cultural dimensions

incorporate modifications in a group's customs, and in their economic and political life (Phinney, 1990). Conceptual developments in the acculturation process become critical because of the significant social changes in both the culture of origin and the culture of the host country. Multiple models of acculturation suggest each model is unique and specific; yet, at the same time, these models present the view that the acculturation process is multidimensional. The model adopted for this study is drawn from two models evident in the research studies, as identified by Phinney (1990, p. 501): (1) linear bipolar models and (2) dimensional or multicultural models. Those who advocate linear models believe that acculturation is a process of refugees being absorbed into the dominant culture and as a result, identification of their original cultural disappears. By contrast, those who favour dimensional or multicultural models see refugees as retaining their original culture while adopting selected aspect of the host culture, and so becoming bicultural. The bicultural model and also the notion of quadric modal acculturation are derived from multicultural models (Berry, 1974; 1980; 1984; Phinney, 1990).

Berry (2005, p.688- 699) a cross-cultural psychologist, defines acculturation as:

the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioural repertoire. These cultural and psychological changes come about through a long-term process, sometimes taking years, sometimes generations, and sometimes centuries.

Berry (1980; 1984) highlighted two basic principles to explain how individuals and groups confront the process of acculturation. These are (1) maintenance of culture of origin and (2) the degree of exposure and participation in the new culture. As shown in Table 2.1, through these two basic principles Berry proposes four levels of acculturation outcomes: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation. Berry (2008, p. 331), further clarifies his model in noting that those who do not wish to maintain their cultural identity interact with other cultures and become assimilated. In contrast, those who hold on to their original culture and wish to avoid interaction with others reflect separation, whereas those who wish to maintain both

their original and host culture create a balance and achieve cultural integrity and are integrated. However, for those who present little possibility or interest in any cultural maintenance (often enforced cultural loss), and have little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) they are described as marginalization (Berry, 1997, p. 9-11).

Table 2.1: Quadric-modal acculturation model

Dimension 1: Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?			
Dimension 2: Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?		Yes	No
Yes	<i>Integration</i>	<i>Assimilation</i>	
No	<i>Separation</i>	<i>Marginalization</i>	

Quadric-modal acculturation model (cited in Berry, 1980, p. 10)

Berry's quadric-modal acculturation model has made significant contributions to understanding the acculturation process but it only examines the relationship between the immigrant and the dominant culture as opposed to examining all relevant cultural groups. While Berry's quadric-modal acculturation model has made significant contributions to the understanding of the acculturation process some scholars have ignored it and provide other reasoning for acculturation. A more general way of reasoning about acculturation is offered by Van de Vijver & Phalet (2004, p.217) who argue: "migrants [may] prefer other options to pursuing complete adjustment, either by developing a bicultural identity or by retaining the original culture without extensively adjusting to the society of settlement". As this is a broader way of explaining the process it is less able to address the different responses that different groups may give. However, Berry's theory is also criticised for denying the realities faced by immigrants in different social, cultural and political contexts (Ngo, 2008).

Of note also is that Bernard (1967, p. 29) argues the culture of the host society is not a major factor in integration because there is no cultural, national or racial superiority in the field of integration. This is supported by Rudiger and Spencer (2003, p. 4) who

state, “. . . there is in fact no monolithic culture or social order to assimilate to, as democratic societies contain many different lifestyles, values and institutional processes, which are constantly changing”. For instance, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2011) Australian Census reveals that Indians and Chinese migrants have become the fastest growing of the Australian population. Interestingly, Wamwara–Mbugua and Cornwell (2009, p.33) also raise the issue of recent changing demographics in developed countries such as Indians in the U.K. or Africans in France, and in the U.S., minority populations of Hispanics, Asian Americans, and African immigrants. They point out they are growing faster than the dominant culture and they argue new immigrants will not only adapt to the dominant culture but also to minority cultures as these countries have significant sub-cultural elements.

2.11 Language, acculturation and integration

The importance of language in the role of acculturation has been explored by Schumann (1976; 1978; 1986; 1990) in his acculturation model (1986), which is based on social and psychological factors. According to Schumann (1986), acculturation refers to the social and psychological contact between members of a particular group and members of the target culture. He noted the degree of social exposure and patterns of social structure of the host society either promote or inhibit the language contact between immigrants and the host society, and thus affect the degree to which members of one group learn the language of another. In his words, “second-language learning is facilitated by assimilative motives because the minority group maximizes contact with members of the majority group and increases opportunities to learn and practice the language” (Schumann, 1978, p. 34).

Addressing the conceptual assumptions behind Schumann’s acculturation model, Masgoret and Gardner (1999, p. 216) point out, “. . . how one acculturates may influence how well one acquires the dominant language as well as how well one adapts to the majority group’s culture”. This view represents the high correlation between language and acculturation, which compliment Schumann’s acculturation model. Schumann (1986) maintains, that more interaction (i.e., social/psychological closeness) a group has with the target group, the more opportunities will result for the group to acquire and use English. Conversely, less interaction (i.e.,

social/psychological distance) results in less acquisition and use of English. As language learning influences the ability to participate in the society and understand the host culture, groups or individuals achieve increased proficiency and acculturation outcomes by better speaking, reading or writing abilities. Therefore, a group's amount of contact with the target culture could determine the amount of English acquired and used. "Interaction with members of the host culture can also raise immigrants' self-confidence in using the target language and thus affect positively their proficiency. If immigrants have many contacts from the host culture and only few contacts from their own culture, they tend to adapt in the assimilation mode (Masgoret & Gardner 1999, p.230). It will be difficult to identify the target culture even once one knows the target language. For example, 'a pavement' for the British is 'a sidewalk' for Americans. 'Dinner' is the evening meal in Australia but 'Supper' for Americans. These examples show how language is attached to the culture and the context of a particular community or country where the linguistic items have different meanings.

Considering the existing immigrant pattern, different levels of social, cultural, economic, political, scientific or technological construct in the host country and given the diverse ethnic, linguistic and historical backgrounds of individual immigrant (such as adult African NESB refugee and humanitarian entrants with no or limited print literacy skills in L1 and no literacy skills in L2 in this study) no matter what the professional interest or theoretical-methodological approach acknowledge, recommendations cannot be made about the appropriateness of one single model to inquire the process of acculturation rather analysis of macro, meso, and micro factors in the process one could obtain a completely new, desired cultural model ". . . within the frameworks of certain and specific socio-historical circumstances, mainly for the long-term, often gradually, sometimes preplanned, but almost always with unpredictable personal, social and cultural consequences" (Petković, 2012, p. 101). It is criticised that ". . . in the absence of a clear definition and an appropriate historical and socio-economic context, the concept of acculturation has come to function as an ideologically convenient black box" (Petković, 2012, p. 101). More importantly the concentration on the factors contextualized in the ecological system provides complexities in determining

immigrant integration. For example, as Gunn (2003) discusses, in practice, religion is the most difficult topic to bring forward. Recent literature suggests that the problem of marginalisation can be especially acute for refugee background women from some Muslim communities. Submission to the African Australians Project: Human rights and social inclusion issues, Reiner (2010) illuminates:

Female Muslim refugees belong to multiple groups of marginalisation, which can each exacerbate the other. These women must deal with the unique intersection of their experience of being a Muslim, a woman and a refugee. Not only are they dealing with past trauma and looking to find security in their new home, at times they can at times come ‘under attack’ from other parts of Australian society because of their religious identity. Female Muslim refugees may also experience fundamental differences with mainstream Australian society that can inhibit their integration (p. 33-34).

What is clear from this example is “effective acculturation is no easy feat, with any number of potential hiccups and failures along the way. Only integration and multiculturalism appear to have the capacity to maintain a strong sense of ethnic cultural heritage while also allowing for successful integration between different groups through a common set of practices, customs and values that define the civic identity” (Bastian, 2012, p. 61). He further predicts the outcome of such issues:

A failure of immigrants to maintain a strong ethnic identity would not only leave Australia bereft of cultural pockets where people love to visit, eat and shop, but would also reduce the richness of Australia’s cultural diversity. On the other hand, a failure to develop a strong civic identity would leave Australia open to segregation, a failure of coordination and the potential for conflict between culturally distinct groups. Achieving this delicate balance is not easy and there are any number of factors that can inhibit or facilitate successful immigration and acculturation (p. 61).

In this regards many studies (Carrington et al, 2007; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Gebre-Selassie, 2008) reveal refugee and humanitarian entrants are at greatest risk of social exclusion due to poor English proficiency and under-resourcing of education in English and ESL. This is confirmed by the key finding of the study on the

settlement outcomes of humanitarian entrants conducted by Australian Survey Research (ASR, 2011) on behalf of DIAC reveals most recent literacy outcomes as shown in Figures 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.

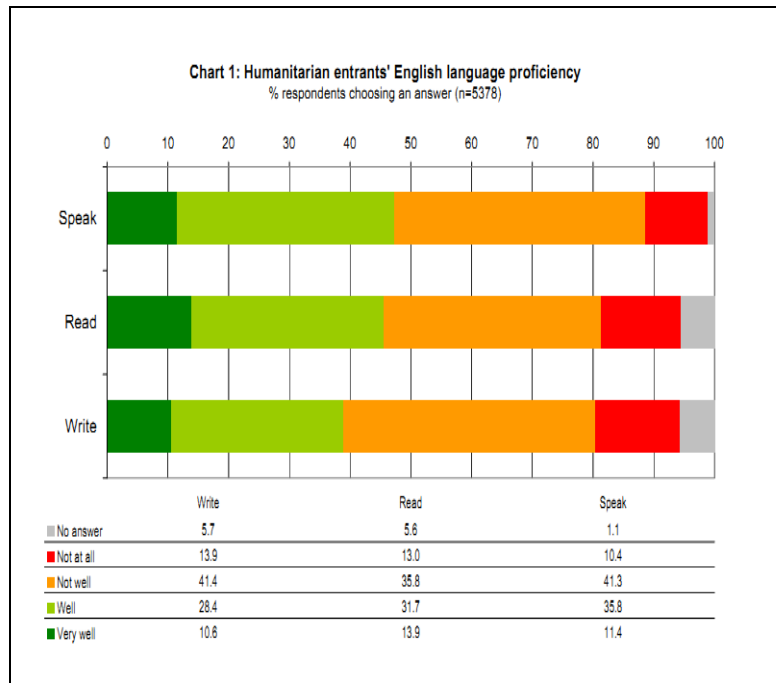


Figure 2.4: Humanitarian entrants English language proficiency

(Australian Survey Research, 2011, p.12)

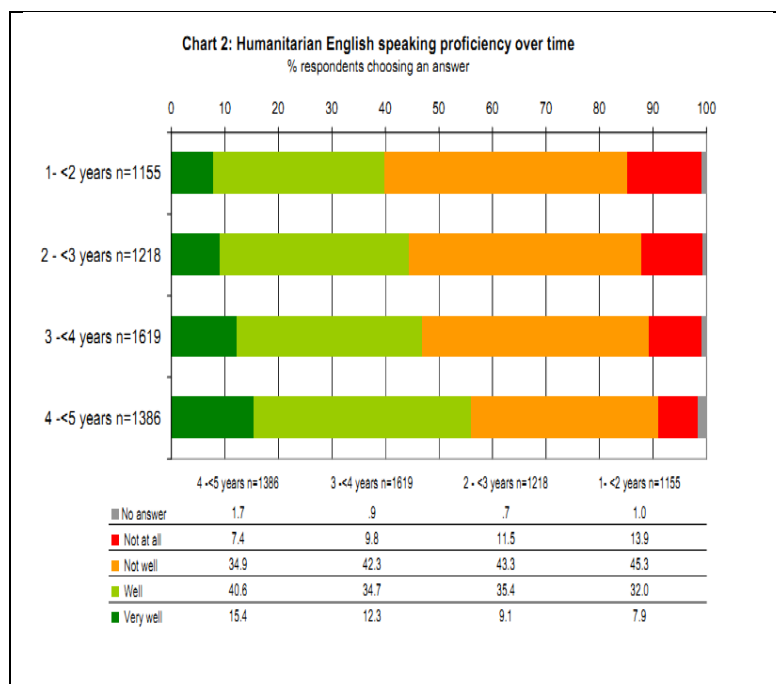


Figure 2.5: Humanitarian entrants English speaking proficiency over time

(Australian Survey Research, 2011, p.12)

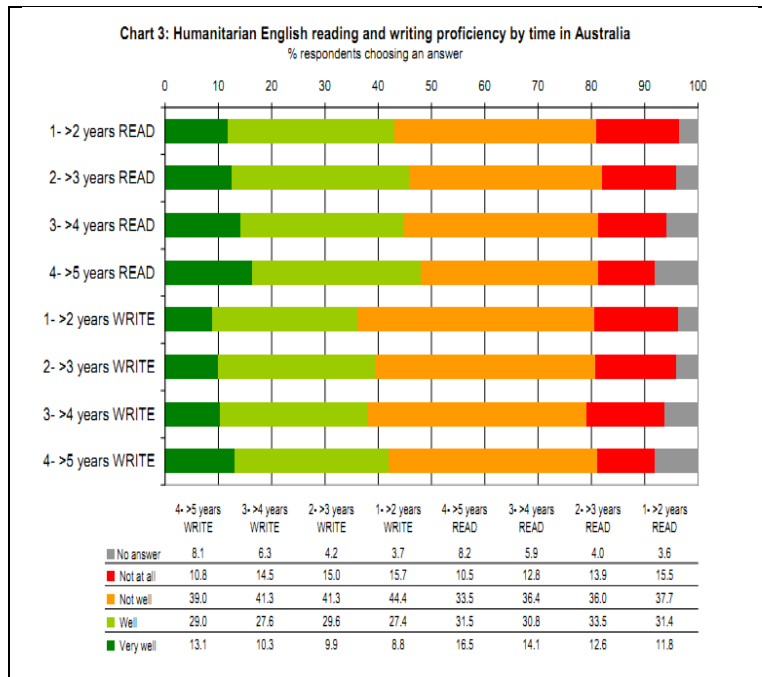


Figure 2.6: Settlement outcomes of new arrivals

(Australian Survey Research, 2011, p.13)

While these figures provide a partial story of low literate humanitarian refugees or LESLLA learners it is important to analyse the reasons behind these literacy skills results and investigate other contextual factors that impact on their English language learning opportunities in the current Australian context. As such, the following section provides background details of the LESLLA learners RHE in terms of ESL and the pedagogical point of view.

2.12 Second languages Acquisition and LESLLA learners

It is important to identify the levels of literacy that are used in the ESL context. As seen in Table (2.2) Huntley (1992), Florez and Terrill (2003) structure the literacy levels of ESL learners into four categories.

Table 2.2 Categories of ESL learner's literacy skills

Pre-literate	Learners have had no contact with print in their native languages; they come from societies, which are oral: the language is not written, has only recently been written, or is being developed. For example, most Bantu people of Somalia; the Dinka people from
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	Sudan; many Australian indigenous groups; some Pacific Island language groups; the Hmong people from Southeast Asia.
Non-literate	Learners have no education at all, have no access to literacy instruction but the native language has written form and literacy is available. For example, many adult learners from Central and South America may not be literate in their native Spanish because of disrupted schooling due to war and poverty.
Semi-literate	Learners from literate societies who usually have had access to literacy in their native culture, but due to socioeconomic status or educational circumstances, they have not acquired a high level of literacy in L1; they may have left school at a young age for economic or political reasons.
Non-Roman alphabet literate	Non-Roman alphabet literate learners are literate in languages, which are written in non-roman alphabets.

Here the author reminds of the adaptation of the term for Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition (LESLLA). “This term is now used to describe a group or demographic of adult learners who have had limited or no access to education in their country of origin, who have limited literacy in their first language, and who are now learning to read and write for the first time in a language they are learning to speak as well” (Wall & Leon, 2009, p.1). Thus, LESLLA represents the learner with no or limited print literacy skills in L1 and no literacy skills in L2 may belong to one of the category of pre-literate semi-literate or non-literate. The International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) scales (Ingram, 1980; Wylie & Ingram 1995; 1999) is used as an initial placement procedure in the AMEP, to asses all above categories and those who score /ISLPR 0/ are placed in the level of Pre-CSWE /Pre beginner. Several studies have reached the conclusion that learners in the above categories are often catered for under the labels of ‘ESL learner’ or ‘low literate learner’ and placed in the same ESL classroom due to the lack of funds or human recourse to maintain the program (Burns & Joyce, 2007; Hewagodage & O’Neill, 2010; Sidhu & Taylor 2007; Windle & Miller, 2012).

LESLLA learners are a unique group that differs from other ESL students. Not only are they adult learners, but also they may be first-time in a formal learning environment. They can be parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents who may have never lived in a city. Many of them may have been the victims of the war and lived in refugee camps, been imprisoned, suffered through hunger and trauma

(Vinogradov, 2001, p. 9). Why these learners need to be literate in English their difficulties may stem from a variety of reasons. As Plutzar and Ritter (2008, p. 2) explain “illiterate people want and need to be literate for several reasons: They want to live autonomously without depending on others, they want to get a job or a better job, they have to pass an obligatory test.” Also reasons for being not literate as they argue:

may result from living in extremely poor countries or regions where there are no schools within reach, or living in a war zone. Family or individual situations may have led to poverty. Unemployment or the death of a parent, or even divorce, may increase the risk that children will remain illiterate, especially in the case of girls. In such cases, children may either have to substitute their mother or father in their own household and as carer of their siblings, or earn a living outside the family” (p.2)

In many cases, AMEP classes operate mixed classes with learners of all ages, and they may have a wide age range. “In a mixed class, preliterate students will lag behind literate class-mates, and the teachers will find it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of both groups equitably” (McPherson, 2008, p. 7). Even refugees who are highly literate in L1 but not literate in L2 are placed with LESLLA learners as the assessment, which depends on the ISLPR test does not differentiate at the lower level. As a result refugee background learners who have never been to a school before or sat at a desk, and who have spent many years in a refugee camp, whether adults or school age teenagers, find themselves in the same class. While the learners who have higher level of L1 literacy skills become successful in acquiring L2 (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010), LESLLA learners, who have severely interrupted schooling or no formal schooling, may struggle to acquire L2. At the end of the day they may perceive their lack of success in the learning process as a personal error and this may prevent them from attending AMEP classes to learn English. As Murray and Wigglesworth (2005, p. 9) acknowledge, “most AMEP learners are in Pre-CSWE, CSWE I and II, and many learners do not progress past CSWE I, even after completing their 510 hours”. Yang (2014) identified this in his study in Great Western Sydney and states, “some of these new immigrants are even illiterate in their

first language, let alone English skills because they did not have an opportunity to go to school before arriving in Australia” (p.124).

The fact that LESLLA learners cannot read and write in any language causes them to face major challenges in acquiring English literacy, while often acknowledged Wrigley (2008, p. 173) points out the system has not yet reached the level to consider that L1 literacy skills facilitate the development of English literacy.

2.13 Matching pedagogy to LESLLA Learners

Exposure to SLA research provides language teachers an explanation why a certain theory should be applied in the curriculum (Nunan, 1991). There are various SLA theories and learning models (Brown, 2007) that have been competing for consideration as being more representative for the study of second language acquisition (Canagarajah, 2006). However, theoretically, ESL pedagogy often favours the framework of the ‘English only approach’ (EO), where in the ESL classroom L2 learning is promoted by the exposure to an acquisition rich environment (Krashen, 1981; 1985). Given more than 60 theories and models into L2 pedagogy (Long, 2000), the acceptance and application of one particular theory (EO) makes it difficult for ESL teachers to be innovative or explore alternatives to work with learners from diverse backgrounds. The linguistic status of LESLLA learners “may be described as that of people with a plurilingual and pluricultural identity, living under legal and social constraints, contradictions and very often also facing economic problems” (Krumm & Plutzar, 2008, p.2). However, ESL teachers “need knowledge about the learners they are working with, about the content they are teaching, and about teaching methodologies and instructional strategies that are appropriate and effective” (Burt, Peyton, & Schaetzl, 2008, p. 3).

When ESL teachers work with LESLLA learners it is important for them to be aware of their levels of L1 proficiency as an important basis for them to learn English successfully (Krumm & Plutzar, 2008; Wrigley & Guth, 1992). Research on second language acquisition indicates that the stronger one’s literacy skills are in the first language, the easier it is to learn an additional language (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2009; Cummins, 1984; Krashen, 1982). “Certainly the research suggests

that first language literacy is an advantage. But what if an adult student cannot read in her first language? Is it better to first teach her to read in her first language, and then proceed with English? Perhaps that would be ideal. However, for most programs, such instruction is not feasible” (Vinogradov, 2001, p.109).

Not being literate in L1 has considerable implications for LESLLA learners in acquiring literacy skills in English L2. In this regard Florez (2000) and Rivera (1990; 1999) look at a model that provides L1 instruction to L2 learners in the ESL classroom. From the pedagogical point of view, Cummins (1984) Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis provides a better explanation of why both L1 and L2 instruction are important to develop L1 and L2 literacy skills.

2.14 The Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis

Cummins (1978) argues that first language (L1) knowledge can be positively transferred during the process of second language (L2) acquisition. In other words the L1 linguistic knowledge and skills can be extremely instrumental to the development of corresponding abilities in the L2 in an educational environment. Cummins (1979) makes a distinction about two types of language acquisition as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS is the language used in day-to-day social situations and CALP is needed in more academic settings, including reading and writing. For example, writing a formal letter to an employer. According to the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis, an interrupted development of L1 is a negative indicator for L2 acquisition.

An additional theoretical framework that supports this theory is Chomsky’s Universal Grammar (UG) or the Innateness Hypothesis (Chomsky, 1959). According to this theory UG is known as part of an innate biologically designed language faculty shared by the all human beings. Language is the product of interaction between the language faculty and the linguistic environment (Chomsky, 1959). This principle in turn favours the bio-ecological theory that claims a bidirectional nature of interactions between the individual and the environment, contributing to the individual development. However, Cummins (1984) in his developmental Interdependence Hypothesis provides strong evidence to justify that quality bilingual

programs have been influential in developing BICS and CALPS in low literate learners in K-12 settings. For example, findings from several longitudinal studies (Cummins, 1983; Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Gerston & Baker, 2000; Swain, 1979; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1979; 1981) provide evidence of L1 instruction contributing to L2 learning. For instance, Condelli, Wrigley, and Yoon (2009) conducted a national study in the US context. First, the team made an assessment of participant literacy level in L1 as well as for English (L2) to determine what they could and could not do in their L1. Assessment was informal, such as asking a person to write a few sentences in his or her L1. It was found that their letter and symbol formations were crooked and unevenly spaced, and words crossed the lines. Also they observed how the non-literate learners, painstakingly made efforts to copy text from the board stroke by stroke to form letters. Importantly, during their period of teaching the strategy was to use L1 to explain concepts, give directions, ask question from the teacher and to do writing activities. The findings of the study acknowledged that the learners who received clarification in L1 from their teachers, developed both reading comprehension and communication skills (Condelli, Wrigley, & Yoon, 2009). Findings of this study also confirmed “many LESLLA learners have limited, if any, experience with school and have not developed common place learning skills of a literate culture” (Marrapodi, 2013. p. 17).

However, when learning L2 for the purposes of passing a citizenship test such as the ACT. To acquire the required language level of the citizenship test LESLLA immigrant learners may have to go through “a period of initial encounter with the behavioural practices of literate people at a personal and community level” (Gunn, 2003, p. 46). For them learning a new language and application of the new language in a test form can be considered as a threat since L2 acquisition relates to the “the realities of the learners’ circumstances impinge on the creation of ‘optimal’ conditions for acquiring literacy. But where the goal of both teacher and student is to pursue an opportunity” (Gunn, 2003, p. 52). However, research (Levin & Shohamy, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 2003) has shown that it takes between seven to eleven years to acquire a new language. For LESLLA immigrant learner this period will be much longer. Since the implications of length of time are placed into the future the threat of using literacy skills for citizenship testing comes from two directions. First

one is how long it will take them to learn and be proficient in their L1. The second one is to what extent they can perform in L2 in order to be integrated into the new society. According to Gunn:

the capacity to write requires manipulative skills and awareness of spatial and sequential processes, 'preliterate teaching' involves a deliberate fostering of kinesthetic and cognitive skills. The capacity to read involves the use of symbols to denote phonemes, phonemes to formulate words, words to denote concepts, and concepts to comprise discourse that can be captured from speech and made tangible in a variety of written modes that can then be read (2003, p.46).

Then it is logical to assume that they require considerable time period than an L1 literate to acquire L2 literacy skills. Since the length of time is placed into the future and depends on the individual variability finally, it outlines the necessity of in-depth research to explore how long LESLLA learner would take to perform in L2 to pass the citizenship test.

2.15 Summary

Concerned with national security, social cohesion, and social integration in the context of Australian multicultural society, and introducing the ACT in 2007, the Howard government seemed to expect their policy would promote uniting the nation and creating good citizens. However, most prospective citizens that belong to the refugee and humanitarian category appear not to be integrated yet. As well, it appears there is a huge array of complex contingencies to deal with when trying to understand immigrant integration (Lithman, 2010, p. 8). In particular humanitarian refugees are a unique subgroup of immigrants and cannot be considered under the umbrella term of 'migrants'. Refugees arriving from Africa are considered highly traumatised because of the high levels of violence and danger they have had to endure, along with extended stays in refugee camps. They are very, and vulnerable because of these circumstances, including their flight prior to their travel to Australia. African refugees present with many different languages and have distinctive cultures, and have typically experienced torture or severe human rights violations, loss of family members, loss of dignity, feelings of fear, and prolonged

political repression (Campbell & Julian, 2009; Campbell 2007; Reiner, 2010; Taylor, 2005). They pose the greatest challenge to initial settlement, and the integration and the acculturation process of the host country (Campbell & Julian, 2007; 2009; Fozdar & Hartley, 2009; Stanovic & Taylor 2005; Taylor, 2005). Clearly, the difficulty of acquiring English is a major barrier to becoming acculturated and integrated (Hewagodage & O'Neill, 2010; Reiner, 2010) and according to Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007a), being visibly different is also a barrier. In this sense, deciding whether they can have the benefits of Australian citizenship by testing their English language skills, knowledge of Australian history, values, civics and the Australian way of life in English, for this particular group does not appear ethical, since as LESLLA they may have never been to a school and may not have any literacy skills in their own language (L1). From the ecological point of view, the design of the Australian Citizenship Test, primarily, does not consider the complete view of interdependency of the five nested system that directly addresses the individual differences, geographical placement, educational level, literacy level and contextual factors or determinants that could detect meso-exo and macro-level factors, which affect immigrants' capabilities and aspiration to integrate into Australian society.

In conclusion, this chapter first examined why the ACT was introduced in 2007. Then it focused on the concepts of integration and social cohesion and the issues involved in relation to the target group at the focus of the research. After a brief analysis of African refugee and humanitarian people living in Australia, it explored the process of integration from the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to identify the different layers of integration. Next it examined how acculturation occurs from a theoretical point of view and what level of literacy refugee and humanitarian people possess upon arrival, and how the process of integration can be complicated by, not only low level of L1 literacy, but also a chain of other issues that penetrate through the process of integration. It considered recent research on what would support improvement of this group's literacy skills acquisition as adult low literate learners and considered the pedagogical issues regarding ESL and SLA, and the applicability of bilingual instruction for this group of learners based on Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis (1979).

While this chapter examines the major theories underpinning this research into humanitarian refugees' challenge of becoming acculturated and integrated into Australian society, the next chapter, Chapter 3, further illuminates the study through review of the literature on relevant Australian government policy, issues in language testing, justification testing language skills for naturalisation or citizenship purposes for L1 low literate immigrants.

CHAPTER 3: CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction

Australia claims to be a nation, which respects and values human rights. Thus, it is a signatory to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, along with the optional protocols (Centre for Human Rights Education, 2007, p. 3). “Recently in Australia, public notions of citizenship are being re conceptualized in terms of promoting the gaining of citizenship as a particular way of being an Australian citizen” (Chisari, 2012, p. 15). The previous Howard government introduced the Australian Citizenship Test (ACT) in October 2007; this required prospective citizens to pass a written test, in English. This chapter examines the testing policy in relation to integration of this study’s target group of low literate refugee and humanitarian entrants into the Australian society. It begins with definitions and discussion of concepts of naturalisation and Citizenship, and then analyses the historical development of the Australian citizenship policy, test structure, contents and study material, followed by a discussion of test failures and the new version of the ACT. The main argument in this chapter is the Citizenship test is not a valid tool to determine or assess the integration of humanitarian refugees into Australian society. The conclusive discussion considers the role of the ACT in relation to principles of language testing and ESL pedagogy and the potential to be biased and discriminatory, in terms of test validity and test fairness.

3.2 Naturalisation

At the theoretical level, ‘naturalisation’ is typically used as a term, and defined as a transformative process whereby an immigrant, or more generally someone outside the host country ‘become[s] naturalised’ by becoming a full member of the host country through citizenship acquisition (Goodman, 2010, p.2). A full member of the society gains better economic benefits other than his or her non-citizen counterparts. However, as Goodman (2010) defines:

naturalization is a paradoxical expression, since there is nothing ‘natural’ about this process of membership acquisition. This contradiction is immediately visible when taken from the legal perspective, where the process of naturalization is not natural at all but requires legal regulation. In this context, naturalization is the process of acquisition where a person applies for citizenship to the state represented by relevant public authorities” (p. 2).

It is important to clarify why naturalization is important for refugees. Part of the reason is that firstly, they are authorised immigrants who are referred by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As forced migrants their naturalisation, or the granting of legal citizenship status, is an important consideration. Da Costa (2006), argues:

from a legal point of view, naturalization represents the objective completion of the integration process into a new society, the right to full legal and diplomatic protection of the State in question (both within and outside the country), and the acquisition of an effective nationality. Moreover, from a sociological perspective, it also indicates the existence of a subjective attachment and commitment to the host country on the part of the refugee” (p.183).

Secondly, Article 34 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees – (UNHCR) specifies that “Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees”. Thirdly, according to the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Article 5 states:

In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of . . . (c) Political rights, in particular the right to participate in elections-to vote and to stand for election-on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, to take part in the Government as well as in

the conduct of public affairs at any level and to have equal access to public service, (d) (iii) The right to nationality (ICERD).

The fourth, Article 32 of the 1951 Convention is the most relevant:

The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of stateless persons. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings (Article 32 of the 1951 Convention). Finally, even though Australia is not a member of the Council of Europe its explanatory Report to the Convention asserts “internal law should contain rules which make it possible for foreigners lawfully and habitually resident in the territory of a State Party to be naturalised” and a host country may “fix other justifiable conditions for naturalisation, in particular as regards integration (Para 3, item 51).

In addition, “Facilitated acquisition of nationality must be provided for all persons,” to “ensure favourable conditions for the acquisition of nationality for the persons” and “include a reduction of the length of required residence, less stringent language requirements, an easier procedure and lower procedural fees (Para 4, item 52).

The primary aim of all these legal documents is to standardize the status of the refugees mainly acquisition of Citizenship after they legally accepted by a certain country signatory to 1951 refugee convention. This means citizenship is considered as an important instrument.

3.3 Citizenship

Smith (2002) notes, a ‘Citizen’ was recognised in history, with political right to participate in processes that “include the right to vote; to hold elective and appointive governmental offices; to serve on various sorts of juries; and generally to participate in political debates as equal community members” (p. 105). This emphasises “the relationship between the country and the individual “making ‘citizenship’ conceptually inseparable from political governance” (Bachmann, Doise, & Staerkle, 2003, p.15. In modern society, “. . . citizens are people who are legally recognised as members of a particular, officially sovereign political community. They, therefore,

possess some basic rights to be protected by that community's government" (Smith, 2002, p. 105).

Besides consideration of policy statements, a growing number of scholars across disciplines have defined citizenship, according to the discourse and context involved. Thomas Humphrey Marshall, who was a main theorist and a social pluralist in the 20th century, focused on the tension between equality, and inequality as a consequence of class structure of a capitalist system. He divided citizenship into three elements of Civil, Political and Social rights. The Civil element refers to the liberty of person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to one's own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. The Political element comprises the right to participate in the exercise of political power, while the Social element involves economic welfare, security and the right to live a civilized life according to the standards of the prevailing society (Marshall, 1950). However, Turner (1993) defines citizenship as "a set of political, economic, legal and cultural practices, the characteristics of an individual as a component member of society" (p. 2).

3.4 Citizenship in Australia

On 26 January 1949, the legal concept of Australian citizenship was created with the enactment of the Australian Citizenship Act 1948 (Smith et al, 2011, p. 4) which facilitated immigrants from many countries becoming citizens of Australia. As a relatively new nation it was seen as having borrowed labour, cultures, values, and ideas, that became under one inclusive banner. Ozdowski (2012) notes, "despite its racist past, high and diverse immigration and enormous cultural and religious diversity, contemporary Australia is a highly successful and well functioning multicultural society" (para 1). However, "since 2005, racial discrimination has been the subject of major legislative and policy initiatives for Australian governments and a subject of major concern for NGOs in Australia" (CERD NGO Committee, 2010, p. 8).

At the time of federation, in 1901, “White Australia was one of the defining elements of Australian nationalism and a central feature of Australian politics for two-thirds of the twentieth century” (Griffiths p.1) Federal Convention of 1897–98 showed no interest to change the legal category of British Nationality thus Australian citizenship existed as ‘British subject’ therefore had difficulty agreeing on a definition of the term ‘citizen’ (Fact Sheet 187).

As Klapdor et al (2009, p.4) point out, “the Naturalisation Act 1903 introduced the conditions by which ‘aliens’ could be granted naturalisation by the Commonwealth yet attain the rights and privileges of British subjects. But this Act precluded persons from other nationalities, such as Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands, from applying for naturalisation.” Also “an administrative concept of citizenship arose from the need for government to distinguish between British subjects who were permanent residents and those who were merely visitors” (Fact Sheet 187). As a result “on 26 January, 1949, the legal concept of Australian citizenship was created with the enactment of the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948, which was replaced by the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Smith et al., 2011, p.3).

3.4.1 White Australia Policy

Australia is well known for its early ‘White Australia policy’. This policy, which favoured white migrants, dates back to the 1850s. Even at this time there were some racial tensions as for instance, white miners' resented industrious Chinese diggers in early mining. This culminated in violence on the Buckland River in Victoria and at Lambing Flat (now Young) in New South Wales (Little & Clegg, 2005, p.4). Later the governments of these two colonies, in response to concerns, introduced restrictions on Chinese immigration (Lake, 2013, p.183).

The Federal Parliament passed the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, which included a Dictation Test in English language, and also the Pacific Island Labourers’ Act, 1901, which ended the employment of ten thousand Pacific Islanders. These were the very hard-working labourers known as 'Kanakas' who were farm workers cutting cane in Northern Queensland (Wills, 2009 p.168). They were the most feared non-European population threatened by the Immigration Restriction Act as many of them had gambled away all their earnings and did not want to face the humiliation of

returning home without any money, and others were committed in Australia because they had married into Aboriginal communities. However, the Commonwealth government passed legislation that specified all Pacific Islanders would be deported by 31 December 1906 (Corris, 1970, pp. 53-55).

The adoption of the white Australia policy highlights the political situation during that era and conveys the message presented to non-British and non-English speaking immigrants in Australia. According to Ndhlovu (2008), the White Australia Policy was adopted as an Act to place certain restrictions on immigration to enhance the exclusion of unwanted immigrants. In other words unwanted migrants were linguistically and socially constructed for purposes of exclusion (pp. 2-7). The inclusion of a dictation test at this time also helped to preclude those with English as a second language. Often this test was conducted in a language that the applicant was not familiar with and which had been nominated by an immigration officer. Here is an example of a Dictation Test passage from 1931 extracted from National Archives (A1, 1935/704, p. 397) held by department of Home Affairs:

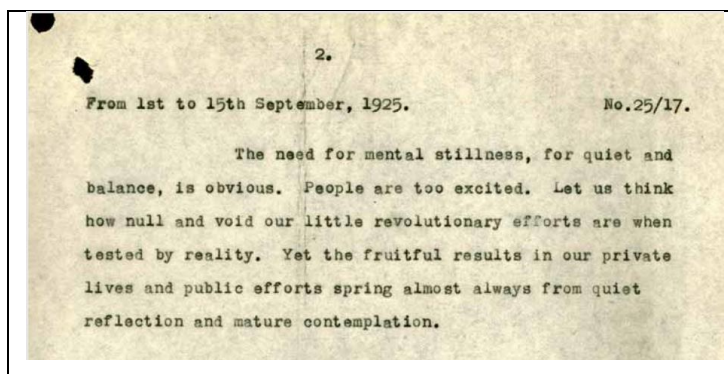


Figure 2.7: Dictation passage from 1-15 September 1925

(National Archives, A1, 1935/704, p. 397)

The dictation test that was dictated in the English language was seen as facilitating the exclusion of ‘undesirable races’ from entry into Australia and was applied to deport non-whites, especially the Chinese. Interestingly, the Sugar Cultivation Act, 1913, stated that non-white labour would be illegal unless the worker had passed the dictation test. Thus, by 1920, the sugar industry was dominated by white labour. Cooper (2012) notes that this proved that non-white labourers were not allowed to work. It seems the intention was not just to stop new arrivals, but also to exclude

those already living in Australia. It is argued that this effectively emphasised the construction of institutionalised racial discrimination and exclusion under the guise of promoting “the desire of elites in the nation state to promote unifying monolingualism rather than ‘divisive’ multilingualism” (Wright, 2008, p. 3).

At the end of World War II, millions of people in Europe were displaced from their homelands. At the same time, there was an acute shortage of labour in Australia and a growing belief that significant population growth was essential for the country’s future (Becoming an Australian Citizen, 2007, p. 9). There were many criticisms about racism in Australian (and other countries), which were also evident in the political scene. In a pamphlet called *Immigration and the White Australia Policy*, R. Dixon, Assistant Secretary of the Australian Communist Party (as it was called at the time in 1945), wrote:

The White Australia policy is something more than an immigration restriction policy. It is an outrageous insult to our great allies in the people’s war against fascism — China, India and Indonesia — because it proclaims “white” superiority (Dixon, 1945, para 18).

“In the 1940s and 1950s Government policy changed to the assimilation of Aboriginals and in the 1960s to the integration of Aboriginal people into white society” (Becoming an Australian Citizen, 2007, p. 33). However, the actual abolition the White Australia policy took more than two decades. Finally in 1958, the Migration Act was revised and as Klapdor et al (2009, p.7) state, it “. . . had been a barrier for many non-Europeans attempting to migrate to Australia.” On this point, it seems that the same exclusionary concept is inherent in the recent decision to introduce the language test as the hurdle to obtain Australian citizenship, particularly for the target group of humanitarian refugees.

3.4.2 Australian Citizenship Policy

As Klapdor et al., (2009, p.1) discuss Australia’s citizenship legislation has been amended over 30 times to remove anomalies and discrimination. However, within the context of the terrorism threat and in favour of a stronger focus on social cohesion and to maintain the “balance in our national identity between unity and

diversity, the balance between history and geography in our global strategy, and the balance in our politics between rights and democratic responsibility citizenship” (Howard, 25 January 2006, transcript of the Address to the National Press Club), Howard government planned to amend the existing citizenship policy introducing new rules and requirement for obtaining the citizenship.

3.4.3 Introduction of Australian Citizenship Test

‘Australian Citizenship: Much more than a ceremony’ has been the theme applied to the promotion of the 2007 introduction of the ACT. Prior to its introduction on September 17, 2006, the Australian Government released a discussion paper using this theme and public opinion was canvassed with respect to the idea of a formal citizenship test (Chisari, 2012; Fozdar & Spittles, 2009). More than 1644 public responses were received and as shown in Table 3.1 university-based and civil liberties groups represented the greatest opposition (Betts & Birrell, 2007, p. 55).

The overall total percentages show 70 percent disagreed with having a citizenship test, while 18 percent agreed and 13 percent were rated as unclear. It was noted that forty-two submissions were received from 158 organisations. Betts and Birrell (2007, p.55) report these descriptive statistics for 116, noting that they presume the remaining organisations “requested their submissions to be confidential.” Those who did not support having the test were the organisations and groups most closely involved with the settlement and integration of immigrants and humanitarian entrants in the categories of University-based and civil liberties, refugee advocacy and ethnic groups, all approximately 80% No. These included, for example, AMEP, AMES, FECCA and RCOA. For example, the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA, 2006), claimed:

The introduction of a formal citizenship test would act as a significant barrier to many refugees attaining citizenship and thus fully participating in the Australian community. Instead of promoting Australian values, the proposed citizenship test fosters exclusion and runs contrary to the Australian values of a fair go and of mutual respect and compassion (RCOA, November 17, 2006).

It is also notable that the submissions from political parties, non-ethnic community groups and other category reflected the greatest indecision at 32 percent for Yes, 37

percent for No and 32 percent undecided (see Table 3.1). This might be because they are less close to the challenges and issues involved and also potentially an uncertainty about what might be best to do for political reasons.

Table 3.1: Should Australia introduce a formal citizenship test? Submissions from organisations by organisational type (per cent)

Respondents/groups.	Yes	No	Unclear	Total	N
University-based & civil liberties groups.	0	91	9	100	11
Refugee advocacy groups.	11	89	0	100	9
Ethnic groups.	21	79	0	100	24
State, territory and local government.	9	77	14	100	22
Religious groups.	18	64	18	100	11
Migrant advocacy groups, migration lawyers and migrant educators.	25	60	15	100	20
Political parties, community groups (non-ethnic) and other.	32	37	32	100	19
Total	18	69	13	100%	
Total N	21	80	15		116

(Cited in Betts & Birrell, 2007, p. 55).

At this time the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC, 2006) considered that the proposed citizenship test should include “an implicit differentiation between citizen and non-citizen”. In this respect, AHRC argued the test would have a “discriminatory impact on the grounds of language, nationality or social origin and/or birth” (AHRC, 2006, item 2). Moreover, they explained their view by noting how a NESB applicant would be disadvantaged in trying to pass an English test compared with an applicant from an English-speaking background (ESB), and how the difference in educational level and richness of resources for education differed dramatically between applicants from a developed country compared with those from developing countries and areas of violence and trauma. They highlighted a strong human rights case against the hurdle of such a test. In supporting Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV, 2006, item 9.1) noted:

ECCV is of the view that a more formal citizenship would discriminate against new migrants, particularly those from refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds. It would deny them the rights and responsibilities of Australian citizenship and at worst create a permanent class of non-citizens akin to those

found in some European countries. This would create social exclusion, resentment and undermine community harmony in Australia.

However, on 10th December 2006 the Howard Government announced the introduction of the citizenship test. Thus, the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill, 2007, which was significantly restructured compared with the 1948 Act, was introduced into Parliament on 30 May 2007 with a number of changes including a language test to objectively test knowledge of English and the rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens. Then the Bill was passed by the Parliament on 12 September 2007 and the Australian Citizenship Test was officially implemented starting from 01 October 2007 (Klapdor et al., 2009; Mollering, 2009). As Smith, et al (2011, p.5) state, “it also extended the residency requirement from two to four years including a 12 month period of permanent residence before making the application”.

3.4.4 Test structure and contents of the ACT

The first version of the ACT was a computer-based test, which consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions, drawn randomly from a pool of 200 confidential questions. Applicants were required to write an explanation for three compulsory questions that referred to the topic of rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens. The pass mark was 60%. In order to pass the test, applicants were required to correctly answer at least 12 out of 20 questions (Mollering, 2009). The information that prospective citizens required to learn in preparation for the test was included in a booklet entitled, “Becoming an Australian Citizen: Your Commitment to Australia (Chisari, 2012, p. 158).

3.4.5 “Becoming an Australian Citizen” - the first ACT resource booklet

Chisari (2013) raises the issue of the development of the Becoming an Australian Citizen booklet, stating:

Preparation for developing test resources began immediately, and in February 2007 Senate Estimates Committee quizzed immigration officials on whether experts external to the Department of Immigration were involved in developing these resources. In his response, Mr. Vardos, the immigration

official, confirmed that the department had engaged ‘the AMEP Research Centre, which is a consortium of Macquarie and La Trobe universities’ (p. 75).

She cites Batainah and Walsh (2008) to confirm that the resource materials were rushed, produced in an ad hoc manner and shrouded in secrecy (Chisari, 2013, p. 76). The fact that the AMEP Research Centre had not engaged in developing the booklet suggests that the government used excessive political power although “the AMEP Research Centre, however, should have been the obvious choice as a contributor” (Chisari, 2013, p. 76). However, as Fozdar and Spittles (2009) discuss, “the booklet provides an overview of Australia’s history, geography, people, and system of government, plus a description of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship” (p. 505) and what it means to be an Australian as well as discussing “Australian values”. Australian values included in the booklet of “becoming an Australian citizen” (2007), are:

Respect for the equal worth, dignity and freedom of the individual, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and secular government, freedom of association, support for parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, equality under the law, equality of men and women, equality of opportunity, peacefulness, tolerance, mutual respect and compassion for those in need (p.5).

Meanwhile Fozdar and Spittles (2009, p.505) argue these values “are not uniquely Australian, representing “Enlightenment” values associated with Western industrialized, developed nations” however “it gives the speakers space to argue that immigrants must adhere to certain standards of behaviour and attitudes if they want to be Australian” (Cheng, 2013, p.56).

3.4.5.1 Role of the language in the ACT

The first page of the resource booklet states, “new citizens are expected to have a basic knowledge of English. They are also expected to know something of Australia’s history and heritage, our land and its people, and of the unique national culture which has evolved in Australia over time” (Becoming an Australian Citizen, 2007, p. 1). Having analysed the resource booklet, Pillar and Mcnamara (2007) concluded, “the resource booklet: “Becoming an Australian Citizen”, is certainly out

of the reach of a basic user of English, and would present difficulties for many native speakers of English with limited education and/or limited familiarity with texts of this type” (p. 1). For example Table 3.2 shows the words contained in the first resource book “becoming an Australian citizen”.

Table 3.2 Becoming an Australian Citizen book’s use of high level English vocabulary and concepts

More difficult vocabulary by page number per column across the booklet				
<i>p. 1</i>	<i>p. 4</i>	<i>p. 6</i>	<i>p. 13</i>	<i>p. 28</i>
distinct	mishap	bigamy	sophisticated	encircling
privileges	endeavour	delegate	<i>p. 14</i>	impressionists
diversity	equitable	<i>p. 7</i>	circumnavigation	<i>p. 29</i>
democracy	pledge	entrenched	constellation	conscious
dignity	obligations	distinctions	<i>p. 15</i>	constitutional
cohesive	compulsory	egalitarian	proclaimed	convention
equality	consular	virtue	emblem	referendums
enduring	<i>p. 5</i>	adversity	<i>p. 17</i>	<i>p. 30</i>
heritage	assembly	ethos	specimens	vigour
evolved	prosperous	<i>p. 9</i>	<i>p. 21</i>	dismantling
embrace	moulded	acute	revolutions	diminished
destiny	principles	tapestry	perpendicular	<i>p. 32</i>
sacrifice	ethics	<i>p. 11</i>	<i>p. 22</i>	infinite
strive	enlightenment	mythology	scavenging	descendants
enormous	sentiments	searing	siege	ancestor
tolerance	conformity	biodiversity	<i>p. 24</i>	contradiction
<i>p. 3</i>	dynamic	<i>p. 12</i>	consumption	punitive
obedience	symbolise	legacy	<i>p. 25</i>	squatters
diplomatic	intimidation	architecture	radical	<i>p. 36</i>
ensure	humiliation	enthusiasm	<i>p. 26</i>	legislative
mission	non-conformist	temperate	enthusiasm	encompasses
	endanger	wilderness		inconsistency

To justify their argument they considered the test in relation to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2001, p. 24), which provides an international standard for language proficiency. It describes levels of language proficiency for languages learning and is used for teaching, learning and testing across the European Union (Little, 2001) and is recognised in other countries such as Taiwan (Chen, Chang, & Chuang, 2007; Chuang, Chiang, & Beasley, 2008). Table 3.3 describes the standard of a “Basic User” that is the lowest level of CEFR, which

is A1 and A2. Both levels are known as ‘Simple’ and ‘Very basic’ in their language abilities, as described in the CEFR.

Table 3.3: Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and its standards of language learning

A1	A2	B2
Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.
Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 26)

As seen in Table 3.3 CEFR defines the level of learner proficiency, that can be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis in an assessment (Council of Europe, 2001). Specifications contain illustrative scales such as speaking, writing, reading, listening and interaction. Each level of proficiency shows what a learner *can do* allowing progress to be measured along a six-level scale, A1 (low proficiency) to C2 (high proficiency) (Council of Europe, 2001). Of particular relevance to this study is the fact that:

The CEFR descriptors at the lower levels clearly imply an already existing basic knowledge and literacy. This is problematic when they are used for

integration and citizenship programmes and for tests where a large part of the target group are either functionally illiterate or have low literacy skills. The CEFR descriptors at higher levels presuppose higher levels of education. Lower - and semi-skilled people who have no higher education background or do not study at a higher level are not part of the target group (Extra, Spotti, & Van Avermaet, 2009, p. 17).

In practice, it is obvious that the test and resource booklet were designed on the assumption that all citizenship applicants will have higher levels of literacy skills to allow them to pass the test. Extra, Spotti, and Van Avermaet (2009, p. 17) also note that, “the misuse or misinterpretation of the CEFR becomes even more problematic once we take into account the consequences attached to language courses and tests for immigrants”. As seen in Table 3.4 and Figure 3.1 below, the Australian Citizenship Test, Snapshot Report (2008) shows refugees and humanitarian migrants have a higher failure rate compared with the other citizenship stream. “While 92.9 per cent of clients overall are passing the test, the number of times a client attempts the test varies across the Migration Program streams and the Humanitarian Program” (DIAC, Australian Citizenship Test, Snapshot Report, 2008, p.7)

Table 3.4: Citizenship test results 2008 program analysis

Program/Stream	Clients	% of all clients	Tests	% of all tests	Average number of tests per client
Skill Stream	11 546	46.1	12 569	41.6	1.1
Family Stream	5 607	22.4	6 918	22.9	1.2
Humanitarian Program	3 255	12.9	5 384	17.8	1.7
Other	4 659	18.6	5 326	17.6	1.1
Total	25 067	100.0	30 197	100.0	1.2

(DIAC, Snapshot Report, 2008, p.7)

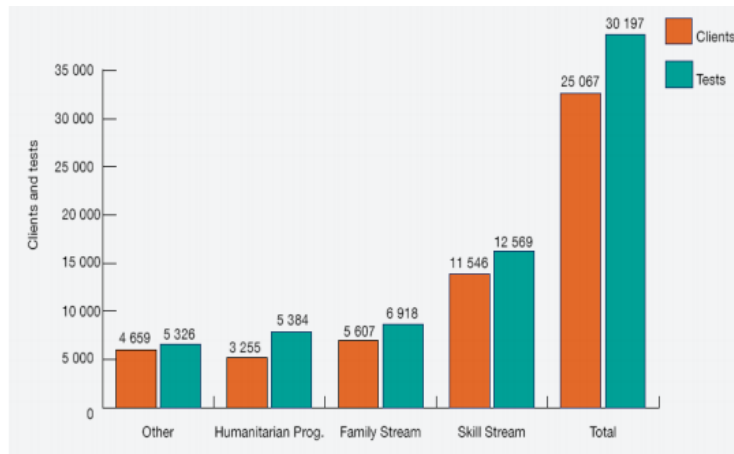


Figure 3.1 Citizenship test results 2008 - Clients and tests

In late 2007 following the change to a Labour Government the new Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, announced the formation of an independent committee to review the test. This was headed by former diplomat Richard Woolcott (Klapdor et al., 2009, p.28-29). Mcnamara (2009, p. 239) pointed out that it was significant that no applied linguists or experts in testing or language testing were members of the seven person committee of review who were required to report to the minister on the operation of the test.

3.4.6 Citizenship test review

The independent seven person committee created to review the citizenship test, also known as the Woolcott’s review, was undertaken in 2008 to examine the content and operation of the citizenship test. Richard Woolcott, who was the committee chair, was “a former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and personal friend of the new Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. Fozdar and Spittles (2009, p. 509) noted that this was a somewhat controversial appointment, as Woolcott had publicly expressed his view that citizenship testing was unnecessary.”

Consultations were made with a wide range of stakeholders: representatives of government and non-government organizations, business and community groups and individuals directly affected by the citizenship test, such as refugees and migrants admitted on humanitarian grounds (Möllering, 2009, p.16). During the consultation period the committee received 179 submissions from individuals and organizations.

The 122 out of 179 submissions addressed the fairness of the test or the justice of it (Mcnamara & Ryan, 2011). Organisations that closely work with the settlement of the migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants such as the Adult Migration English Program (AMEP), Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, and Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) were not in favour of the test. For example, in its submission to the Review committee, RCOA (August 5, 2009b) stated: “the citizenship test is an inappropriate method of determining whether a person is ready to take on the responsibilities of citizenship and that the testing regime ultimately will result in fewer permanent residents deciding to become citizens” (para., 4). In relation to this, various reasons offered contributed to the debate on citizenship tests. For example, it was emphasised that:

- (a) the conflation of an English test with a demonstration of knowledge has transformed the citizenship test into a relatively sophisticated English comprehension test;
- (b) multiple choice testing is not a form of assessment that is commonly encountered by refugees in their home countries and thus they find it difficult to successfully complete a test on a computer;
- (c) many refugees, particularly those who have lived in protracted displacement situations, have not had any experience using computer interfaces (RCOA, 2009b).

With this in mind, the argument on the role of the test is a matter of literacy skills in both principle and practice, in the light of the significant level of low literacy in former refugee and humanitarian immigrants living in Australia. This is reinforced by the submission to the citizenship test review, Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre (2008) which specified:

the test has and will operate in a discriminatory fashion, which denies equal access to some on the basis of literacy. This would appear to offend against the principles of equality and non-discrimination, which are golden threads of good public policy and law in Australia (para.12, f).

In spite of the feedback from submissions from many organisations closely working with refugee and humanitarian immigrants the test review committee review report

resulted in the decision to keep the test. Entitled ‘Moving forward: Improving pathways to citizenship’ there were thirty-four recommendations (ACTRC, 2008, p.3). The most notable findings found that (a) the present test was flawed, intimidating to some and discriminatory and it needed substantial reform. It was noted that: (b) the legislative requirements for a “basic knowledge of the English language” and an “adequate knowledge of Australia and of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship” require definition before a revision and more appropriate test could be established. In addition, it was recommended that the special situations of refugee and humanitarian entrants and other disadvantaged and vulnerable people seeking citizenship should be addressed (c) and (d) it was found that the resource booklet should be re-written in basic English by professional educators (Australian Citizenship Test Review Committee, 2008, p.3). Further, the review pointed out that there had been an overall decrease in the number of applications for citizenship since the introduction of the test, thus showing the test was being seen as a difficult hurdle by some. In the first nine months of 2007 applications did not fall below 11,000 per month, peaking at 21,000 in September, the month before the test was implemented. Thereafter applications fell to 2,170 in October, 3,400 in November, 3,190 in December 2007, and 4,200 in January 2008 (DIAC, Annual Report, 2007-2008).

Fozdar and Spittles (2009, p. 510) discuss the government response to the review and note how it rejected some recommendations, including the recommendation to publish the test questions and conduct the test in languages other than English. It also rejected the recommendation to consider a different form of citizenship such as “earned citizenship”. As well, it did not agree to exempt some people from having to sit for the test because this would create two classes of citizens. Nevertheless, the new test was seen as significantly different from the original.

3.4.6.1 The revised Australian Citizenship Test 2009

On 19 October 2009, changes to the ACT (second version) came into effect. Under the new rules, a mark of 75% (15 out of 20 questions correct) became the pass mark. Previously, the original pass mark of 60% had increased to 75%. The new test questions were rewritten in plain English and the answering of three mandatory

questions was scrapped. The test is now based on the Australian Citizenship Pledge that new Australians make when becoming citizens. The citizenship test resource booklet, *Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond*, published by the then DIAC (and now DIBP) has been released with all the information needed to prepare for the test, thus replacing the previous official guide, "*Becoming an Australian Citizen*". In the new booklet the mandatory knowledge of Australian values is replaced with the Citizenship Pledge. Specifically, test questions are derived from identifiable information confined to the testable section of the booklet. This covers topics that include Australia's democratic beliefs, law and government, and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. The non-testable section of the book contains useful information about Australia, including Australian history, culture, sport and notable Australians. However, applicants with physical or mental incapacitation, including limited vision, hearing or speech, and those who are under eighteen and over sixty, are not required to sit for the test (Australian Citizenship Act 2007, Section 21, item 3). Also as a result of the review an 'assisted test' was introduced for applicants with English literacy difficulties but only for those who had completed at least 400 hours of English language tuition (Special Preparatory Course) under AMEP. They are officially assessed and declared as not possessing the English literacy skills necessary for the test. Even after having studied 400 hours of language tuition under the Special Preparatory Course, if applicants can still be assessed as possessing inadequate English skills, this clearly highlights the difficulty for those with serious English language problems e.g. lack of L1 and L2 literacy. Once applicants have passed the ACT they are scheduled to attend a citizenship ceremony on a particular day, typically Australia Day. When attending the citizenship ceremony, applicants make the Australian citizenship pledge.

From this time forward, under God* I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

* A person may choose whether or not to use the words 'under God'.

Repeating this pledge is the final step in becoming an Australian Citizen. In doing so new citizens are seen as making a formal and public commitment to Australia, which

includes the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. This pledge is also the basis for the pledge used in Australian Citizenship affirmation ceremonies. These are ceremonies open to anyone regardless of their citizenship status, and give individuals the opportunity to affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people (DIBP, 2014c).

3.4.6.1 Critique of the revised Australian Citizenship Test 2009

The revised Australian citizenship test was launched by Rudd Government in October 2009, and included the release of the new resource booklet, “Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond”, which is clearer about what is to be tested. This booklet states:

the citizenship test is also designed to assess whether you have a basic knowledge of the English language. English is our national language. Communicating in English helps you to play a more active role in Australian society. It helps you to take full advantage of education, employment and the other opportunities Australia has to offer (Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond, 2014, p. 4).

The booklet specifies that it “is expected that most prospective Australian citizens will have the literacy skills necessary to complete the citizenship test without assistance” (Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond, 2014, p.5). This statement clearly shows that the English language level demand of the new booklet has not changed and the expectations of audience English proficiency from the perspective of the authors have not changed significantly. For example Table 3.5 provides an overview of the vocabulary and concepts required to fully comprehend. While, the booklet has been translated into “37 community languages for those prospective citizens who are more competent at reading in a language other than English” (Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond, 2014, p. 4) the test remains in the English language.

In his article to the Sydney Morning Herald (23 September 2009) George Williams, Professor of Law at the University of NSW argues that both the old and revised tests

create an expensive bureaucratic impediment to becoming a citizen, without providing the desired benefits. “Even as rewritten, the booklet has more than its fair share of flaws, odd moments and controversy” (Williams, 2009). Moreover, Ryan (2012, pp. 58-59) raises the issue of just one sentence from the booklet, which is “Anzac Day is observed on 25 April each year.” He notes, “to ‘observe’ is a relatively straightforward concept: it means to ‘look at’ or watch closely.’ Imagine teaching it in relation to a national holiday to adults with little or no English who want to know why people “look at” a holiday. If ‘Christmas Day’ is switched for ‘Anzac Day’ and ‘December’ for ‘April’ one could ask whether people ‘observe’ New Year’s Day, Good Friday and on and on, and how many government-funded language teaching hours might be required to explain the concept.” In analysing such difficulties with the contents in the booklet, Ryan (2009) further argues for the principle of equal treatment of all citizens in a liberal democracy. He states: “that prospective citizens are expected to understand the concept of a fair go while a significant proportion of them are not getting one”. This is highlighted through the following contrasting situation, comparing the example of “an educated Briton who spends a couple of hours reading the booklet and five minutes doing the test to get 20 out of 20 with a humanitarian visa entrant from an oral culture who, upon arrival in Australia, had never held a pen or sat at a computer, or ever made a phone call.” He questions whether people who ‘had never held a pen or sat at a computer, or ever made a phone call’ can understand the vocabulary and concepts in the resource booklet. Perusal of Table 3.5 provides a brief linguistic analysis of the vocabulary that is most likely to be difficult to understand.

Table 3.5 Changed Australian Citizenship book’s use of high level English vocabulary and concepts

More difficult vocabulary by page number per column across the booklet				
<i>p. 3</i>	<i>p. 4</i>	<i>p. 9</i>	<i>p. 14</i>	<i>p. 18</i>
endeavour	protection	crimes	Property	allegations
commitment	scheduled	survived	floral	secular
contribution	testable	convicts	Emblem	custody
democratic	<i>p. 5</i>	influence	<i>p. 17</i>	reputation
unique	presentation	federation	stable	violently
diversity	prospective	<i>p. 12</i>	occur	vibrant

harmonious	traditional	honour	persuasion	<i>p. 19</i>
Indigenous	<i>p. 9</i>	prosperous	violence	discriminate
pledge	population	annual	Preference	intimidation
<i>p. 4</i>	symbols	solemn	<i>p. 18</i>	
decisions	distinctly	<i>p. 14</i>	freedom	
adequate	inhabitants	authority	expression	

Also part three of the resource book contains information under a series of sub headings such as The Australian constitution, how is the power of government controlled, Legislative power, Executive power, judicial power, and who is Australia’s Head of State, Constitutional monarchy, the role of the Governor-General, how is Australia governed and how are laws administered. Again these involve abstract concepts that may not be familiar to humanitarian refugees whose practical experience is generally very different and who come without having any education or limited education.

3.4.6.2 Knowledge of Australia and testing values

While previous citizenship booklet ‘Becoming an Australian citizen’ (2007) “asked to embrace the values of Australia that provide the everyday guideposts for living in Australia, for participating fully in our national life and for making the most of the opportunities that Australia has to offer” (page, 4), new resource booklet, “Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond” (2014) states “Australians believe in the dignity and freedom of each person, the equality of men and women and the rule of law. Australian citizenship is about living out these values in your everyday life” (p. 3). There is no doubt that knowledge of Australian life and values contribute for successful integration. the listing of Australians values as in previous resource booklet (2007, p. 5-6) include; respect of the freedom and dignity of the individual, support for democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, the equality of men and women, the spirit of the fair go, of mutual respect and compassion for those in need. As (Chisari, 2009) argues:

“what is interesting in discourses about national values in the current climate is the "commonsense" and universal acceptance that these values imply and

whilst they are proclaimed to be unique to a nation, they are also presented as pertaining to some "universal" qualities of humanity (p.16).

However, one could argue that taking up knowledge of Australia and testing values as the possible ground for integration, the citizenship legislation is politicised. For example, Fozdar and Spittles (2009) acknowledged “the clear message behind the process and rhetoric associated with the implementation of the Australian citizenship test is that those who do not wish to subscribe to the values identified in it are guests who have overstayed their welcome” (p. 511). Joppke (2010) termed this as “national particularisms” (p. 137) that in turn indicates “those who may not subscribe to such values (Muslims) should leave the country” (Fozdar & Spittles, 2009, p.511). Here, what Fozdar and Spittles (2009) point out more specifically is “a sense of protectionism towards those identified as insiders, and exclusion of others” (p. 511). (It should be noted that since 15 October 2007 all provisional, permanent and some temporary visa applicants are required to sign an Australian Values Statement on their visa application). Also the argument here is by signing the value statement or passing the test the view that government would be able to “scrutinise a candidate’s ‘inner disposition’ is problematic, precisely for transgressing the thin line that separates the regulation of behaviour from the control of beliefs” (Joppke, 2010, p.141). For example Man Haron Monis who was behind at the most recent event that occurred in the Sydney cafe siege on 15th December 2014 provokes loud debate on his inner disposition integration and testing values.

3.5 Citizenship and testing language skills

Tests have been constructed as symbols of standards, objectivity, and merit as well as productivity in education, the workplace and society as a whole (Shohamy, 2009, p. 50) Language tests used in contexts where the results will be used to make decisions about the testees’ proficiency for integration, citizenship or naturalisation have been controversial and mostly high stakes tests with the capacity to impact on testees’ lives (Etzioni, 2007; Kunnan, 2009; Piller, 2001; Shohamy & McNamara, 2009). These conclusions are based on language test fairness criteria with the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) associated with the Council of Europe (CoE). For example, the International English language Testing System (IELTS) is used across the world to select professionals e.g. NESB nurses and teachers for acceptance

of international NESB students to enter English medium tertiary institutions based on the scores on the test and various levels (Mcnamara & Ryan, 2011; O'Neill, 2010). Similarly, in Australia the International Second Language Proficiency Scales (Ingram & Wylie, 1979/1999), formerly the Australian Second Language Proficiency Scales are used in the same way and also underpins the CSWE curriculum. They comprise descriptive scales of hierarchically organised levels of proficiency in the four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are used prolifically for the design of placement tests and assessment of English at a range of levels (Ingram & Wylie, 1991). The ISLPR also has application to test English for specific purposes (O'Neill & Hatoss, 2003).

3.5.1 Test validity

ESL pedagogy has paid considerable attention on fairness of language testing in terms of validity and reliability (Bachman, 2000; Extra & Spotti, 2009). “One of the most important considerations in the process of making tests is test validation which can refer to any attempt to eliminating irrelevant factors and sources of bias from any kind in order for a test to yield valid results” (Salehi & Tayebi, 2012, p. 85). Thus, validity as “an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores and other modes of assessment” (Messick, 1989, p.13). Reliability “has to do with the consistency of measures across different times, test forms, raters, and other characteristics of the measurement context” (Bachman, 1990, p. 25).

The goal of any language test is to reach fair conclusions about the state of linguistic knowledge or the performance capabilities of language users. Professionals in the field of language test development (Bachman, 2005; Mcnamara, 2007; 2011; Kunnan, 2009; Shohamy, 2009) have pointed out that policymakers must work with the test providers on several aspects when using a language test for citizenship. These aspects include the purpose of the test, what type of assessment is necessary for the intended purpose, and the outcomes of the test that determine the civil and human rights of the society as a whole. Given the ethicality of language testing,

Shohamy (2001; 2009) further emphasizes policy makers and test developers need to rethink whether the requisite skills and knowledge could be measured with consistency, whether the appropriate and justifiable inferences may be drawn from the test results, and what the test could be expected to measure when developed. Mcnamara (2007) highlights the complexity of test development when he states:

the development of a language test involves much more than technical considerations in the production and implementation of an efficient instrument, but requires test developers to address not only questions of the fairness of the test, but also of its intended use, the values it embodies, and its impact both on educational systems and on stakeholders, including test takers and the community at large (p. 3).

With respect to societal equity Shohamy (2009) argues “that tests have detrimental effects on people’s lives: they perpetuate social classes and preserve oligarchies based on pre-defined and essentialist categories” (p. 51). In the case of language testing for integration citizenship or naturalisation presents good example of that as all the test applicants come from either English speaking background or non- English speaking background. Then the consequential aspect of “societal equity goes beyond equal validity and access” (Kunnan, 2000, p.4) and purpose of the testing program does not contribute to societal equity.

According to Mcnamara and Ryan (2011) validity includes two forms. The first applies to candidates’ chances of showing what they know or can do not be compromised by construct-irrelevant factors such as the particular tasks set, the characteristics of the evaluators who assess the performance, or badly worded test items and the like. The second applies to test bias that where the design of a test item have an impact or differential treatment of a particular subgroup of test takers. In this sense ACT favours the candidates come from English speaking background and candidates with better English literacy skills. When one group of test-takers perform significantly better than another group “who do not have an opportunity to resist these testing policies, may imply unethical and undemocratic methods of policy making” (Shohamy, 2009, p.51). A test should be fair to all candidates in terms of “. . . test questions, administration procedures, scoring methods, and reporting policies that optimise the chances that each student will receive equal and fair treatment”

(Brown, 2005, p. 26) irrespective of gender, culture, ethnicity, or race, (Kunnan, 2000; Shohamy, 2000). A fair test that is valid for all groups and individuals provides each test taker an equal opportunity that demonstrates relevancy of the purpose of the test with the skills and knowledge of the test taker (Etzioni, 2007; Mcnamara & Shohamy, 2008).

There is no argument with the fact that prospective citizens need to learn about the language culture, history law and values of the adopted country but the argument here is the Citizenship test to serve, as a tool to measure integration is inappropriate. Upon close examination of the test items, test outcomes there is a direct impact on refugee and humanitarian immigrants whom ACT excludes in the naturalisation process.

Thus, current citizenship testing practice is bias and;

1. increase the attainment levels for would be citizens who come from English speaking backgrounds who are better equipped to participate in society and therefore are less likely to have problems in integrating
2. decreases the attainment levels that are achievable for ‘would be citizens’ that come from ‘NESB refugee and humanitarian entrants with no literacy skills in L1 and L2 and lead to their ‘exclusion’ from society and the benefits of citizenship

To justify the argument, Table 3.6 shows official figures released by the DIAC (2013) after an application under the Freedom of Information Act.

Table 3.6 Citizenship test results for year 2011-12 (DIAC 2013)

Applicants	score
Applicants with Swedish citizenship (Sweden)	98.1 %
Applicants with Dutch citizenship (Netherlands)	97.6 %
Applicants with Finnish citizenship (Finland)	97.5%
Applicants with French citizenship (France)	97.4%
Applicants with Swiss citizenship (Switzerland)	97.4%

According to the report of English language proficiency index under ‘Education First’ (EF EPI, 2013) Citizenship test results 2008 - Clients and tests, which rank

countries by the average level of English skills amongst adults, Sweden is being rated first with the very high level proficiency in English. Netherland has scored third place and Finland the seventh place with very high-level proficiency in English. Meanwhile Tables 3.7 and 3.8 reveal consistent failure rates of former refugee and humanitarian immigrants.

Table 3.7 Australian Citizenship Test results /Snapshot Report/30 June 2013

Programme analysis for 2012-13								
Programme/Stream	Clients	Per cent of all clients	Tests	Per cent of all tests	Pass	Fail	Client pass rate (per cent)	Avg. number of tests per client
Skill Stream	61 224	59.2	64 381	51.6	61 078	146	99.8	1.1
Family Stream	21 544	20.8	29 750	23.8	20 980	564	97.4	1.4
Humanitarian Programme	6 987	6.8	15 200	12.2	6 204	783	88.8*	2.2
Other **	13 676	13.2	15 525	12.4	13 448	228	98.3	1.1
Total	103 431	100	124 856	100	101 710	1 721	98.3	1.2

(DIBP, 2013, Snapshot Report, p. 3)

Table 3.8 Australian Citizenship Test results /Snapshot Report/30 June 2011

Program Analysis for 2010-11								
Program/Stream	Clients	Per cent of all clients	Tests	Per cent of all tests	Pass	Fail	Client pass rate (%)	Avg. number of tests per client
Skill Stream	30 158	50.4	31 518	42.7	30 125	33	99.9	1.0
Family Stream	16 377	27.4	23 591	31.9	16 100	277	98.3	1.4
Humanitarian Program	2 042	3.4	5 901	8.0	1 757	285	86.0	2.9
Other *	11 210	18.8	12 888	17.4	11 141	69	99.4	1.1
Total	59 787	100	73 898	100	59 123	664	98.9	1.2

(Snapshot Report, DIAC, 2011, p. 3)

As Shohamy (2009, p. 45) reiterates “. . . the stipulation of ‘language’ and ‘language tests’ as criteria for obtaining citizenship represent biased, discriminating and unattainable requirements that can lead to invalid decisions about the rights of people in societies”. She goes on to explain that when these three categories [language, tests

and citizenship] are combined and feed and support one another, they impose powerful and strong sanctions on immigrants who have very limited space to resist [because they are in desperate need of citizenship]. She further points out how the combination of these three sources of power acts against groups in society, noting that it is often the immigrant groups who are marginalised to begin with. Thus, she raises questions about the ramifications of the testing policy in causing negative attitudes towards ‘the others’, which can lead to racial and ethnic tensions rather than incorporation and equality (Shohamy, 2009, p. 55).

With respect to the ACT, Mcnamara and Ryan (2011) also provide several critical insights. He notes the ACT’s potential threat to the employment of authentic pedagogy since the Citizenship Test promotes a set of conditions that are unjust and unequal. In addition, it is seen as contradicting the climate and functionality of current standardisation-language testing pedagogy. In pointing out that the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), promoted by the COE, was designed to be responsive to the needs of the increasingly cooperative political structures in Australia’s multilingual and multicultural continent, he states that when using language tests in high-stakes contexts, it is important for all test developers and policy makers to follow established Codes of Practice to ensure that all aspects of the assessment process are of high quality and that all stakeholders are treated fairly (Saville, 2006). *The manual for language test development and examining* (Council of Europe, 2011), which is complementary to the earlier version of the “User guide for examiners” (1996), provides a coherent guide to test development in general and presents test development as a cycle. It describes how test items need to be developed, how a test should be piloted, when and how a test needs to be sampled and the characteristics of the population required for the sample test. Also as Brown (2005, p. 188) maintains, if a cut-off score is used, it should document how it was established. The documentation should report the standard error of measurement (SEM), a reliability statistic that describes a band around a test taker’s raw score within which that test taker’s score would probably fall if he or she took the test many times. The size of that band, the expected variability in a test taker’s scores—provides information on how precise a cut off score should be.

Reliability and validity of any test are especially crucial (Mcnamara, 2006; Norris, 2008) as any test can have significant impacts on the test takers' lives. For example only applicant can vote, get an Australian passport, apply for government jobs, use the vote and provide family members sponsorship to migrate, if they pass ACT. Then, ACT has the potential to change the lives of its applicants. Yet ACT designers never proved that the ACT test is either reliable or valid. Nevertheless they not released any reliability or validity studies, or a technical test manual (Kunnan, 2009) to provide score interpretation of the ACT. Since ACT has multiple forms of testing such as course-based test and assisted test it is required to be included a test manual to describe how the multiple forms were equated. Since there is no test manual is presented reliability of ACT is questionable. It is easy to understand Banulescu-Bogdan (2012) argument that:

when the requirements to achieve citizenship are set too high (for example, a test demanding knowledge so detailed of the host country that even well-educated natives might fail), the citizenship process can become counterproductive, interfering with the very integration it seeks to promote).

Considered from this point of view, “the greater difficulty of reaching higher language proficiency means fewer people will attain citizenship standards, such that the policy is restrictive thus having direct implications for which groups a nation excludes or includes in becoming naturalisation” (Copeland, 2010, p. 22). “this is particularly so in approaches to literacy and language learning for the recent waves of refugee migrants from countries where traditional literacy levels may be uneven or low, but other forms of ‘multiliteracies’, including oral cultural forms, are widely used”(Ndhlovu, 2011, p.446). Applying this into the context of L2 acquisition and citizenship education, the educational aspect of citizenship policy presents the requirement of sufficient amount of language learning for the immigrants from low literacy background. “While language is associated with notions of patriotism, loyalty and social cohesion, views about the capacity of tests to lead to high levels of achievement and standards, fairness and objectivity are un-substantiated” (Shohamy, 2009, p. 51).

3.5 Resourcing citizenship education

Citizenship education deals with the relationship between the individual and political society, between the self and others. The curriculum needs to reflect this: it must help the individual understand both their own identity and the nature of society, and how to actively engage with the complex relationship of rights and responsibilities that exist between the two” (Ross, 2012, p.7). Given the acknowledgement of basic rights in the 1951 convention, complexity of achieving required level of L2 skills and legal measures imposed to refugee and humanitarian immigrants, how they are educated or shaped to become Australian citizens is the next question. Civic, historical and English section of the citizenship test makes “substantial and unacknowledged literacy demands” (Mcnamara & Shohamy, 2008, p. 94) on low literate applicants. In this regards what measures the government has taken to address the literacy problems and promote citizenship education need to be considered.

In August 1998, the Australian Commonwealth Government established the Australian Citizenship Council to advise the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs on Australian Citizenship matters referred to it by the Government (Murray, 2003, p.3). As she further described, in collaboration with AMEP the course, ‘Let’s Participate’: A 20 hour Course which was focused on the responsibilities and privileges of Australian Citizenship offered with its English program. This course helped AMEP clients in their application for Australian Citizenship to meet one of the requirements for citizenship at that time –‘adequate knowledge of the privileges and responsibilities of Australian Citizenship’. AMEP students who complete the course received an *Australian Citizenship and Responsibilities and Privileges Record*, which is then accepted at the citizenship interview as evidence of their understanding of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian Citizenship (Murray, 2003, p. 3-5). However, the AMEP ‘Let’s Participate’ citizenship course was suspended in early 2008 following the introduction of the Australian Citizenship Test 2007. In November 2008, the Woolcott Review (ACTRC, 2008, p.3) reported:

The Government will develop a citizenship course that will provide an alternative pathway to citizenship for refugees and disadvantaged or vulnerable

migrants. This will include people who understand English but whose level of literacy does not allow them to undertake a formal computer-based test. This alternative pathway will address community concerns about the test and in many cases, will help people who were previously excluded from obtaining citizenship.

Further the report confirmed the Government support and availability of educational support including a range of preparatory learning materials. The resource booklet, *Australian citizenship: Our Common Bond*, has been translated into 37 languages, but the test will be administered only in English. Even applicants prepare for the test in 37 languages how low literate learner transfer the knowledge and produce the answers in English is not being considered by the course developer in this course.

3.5.1 Australian Citizenship Course

Australian Citizenship course that includes 20 hours of tuition over seven sessions was introduced at selected locations through AMEP providers in May 2010. The course content is drawn from the testable component of the ‘*Australian citizenship: Our Common Bond*’ resource booklet.

In 2011–12, 21 courses were delivered by AMEP service providers in metropolitan Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide. Of the 339 clients who confirmed their interest in attending the course, 311 (92 per cent) clients enrolled. A total of 285 clients (92 per cent) passed the course, 22 clients failed the course (7 per cent of the total number who attended) and four clients (1 per cent) withdrew from the course for personal reasons (DIAC, Annual Report, 2011–12, p.278). In 2012–13, 37 courses were delivered by relevant AMEP service providers in metropolitan Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane and regional Shepparton. A total of 606 clients enrolled in the course. Of these, 542 clients (89 per cent) passed the course, 56 clients failed the course (9 per cent) and 8 clients (1 per cent) withdrew from the course (DIAC, Annual Report, 2012-2013, p.278). These reports show that the

course is offered in certain metropolitan areas and one regional area only. Also still there are people who are unable to be successful undertaking the course-based test.

Many questions hence arise: what pedagogical approaches are taken to address the citizenship of failed clients. Are they going to remain as non citizens and what are consequences of exclusion from citizenship, what work best for them to be included and so on. From the pedagogical point of view most important questions are how ESL teachers provide instruction for them to be successful within 20 hours of time period, how might citizenship preparation be encouraged, using available language provision. According to the report of Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (SSCLCA 2007, p. 11), the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT) has stated:

. . . over the years we have successfully integrated thousands of migrants and refugees from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds into Australian society, without the need for a written citizenship test. We do not believe there have been any significant changes to this situation that would warrant the introduction of a formal test.

Although the take on the test is defended here it is common sense that in order to fully participate in the host society they must be proficient in English language and have general knowledge about the host country, which cannot be ignored. Therefore as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) argued Citizenship policy should provide a mechanism to allow for special exemptions for those people who are unfairly disadvantaged (cited in SSCLCA, 2007, p. 22) or low literate for not being able to be successful at the test. However, Professor Kim Rubenstein suggested, “engendering a commitment to Australia can be encouraged in ways other than formal citizenship testing” (cited in SSCLCA, 2007, p. 12). Her suggestion as a basis it could suggest that there are better ways of constructing citizenship education for prospective citizens other than operating the existing citizenship test. In this regard the opinion expressed by the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum provides a better interpretation to develop citizenship education programs in the adult immigrant context. For example, it suggests that there are more practical and effective ways of using funds that will be spent on administering and

monitoring the test instead citizenship funds need to be spent on English language classes, ongoing community integration programs, employment skills programs, community support services, reciprocity programs—such as volunteer and community participation agreements—or a range of social cohesion or education programs rather than on one-off Multiple-choice test to ensure the successful settlement and on ongoing support to ensure good citizenship (cited in SSCLCA, 2007, p.38).

3.6 Summary

What can be concluded from this chapter is as evident from the scholarly literature there is a significant disconnect between the citizenship testing domain and the principles of language testing that address the validity, reliability and test fairness in language testing. It is obvious that the content, test purpose, the test format and the implementation of the ACT have violated pedagogical aspects of language testing and long-standing rules in language testing. Nevertheless, less attention is given to the principles of second language acquisition that need to be considered worthy of attention. On a more subtle level, by ignoring equal human dignity and diversity, Australian citizenship test reflects some elements of the white Australia policy. Shohamy (2009), Kunnan (2009) and Orgad (2011) also argue about integration and language testing, and citizenship, which could lead to a violation of basic rights for immigrants who lack a space to contest against these policies.

This chapter first examined the meaning of the terms of citizenship, naturalisation and then overviewed the historical development of the Australian Citizenship Act and Amended Australian Citizenship Act (2007), which the introduced Citizenship test in 2007. Then the chapter described the test's restructuring, which began in 2009 following the Woolcott Review, revised Australian Citizenship Test 2009. Research into citizenship and language testing, along with policy issues are analysed, which raises the issue that the ACT may have discriminatory effects in practice. It also suggests that the test design and implementation process is open to improvement, therefore reinforcing the need for the current research with respect to humanitarian refugees. Besides approaches taken to support citizenship education being explored,

The chapter presents arguments that demonstrate that the use of language and literacy tests may not be a valid method to address ‘integration’ or whether would be citizens should gain national citizenship. Before moving on to the next chapter (Chapter Four), which outlines the methodology for the present research it is important to clarify the relationship of this chapter to the project. This is summed up by Carrera and Guild (2010, p. 9) who state “. . . testing integration constitutes another tool of ‘exceptionalism’ appealing to the obligation for the foreigner to respect, adhere and disappear into a constructed set of national liberal democratic history, principles and values (rules of the game), which are (in a rather hypocritical fashion) considered to be alien only to ‘non-nationals’, and which function as another legal barrier for them to cross the bridge towards a formal recognition before the law of citizenship”. On this note it is important to conduct the present research to investigate the opinions and experiences of the migrants themselves who are on the receiving end of the policy to pass the ACT, and in particular the NESB adult refugee and humanitarian entrants with no print literacy in L1 and no Literacy skills in L2 under the acronym of LESLLA.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter first provides an overview, showing how the research design relates to the conceptual framework of the study and outlines the research methodology, the aim, objectives and research questions, the stages of the research, sample selection, the data collection instruments and the approach to analysis. The methodological approach is exploratory in design, employing mixed methods in its focus on discovering barriers and success factors that impact most on humanitarian refugees from NESBs, in their need to become acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society, and to acquire the English language, and how they might be best assisted to become citizens within an appropriate timeframe. Specifically, the target group for the study is those NESB humanitarian refugees who have limited print literacy skills in their L1 and also limited literacy skills in L2. Besides providing an explanation and justification of the research design, it considers the ethics of the study, and addresses issues of trustworthiness and the limitations of the study.

4.2 Relating the research design to the study's conceptual framework

It is important to consider how the research design relates to the conceptual framework of the study since it needs to ensure the collection of data that will enable the research findings to contribute to the existing knowledge in the field. This relationship is depicted in Figure 4.1. As Robson (1993, p.150-151) notes, “a conceptual framework forces the researcher to be explicit about the research and be selective in deciding “which relationships are likely to be of importance or meaning; and hence, what data . . . is to be collected and analysed.” Also Jabareen, (2009) defines:

conceptual framework as a network, or ‘a plane’ of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena. The concepts that constitute a conceptual framework support one another, articulate their respective phenomena, and establish a framework-

specific philosophy. Conceptual frameworks possess ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, and each concept within a conceptual framework plays an ontological or epistemological role (p. 51).

For this study there is a relation between the research approach and the function of the conceptual framework. The concepts contained in the circles in Figure 4.1 underpin this study and indicate the overall structure and the relationships within and between it. The dotted line represents how the whole system is in motion and vibrating. These concepts address the person in the context, initially, on three levels that may best exemplify Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979).

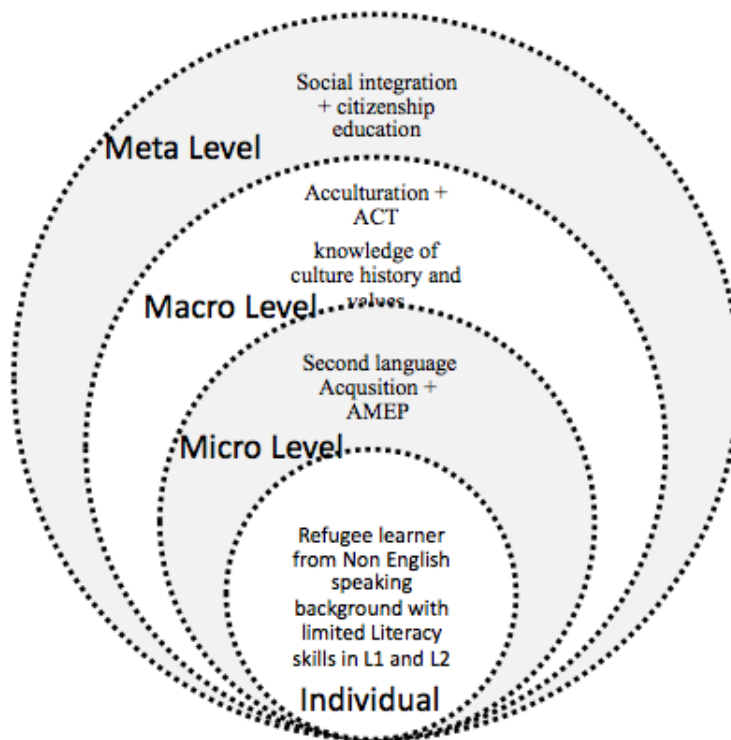


Figure 4.1: Relationship between the research design and the conceptual framework of the study

Figure 4.1 shows three concentric circles surrounding the person in the context. As the closest ring, the micro-level influences the person in the context on a practical basis. At the *micro level*, the target group for the study need to acquire the English Language through L2 instruction in the AMEP, which provides a new and separate challenge to them. Data gathered in relation to their second language acquisition provides the factual findings of the research.

At the next level, according to Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) socialisation is influenced by those who interact with the person in the context within the meso-system (e.g., teachers and friends). Connections between multiple micro-systems, the meso-system links the exo system where the person in the context is not involved exert an indirect influence upon his or her life. Then the next ring the *macro level* represents meso- and exo-systems, which is focused on the target group's acquisition of the English Language through instruction in the AMEP and learning Australian cultural values in order to be in a position to face passing the ACT to obtain citizenship. This provides the interpretive findings of the research. Since macro level can be changed for example due to political culture and technological development, Bronfenbrenner (1989) added the chronosystem to show his theory is responsive to the external factors. The *meta level*, represents chronosystem which is all the other systems are immersed in to address the key point of the study that in turn accommodates the ongoing changes between the person in the context and the environment across his or her lifespan. Thus, all three dimensions English language acquisition through instruction in AMEP, their learning of Australian cultural values and having to face passing the ACT to obtain citizenship challenge the learner, and their consideration in combination and the interpretation of the results provide the conceptual findings of the research and together a basis for the study's contribution to knowledge.

4.3 Research Methodology

Research design, which Creswell (2008, p. 5) refers as the plan or proposal to conduct research, involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods. Thus, in planning a study, researchers need to think through the philosophical worldview assumptions that they bring to the study, the strategy of inquiry that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods or procedures of research that translate the approach into practice.

4.3.1 Philosophical worldview

Different researchers have used different interpretations to distinguish the philosophical worldview of two traditions of research. Sometimes the distinction has

been made between “quantitative” and “qualitative” traditions (Castellan, 2010), sometimes between “scientific” and “humanistic” traditions, and sometimes between “positivist” and “phenomenological” traditions (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 23). Inevitably, “. . . all studies include assumptions about the world and knowledge that informs the inquiries” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 20), a statement with which this study is in accord. Creswell (2008, p. 6), simplifies the term ‘worldview’ by explaining its meaning in citing Guba’s definition (1990, p. 17) as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action”. Creswell (2008, p. 9-11) further explains how all worldviews can be condensed into four broad categories such as *postpositivism*, *constructivism*, *advocacy and participatory*, and *pragmatism*. Accordingly, the postpositivist believe that facts have an objective reality and can be expressed numerically; therefore this tradition puts emphasis on numbers, measurement, experiments and numerical relationships and descriptions, which resembles the quantitative approach. On the other hand, constructivists hold assumptions that the social reality can understand human behaviour only from the participant's own frame of reference. They also believe that the qualities people ascribe to objects are socially constructed. This means individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences that are directed towards certain objects or things that lead the researcher to look for a complexity of viewpoints instead of narrowing interpretations of data down to a few categories or issues. Methods related to social constructivists’ approaches include case study, ethnography, and historical and action research that rely on qualitative methodology. Other groups that hold an advocacy and participatory worldview tend to focus on specific issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation for which the research is typically collaborative, action research. The pragmatic worldview, to which the present research takes as its approach “. . . is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality [in that it draws] . . . liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions” (Creswell (2008, p.10). It takes from the worldview of “what” and “how’ and has the freedom to mix quantitative data and methods with qualitative data and methods in a mixed-methods approach.

4.3.2 Mixed method approach

Mixed-methods research represents an important departure from the either/or

assumptions of quantitative or qualitative approaches because it allows that both methods may be valuable depending on the type of research question under investigation (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p.117). Specifically, mixed methods research, involves “mix[ing] or combin[ing] quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

4.3.2.1 Choice of mixed methods

Greene (2007, p. 20) proposes both quantitative and qualitative inquiry “. . . actively invites us to participate in dialogue about multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the social world, and multiple stand points on what is important and to be valued and cherished”. Additionally, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007, p. 35) note that “when quantitative results are inadequate to provide explanations of outcomes . . . qualitative data [can be used] to enrich and explain the quantitative results in the words of the participants.” Thus, on the basis of this comparison of specific characteristics of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research, the researcher’s chose to combine qualitative and quantitative methods since this particular design was better able to facilitate the pragmatic exploration of the research problem a the focus of this study and enable the research questions to be answered in keeping with the research conceptual framework. Thus, a mixed methods approach was selected for this study, on the belief of the researcher, that even a postpositivist researcher could embrace a “what works” worldview that contains constructed meanings, and this could be reconciled with a pragmatic approach. For example, a postpositivist worldview in the core knowledge of Citizenship education in Australia could be based on only numerical results on the citizenship knowledge on students’ achievements on the research questions being asked in a particular study on a particular group of students. But it is not the classical view of the world about the citizenship education in Australia. More to the point, in common sense, the worldview of Citizenship education in Australia can be described in multiple ways based on the history or based on a particular government governing within a particular period of time. Then even a postpositivist researcher (if s/he wanted to) could employ the mixed method design using numerical results with the

qualitative data to explore Citizenship education. This position is described by Guba and Lincoln (2005) through mixed methods, which can be:

. . . retrofitted to each other in ways that make the simultaneous practice of both possible. We have argued that at the paradigmatic, or philosophical, level, commensurability between positivist and postpositivist worldviews is not possible, but that within each paradigm, mixed methodologies (strategies) may make perfect sense (p. 200).

Therefore, by seeing the complementarities rather than incompatibilities between postpositivism and pragmatism and particularly with respect to the nature of the research problem and research questions posed by this study, postpositivist sentiments, which are the consideration of Citizenship test results for humanitarian refugees on the one hand, and having the pragmatic sentiments that the sensitive experiences, aspirations, and feelings of humanitarian refugees on the other, a mixed methods design is supported. However, one could question what does the researcher achieve by doing mixed method that he or she cannot achieve by employing qualitative or quantitative methods alone. To answer this question there is a need for “a clear differentiation of alternative purposes for mixing qualitative and quantitative methods” (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, p. 255) and clarity of understanding of why we use mixed methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, 2011) discuss when mixed methods may apply, providing a rationale as succinctly outlined by USAID (2013, pp. 1-2), when:

1. different research questions require different methods, or when a single research question requires more than one method to answer all components.
2. different methods are used to answer the same elements of a single question, increasing the validity and reliability of the results.
3. the results from one method are used to design the future phases of the study.

In addition Creswell and Plano Clark (2007; 2011) highlight other benefits that can be achieved by using mixed-method designs, noting their applicability when the researcher (1) has a high probability of finding unanticipated results, (2) needs to provide a deeper understanding of why change is or is not occurring as planned and (3) needs to capture a wider range of perspectives than might be captured by a single

method. More comprehensively, as cited in Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007, pp. 115-116), Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989, p. 259) provided five multiple rationales to explain the added advantages of using mixed methods approaches:

(a) triangulation (i.e., seeking convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon), (b) complementarity (i.e., seeking elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with results from the other method), (c) development (i.e., using the results from one method to help inform the other method), (d) initiation (i.e., discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to a reframing of the research question), and (e) expansion (i.e., seeking to expand the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components).

Thus, researchers may use mixed methods approaches for multiple purposes (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2007, 2011; Greene, 2006; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007) or they may select a single method or different mix methods designs such as Convergent (or parallel or concurrent) designs, Sequential (or explanatory sequential or exploratory sequential) designs, Embedded (or nested) designs and Multiphase designs depending on the primary or secondary purposes of their research studies, which should be driven by the specific questions and aims in the particular investigation. Whatever the design it is also important to note Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2009) point that the key design component in mixed methods research is whether the methods are to be implemented in a parallel manner or in a sequential manner. Whether equal priority is given to both quantitative and qualitative research, or greater emphasis is placed on qualitative or quantitative data collection is seen as depending on the particular situation. For instance, there may be practical constraints impacting on the data collection, or participants may only be able to respond in a particular way e.g. survey rather than interview. So it is important for the researcher to be aware of the potential of the design as well as the constraints.

4.3.2 Convergent parallel design

In keeping with Creswell's (2007, p. 80) approach to mixed methods a convergent parallel design, as represented in Figure 4.2, was chosen to address the purpose of the present study, and ensure equal priority across the data sources. It was designed for each data collection to remain independent of the other during analysis, after which the researcher merged the qualitative findings and quantitative results for an overall interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

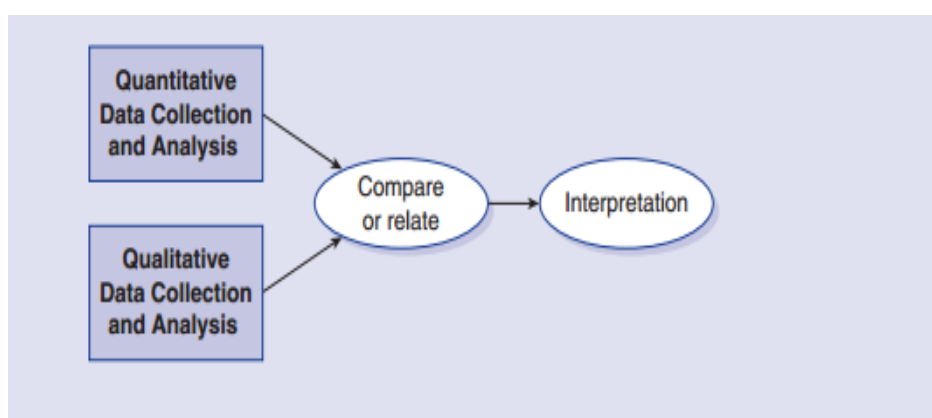


Figure 4.2: The study's convergent parallel design

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 69)

As this study utilized a convergent parallel design, the quantitative and qualitative strands occurred concurrently and in the quantitative strand, data were collected from 30 ESL teachers using anonymous survey and interviews with 20 adult NESBs humanitarian refugee learners. In the qualitative strand, this study investigated in greater depth the complex social lives of NESB refugees. This design is appropriate for the present research, in particular, owing to the lack of previous research and published literature on this target group and the Citizenship Test in Australia. The combination of quantitative data and qualitative data were better able to examine in depth the impact of the test and policy from the perspective of this group's experience, which the analysis of one data set would not be sufficient alone. Both forms of mixed data allowed for interpretation of survey results, focused discussions, observations and interviews alongside stories to yield a more complete picture through data comparison, and to add to the credibility of the data.

4.3.3 The aims and objectives of the study

The overall intention of the research is to provide a detailed and reliable evidence base that relates to the current citizenship policy as it pertains to NESBs humanitarian refugees with literacy difficulties in L1 and L2. Thus, the study is designed to analyse the Australian citizenship policy in relation to the concepts underpinning research conceptual framework. At the centre is their ability to become socially integrated into Australian society, which involves the acquisition of the English language, the need to become acculturated into Australian society, and in order to achieve the benefits of a citizen they need citizenship education and preparedness to pass the citizenship test in a timely manner. It sets out to study the experiences of members of the subgroup of NESBs humanitarian refugees in a regional city in Australia. It also sought to obtain evidence from ESL teachers who had dealt with the NESBs humanitarian refugees with L1 and L2 literacy difficulties in the AMEP context. The study set out to address the following three research questions:

- 1 What are the barriers and success factors that impact most on humanitarian refugees from NESBs with limited literacy skills in becoming acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?
- 2 How do humanitarian refugees with little or no literacy in their first language best acquire proficiency in English and become acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?
- 3 How can NESB humanitarian refugee learners with limited literacy skills in their first language best be assisted to develop a feeling of belonging/their new cultural identity and become citizens within an appropriate timeframe?

As seen in Table 4.1 the convergent parallel design involved policy document analysis, a survey to teachers (30) and in depth interviews (10) as well as classroom observations (20 students), and interviews with members of the class (20), and finally case studies of a small sample of the target group of humanitarian refugees (8). While the quantitative data collection in the form of a survey to teachers of the AMEP program gathered their views in relation to research questions one and three, teacher interviews collected qualitative data in the exploration of teachers' views in

relation to research question two and three in depth. At the same time additional qualitative data were collected through classroom observations, to explore these two questions, and interviews with the humanitarian refugees themselves provided data with respect to all three-research questions. The incorporation of case studies of eight refugees further allowed deep interrogation of the specific nature of this target group by distinguishing between four kinds of ESL literacy learners: pre-literate; non-literate or illiterate; semi-literate; and non-roman alphabetic. This theme was also incorporated into the AMEP, ESL teacher interviews in order to add to the depth of understanding of the challenge and the supportive practices that were in place.

Table 4.1 Overview of research study, research questions and data collection techniques

Research mixed methods	Convergent parallel design – Concurrent data collection			
Participants and data collection techniques	Teacher survey (30)	Classroom Observations 20 hours	Refugee Interviews (20)	Refugee Case studies & Interviews (8)
Research questions				
1. What are the barriers and success factors that impact most on humanitarian refugees from NESBs with limited literacy skills in becoming acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?	✓		✓	✓
2. How do humanitarian refugees with little or no literacy in their first language best acquire proficiency in English and become acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?		✓	✓	
3. How can NESB humanitarian refugee learners with limited literacy skills in their first language best be assisted to develop a feeling of belonging/their new cultural identity and become citizens within an appropriate timeframe?	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Document analysis – relevant policy considerations			

4.4 Research procedure

4.4.1 Data collection techniques

A combination of multiple research instruments was utilised to collect data in this research. Initially, as a part of the literature review in this study a document analysis was necessary to examine the Australian citizenship policy; white Australia policy, the citizenship test; the UNHCR convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, Australian settlement policy and the relationship of policy to the AMEP curriculum and English language learning. The analysis and synthesis of literature on government policy and statistics in relation to the target group was essential to gain insights into the information, issues and practices relating to this target group's settlement, and the reality they perceived in relation to social integration, acculturation, English language acquisition, citizenship education and the citizenship test. The parallel quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments, as shown in Table 4.1, are listed below and are provided in the attached appendices: Anonymous ESL teachers survey to AMEP providers in RWZ (Appendix 1); Individual interviews with ESL teacher-participant (Appendix 2); Participant classroom observation (Appendix 3 Classroom observation chart); Individual interviews with Refugee student participant (Appendix 4) and the Case studies – Interview schedule with case study participants (Appendix 5).

4.4.2 Sample selection

The primary purpose of sampling is to collect data about specific events, cases or actions that can clarify and deepen understanding of what is being studied (Neuman, 1997, p. 234). Several groups of participants were involved in the present study and they are identified in Table 4.2. In general the study relied upon purposive and convenience-sampling techniques since the research sought to investigate the circumstances of a particular group of humanitarian refugees. Purposive sampling, that is sometimes known as judgmental sampling, is popular in qualitative research enables researcher to have an initial understanding of the situation to identify, specific characteristics to differentiate the needs of one group from another group (Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010; 2009). This approach was adopted since it was seen as being very well placed to respond to the research questions. First it applied to the selection of ESL teachers for survey who taught in the AMEP program in

places where the target group were to be found. Thus, it was ensured that the ESL teachers who provide English language lessons were selected for the ESL teacher voluntary survey. As noted earlier these groups of refugees are settled on the basis of government Rural and Regional Refugee Settlement policy developed by DIMA in 2003 (DIMA 2003; DIAC, Fact Sheet 97) in one of the regional RWZs (RCOA, 2013). With such a sample, specific characteristics can be detected compared and contrasted, and a range of experiences can be summarised.

Table 4.2 Background of the five participating groups

Group 1 (N=30) - Teacher Survey (see Appendix 1).	Sample T1 of ESL teachers selected through purposive selection from across the region to take an anonymous survey.
Group 2 (N=10) -Teacher Interviews (see Appendix 2).	Sample T2 of ESL teachers selected purposively from local AMEP providers for interviews.
Group 3 (N=20) ESL lesson observations (see Appendix 3).	Purposive selection of one class of NESB humanitarian and refugee learners at the Preliminary CSWE Level for ESL lesson observations.
Group 4 (N=20) refugee learner interviews (see Appendix 4).	Convenience sample S1 of NESB humanitarian and refugee learners for interview.
Group 5 (N=8) case study Interviews (see Appendix 5).	Purposive sub-sample of S1, Sample S2, of NESB humanitarian and refugee learners for case study.

Purposive sampling, that is sometimes known as judgmental may be used, by a researcher when there is a need to target a particular group, as with this research (Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; 2010). This approach was adopted since it was seen as being very well placed to respond to the research questions. First it applied to the selection of ESL teachers for survey who taught in the AMEP program in places where the target group were to be found. Thus, it was ensured that the ESL teachers who provide English language lessons were selected for the ESL teacher voluntary survey. As noted earlier these groups of refugees are settled (on the basis of Rural and Regional Refugee Settlement policy developed by DIMIA in 2003 (DIMIA 2003) in one of the regional RWZs (RCOA, 2013. While the case study sample were also selected purposively, because it was necessary to identify and investigate the range of people within the “low literacy” level (pre-literate, non-literate or illiterate, semi-literate and non-Roman alphabetic). The remaining samples were selected on the basis of convenience. That is as Creswell (2007, p. 149) notes teachers and students were selected for interview and classroom observation at the ‘convenience’ of the researcher, based on accessibility, availability and willingness to be studied and

participate in this research. It should be noted that the anonymous ESL Teacher Survey (Appendix 1) targeted 36 AMEP-ESL teachers from RWZs and the areas that refugees mainly settled in under the Rural and Regional Refugee Settlement policy (DIMIA 2003). The local AMEP provider offered same English program in two different towns enabled the researcher to find the 10 ESL teacher participants for the group two interviews locally. As the ESL teacher Survey was anonymous and teacher interviews did not collect teachers' demographic data however whether these two approaches were overlapped with each other is not known. CSWE pre beginner class that initially registered with 23 students was selected as Focus group three for the classroom observation at local AMEP provider.

4.4.3 Ethical considerations in the study

Once ethics approval was received from the University of Southern Queensland, it was required that the researcher obtain "informed consent" from participants for the initial recruitment for the study. This was sought through provision of a letter that provided details of the study, including contact telephone number and email address of the researcher and the ethics officer. It explained the purpose of the research and an invitation to volunteer in the study as follows. Thirty-six AMEP providers were contacted with an invitation letter and an application with informed consent to request ESL teachers' participation in the anonymous ESL teacher Survey. The documentation is contained in appendices as follows: Cover letter to ESL Teachers and Consent Form (Appendix 6); Cover letter to ESL Teachers and Consent Form for voluntary participation in the research interviews (Appendix 7); Letter to humanitarian refugee learners and consent for voluntary participation in the research interviews (Appendix 4.8); and Letter to seek the institutional approval for access to AMEP classroom observation (Appendix 9). Potential participants were encouraged to contact the researcher if they required any additional information or wanted to discuss any aspect of the study before making a decision about whether or not to participate.

4.4.3 Privacy and confidentiality of participants

Confidentiality is central to this study. The study does not reveal the location where the interviews and classroom observation took place as the privacy right of the research participants was taken into account. In each case the research participants were assured

that they would not be identified and that all their responses would remain confidential, and any reporting would use pseudonyms. All data returned in the survey and interviews were treated as confidential. The completed teacher survey questionnaires contained no information by which participants could be identified beyond a unique code to detect the location of the AMEP provider. It is not known whether any teachers who completed the survey were also interviewees.

Data from hardcopies were transferred into electronic mode and made secure on the researcher's password protected computer, which is the sole custody of the researcher. All handwritten and printed material associated with this research study are stored in a metal filing cabinet, which is locked when not in use. The researcher is the only individual who can have access to the data. After five years, in accordance with research ethical standards, the electronic data will be deleted and printed material shredded. During any interviews, confidentiality is central to participants feeling safe and secure in answering the given questions. This can encourage the willingness of people to respond but particularly there should be an absence of any attempt to influence participation by the researcher. In particular, as the target group for this research is being designated by UNHCR as humanitarian refugees the researcher needs to be aware and sensitive towards their previous life and the potential emotional and psychological impact they may have experienced. Thus, the researcher appreciated the need to be conscious and cautious at each stage of the interviews and flexible to make adjustments to the situation as necessary, guarding against seeking sensitive information. Some of the participants had experienced severe trauma as a result of their experiences in wars, and in refugee camps, and it was not intended to make such participants uncomfortable or to cause them distress. Therefore, the researcher intentionally avoided asking sensitive questions related to any painful memories or triggering their reflection on past trauma. The welfare officer, whose role was to liaise between AMEP and the refugee and humanitarian settlement program in the local area, reviewed all interview questions.

4.4.4 Data Collection

4.4.4.1 Focus Group One - ESL Teacher Survey (Appendix 1)

Once ethics approval was received from the University of Southern Queensland the initial recruitment of participants for the study began. Thirty-six AMEP providers were selected from RWZs in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia to undertake the ESL teacher Survey. Programme coordinators were contacted over the phone and through emails with an invitation, informed consent and information to participate in the anonymous Survey. They were contacted with an invitation together with the research project informed consent information to participate in the anonymous survey, which was in the form of a six point Likert type rating scale, and addressed issues of attitude, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and needs, plus three open-ended questions. The survey rating scale results were analysed descriptively to show the percentage of teachers who selected each choice. The responses to open-ended questions were manually analysed to identify common themes.

Initially, the survey was designed to be sent to potential participants electronically to allow ease of response, however this proved an unsuccessful strategy. Since the researcher received no response by the due date, following a courtesy phone call, friendly email reminders were sent to the key contacts, and a new return deadline was negotiated. This second wave involved providing hardcopies of the survey, with the accompanying documents outlining the nature of the research and informed consent information with pre-paid envelopes to the 36 AMEP providers. They were sent to the AMEP program coordinators with a request to distribute the survey to their ESL teachers and remind them to return them in the envelopes provided by a specific due date. However, many AMEP providers were not interested in participating in the survey. Some coordinators informed the researcher that they were unable to participate in the survey, e.g. distribute the survey packages. A sample e-mail reply is shown in Figure 4.3.

*From: XXXXXXXX[xxxxxxx@deta.qld.gov.au]
Sent: 25 August 2011 14:33
To: Vineetha Hewagodage
Subject: RE: Research help
Hi Vineetha,
Due to limited time and a very busy role, I am unable to spare time to assist you at this time.
Warm regards*

Figure 4.3: Sample AMEP coordinator response to request to distribute survey to teachers

Considering the total of 36 AMEP providers with several teachers at each provider, on the basis of 1:2 ratio it was anticipated that at least 70 surveys would be returned but only 30 surveys were received.

4.4.4.2 Focus Group Two (n=10) - ESL Teacher interviews (Appendix 2)

Kvale (1996, p. 14) notes interviews as “an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, . . . the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, [that] emphasizes the social situatedness of research data.” This is because “the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2000, p. 267). Another strength of interview data, according to Creswell (2007, p.215), is that they “provide useful information and permit participants to describe detailed personal information.” Nevertheless, the open-ended questions allow participants to “best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings” (Creswell, 2007, p. 214).

Focus Group-two participants were 10 practicing language teachers, who taught English as a second language (ESL) to immigrants in AMEP in the researcher’s local area. Prior to the interviews each teacher received a letter and invitation courtesy of the institution, with the informed consent form, to participate in the focus group interview. This letter briefly introduced the research project, the voluntary nature of the request to participate and the confidentiality of their involvement in the study, including the protection of their names and the confidentiality of the data. In all cases of recording and transcribing the interviews, the names of participants and any names mentioned during the interviews were recorded as pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The focus group interview provided a body of data that explored the teachers’ experiences, as a

group, in addressing the specific learning needs of NESB adult refugee learners in the research target group.

4.4.4.3 Focus Group Three – AMEP Classroom Observation

Nunan (1989, p.78.) notes “. . . researchers need to spend time looking at classrooms to enrich understanding of language learning and teaching.” Learning is a complex process. How learners engaged in the learning process can be better done by observing when the learning is taking place in the authentic environment rather than after it has taken place. As a result, description of the observation becomes more valuable and the researcher can better understand the complexities of the learning processes. According to Creswell (2007, p. 211), observation can be described as “the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site.” Classroom observation as a method in this study enabled the researcher to obtain an understanding of the AMEP learning situation and how this target group participated. Soon after the researcher received permission to access the AMEP program, she contacted the teacher of the Preliminary CSWE class to negotiate the schedule for the classroom observations. The researcher explained to the teacher that the purpose of the classroom observation was mainly related to exploring the process of L2 acquisition of the target group of humanitarian refugee learners. The researcher was made very welcome by the AMEP staff who were happy to participate in the research. The classroom teachers offered their assistance and invited the researcher to attend any of their classes at any time. The purpose of the research mainly focused on the Preliminary CSWE class of pre-beginners (Pre –CSWE at ISLPR level 0), where the learners consisted of 13 females and 10 males. The researcher did not need to go to other classes. It was common practice for some local native English speakers to volunteer to assist with the classroom activities in the Preliminary CSWE class, such that the researcher became involved in assisting the class for ten days to be familiar with the classroom environment and interact and create a rapport with the learners. The classroom observation was scheduled for a total of 20 hours, over a period of 5 days, in keeping with the aim to gain insights into teacher/learner interactions, the pedagogical approach, the curriculum content, and to explore the factors that influence L2 literacy acquisition for those learners at pre-beginner level.

The classroom observation chart (Appendix 3), which assisted the researcher to discover how the learners' were involved and engaged in their learning, was developed according to the model of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000; 2008; 2010). SIOP that interacts with CSWE curricula is both an observation instrument and a model that teachers create a stress-free learning environment and use multiple sources, such as physical activities, visual aids, and body language, to teach key vocabulary for concept development (Pu, 2008. p. 254). The researcher as a participant observer carried out her observation by focusing on the themes of teacher/learner interactions, evidence of the pedagogical approach, and curriculum content. The trustworthiness of the observation data was further validated through the researcher taking detailed field notes on teacher/learner interactions, particularly with reference to the process of L2 acquisition in the form of a daily journal.

4.4.4.4 Focus Group Four refugee learners' interviews

There were 23 learners who were willing to be interviewed. However later three learners dropped their attendance to take up employment and personal reasons, therefore Group four (n=20) interviews consisted of twenty NESBs humanitarian refugee learners from the AMEP preliminary class. Most of them were not able to speak or comprehend English; the class teacher assisted with arranging an interpreter, who had been a former African background refugee and a past student of AMEP. His role was in liaison, working between the refugee community and the AMEP, and he had been working as a welfare officer to provide language and cultural support to the AMEP, working with learners from various African countries. He was fluent in multiple languages e.g. Arabic, French, Dinka and English. His friendly approach supported the research agenda. He informed participants about the research, and made it clear that it was voluntary to join the group. He was able to manage the request for consent, ask for their permission to tape record, and explain clearly that the learners were able to leave the group at any time should they wish to do so.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted that concentrated on their perceptions of their English language learning and integration in Australia. Except two participants, all others required translation in Arabic, French and Dinka, as they were not able to

understand the interview questions. Each interview was planned to be completed within 30 minutes, however they took approximately one hour 30 minutes owing to the time consumption for translation and explanations. All the interviews were tape-recorded *using an* Olympus DS-30 digital recorder with the interviewees' permission. The interview questions for this group were designed to gather basic information about their background, family acculturation patterns, obstacles, and their educational expectations, gender issues and empowerment, attitudes toward social participation, the difficulties they experienced in real life situations, mobility in the public domain and general world view, together with the understanding of the Australian citizenship.

4.4.4.5 Focus Group five (n=8) Case studies (Interviews with case study participants)

Interviews for eight Case Study learners were carried out with the support of the Welfare officer. These interviews helped the researcher to understand the unique issues experienced by individuals and make findings more predisposed to theory generation. These eight individual case studies were purposively selected to discover in depth the barriers and success factors and their impact on them with regards to developing English proficiency, becoming socially integrated into Australian society, becoming acculturated and able to understand citizenship and take the test.

4.5 Approach to data analysis

The approach to data analysis needed to address the mixed methods that allowed the collection of the data, including the policy document analyses, the survey, teacher interviews, classroom observations, refugee learner interviews, and refugee learner case studies, to explore the overall impact of the social integration and the ACT as viewed by the research participants. Throughout this procedure, the researcher was able to build up a detailed picture of the nature of the research context, the content of the AMEP, and teachers' experience and pedagogical practices with the target group. Teacher learner interviews helped to gather basic information about the teacher and learners, along with demographic information, self-concept, gender issues and empowerment, attitudes toward social participation, mobility in the public domain and general worldview, together with the target group's understandings of Australian citizenship and the

acculturation process. The teacher survey was in the form of a rating scale, which addressed the issues of attitude, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, issues and needs and included three open-ended questions. Rating scale data were presented descriptively in participant percentage ratings, and the open ended questions explored for common themes. Validation of the emergent themes from the open-ended questions was achieved through sharing and discussing with an independent critical friend. Similarly, the qualitative data derived from the classroom observation schedule and interviews were also analysed for emergent common themes and their frequency calculated, following the scrutiny of the independent critical friend. In addition, the researcher's journal notes taken on the day supported the classroom observation ratings in the various sections. These were written in accord with the structure with respect to the key features of teacher/learner interactions, pedagogical approach, curriculum content and L2 acquisition. The use of an interpreter, who was of the same culture as the participants and was a well-respected member of the community added to the validity and reliability of the interview data. This strategy also helped address the any cultural barriers.

4.5.1 The data analysis process

Fundamentally the data analysis process "... is about an intellectual struggle with an enormous amount of raw data in order to produce a meaningful and trustworthy conclusion" (Bassegy, 1999, p. 83-84). Through the ESL survey, pre-beginner (Pre – CSWE) learner classroom observations, and the interviews with ESL teachers and humanitarian refugee learners the researcher encountered a large quantity of data.

Specifically, the manual qualitative data analysis process was handled and analysed using the Constant Comparative Method (CCM and Content Analysis (CA). The Constant Comparative Method (CCM) involves breaking down the data and coding the data into categories such that "the process of constant comparison stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories" (Lincoln and Cuba, 1985, p. 334-341). For example, the researcher frequently compared new data with previous data to see if there were any discrepancies or similarities so that she could carefully study and identify what may have caused them. In constant comparative analysis, data are transcribed and examined for content and used to categorize and summarise in which coding categories are derived directly and inductively from the raw data. Thus, content analysis may be used in an inductive or deductive way (Lauri & Kyngäs, 2005). In that

the researcher took detailed notes of participants' responses and then categorized them by individual participant followed by a code. Then data were recorded in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, to identify the emerging themes and ideas. In summary stages of data analysis process in this study were, coding the data into the main sections, dividing each section into the sub-sections of the conceptual framework, identifying emerging themes and ideas within each component and seeking to understand the common patterns, their interrelations, and comparing the cases, and connecting it to the broader literature.

4.5.2 Research trustworthiness

Since it is the responsibility of the researcher to build validity into the different components of the research from data collection to analysis and interpretation, as noted earlier the present research design used a mixed methods design (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). This contributed to ensuring there was triangulation of the data and the research findings were able to fully capture the reality of the context under scrutiny. The researcher addressed the trustworthiness of the research through considering: face validity, content validity, internal validity, member checks, and triangulation. While face validity was concerned with the initial impressions of the research instruments' as being appropriate for their purposes, content validity, according to Creswell (2008, p.32) is "established by . . . professionals selecting appropriate content for questions and statements". Therefore, content validity here was concerned with how accurately the questions were sufficiently well formulated to elicit the information sought. The research instruments were tested for content validity by sharing with a small reference group, who had insights into the research context, and which included a culturally appropriate community person that acted as the interpreter. Internal validity was concerned with the comparison of the research findings with the reality in terms of the extent to which the instruments were able to measure what they were supposed to measure. To address internal validity, as recommended by Merriam (2009; 1998) the researcher included time for member checks at each time of data collection, audio-recording interviews, and keeping extensive notes and through the mixed methods approach the researcher was able to incorporate triangulation. These actions with regards to achieving internal validity also contributed to guarding against possible bias on the part of the researcher. Stake (2010, p.123) points out that triangulation is a process of using various perspectives and maintaining replicable data

collection procedures and conclusions. For this research the researcher addressed triangulation by using a combination of data sources so that any lack of corroboration between the findings from, for instance, the student interviews, teacher interviews and teacher survey, and classroom observations would alert the researcher to investigate why. In order to strengthen the validity of the data and findings the researcher collected data through several sources: literature review on ESL pedagogy, government policy documents on Australian citizenship, the Australian citizenship test, Citizenship test results, census data from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and the data collection instruments: ESL Teacher Survey, ESL teacher interviews, interviews with refugee and humanitarian learners and non-learner interviews and ESL classroom observations. Gathering data through one technique can be questionable, biased and weak.

In keeping with Creswell's (2007) advice a process of member checking was used, which involved sharing the findings with the participants, and allowing them to provide comment and feedback to check the interpretations of interviews accurately reflected participants' views. In particular, the researcher took particular care, using an interpreter for learner interviews. Therefore translation was rechecked with the welfare officer who interpreted the interview questions. In this way the researcher was able to detect the plausibility or truthfulness of the data collected. As noted earlier the researcher was also concerned to ensure that she did not bias the data in any way. According to Creswell (2007, p. 59-60) a researcher's bias in any research method or on the subject of the phenomenon being studied could involve a misinterpretation of the data and cause invalid conclusions to be drawn. Therefore, researchers must attempt to minimise individual bias and approach the phenomenon with an open mind. It is acknowledged that all researchers have their own values, beliefs and worldviews, thus potential bias needs to be addressed. The point is that a researcher's collection, analysis and interpretation of data should be as impartial as possible. Sometimes unconsciously "a researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001, pp. 483-484). Therefore, as emphasised by Yin (2009) the researcher needs to be explicit, critical and faithful at different phases of the total process. Being a professional teacher and having had previous research experiences in the field of NESB

immigrants from refugee and humanitarian background, the researcher made every effort to remain as nonjudgmental as possible throughout the whole process. She entered into the ESL classroom with a conscious awareness that she was learning about a specific context so there was a need to be ethical and respectful of the students and the teacher's work and have an observation chart that supported her to observe learner behaviours, procedures, interactions and L2 acquisitions as independently as possible, and report the findings honestly. During the classroom observations, to ensure that professional biases would not influence the class teachers' methodology or the participants' learning process the researcher did not make any suggestions, assumptions or references to pedagogy or learning contexts. While study was in progress the researcher was aware of that her educational background as mixed Srilankan and Australian, and her personal experience as an ESL migrant from a developing country to a developed country. She had interrogated and raised her own awareness of her view of the world through both her education in Srilanka and Australia and discussions with interested others and critical friend throughout the research process. In addition, in order to control her biases, she developed a reflexive journal and made regular entries during the research process to record her methodological decisions and the reasons for them, the logistics of the study, and reflection upon what emerged in terms of her own values and experiences, reactions, and thoughts, as well as any emerging awareness of biases and assumptions.

In addition to the above-mentioned strategies the utility criterion is considered. According to Lynch (1996, p.63) "utility refers to the degree of usefulness the . . . findings have for administrators, managers and other stakeholders." He emphasises that the utility criterion asks whether the outcomes of the research are able to generate proper and ample information and so be deemed valid in this way. These studies was designed to raise the level of discussion regarding the provisions for this target group of refugees and provide insights into the challenges they and AMEP face in providing for their social integration. The findings will provide advice for government policy and ESL teaching practice in the addressing of NESB humanitarian refugee learners who have limited literacy in L1 and L2, and particularly with regard to revealing their experiences in needing to become Australian citizens.

4.5.3 Limitations of the study

This research problem highlighted the need to study the barriers faced by adult NESB humanitarian refugees with literacy difficulties in both their L1 and L2 and who, in keeping with settlement policies, were living in a regional area. Although the research focuses on only one regional context with regards to the case study the sample of thirty AMEP-ESL teachers was relatively small this is countered to some extent by them being distributed across the refugee welcome zones in four states of Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. However, this ESL teacher sample cannot be said to represent the larger population of ESL teachers working in AMEPs across Australia. In addition, a case study approach was taken to study the situation of African adult NESB humanitarian refugees since it was not possible to select a random sample. In spite of this the study does provide an in depth picture of one particular regional context for this target group, and in this respect provides important insights into the impact of policy and the situation for these low L1 and L2 literacy learners. From a humanitarian perspective this research highlights their case and provides a basis for changes to policy and practice.

In addition, it needs to be noted that an interpreter was used for the learner interviews and that while very precautions was taken to ensure reliability and validity of the data and its interpretation, it cannot be denied that the language and cultural barriers was also a factor that could provide limitations to the study. For instance, the familiarity between the humanitarian refugee group and the translator (welfare officer of the interviewees' culture) could have been an advantage or disadvantage but the researcher did not have any direct means of knowing. The male translator, who was an employee of the local refugee settlement program, was a conduit for the interview data gathered from the target group. The knowledge the translator had about the participants and vice-versa may have had an influence, as it is possible the interviewees may have seen him as an authority figure. Similarly, it is not clear whether being a male translator, influenced female participants on the scope and nature of their responses. However, the translator was constantly reminded by the researcher of the importance of encouraging the target group to speak freely, without bias, and the ethical issues of respecting their potential traumatic background when telling about their journeys.

Also the limitations of this research include the length of the study as it did not allow for a deep analysis of family structure of the humanitarian participants to observe all aspects of their life challenges related to literacy development and social integration. Future researchers should spend more time understanding the family structure of the population, and L1 literacy development should be examined in greater detail with a larger sample size, perhaps with a sample varying in immigration status, age, marital status, education, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Through the combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, this research built rigour into the design. Given the small number of participants and the natural individualistic biases of participants' own experiences it is impossible to claim that the findings of this study reflect the realities of all refugee learners or of all ESL professionals working with them. Also given the small number of AMEP providers for statistical collection by the ESL survey, the conclusions drawn in the dissertation are by no means meticulous and every attempt has been made to research assumptions further within the academic literature and in conjunction with the assumptions experiences, opinions and worldview of the participants in the study. Thus, there is no guarantee the findings and conclusions of this study are transferable to another context or can be generalised to the whole population in the refugee and humanitarian context., although the research clearly highlights the serious challenges faced by this target group and those who are trying to develop their English literacy. Thus, the findings of this study do provide valuable insights into what considerations policy makers, AMEP providers and ESL teachers need to address when designing and implementing an appropriate educational environment for adult NESB refugee learners with limited or no print literacy skills in L1 and L2, to meet their linguistic and literacy needs, social integration, acculturation and citizenship aspirations.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the research problem and research questions and discussed the approach to the research design, and justified the research paradigm that underpins the study. It outlined the relationship of the research data collection to the conceptual framework and the way the data to be collected contributes to the answering the research questions. It explains and justifies the choice of mixed methods research for

the study in its exploration of how Adult NESB refugees with limited or no literacy skills in L1 and L2 socially integrate and acculturate in to Australian society within the context of acquiring the English language and needing to obtain Australian citizenship in a timely manner. It also described the research procedures, the participants and approach to sampling, the data collection tools, their development, and analysis methods, and how issues of research trustworthiness and credibility were dealt with and finally it addressed the limitation of the study. Next chapter describes the results of the study.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS OF TEACHER SURVEY, INTERVIEWS AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the research, which investigated the acculturation, integration and citizenship experiences of African adult, former refugee and humanitarian entrants to Australia, who had limited or no print literacy skills in L1 and no literacy skills in L2. It presents the results of a survey of 30 ESL teachers and 10 follow up interviews; the analysis of classroom observations conducted in AMEP pre-beginner classes; interviews with 20 refugee learners from these classes and lastly, the results of case studies of eight refugee learners.

5.2 Findings from Teacher Survey

The anonymous ESL Teacher Survey (see Appendix 1) targeted AMEP-ESL teachers from RWZs and the areas that refugees mainly settled in under the Rural and Regional Refugee Settlement policy developed by DIMIA in 2003 (DIMIA 2003). There are 87 local Government areas around the country (RCOA, 2013). This survey targeted the AMEP providers located in the areas by following the refugee and humanitarian settlement population index (ABS census, 2010; DIMA, 2003; RCOA, 2013). The survey was sent to a total 36 AMEP providers (five per provider, totalling 180 surveys) across four states as the basis of distribution. This relied on their cooperation and also that of their AMEP coordinators. Thus, the exact number of surveys distributed to individual ESL teachers is not known but it was returned by 30 teachers overall. Table 5.1 shows the breakdown of the number of teachers who completed the survey by state. The survey was divided into the following five parts, which are used to form the structure of reporting of the results: (A) Demographic information; (B) AMEP; (C) Teacher professional development; (D) Gaps and challenges in delivering ESL literacy; (E) Computer access; and (F) Citizenship Education.

Table 5.1: ESL Teacher survey participation by state

State	Number of providers targeted	Number of ESL teacher responses	Proportion of responding units
Qld	5	11	4/5
Victoria	11	7	3/11
NSW	15	9	5/15
WA	5	3	1/5
Total	36	30	13/36

5.2.1 Participant demographic information

Section A of the survey gathered teacher demographic information specifically, gender, age range, ethnicity, first language, including his or her professional qualifications, previous teaching experience, as illustrated in Table 5.2. It indicates that 90% (27) of ESL teachers were female and 10% (3 of 30) were male. They originally came from Australia, England and New Zealand. The majority 86.6% (26 of 30) were in the age range 31-45 years and were born in Australia. All teachers reported English as their first language and ethnicity as Caucasian.

Table 5.2 ESL Teachers' demographic information N=30

Gender	Country of birth	Age group*	Duration in Australia
Male	3	Australia	24 26-30yrs
Female	27	United Kingdom	5 31-45yrs
		New Zealand	1 46-55yrs
			26 4-8 yrs
			4

*The survey included the full range of applicable age bands.

5.2.1.1 Professional qualifications

Question 9 (Section A) of the survey asked the teachers to identify their ESL professional qualifications. While 20% (6) did not respond, the remainder all had acquired a qualification in TESOL, but there were differences in the length of study and level of qualification. Table 5.3 reveals that the only four teachers (13.3%) held postgraduate qualifications in TESOL/ESL (one held a Master of TESOL). The

remainder had completed shorter courses at the Graduate Certificate level 13.3% (4 of 30), the Diploma level 13.3 % (4 of 30) and Certificate level, 20% (6 of 30). In contrast to holding a specific TESOL/TEFL qualification, 10% participants (3 of 30) reported they held ‘other’ professional qualifications.

Table 5.3: AMEP ESL teachers’ professional qualifications

Professional qualifications	N =30	Percentage
Post Graduate Certificate/Masters in ESL	4	13.3
Diploma in TESOL/TEFL	4	13.3
Graduate Certificate in ESL	6	20
Certificate in TESOL	7	23.3
Other	3	10
No response	6	20

5.2.1.2 ESL teachers’ background teaching experience

Results from Question 10, Section A of the survey are shown in Table 5. 4. It shows that the ESL teachers in this study came from a wide range of teaching backgrounds but also included two who rated their previous teaching experience as ‘not applicable’. However, 43.3% respondents (13) reported they were experienced in teaching in the AMEP. While 10% of teachers (3 of 30) had been teaching in the primary school context, 6.6% of the teachers (2 of 30) reported they had prior experience teaching in secondary schools. Also 13.3% (4 of 30) of the teachers had previously been engaged in the adult-literacy teaching context. They had completed a course in Adult Literacy and Numeracy, which is an accredited short course originally developed in 1997 to respond to a need expressed community groups in Australia. They saw a nationally accredited training product for the delivery of literacy and/or numeracy training as very necessary. This course is designed to meet the needs of the general community in terms of those who are marginalised by low-level competence in language (oral skills), literacy (reading and writing skills) and numeracy (skills with numbers). The course was developed and is owned by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (see DEED, 2009). In addition 20% of the teachers (6 of 30) reported they had been working in voluntary positions.

Table 5.4 AMEP ESL teachers' teaching contexts

Teaching sector/program	N=30	%
AMEP	13	43.3%
Secondary	2	6.6%
Primary	3	10%
Adult literacy	4	13.3%
Voluntary	6	20%
Not applicable	2	6.6%

5.2.2 The AMEP

In Section B of the survey the teachers reported on the length of time they had been teaching in AMEP, which levels of the CSWE they had taught and whether they had refugee background learners in their classes. They were also asked to provide their opinion of the language and other skills of learners at the Preliminary CSWE level using a rating of one to five. The results found that all the ESL teachers in the study had humanitarian learners in their classes. Table 5. 5 shows that at least 80% (24 of 30) of the teachers had experience teaching English as a second language; the remaining 20% did not complete this question. However, approximately half of those who responded (13) had only three years or less experience teaching ESL, with a third (8 of 24) reporting 4-6 years experience and two teachers 7-10 years experience and the remaining teacher 11 to 15 years experience.

Table 5.5 Years of experience with ESL learners

3 years or less	13	43.3%
4 to 6 years	8	26.6%
7 to 10 years	2	6.6%

11 to 15 years	1	3.3%
No response	6	20%

5.2.2.1 ESL teachers' teaching experience with AMEP

The teachers were asked to respond to a question about their teaching experience working with the AMEP and whether they were involved in providing citizenship education. These results are reported in Table 5.6. It was found that half of the teachers had experience teaching CSWE Certificate one or CSWE Certificate two and apart from three teachers with experience teaching CSWE Certificate three the remaining 40% (12) reported teaching at CSWE Preliminary level, the lowest level of English. None of the teachers taught the CSWE Certificate 4 level and none of them had been involved in teaching Citizenship Education.

Table 5.6 Teaching experience with AMEP

Teaching area	N =30	Percentage
Preliminary CSWE	12	40%
Certificate 1 CSWE	8	26.6%
Certificate 2 CSWE	7	23.3%
Certificate 3 CSWE	3	10%
Certificate 4 CSWE	0	0%
Citizenship Education	0	0%

5.2.2.2 Teachers' ratings of preliminary CSWE learners' skills

Last question of the Section B was related to teachers' views on the English language skills of the humanitarian learners they taught. They responded to nine items for which they were asked: "With your experience in general how would you rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the language and other skills of learners at Preliminary CSWE level. The ratings were 1 meaning 'poor'; 2 meaning 'basic'; 3 'satisfactory'; 4 'good' and 5 'very good'. The results are displayed in Table 5.7. The items are ordered to show where the teachers viewed students' skills as poorest to not so poor. Overall the Table 5.7 shows that the teachers saw these preliminary CSWE learners as having significant needs in terms of all of the skills listed, although there is some evidence of some teachers having

students with good to satisfactory skills in a small number of areas. Firstly, these ratings show that all of the teachers viewed preliminary CSWE learners as having poor *computer skills*. In addition, these ratings show that almost all the teachers identified these learners as having *poor skills in writing, listening and reading*, as well as the *ability to interact with native speakers*. Coupled with this is the view of almost all teachers (28) that these students have poor *cooperative skills*.

Teachers were more positive about the students *speaking and numeracy skills* although a majority of teachers still viewed these skills as poor (76.6%; 23 and 66.6%; 20, respectively). However, teachers' ratings of the students' *ability to cope in the classroom* showed only just over half rating this as poor compared with 20% (6) rating this as 'basic' and 23.3% (7) satisfactory.

Table 5.7 Teacher ratings of preliminary CSWE refugee learner's skills

Learners' skills	1	2	3	4	5
(g) Computer skills	100 (30)				
(b) Writing skills in English	96.6 (29)	3.3 (1)			
(d) Listening skills in English	93.3 (28)	6.6 (2)			
(i) Ability to interact with native speakers	93.3 (28)		6.6 (2)		
(h) Cooperative skills	93.3 (28)	6.6 (2)			
(a) Reading skills in English	90 (27)	10 (3)			
(c) Speaking skills in English	76.6 (23)	20 (6)	3.3 (1)		
(e) Numeracy skills	66.6 (20)	23.3 (7)	10 (3)		
(f) Ability to cope in the classroom	56.6 (17)	20 (6)	23.3 (7)		

5.2.3 ESL teachers and professional development

Section C of the Survey was designed to focus on teachers' professional development from two perspectives. The first related to gathering data on teachers' recent involvement in professional development and their knowledge of the Citizenship

Support Grants Programme (CSGP) introduced by DIAC in 2007. For example, as described in Chapter two, Woolcott (2008) introduced an ‘Assisted Test’ and ‘Course based test’ to applicants with English literacy difficulties and then the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship signed for approval of the Determination, under section 23A, of the Australian Citizenship Act, 2007, on March 01, 2012, under the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) (see Appendix 10). This should include a Citizenship Test kit and tutorial, an explanation of some important parts of the Citizenship Test, advice on how the test works, basic computer skills training for the test, and other services aimed at assisting migrants with the test through AMEP (DIAC, 2012).

The second investigated whether the ESL teachers were up-to-date with their field in terms of if they had been provided with requisite knowledge and skills delivery for the ESL instruction required for preliminary adult learners of this target group. In terms of professional development, Table 5.8 highlights how the teachers in this survey needed to develop greater knowledge about refugee issues in general and implementation of Citizenship Education related to ACT, in particular. There were five questions that each asked about the teachers’ professional development experience during ‘the last 12 months’. As shown in Table 5.8, in the last 12 months only 10% of teachers (3 of 30) had specific training or support for the teaching of refugee learners, and only 20% of teachers (6 of 30) had attended in-service training or workshops related to ESL teaching of refugee learners. None of the teachers had attended any in-service training or workshops related to the Citizenship Education contents of the AMEP curriculum. Also none of the teachers received any materials or resources neither related to Citizenship Education content nor for their involvement in teaching any lessons related Citizenship Education content in AMEP curriculum.

Table 5.8: ESL teachers’ uptake of professional development

Questions (N=30)	Yes	No
1. Have you had specific training or support to teach the refugee learners?	10	90
2. In the last 12 months have you attended any in-service training or workshops related to ESL teaching of refugee learners?	20	80
3. In the last 12 months have you attended any in-service training or workshops related to the Citizenship Education contents of the AMEP		100

curriculum?	
4. In the last 12 months have you taught any lessons related to the recently introduced Citizenship Education content of the AMEP curriculum?	100
5. In the last 12 months have you received any materials or resources related to the Citizenship Education content of the AMEP curriculum? If Yes briefly write down the topics.	100

5.2.4 Gaps and challenges

Section D in the survey was designed to gather data on ESL teachers' perceived gaps and challenges in delivering ESL literacy. The teachers were asked to provide their perceptions of gaps in the delivery of ESL literacy strategies and services and to what extent eight provisions were working well for refugee background learners. They responded to a five point Likert scale where the coding of 1 meant 'Not working at all'; 2 – 'Needs substantial improvement'; 3 – 'Working very well'; 4 – 'Extremely successful'; N – 'Not offered as a service or strategy'. The results are shown in Table 5.9 and reported in the following sections below. As shown in Table 5.9, all the ESL teachers rated three areas as 'Not offered as a service or strategy'. These were: (b) Provision of specialist support for refugee learners with low literacy skills; (e) Provision of learning support for taking the Citizenship test and (h) Provision of a wide range of resources to support refugees' understanding of Australian citizenship education.

With regards to item (f) that focused on whether refugee learners were engaging with real-life written texts the teachers' ratings showed that the majority, 88.6% (26) believed this area needed substantial improvement. This item highlighted 'engaging refugee learners in experiences where they use real-life written texts involving news, shopping and daily financial and communicative transactions. The remaining four teachers perceived this pedagogical focus was 'not working at all'.

Item (d), which referred to provision of bilingual support for refugee learners with little or no formal education, the majority of teachers (83.3%; 25) rated this as 'Not offered as a service or strategy'. However, the remainder (5 teachers) viewed this as 'extremely successful, thus implying substantial variation in the offering of services of this nature.

The teachers' ratings on item (c) 'provision of individualised ESL programs that cater for specific needs' showed variation in views across the group of ESL teachers. Twenty percent of teachers (6 of 30) identified that the provision of individualised ESL

programs successfully accommodates learner needs, while 13.3% (4 of 30) believed that individualised ESL programs were working well. However, 23.3% of teachers (7 of 30) claimed that these programs need substantial improvement and 43.3% of teachers (13 of 30) reported that individualised programs were not offered as a service.

Table 5.9: Teachers perceived gaps in delivering of ESL literacy

To what extent to do you see the following working in the delivery of ESL literacy?	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Provision of specialist support for refugee learners with low literacy skills.					100 (30)
(e) Provision of learning support for taking the Citizenship test.					100 (30)
(h) Provision of a wide range of resources to support refugees' understanding of Australian citizenship education.					100 (30)
(d) Provision of bilingual support for refugee learners with little or no formal education.				16.6 (5)	83.3 (25)
(c) Provision of individualised ESL programs that cater for specific needs.		23.3 (7)	13.3 (4)	20 (6)	43.3 (13)
(a) Provision of different classes and sessions to cater for different levels of language skills.		30 (9)			70 (21)
(g) Provision of a wide range of resources to support refugees' understanding of Australian culture.		36.6 (11)	30 (9)	33.3(10)	
(f) Engaging refugee learners in experiences where they use real-life written texts involving news, shopping and daily financial and communicative transactions.	13.3 (4)	86.6 (26)			

When asked about (g), provision of a wide range of resources to support refugees' understanding of Australian culture 36% of teachers' (11 of 30) were of the view that this provision requires substantial improvement but almost as many (30%; 6) were of the opinion that this provision was working well. This area also may vary in its provision across the country since the remaining third of the teacher group (10) teachers reported such a provision was 'working extremely successfully'.

5.2.5 Strategies to address gaps and challenges in the programme

In this part of the survey (Section D) the teachers were also provided with the opportunity to give their opinion on the gaps and challenges they encounter with adult refugee learners and strategies and services that they believed are working well (Item j). They were asked to make a list. Twenty of the thirty teachers completed this item. Their

responses were then categorised and frequency counts compiled. Table 5.10 clarifies the content of their responses and number of teachers who responded beside it.

Table 5.10: Teacher perceptions of the challenges and Gaps they experience at AMEP (N=20)

Gaps and challenges	<i>f</i>	Strategies	<i>f</i>
510 hours of English study is insufficient	7	Require additional or continuous hours	7
Low literacy in L1 is a challenge	7	Require L1 support to develop basic skills	7
Irregular attendance	5		
Having low-literate learners in a class with literate learners (mixed level classes)	5	Separate classes for low-literate learners are required	5
Seeking to be employed becomes important rather than learning English	1	Centrelink should provide assistance until they learn the language	1
Data on learner profile and on their language proficiency are not available	1	Learner profile bus be provided to teachers	1
Poor concentration and short term memory interferences	1	Policy changes and re design of curriculum	1
Curriculum is not focused on improving meta cognitive skills	1		
Difficulty in retaining and recalling information	1		
Poor personal health care	1	Programme to address Australian standard of living	1
No concentration or motivation to learn	1		
Sleeps in the classroom	1		
Inability to express their ideas	1		
Learners pretend that they understand the instruction	1		

Sixty-six point six percent (20 of 30) of teachers responded to this item they contributed less when asked to provide strategies to address the challenges they encounter in the classroom. The most cited gaps and challenges referred to the standard free 510 hours of English study as being insufficient (7 of 20), the challenge of the refugee students L1 literacy levels being low (7 of 20), the students' irregular attendance (5 of 20) and the problems associated with teaching low-literate learners in a class with literate learners (mixed level classes) (5 out of 20). Individual responses also indicate the multiple challenges experienced by teachers. The second opened response opportunity asked the teachers to 'list strategies and services that they believed should be introduced

to enhance refugee students' timely acquisition of English and/or Citizenship knowledge (item h). This was designed for the teachers to provide advice on the basis of their teaching experience of such refugee learners, and with particular regard to the acquisition of English and/or Citizenship knowledge. As seen in the Table 5.11 numbers beside individual suggestions indicate the number of times the same or similar suggestion was repeated.

Table 5.11 Suggestion to improve refugee learners' literacy skills and citizenship knowledge

Suggestions and strategies	<i>f</i>
a. First language literacy support for low literate learner.	9
b. L1 and L2 (bilingual) parallel classes.	9
c. Separate classes for L1 low literate learners.	8
d. Information about living in Australia.	8
e. More childcare facilities.	8
f. Community engagement.	8
g. Trained volunteers for individual learning support.	6
h. Individualised teaching.	6
i. Networking with other organisations.	1
j. Using activities that involve citizenship education.	1
k. Informal teaching approach to learner in the outside of the college.	1
l. Select learners to AMEP on the basis of literacy skills in L1.	1
m. AMEP requires an integrated policy framework.	1
n. Additional resources (books, reading materials) for students.	1
o. Volunteers from same ethnic backgrounds to assist learners.	1
p. Providing compulsory English language classes in some of the refugee camps around the world.	1
q. Case officer to negotiate and mediate social, cultural and psychological barriers.	1
r. Creation of a mentorship program involving families from the community.	1
s. Access to teachers on the basis of 1 teacher for 5 learners.	1
t. Total immersion program.	1
u. Adult community education to takeover literacy issues.	1

The responses suggested a clear preference among teachers to assist with learners' timely acquisition of English and citizenship knowledge in the context of them being in a new country. First language literacy support for low literate learners was suggested nine times. In order to show the importance of having first language (L1) literacy learning and English language (L2) parallel classes for low literate learners also was raised nine times. The teachers' indications of the disadvantages that occur being in a mixed level classes received eight responses, clearly suggests separate classes for L1

low literate learners (or pre-literate as they are in this study). Eight responses suggested providing information about living in Australia, which appeared to address timely acquisition of citizenship knowledge. The relationship between easy access to the learning context and availability of childcare facilities appeared next receiving eight responses to address immediate language and settlement needs of many low literate refugee female learners. Six teachers (6 of 30 responses) thought that community engagement could be used to help improve the approach to their learners in ensuring they received practical experience in the local Australian society. Six teachers also recognised the dedicated service offered by volunteers in the AMEP context and suggested to engage trained volunteers for individual learning support. Similarly, six teachers suggested individualised teaching would be a better teaching method for their learners rather than whole class instruction. Other individual responses suggested that AMEP should be networking with other organisations, using activities that involve citizenship education, using an informal teaching approach, selecting learners on the basis of L1 literacy skills and the AMEP to have an integrated policy framework.

5.2.5 Computer access

Section E of the survey explored the extent to which the teachers were working with computers with students, since it is typically expected that today's learners will have good reading skills, access to computers, understand computer related terms, handle keyboard activities, and be able to navigate the Internet. And as Murray (2005, abstract) points technology can be empowering for second language literacy but “ interactive applications such as e-mail, chat, and web-based programs, require learners to acquire computer literacies”. To integrate successfully in Australia not only do refugees need basic literacy, numeracy, and language skills but they also required computer literacy to enhance their employability and participation in daily life. Application of digital technologies and E literacy change lives rapidly and basic literacy skills are a necessary requirement for accessing technology and using it fully (Warschauer, 2003, p. 109). More pertinently to the refugees in this research, as discussed in Chapter 2, they need to be prepared for the ACT, which is a computer generated test with multiple choice questions. Low literate refugee learners therefore should be able to develop their computer skills together with learning English literacy if they are going to become citizens of Australia and pass the test.

Question one in Section E of the survey was intended to find out how frequently students were involved with eight different associated computer literacy activities. First the teachers were asked if their students had access to computers and if so to complete the ratings of their usage. Three-quarters of the teachers' responses 76.6 % (23) showed that their students as learners did not have access to computers. The remaining teachers, (7), claimed that their students did have access to computers so it was this group whose frequency ratings are shown in Table 5.12. A rating of 1 meant that the teachers never involved their students in the activity; a rating of 2 'rarely'; a rating of 3 'sometimes'; a rating of 4 'often' and 5 'always'.

Ratings as in Table 5.12 indicate that although the teachers reported their students had access to computers the frequency that they were involved in using them in their AMEP class was very limited. Two of the seven teachers noted that their learners only accessed computers in a lab, while the remaining five indicated their students were confined to access through the lab sometimes. It is therefore not surprising that these seven teachers' ratings for the remaining items were mainly conveying that their students were 'never' using computers e.g. c, d, f, g and h in the Table 5.12. Only with regard to (b) practising keyboarding and (e) composing written texts in Microsoft word did all seven teachers indicate the students were doing this 'rarely'.

Table 5.12 ESL teachers' ratings of humanitarian and refugees access to computers (N=7)

Please rate how often students are involved in computer-related activities	1	2	3	4	5
(a) Access computers only at the computer lab	6.6*		16.6		
	(2)		(5)		
(b) Practise keyboarding.		23.3			
		(7)			
(e) Compose written texts in Microsoft word.		23.3			
		(7)			
(c) Learn to search the Internet.	23.3				
	(7)				
(d) Learn to send and receive e-mails.	23.3				
	(7)				
(f) Complete computer-assisted multiple choice activities.	23.3				
	(7)				
(g) Complete language learning activities on the computer.	23.3				
	(7)				
(h) Interact via e-mail.	23.3				
	(7)				

Percentages here are reported against the whole sample of teachers N=30.

For section E, teachers were also asked “Are you aware of any of your students from refugee background having computers at home?” (Question 2), “Do you know if any of your students from refugee backgrounds have access to the Internet from home?” (Question 3) and “Do you contact students from refugee background via email?” (Question 4). All of the teachers (100%; 30) responded ‘no’ to all three questions raising the issue of computer literacy as a vital one in the context of current education and life demands which depend on digital communication technologies and Internet services.

5.1.6 Citizenship education

This section included 10 questions to find out whether the introduced citizenship course regarding the amended ACT 2007 Bill 2007 had been implemented and whether LESSLA learners were benefitting from the program. However, since all thirty teachers indicated that the new citizenship course had not yet begun questions 2, 3, 4 and 5, became not applicable. Section F of the survey asked teachers two questions as follows: Given the complex nature of the delivery of citizenship education in the AMEP context: (1) to what extent has the new Citizenship curriculum been implemented in your centre?” and (2) “To what extent has the Citizenship education begun to have an impact on your students’ learning?” With question one the teachers were asked to indicate their

response by choosing ‘largely’, ‘just begun’, ‘not yet begun’. With question two they had to select one of four responses:

- The majority of refugee learners are now more engaged by the new Citizenship course.
 - Few learners are now engaged by the Citizenship course.
 - They have shown no interest to learn yet.
 - Other, please specify
-

All thirty teachers indicated that the new Citizenship course had not yet begun in their place of work. This response then made question two not applicable since there could not be any impact at the time of the research. None of the teachers in the survey made any comment about this.

Section F, question 6 asked the teachers to rate in general how well informed they thought immigrant and refugee learners were about the citizenship education system in Australia. Their rating on a scale of ‘poorly informed’, ‘adequately informed’ or ‘very well informed’ showed the majority of the teachers (93.3 %; 28) they were poorly informed while 6.6% (2 of 30) of teachers did not make comments on this question.

Section F, question 7, was a multiple question that asked teachers; “When you do think is the best time to educate them [refugee learners] about the citizenship in Australia”? They selected one of answers of (a) Before arriving in Australia, (b) On initial arrival in Australia, (c) When a learner enrolls in the Adult migrant English program and a choice of “Other, please specify.....”

Almost a quarter of the teachers (7) believed the best time to educate immigrant and refugee learners was prior to their arrival to Australia (although that is not always possible, particularly with humanitarian refugees). However, the majority (60%; 18) thought the best time to educate about the citizenship in Australia was on initial arrival. The remaining teachers (5) selected when the learner arrived in the AMEP. No teacher offered any other ideas about the timing of citizenship education.

In Section F, question 8 asked teachers; “Do you find that generally refugee learners will have an accurate understanding of citizenship issues within the Adult Migrant English Program? They selected ‘Yes’ or ‘No and were asked to list the three most important reasons for their choice. The majority (70%; 21) selected no so believing that refugee learners did not have an accurate understanding of citizenship issues within the Adult Migrant English Program. The remainder were of the opinion that their refugee learners would have an accurate understanding of citizenship issues when learning in the AMEP. The reasons for their choice are divided into two categories such as those who stated that refugee learners would have an accurate understanding of citizenship issue (Table 5.13) and those who believed they would not in Table 5.14. The numbers beside individual comments indicate the number of times the same or similar reason was given.

As shown in Table 5.13, 30% of the teachers (9) were more positive about refugee learners being able to understand citizenship issues within the AMEP than the rest of 70% (21). To justify their positivity four teachers pointed out that they were taught English language skills, and information about Australian society, customs and culture needed for day-to-day situations. Secondly, it was noted that all refugee learners do not have language problems (3 times). They would have looked at the literacy level of refugee learners in general and stated compressively that some are well educated in L1 and L2 and aware of citizenship issues. Two teachers would have compared the difference between the previous status of refugee learners and the standard of living in Australia and then believed that the ‘difference’ would lift the learners’ desire to understand social and political culture in Australia so they would learn citizenship issues. One response believed that refugee learners would understand specific benefits of being a citizen once they were living in Australia so would learn Australian citizenship.

As indicated in Table 5.14, the group of teachers (21) who thought refugee learners would have no accurate understanding of citizenship issues within the AMEP considered multiple factors that may impact on understanding citizenship issues. Five responses (5) argued that AMEP is not facilitated with the contents of Citizenship education. This finding is consistent with the literature cited in Chapter two. “Let’s Participate: A Course in Australian Citizenship” that has been operated by AMEP was

abolished after the introduction of the Australian Citizenship Test in 2007 as noted by the DIAC annual report 2007-2008. The same number of responses (5) took the position that AMEP was not required to facilitate Citizenship education.

Table 5.13: Refugee learners will have an accurate understanding of citizenship issues within the AMEP (n=9)

Refugee learners will have an accurate understanding of citizenship issues within the AMEP because . . .	<i>f</i>
Learners are taught English language skills, about Australian society, customs and culture needed for day-to-day situations.	4
Not all refugee learners have language problems. Some are well educated in L1 and L2 and aware with citizenship issues.	3
They have a desire to understand social and political culture in the host country.	2
Desire to understand social and political culture in the host country	2
They understand the specific benefits of Australian citizenship.	1

Table 5.14 Refugee learners will have no accurate understanding of citizenship issues within the AMEP (n=21)

Refugee learners will not have an accurate understanding of citizenship issues within the AMEP because . . .	<i>f</i>
AMEP is not facilitated with the contents of Citizenship education	5
AMEP is not required to facilitate citizenship education.	5
Understanding of citizenship issues requires high levels of proficiency in English.	4
Most refugee learners have very limited English language proficiency skills to understand the citizenship issues.	4
AMEP has a strong focus on preparing for job readiness to enable learner to enter workforce rather than teaching Citizenship related contents.	3
AMEP value labour market participation and this trend exclude the value of citizenship education.	3
Citizenship contents are not included in the curriculum.	3
Refugee learners are not focused on Citizenship education.	1

However, four responses reported most refugee learners have very limited English language proficiency skills to understand the citizenship issues and were of the opinion that gaining an understanding of citizenship issues require high levels of proficiency in English. Three responses raised the issue of the goal of the new AMEP business model introduced in 2011 (DIAC, Annual report 2010-2011) that values labour market participation so this trend is believed by these teachers to exclude the value of Citizenship education. Two responses (2) noted that Citizenship contents were not included in the AMEP curriculum. Only one response indicated that refugee learners

were not focused on citizenship education most probably because of their literacy difficulties or initial settlement issues.

Section F, question 9 explored teachers views on the importance of refugee and humanitarian background learners having an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values when they learn in AMEP: “Do you find that generally refugee learners from humanitarian background acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values when they learn at Adult Migrant English Program?” After selecting ‘yes’ or ‘no’ they were asked to give reasons for their choice. The majority of teachers, 86.6% (26) reported refugee learners do not acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values in AMEP. Only four teachers (13%) were of the opinion that their learners acquired an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values when they learn in the Adult Migrant English Program. Table 5.15 show the reasons provided by teachers who believed their learners do not acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values in the AMEP classroom and Table 5.16 shows responses of teachers who believed their learners acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values at AMEP. As in Table 5.15, eleven responses indicated most refugee learners have great difficulty in following classroom instruction therefore they will not be able to acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values in the AMEP classroom. Ten responses indicated Australian cultural issues and values require participation in Australian community to learn them. Four responses (4) noted most adult refugee learners often live with their own culture and customs so it is difficult for them to learn new skills to navigate socio-cultural issues therefore it may take years to understand the Australian culture and values for refugee learners who come from very different cultural contexts. Only two teachers noted that AMEP does not teach learners from the dominant culture but only teaches learners from multicultural backgrounds so they pointed out that they need to learn the dominant language to be able to gain an accurate understanding of the dominant Australian cultural issues and values. Individual responses received for this question also raised the issue that AMEP cannot fulfil all the requirements within the given timeframe to educate adult humanitarian and refugee learners, or to foster Australian culture and values since learners need be exposed to the dominant culture. They noted that understanding Australian cultural issues and values depended on the learner

participating within the dominant culture but most learners appreciate and socialise within their own culture because of language issues and therefore are not encouraged or do not aspire to embrace Australian culture and values.

Table 5.15 Refugee learners will have no accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values within the AMEP (n=21)

	<i>f</i>
Most refugee learners have great difficulty in following classroom instruction.	11
To Australian cultural issues and values requires participation in Australian community.	10
Most adult refugee learners often live with their own culture and customs it is difficult for them to learn new skills to navigate socio-cultural issues.	4
It may take years to understand an accurate level of Australian culture and values.	4
AMEP do not teach learners from dominant culture rather teach learners from multicultural backgrounds those who need to learn the dominant language.	2
AMEP cannot fulfil all the requirements within the given time to educate them.	1
To foster Australian culture and values learners need be exposed to the dominant culture.	1
Acquisition of Australian cultural issues and values depend on the learner participation with the dominant culture.	1
Most learners appreciate their own culture therefore no specific desire to embrace Australian culture and values.	1

However as in Table 5.16, a small number of teachers (4) believed that refugee learners acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values when they learn in AMEP. The reasons given were that the teaching contents involve cultural issues and values, and AMEP focused on employment pathways guided by Centrelink and involved lessons that described Australian culture and values that refugee learners needed for their initial participation in Australian society. Two teachers were also of the opinion that AMEP provided culturally appropriate lessons.

Table 5.16: Teachers who believe that their learners acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values when they learn at AMEP.

	<i>f</i>
Teaching contents involve cultural issues and values.	4
AMEP focuses on employment pathways guided by the Centrelink and involve lessons that describe Australian culture and values needed for refugee learner for initial participation in Australian society.	4
We (AMEP) provide culturally appropriate lessons.	2

The final question of the survey was opened to teachers to provide their recommendations to better educate refugee learners with limited literacy in their first language. Almost a third of the teachers (9) did not respond to this question but based on the remaining teachers' responses (70%; 21) most made at least three recommendations and some were limited to one or two. Some respondents made similar recommendations. Those made more than once are presented in Table 5.17 and those raised once are presented in Table 5.18.

Table 5.17: Set 1 AMEP ESL teachers' recommendations to better support refugee learners (n=21)

<i>Recommendation made more than once.</i>	<i>f</i>
Calculating how much tuition is needed to educate the refugee learners with limited literacy in L1 and L2 needs to be changed.	13
Linguistic needs of learners with limited literacy in L1 and L2 are complex and require L1 support, specialist resources and teaching approaches.	9
Foundation courses that involve initial word sounds, learning motor skills for forming letters, learning English alphabet, understanding concepts about print and new word orders.	7
Individual approach is needed for each learner.	6
Due to poor concentration and short-term memory, slow rate of progress, recommend no more than 10 learners in a class.	3
More opportunities to speak English outside the AMEP class.	2

Table 5.18: Set 2 AMEP ESL teachers' recommendations to better support refugee learners (n= 21)

<i>Recommendation made once.</i>
Only 5 learners per teacher.
Assumptions about staircasing to higher level language programmes need to be changed in the case of learners with limited literacy in L1 and L2.
Recommend settlement services take the responsibility to address first language literacy issues and psychological trauma prior to AMEP enrolment.
Classes need to be double-staffed with a tutor and a bilingual assistant.
Divide classes on the base of ethnicity and involve bilingual tutors to bridge the literacy gap.
Need an additional course that places more importance on teaching phonics, sight-reading and constructing sentences.
Need a specialist program that provides 'learning blocks' necessary to facilitate skills as basic as holding a pen, learning to work in groups on set tasks.
They need many basic learning skills such as sitting at a table, understanding rules of behaviour, following instructions, and uninterrupted attendance in the AMEP.

The teachers' recommendations clearly reflect the need for a broader focus than English proficiency for this group of learners. It implies a need for an initial diagnostic assessment approach that is able to provide advice on what preparatory/readiness skills may be needed and what other emotional and psychological/well being support is required to maximise the learning and ultimately the benefits of the 510 hours free tuition to learn English.

5.1.7 Summary

This chapter reported the results from the anonymous survey to AMEP ESL teachers (N = 30) in refugee settlement areas across Australia. Results were described under the themes of demographic information, AMEP, professional development, gaps and challenges in delivering ESL literacy, computer access and citizenship education. It closes with teachers' recommendations on how to improve education and English language learning for the target group of humanitarian and refugee immigrants.

The next section will describe the findings from focus group discussion conducted with a small sample of ten ESL teachers from the local AMEP program who volunteered but they did not do the survey.

5.2 ESL Teachers' focus group interviews (n=10)

The participants in the second group of participants (Group Two) were ESL teachers recruited from and through a local AMEP provider. The samples were volunteers who came from this provider's three different campuses. First, the researcher approached the program managers at the three campuses, explaining the scope and purpose of the study. After receiving their permission to proceed with the study in keeping with university ethics' approval requirements the researcher decided to approach the teachers individually to request their participation in interviews. A few teachers refused the request, *apologetically*, telling that they were not in a position to accept the request and gave the reason of their busy schedule. Later it was found that they held contractual positions at AMEP and engaged with other educational providers in the area as well. However, with the assistance of the program manager ten ESL teachers who had been teaching English for refugee learners at different levels for more than two years were able to participate for the focus group interviews. Their willingness to be involved in the interviews, and the rapport that both teachers and researcher had established through the researchers informal visits, enhanced the opportunities for discussion and data collection. However, demographic data was not requested or additional detailed information was not collected or presented to preserve the anonymity of teachers.

Prior to the interviews each teacher received a letter for them to read about the project and provide their informed consent for the focus group interview. This letter provided an outline and details of the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature and the confidentiality of their participation in the study, including the protection of their identity and the confidentiality of the data. In all cases of recording and transcribing the interviews a number replaced the names of participants. These interviews were conducted outside class time after 3 pm approximately for 50 minutes to one hour. Interviews were preceded by informal discussions but it was necessary for the researcher to provide open-ended questions in order to avoid simple answers and allow teachers to share their unique experiences.

5.2.1 Focused group interview questions for AMEP ESL teachers

The focused group interview schedule for ESL teachers is shown in (see Appendix 1) were pre-formulated, however the length of responses and divergent discussions that

arose in between impacted on the length of interview. The topics raised by the researcher related to why refugee learners lack print literacy skills in general; the kinds of problems, barriers and challenges this target group of learners in learning English; the kinds of problems and challenges the teachers experienced in their work with learners from refugee background; the approaches they adopted to address the needs of those students who did not have literacy skills in their first language (L1) or in English. Teachers were also asked about the length of time this target group might take to be able to pass the Australian Citizenship Test; what they recommend in the long term for this group to more effectively develop English literacy and finally, their opinion on this target group might be helped to develop an understanding of citizenship in Australia. This focused group interview was designed to provide a body of data that would be able to explore in more depth the responses and issues that emerged from the survey.

5.2.1.1 Refugee learners' lack of print literacy skills

The ten teachers interviewed identified the refugee background learners in their classes as representing a wide-ranging age group: 18 to 70 years old. Overall, these teachers identified their learners were predominantly from Africa, the Middle East and Burma but indicated that they did not know which part of these countries the learners came from.

As this study was mainly focused on African refugee learners they were asked sub-questions such as “Why do you think so?” “Have you got a learner from that background?” “How did you know that ‘X’ come from a rural area”? and “How did you receive such information?” to maintain the flow of the interview and to fully explore the topic. Table 5.19 identifies the teachers’ responses and the number beside each one the frequency the same comment was made. The responses were also categorised under overarching themes that are also shown in the table.

Table 5.19: Teachers' views refugee learners' lack of print literacy skills

Theme and code	Why refugee learners lack print literacy skills in <i>f</i> general?	
Learner background (LB)	Civil war interrupted schooling; no formal schooling.	10
Gender (GNR)	Female learners have been disadvantaged.	9
Culture (CUL)	Some cultures do not consider literacy is important.	8
Religion (REG)	Religious norms; female learners need a female tutor.	6
Infrastructure(INF)	Limited mobility; no access to AMEP, living in rural areas.	6

All teachers (10) were aware of the background of low literate refugee learner who had experienced trauma and hardship in their lives prior to arrival into the host country. For example, Teacher G2-2 said, that she had two refugee learners from Kenya who had spent thirteen years in a refugee camp before being sent to Australia by UNHCR. These students had no opportunity to become literate in English or their first language. This is a typical situation of this target group of humanitarian and refugee learners as found by Hatoss (2013). All ten teachers highlighted how the students' education in their home country had been disrupted by war and as a result either the refugee learner missed out on or had their opportunity to be engaged in the formal education process interrupted in the early stages. This in turn would have resulted in them not acquiring print literacy skills as well as being unprepared or not familiar with the behaviours that are associated with learning in Western education settings. As found from the survey these behaviours range from not having the fine motor skills to hold a pen or a pencil and control it to write to not being practised in sitting at a desk having to concentrate on learning. The remaining issues rose out the difficulties experienced by refugee learners in terms of how the sociocultural and religious aspects of their culture limited their ability to learn and achieve print literacy skills during AMEP. These related to the themes of gender, culture, religion and infrastructure.

Nine responses in this study noted that gender could be influenced by the degree of success of print literacy acquisition among refugee learners. Literature on gender and language have noted "inequitable relations of power limit the opportunities L2 learners have to practice the target language outside the classroom" (Norton, 2000, p.12). This could be on the one hand due to traditional expectations of their home culture to prioritise the vision that role of the female is child rearing in the home institution (Norton 1995); and on the other hand when females play the role of mother and

housekeeper, in combination with lack of transport and lack of child care facilities, this limits female learners access L2 learning. Eight responses perceived that the home culture could limit these learners print literacy skills development. While government and educational institutions and Australian families practise print culture and have range of social practices that require literacy (Edwards-Groves, 2012 Robinson-Pant, 2010; Wells, 2010) the home culture for Sudanese and Somalian students' different cultural practices were seen to not support Western pedagogy. For instance, teacher G2-3 said, "I had many learners from Sudan and I came to know are all sorts of African traditional and cultural practices ranging from foodstuff, poems, storytelling to dances. The Dinkas are strongly guided by their parents". Also six responses indicated that the practice of a particular religion disapproves of them entering into education therefore they are not allowed to choose to go to a college to learn basic literacy skills. This disapproval shows that Muslim women for instance can face religious cultural barriers to education, regardless of their country of residence. Teacher G2-9 noted, "for Muslim women attempting to achieve education is a clash between gaining knowledge and their religious beliefs." Further, she described the situation of Muslim young female students in the beginning of the AMEP, CSWE preliminary class, who left the class because there were male learners in the same class. Thus, learners in this situation either have to miss the classes, or same gender classes need to be available, and it was suggested female tutors, or the families need to reconsider and give permission for their attendance. In addition to the above mentioned problems, six comments were made that identified 'limited mobility', 'no access to AMEP', and the isolation of 'living in rural areas' as barriers for the refugee learner to access learning English.

5.2.1.2 The challenge for refugee learners' acquisition of English

Teachers' responses to the question of this target group's difficulties learning English identified specific barriers that can be seen as directly and indirectly impacting on learners' ability in acquiring basic levels of English literacy. Their responses were categorised with frequency counts into personal and institutional barriers as shown Tables 5.20 and 5.21.

Personal barriers

As in Table 5.20 the most frequently repeated responses highlight that poor literacy in L1 was due to limited or no schooling, lacking familiarity with leaning skills, not having functional skills, such as being able to hold a pencil, moving into the workforce, and also poor concentration as the most severe barriers that prevent these learners in acquiring literacy skills in English language.

Tables 5.20: ESL teacher perception of personal barriers experienced by refugee learners in learning L2

Theme and Code	Personal Barriers	<i>f</i>
Education (EDU)	Poor literacy in L1 due to limited or no schooling. (10) Lacking familiarity with leaning skills. (10) Not having functional skills such as being able to hold a pencil. (10) Learners do not stay at the beginning levels. (9) Dropped out early in the course. (8) Cannot acquire the skills to get the next level. (6)	53
Trauma (TRU)	Poor concentration. (10) Post-traumatic stress disorders. (7) Experience of grief and loss. (9) Poor retention. (7)	33
Employment (EMP)	Commitments to work. (9) Moving into workforce. (10) Mainly male learners drop L2 classes for work/jobs. (7)	26
Family (FAM)	Female learners are depending on their husbands and no way have getting to class. (4) Some learners are disadvantaged being isolated at home with children/pregnancy. (8)	12
Culture (CUL)	Cultural forces against literacy in English.	8
Attributes (ATTB)	Learners embarrassed by the lack of abilities and knowledge.	7

There were fifty-three references altogether that related to their lack of preparedness to learn another language and become literate in a new culture. However, seven of these responses confirm that dropouts are mainly male learners who leave for reason to find labour work. This reflects how the men's urgency to obtain any kind of work and how low literacy learners are placed in unskilled work in the workforce. Secondly, the impact of trauma-related aspects of their lives were identified with a total of thirty-three responses. It seemed that the teachers perceived that the students in their classes experienced grief and loss from leaving their family and/or traumatic experiences and

suffered post-traumatic stress disorder, which led to poor concentration and poor retention of learning.

A third reason for this target group having difficulty acquiring English literacy was the fact that they managed to find employment. This was raised twenty-six times. The teachers reported that this mainly applied to male learners. They noted that the inability to stay in the beginner level created a barrier for any future learning of English. As discussed earlier the teachers also raised the issue of female students having difficulty with transport to attend classes as they depended on their husbands who may be in work or they needed to be at home for their children or because they were pregnant (total of 12 responses). Teacher G2-3 said that, “I have got a Congolese husband and wife in my class and they have already nine children and now expecting another one”.

Related to this, and as raised earlier, is the impact of the students’ cultural norms also impacted on attendance so interfering with progress with English. Similar responses were received to point out that learners are dropped out early (8 responses). It was also discovered that these humanitarian and refugee learners were embarrassed by their lack of abilities and knowledge. There were seven responses to this kind of barrier to learning. This is reinforced by the number of times the teachers noted that they had problems moving from the lowest level literacy class to the next one. However, it is not surprising given their starting point and the challenges that have emerged from this focus group interview.

Institutional barriers

The ESL teachers interview data also identified five issues to do with the institution as barriers to the students’ learning. In the overarching category of course delivery Table 5.21 shows that this was referred to a total of forty-two times. The ESL teachers interview data also identified five issues to do with the institution as barriers to the students’ learning. In the overarching category of course delivery Table 5.22 shows that this was referred to a total of forty-two times. As discussed in Chapter One, the issue of insufficient tuition hours for refugee learners was viewed as the most important factor (ten responses). Considering that many had moved between refugee camps prior to coming to Australia and had little L1 literacy, as well as very little or no opportunity to develop print literacy the intensiveness of the programme needed is highlighted here.

Tables 5.21: ESL teacher perceptions on institutional barriers experienced by refugee learners in learning L2

Theme and Code	Institutional barriers	f
Course Delivery (COD)	Insufficient tuition hours. (10) Mix level of classes due to shortage of the staff. (9) Those who work are unable to attend day class. (8) Incompatible program delivery. (8) No supportive bilingual network. (7)	42

In Hatoss' (2013) study it was shown that even though such refugees were in camps they were often forced to acquire speaking skills in another language on the way to survive. The teachers in this study saw themselves limited in what they because of the limited number of hours, students' special support needs and the difficulties of regular attendance. For example Teacher G2-10 noted that: *“some students need an individual approach and more time to improve their fine motor skills but we have been told to keep moving even though some learners have particular learning difficulties”*. As in Table 5.21 nine teachers referred to the problem they experienced with trying to teach students with such learning difficulties along side other students who should be able to progress more quickly. They noted that this situation might be because of a shortage of staff.

In response to the Review of the Adult Migrant English Program Discussion Paper, July (2008), members of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ATESOL) were strongly of the view that the separation of clients (learners) would simply replace a “one-size fits all” approach with two even more rigid “sizes”. In regards to the perceived impact on teachers, Teacher G2-6 said, *“. . . they really need a one on one with the tutor. So it wouldn't work having 20 learners with different levels in one class. Some days I take more than one hour to explain a concept or a term. Particularly realising the time and finding the level of the learners, planning a lesson in advance is a difficult task”*. From the learners' point of view Teacher G2-1 said, *“They barely speak English and they struggle to understand what I am saying”*. These responses show that for many pre-literate learners mixed level classes pose particular difficulties in being able to engage with the programme and become acculturated to the classroom.

With her research study, McPherson (2008, p.14) suggests that mixed literacy ability classes are not very effective for either the low level skilled or those with higher levels. She reported, *“. . . with mixed level classes, teachers tend to choose methods and*

materials suited to the greatest number of students and make adaptations to suit others in the class. The teaching strategies used to challenge and motivate higher level learners are less effective for preliterate learners and vice versa”. In addition, if learners have difficulty just listening and speaking, and are not familiar with the classroom culture then they will be wasting their time when the lesson is targeted at those who can understand.

However, eight responses highlighted that classes were only available during the day so that those who worked were unable to attend English classes therefore creating a barrier. Thus, the programme delivery was viewed as incompatible with the needs of refugees and the pressure on them to find jobs and work. Teacher G2-3 said that many learners in an early settlement phase also find it difficult to attend day classes because of family commitments, health problems, or work commitments. Teacher G2-9 added that those who were at work were not interested to be available for night classes after a full day of work. Even if they were willing to be available the teachers believed that they would not be able to concentrate owing to the fatigue. The professional judgment of Teacher G2-7 was that the options available for low literate learners were limited. She provided an example, stating that until learners developed basic literacy skills in L2 and basic computer literacy skills, distance or online learning would not support them. Seven teachers argued for the creation of a bilingual network. They saw this as being very supportive for their teaching as well as for the pre-literate and low-literate learners.

5.2.1.3 Problems AMEP ESL teachers face working with refugee learners

Interview question three was designed to get qualitative data to understand the problems and challenges experienced by these ten teachers, in the current context, in order to compare the data received by the ESL teacher survey to a similar question. Their responses are included in the Table 5.22 and display the categories and frequency counts of responses. The major issues that the ESL teachers reported as impacting on their work with the target group of learners in the classroom related to the students' education, settlement issues, psychological issues, health issues, lack of skills and impact of work on being able to learn in class. All these responses reflect multiple challenges experienced by teachers who teach pre- and low- literate refugee learners.

Table 5.22: The problems and challenges faced by ESL teachers with refugee background learner

Code	Response	<i>f</i>
Education (EDU)	Unfamiliar with written page numbers, headings. (9) Not independent learners. (9) No L1 support. (8) No formal education in first language. (7) Too many pre literate learners. (6) Unfamiliar with handling paper or pencil. (6) No previous exposure to English language. (3) Individualised approach has great demands on time and effort. (2)	50
Settlement Issues (SET)	Irregular attendance. (10) Insufficient childcare facilities so learners cannot attend class. (9) No proper accommodation. (6)	25
Psychological (PSY)	Lack of concentration. (7) Lack of retention. (7) Lack of personal accountability. (6) Stress caused by settlement issues. (2)	22
Health (HEA)	Poor hygiene. (7) Posttraumatic disorders. (6) Fatigue. (3) Tardiness. (3)	19
Skills (SK)	Difficulty in getting on with others. (8) Not conscious about time. (5) Manners, appear impolite. (4)	18
Employment (EMP)	Male learners attend class after a long day of hard physical labour.	8

The greatest number of references was made about education related issues. Nine teachers were concerned because the students were unfamiliar with the paralinguistic cues in written texts such as page numbers and headings. Similarly, the fact that these students did not have skills to learn independently meant that the teachers had difficulty organising learning experiences for the mixed literacy ability groups they had to teach. The teachers (8) also had problems in teaching because the students did not receive any support to improve their literacy in their L1, which is known to impact on their ability to acquire an L2 (Benseman, 2012; Williams & Chapman, 2007; Wrigley, 2009, 2012) and seven teachers noted that it was problematic that they had not experienced any formal education in their first language. Six teachers argued that there were too many pre-literate learners for them to be able to manage the teaching effectively in their classes and they pointed out that at this level the students were unfamiliar with handling

paper or pencil. In addition, three teachers raised the issue that the students did not have any previous exposure to the English language. Thus, the demand to provide individualised tuition was seen as very great and needing a lot of effort on their part. The next most frequent theme was about settlement issues, which was referred to a total of twenty-five times. The sub-themes were irregular attendance, insufficient childcare facilities so learners could not attend class and no proper accommodation. Most frequently cited response was irregular attendance (10) As described by several teachers the reasons given for attendance problems also varied. It was seen as relating to previous trauma, unhealthy sleeping patterns or night work and keeping compulsory appointments with Centrelink. Teacher G2-5 said that:

“I have a learner with three primary school aged children. The little one caught chickenpox; then she stayed away for nearly two months. It lessened her motivation to come to the class. When you get learners missing for days they don't understand it takes days to get back on track. There may be many reasons behind their disruptive lives. But we have to go with the curriculum”.

In terms of challenges and problems summarised in Table 5.23, seven teachers reported that it was impossible to abide by these challenges. Their opinion was as other education providers AMEP syllabuses and lessons are planned according to the CSWE curriculum and assessment framework.

Other issues relating to settlement were insufficient access to childcare facilities so learners with children could not attend class. This was raised nine times and was a continual emerging theme that impacted on this target group's ability to benefit from AMEP, particularly females learners. The teachers had also found that these learners had issues in finding accommodation (9 responses), which impacted on their ability to attend classes or concentrate and feel they were in a stable situation to learn. The students were also reported to have psychological related issues. These emerged 22 times raising the previous emerging subthemes of their lack of ability to concentration (7) and retain information (7), with two teachers explaining that the students were stressed because of settlement issues. However, six teachers' viewed these students as lacking a sense of personal accountability, which they were unsure whether this was

culturally related or a symptom of the stress of settlement and their frustration with not having the foundation skills to learn.

5.2.1.4 AMEP ESL teachers' approaches to meeting the language needs of pre-literate refugee learners

Question four of the focus group interview asked the teachers “What approaches have you taken to address the language needs of refugee learners who have no literacy skills in (L1), their first language or (L2) the English language?” All the teachers said that their approach involved firstly introducing motivating learning experiences that tried to stimulate the students’ interest, ensuring the development of students’ vocabulary, giving more exercises, and giving homework for learners who had literacy difficulties. Teacher G2-10 pointed out: *“it depends on the task and the linguistic level of the individual learner”* and Teacher G2-3 added, *“it’s difficult to make an individualised approach due to the increased number of learners”*. However, consideration of the teachers’ responses provides insights into their teaching philosophy with regards to teaching English as a second language, the nature of the learning experiences they planned and the reasons why, their attention to creating a positive learning environment, and their special consideration for the learner.

There was evidence of teachers having quite different philosophies of teaching English as a second language. For instance, Teacher G2-9 took an eclectic approach stating, *“In my opinion there is no one effective teaching approach? It is important to understand that each learner is unique. What might work for one might not work for the other”*? In contrast, Teacher G2-10 stated, *“I believe that in the philosophy of L2 acquisition needs “only English” so they are immersed in the language in my classes. As a teacher, I prefer them not speak their own language in the classroom, only English”*.

Other teachers emphasised how they paid attention to providing authentic, stimulating learning experiences that related to real life literacy practices. Teacher G2-2 stated, *“I provide learners hands-on experience in utilising the kinaesthetic approach to learning. For example I take my learners to the library, to the ATM and expose them to the real learning situation. I ask them to bring real food or clothing for them to handle in class as they learn vocabulary, or as varied experiential learning from class field trips.”*

Similarly, Teacher G2-1) specified, “I use variety of activities and approaches to teach the same material, I accommodate L2 rich environment by keeping English instruction simple and live. In addition, I do a great deal to encourage communicative competence and reinforce learning with listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities” and Teacher G2-4 highlighted the need to make meaning, stating “I use multiple teaching strategies to establish the meaning of the lesson; for example I use visual aids, colour cues, music and verse, word cards, language games, charades and role play.” Teacher G2-6 was concerned about the students’ foundation skills stating, “I take extra time to teach basic writing skills. I focus on how to use the pencil and how to form letters, and assistance to support the students’ understanding when they had no English at all, “I really need a bilingual assistant so I can cater for the majority of Sudanese learners.” Two other teachers saw the importance of creating an environment that would be encouraging the students’ language learning and one that would address the fact that they were coming from traumatic backgrounds and living under stress. Teacher G2-3 stated “I make the classroom a comfortable place to develop self-esteem and develop a learner-centred classroom”, while Teacher G2-5 described, “I create a welcoming environment and emphasise to the students the importance of learning to read and write because some cultures do not see these skills as necessary”.

The remaining two teachers also related to the importance of the learning environment in terms of the students’ cultural background. Teacher G2-8 stated, “*I make all my learners feel acknowledged and recognise their history, culture and values. By doing that I reaffirm the learner identity, which is an important factor for their comfort in learning for example “. . . I would say I love African music or I love Ethiopian injera”*, whereas Teacher G2-7 stated, “*I am cautious and aware of any gender issues such as discomfort for the Sudanese women in a mixed gender class”*.”

5.2.1.5 AMEP ESL teachers’ professional judgement on length of learning time to pass the ACT

The fifth question drew upon the AMEP ESL teachers’ professional judgement of the length of time it would take the refugee learners who had no literacy skills in L1 to reach the level of English proficiency required by the Australian Citizenship Test. Each teacher for this question expressed their background knowledge of principles of

learning a second language learning and teaching (Brown, 2007), and they used their knowledge and experience of teaching L1 literate refugee learners and L1 low-literate refugee learner as the point of comparison in their responses. Particularly, they often referred to the differences in the amount of background knowledge in regard to learning goals as the main difference between the two groups. Teacher G2-3 and teacher G2-4 mentioned in particular L1 literate learners possessed a sizable amount of background knowledge and skills in comparison to the L1 low literate learners. Teacher G2-3 emphasised the lack of background knowledge and skills of L1 low literate learners and related it to both time and acquisition of language. Teacher G2-3 further said that, “*teachers never teach, we only help learners build background knowledge*”. Teacher G2-7 put her opinion differently and said that, “. . . *refugee learners need time to go ahead from one level to the next one smoothly. We cannot guarantee how long it will take but we can guarantee that it will be a very long for them*”. She then added, “*Even for L1 literate learners learning another language from the beginning can be an uneven process. In particular for adult refugee learners facing family responsibilities, financial pressures, personal and settlement issues, as well as any additional issues such as trauma from past experiences, it means that acquisition of English can be a slow process. With our experience for some learners in this category it might take years for some, two or three years or for some never.*”

In general, there was clear consensus amongst the teachers on the challenge involved for all the refugees but particularly those with no or very little literacy in their L1 skills and the need to pass the ACT. The teachers’ capacity to identify refugee learners’ English-language needs and to design teaching and learning programs to meet those needs was clearly demonstrated. For example, all teachers were of the opinion that until low literate learners developed their learning skills, metacognitive skills, the four macro skills of listening/speaking and reading/writing, and until they learnt to use words to describe concepts, and had a sufficient knowledge of English to be able to exist independently, they would not be able to even think about facing the Australian Citizenship Test. To achieve all of this they noted that these learners would need to reach at least CSWE level 3 or 4. To reach these CSWE higher levels these learners have to overcome highly challenging hurdles at the beginner level, which at this stage requires additional hours of individual consistent support in their L1. This links to the

teachers' earlier recommendations for bilingual aides, and opportunities for L1 literacy learning.

However, the question is whether they the AMEP can provide the extra tuition and preparation these learners require to have a chance to begin to progress to the required level. Given only 510 hours of free tuition to cover all the student levels, the barriers for low literate learners, the challenges and gaps raised by the ESL teachers, and the need to understand the Australian approach to current curriculum and pedagogy, combined with the absence of the Citizenship education curriculum in the AMEP, leaves both teachers and their students with what seems like an insurmountable challenge. Thus, the current approach in terms of course offerings and structure does not seem to be working for the pre-literate and low-literate learners in particular. It seems they really need a separate course that provides the foundation skills, including a focus on their L1 literacy before moving into the preliminary CSWE.

The issues that emerge from this relate to the need for this group of refugees to have access to bilingual support, learning some literacy in their first language, and learning about the concepts and knowledge that underpin Australian culture and the notion of citizenship. This raises the issue of the need for an initial comprehensive diagnostic assessment of these students' needs. There needs are clearly more than related to their English language level as might be assessed on the ISLPR for instance.

5.2.1.6 AMEP ESL teachers' long-term recommendations for refugee learners with no literacy skills in their first language (L1) to acquire English literacy skills

Interview Q.6 what do you recommend in long term to the learners from refugee background with low literacy skills to develop their literacy skills?

Teacher ACT-9 in this interview provided useful information to the main focus of this study. Teacher ACT-9 believed that her experiences had allowed her to empathise with the refugee learners with low-level literacy in L1 and L2 and the language difficulties experienced by them. “. . . I put myself into their shoes. Imagine you have only L1 speaking skills and mixed with more advanced learners lag behind in the classroom struggling hard to understand the English language. How do you like to be taught in the first place? We need a more sensitive method than “ONLY ENGLISH” to address

language needs of low literate learners”. She said that this group of learners have been deeply affected by emotional social and structural conditions. Lack of resources, inability to communicate in English, settlement issues personal issues together teachers are ill-equipped to tackle the multiple challenges of teaching low literate learners. Further she revealed that ESL teachers need to rediscover the methodologies they have abounded long time ago. “. . . Learners who are literate in L1 speed up the processing of L2 quickly. Use of L1 instruction will be beneficial for the low literate learner. The problem is there is no proper structure to teach ESL. The system is slow to consider, discuss, and fund the bilingual programs that show the success. I mean simply I don’t have the power to know how to make it happen. I am just a teacher. AMEP really should have a vision for effective L1 instruction as it is the key for these learners to be successful in achieving the basic literacy skills in L2”. Supporting this view Teacher ACT -6 said, L1 instruction or bilingual support for low literate learner allows teachers to directly use learners’ background knowledge to improve L2 literacy skills. We have many learners in advanced classes from multiple ethnic and language backgrounds. Some of them are highly literate in their L1. If we can match them to provide L1 instruction low literacy learners bases on their culture and L1 that would assist to overcome the problems with vocabulary sentences structures and patterns. But learners who do not have developed Meta cognitive skills I do not think that AMEP would be helpful”. What was less clear in this interview was no suggestions were provided to understand how Meta cognitive skills be developed within these learners. Other teachers also had different views. For example teacher ACT- in considering ways in which very low literate learners are being positioned she strongly felt that “ESL teachers, literacy teachers and bilingual teachers need be teamed up’ It was evident that this teacher thought about every aspect of language learning and L2 acquisition. In contrast the number of undecided responses from other teachers signalled the need for further clarity around whether the researcher is expecting to hear about recommendation for elderly adult learner with no literacy or with some literacy in L1 or adult learner with no literacy or with some literacy.

This made researcher to realise that why teachers had difficulty in deciding on a recommendation. This demonstrates that, teachers need to allocate certain identity positions to learners through their pedagogical practices.

5.2.1.7 AMEP ESL teachers' views on refugee learners' understanding citizenship in Australia

Question seven addressed the teachers' views on how, in the long-term, refugee background learners with low literacy skills might be helped to develop an understanding of citizenship in Australia. This was a key question because, as noted in Chapter One it was discussed that refugee learners who come from NESB with literacy difficulties are the most vulnerable and most likely to fail the Australian Citizenship Test. Further, the pass rates of the ACT provide insights into the effects of current testing standards on this group. Although the newly introduced Citizenship course is not offered in the AMEP yet the teachers explained their views in terms of providing learners with a general understanding of the citizenship in Australia. The teachers had a variety of views about the students' situation in needing to pass the ACT and how they might best be assisted to acquire the citizenship knowledge and understanding while coping with the challenge of learning English and trying to find jobs, care for families and overcome their past traumatic life and trying to settle in Australian. Teacher G2-8 noted, *"We are not trained to teach history or the arts in the AMEP. To teach citizenship matters teacher should have completed a degree in history or political science before teaching citizenship to adults. A skilled teacher can teach complex ideas taken from history or culture and simplify them for low-literate adults. As far as I understand the citizenship test in Australia is more advanced and you certainly have to have a course based on teaching with professional qualified teachers."*

Knowing that AMEP operated a citizenship course 'Let's participate' from 1998-2006, the teachers were asked how ESL teachers managed to operate this course. Teacher G2-4 said, *"It was only 18 hours of course for learners to gain more knowledge and understanding of the meaning of Australian citizenship, and basic history that everyone knows. The primary purpose of our program is to help learners learn English so that they can be active members of the society. We focus on the learners' skills both verbal and written communication, and functioning in society, for example how to fill out a job application, how to call the ambulance, how to make doctors' appointments, how to talk to their children's school and teachers."* Teacher G2-4's response highlights her perception of the difference between previous citizenship courses and the content of the current citizenship test. Further, besides recommending professionally qualified

teachers of citizenship education to prepare students to be able to address the concept of citizenship and the needs to prepare for the Australian Citizenship Test, she highlighted the complexities of combining language instruction for multilevel learners and particularly the low literacy learners with the conceptual knowledge to understand citizenship. According to her view low literate learners first needed to acquire basic literacy skills before they would be able to move on to do anything else.

According to teacher G2-6, low literate Learners who fall between Pre-CSWE and CSWE Certificate III (Chapter 1, Table 1.3) are less likely to be benefited by trying to complete another course, simultaneously on Citizenship Education. She pointed out, *“They don’t have developed reading and writing skills. Many immigrant learners are unfamiliar with concepts and vocabulary related to history and government (even in the native language). Given carefully designed bilingual instruction, these learners may improve for an oral test but may not be ready to receive extensive practice and repetition of new skills and content.”*

However, Teacher G2-1 was of the opinion that, basically, all learners receive the knowledge of Citizenship Education through AMEP, stating that, *“CSWE curriculum here promotes and prepares AMEP learners for future political participation”*. When she was asked about whether the current AMEP curriculum covered topics such as racism and discrimination, she explained that it covered more abstract topics such as religion, politics and culture through the use of resources for developing English language skills of learners. She believed the AMEP supported the diversity of the students in its courses and did not practice racism and discrimination. But she was of the opinion that *“once learners go back into the society they encounter hidden racism and discrimination mainly due to their low literacy. For example, the lack of employment opportunities means they always go for work in meat factories or physical labour; lack of rental accommodation in the area means they are placed in poor housing”*. The teaching of citizenship concepts was seen as being of limited use if the majority of the society were not seen to be practising them. Teacher G2-1 notes *“Sometimes the host society does not see people from refugee backgrounds as equally credible.”* But Teacher G2-3 brought a different view in terms of course delivery stating, *“. . . Self-study is not an option for them they have not yet developed strategies for independent learning. They need assistance in removing barriers to their*

participation in the society and education in the long term. In the short term trained volunteers can make an incredible difference with additional support services. But having very limited L2 literacy skills I do not recommend any low-literate learners to have any assessment done. Rather I recommend them to consider Citizenship Education in L1 instruction with the community based organisations”.

As recognised by these teachers, low L1 literate refugee learners’ ability to acquire the level of English language proficiency for effective participation in Citizenship Education was seen as problematic compared with those who started with literacy in L2 or those who already had some English language. All ten teachers agreed that those learners who are illiterate in their L1 might never be able to learn citizenship concepts or acquire the necessary higher level of English proficiency. The teachers pointed out that they may make many attempts but they are impeded by cognitive processing difficulties or impaired memory function, and lack the funds of knowledge common to western societies that underpin citizenship.

5.2.8 Summary

Interviews with teachers sought to understand what ESL teachers perceived, encountered, experienced and considered when teaching ESL to low literate learners from the humanitarian and refugee context. With a focus on ten AMEP ESL teachers this phase identified many factors related L2 acquisition, literacy skills and citizenship knowledge necessary for low literate refugee learner. Overall, all the teacher group demonstrated collective, professional, consensus around the ESL needs of the target group of learners at the centre of this research. They showed their concern for how, without the extra support, including bilingual support, these students would find it extremely difficult to engage in learning that would help them understand the concepts underpinning Australian citizenship that would ultimately foster their integration into the Australian society.

5.3 ESL classroom observations

Focus Group 3 comprised one class of NESB humanitarian and refugee learners at the Preliminary CSWE Level who participated in the classroom observation for the research. These students were in the AMEP pre-beginner CSWE class where all learners were from African NESB former refugee background with different cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious status. Here the author reminds of this study's adaptation of the label of Low-educated second language and literacy acquisition (LESLLA) Wall & Leong, 2009) to represent NESB adult refugee learner with no print literacy skills in L1 and no literacy skills in L2 may belong to the category of either Preliterate, Semi-literate or Non-literate as termed in chapter two Table 2.2. The definition of literacy is taken to be "the ability to take part fluently, effectively and critically, in the various text- and discourse-based events that characterise contemporary, semiotic, societies and economies" (Freebody & Luke, 2003, p. 53).

These learners were initially observed beginning English as a second language for the first time. Initially there were 13 registered female learners and 10 male learners, aged between 25 years and 55 years; later numbers fell to 12 female learners and 8 male learners. It should be noted there were more absentees rather than attendances. However they had all been placed into the same beginning level at ISLPR 0, according to the ISLPR placement procedure. This class included pre literate, non- literate and semi-literate learners.

The teacher was a native English speaker with three years experience in teaching English as a second language. Her previous teaching experience included mainstream primary classes. She had been teaching English for "Preliminary CSWE", "Certificate I CSWE", "Certificate II CSWE" and "Certificate III CSWE" for one year and four months. She was very well respected by her colleagues and learners and was seen as a good teacher and as a provider of genuine pastoral care for her students. The classes were held three days per week from 9 am to 2 pm (5 hours with one morning tea break of 30 minutes and a lunch break of 60 minutes). Two to three different Volunteer Teacher Aides (VTAs) with native English speaking backgrounds came in each day to assist in the class. Initially, the classroom observation was scheduled for a total of 20 hours; however the researcher spent time volunteering (helping in classes) for two weeks in advance, prior to primary data collection. This helped the researcher gain an

understanding of the culture of the class and be familiar with the teacher and learners in the classroom. Classroom observation was guided by the Observational Chart (Appendix 3), which was developed according to the model of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The structure of the Chart allowed for the observations and their analysis to be descriptively reported in keeping with the following themes:

1. Teacher/learner interactions
2. Pedagogical approach
3. Learners' participatory behaviours
4. Learners' literacy outcomes
5. Remarks

During the seven days of observations the researcher was in the role of 'participant observer'. During the observation sessions, the researcher took detailed field notes on teacher/ learner interactions, particularly with reference to the process of L2 acquisition by refugee learners. A journal was maintained to record the learner behaviour and teacher pedagogy on each day. At the end of the day, after a careful reflection on the day's notes information were recorded according to the selected themes as follows.

5.3.1 Teacher/learner interactions

The quality of interaction between teacher and learners was evidenced throughout the time spent in the classroom. Routinely, the teacher was the first person to be in the classroom, and once the learners entered the teacher pleasantly greeted them. Then they placed their names on a large whiteboard at the front of the class. The classroom atmosphere appeared as a friendly safe place where learners did not feel threatened. Learners were seen as relaxed and conducive to learning. The learners were varied in terms of their dress. Most male learners wore casual dress, such as jeans and tee shirts, and mature adult female learners wore ethnic clothing typical of their home countries; but the younger learners were dressed in jeans and western style tops.

The teacher made a significant contribution to the physical environment of the class by arranging posters, pictures and charts to display the days of the week, the English alphabet, numbers, months of the year and Australian currency.

One of the most important objectives of the teacher was to establish a comfortable classroom atmosphere to foster a positive learning climate for the learners showing compassion, commitment, tolerance, patience, and understanding of the barriers to learning. The teacher actively created a nurture-learning environment and built up positive relationships with the learners. The physical arrangement of the classroom and personal traits of the teacher indicated that effective and indirect strategies were used by the teacher to support learning. There was frequent use of visual aids, authentic learning materials with 'real life' applications that produced comprehensible output and went a long way to build confidence to support learner risk taking and reduce failure.

Over the time period irregular attendance made it difficult for both teacher and *learners* to achieve set goals. The teachers' work, at times, was especially difficult because of irregular attendance. Some days only a few learners e.g. five were present in the class. Some learners arrived late but the teacher did not ask why so as not to embarrass the person and also disrupt the learning. However, it was later found that these learners needed to deal with issues such as, transportation, dropping children to school or childcare, going to Centrelink or keeping appointments with health services, job recruitment agencies and also work before they arrived in class. It was clear that the classroom teacher had spent time in finding out about the backgrounds of the learners and the various issues that were impacting on their lives and attendance; recognising their day-to-day challenges, she had developed a very positive relationship with them.

5.3.2 Pedagogical approach

The observed Preliminary CSWE class curriculum involved the learners in identifying the English alphabet, copying/forming letters, writing words and sentences, numerals and the sequencing of numbers, simple addition and subtraction; labelling and naming pictures or real objects (for example, the learners were exposed to various objects, including kids version of basic household items such as kettle, pan, spoons, fruit and vegetables). They were also exposed to basic conversational dialogues, asking and giving directions, writing small notes to school or their teacher, filling in forms that required them to write their personal information such as their name, address and phone number, social security number, birth date, birthplace, age, and gender. Further, Table 5.23 describes how class time was organised into sequences of distinctive functions.

Table 5.23 Pedagogical approach of observed CSWE pre beginner class

Item	Contents Delivered by the teacher
Classroom activities	Drill Presentation Guided practice Role plays Repetition
Student participation	Teacher to student Student to students or student to classroom Group work Pair work Individual work
Focus on language	Form/grammar Communicative Reading Writing Speaking Listening
Materials used	Authentic Visual Stories Dialogues
Communicative features	Use of target language

The morning session from 9.00am-10.30am was the first routine, when basic conversational dialogues are being practised. A set of pre-designed posters with basic conversational dialogues important for the learners' real life communicative needs appeared on the whiteboard and the learners were given the text of the dialogue displayed to practise each morning. Following are few examples of practised dialogues. The teacher-learner behaviour involved "drilling sequences", where the learners listened to the dialogue and repeated the sentences chorally. Then they practised the dialogues with the teacher first and then with peers. This activity was teacher centred and tended to be taught on a whole class basis in more of a formulaic way (Figure 5.1). For example the teacher asked the learners to recite the dialogue as a class by looking at the whiteboard. Finally, they were asked to recite the entire dialogue without referring to the whiteboard.

Table 5.24 Practised dialogues

Meeting people

A: Where do you live?

B: I live in..... (name of the city)

A: Is a big city?

B: It's pretty big.

Shopping

A: Hello. May I help you?

B: No thanks. I'm just looking.

A: Well, let me know if you need anything.

B: Okay, thank you.

Calling for an ambulance

Operator: 000- State your emergency please.

Caller: I need help! I am in a car accident. I cannot move my legs.

Operator: Where are you?

Caller: I'm on Queen Street.

Operator: Are you still in the vehicle?

Caller: Yes.

Operator: What is the nearest cross street?

Caller: I'm not sure. There is a McDonald's across the street. I think it is High Street

Operator: An ambulance is on the way. Please stay on the line until they arrive.

Asking and giving directions

A: Excuse me

B: Can I help you?

A: Where is the Centrelink Office?

B: Go straight and turn right

A: Where do I turn right?

B: Turn right at the bus stop.

The teacher-learner behaviour involved “drilling sequences”, where the learners listened to the dialogue and repeated the sentences chorally. Then they practised the dialogues with the teacher first and then with peers. This activity was teacher centred and tended to be taught on a whole class basis in more of a formulaic way (Figure 5.1). For example the teacher asked the learners to recite the dialogue as a class by looking at the board. Finally, they were asked to recite the dialogue without referring to the board.



Figure 5.1 Morning session

Usually learners were given a half an hour tea break from 10. 30 am to 11.00 am. During this break female learners and male learners flocked together separately to interact with each other. Mostly they used French and Arabic and in between the conversations they used some English words. For example ‘Class’, ‘Teacher’, ‘supermarket’, ‘water’, ‘drink’ and ‘books’.

After the tea break, once the classroom resumed at 11.00am, the teacher formed the learners into small groups each lead by a VT. The teacher defined the nature of the group activity and she explained what learners have to do as a group. Group activities included role-plays, reading and writing activities related to the introduced dialogues. Mainly learners enjoyed the activities related to authentic situations. For instance, the teacher created a *play grocery shop* in the classroom using empty breakfast cereal cartons, milk bottles and other groceries to help learners to understand concepts about money and numeracy. Items were priced realistically in keeping with the same price as in the real supermarket. Fake money was available for them to make financial transactions. The language was modelled with sentences being taught relative to this context. Each learner was given \$100 to spend and a list of groceries to buy. They had to buy the listed items and bring back the correct change. They found this task exciting as knowledge of this theme directly related to supporting their acculturation into Australia. The teacher’s efforts to activate their linguistic and conceptual schemata surrounding this event related to their real life situation and made the learners use the language and buy real grocery items, stimulating at the same time their need to come to

grips with numerical concepts. While most learners (8) in the class for the day were actively involved in this learning experience and made good progress some female learners (4) appeared not to be motivated and rejected the opportunity to be involved.

For reading and writing activities the teacher used different techniques for each lesson, for example, the teacher provided the each group an envelope with words in it. They had to re-arrange the dialogue and provide commas and question marks where needed. Then practise the dialogue through a role-play. In addition, all the learners practised poems, songs and games. Nursery rhymes such as “We’re going to the zoo, zoo, zoo (Figure 5.2) and most often practised songs were “The alphabet song,” “Simon says,” “Snakes and ladders” and “Old McDonald had a farm”. VTAs often helped learners in the group to break down cultural barriers and facilitate the activities.

After taking one hour of lunch break, class resumed at 1.30 pm. where the activities were oriented towards developing learners’ reading and writing skills. The teacher’s focus on developing English literacy was intensive. The lesson was tightly structured to encourage and enhance the learners’ involvement all of the time. She ensured that she used authentic materials to involve them with the activities related to the real life situations. For example activities such as form filling, labelling, and counting, using money as in shopping and other services. Materials used in the class were photocopied worksheets, mainly chosen for their relevance to the theme or topic being taught for the day. No textbook or textbook instruction was used and activities were most often invented by the teacher. Learners were given print outs of the sentences used in the spoken dialogues for the day to cut up into strips. While they cut, the teacher placed 10 pictures around the room on tables. As they completed their cutting, they were required to move around the room and matched their sentence strips to the right picture. Then they milled around, read their sentences, helped each other understand and identified key words, then put their sentences (upside down) near the picture.

When they finish the learners were asked to copy the text into their notebooks or on pieces of paper. Until class disperse at 2.30 pm, this pattern dominated during the majority of observed lessons. Drilling exercises did not appear to challenge learners intellectually but the role plays caused them articulate the language and become

familiar with formal practice of the sounds, writing system of English, specific vocabulary and formulaic expressions.

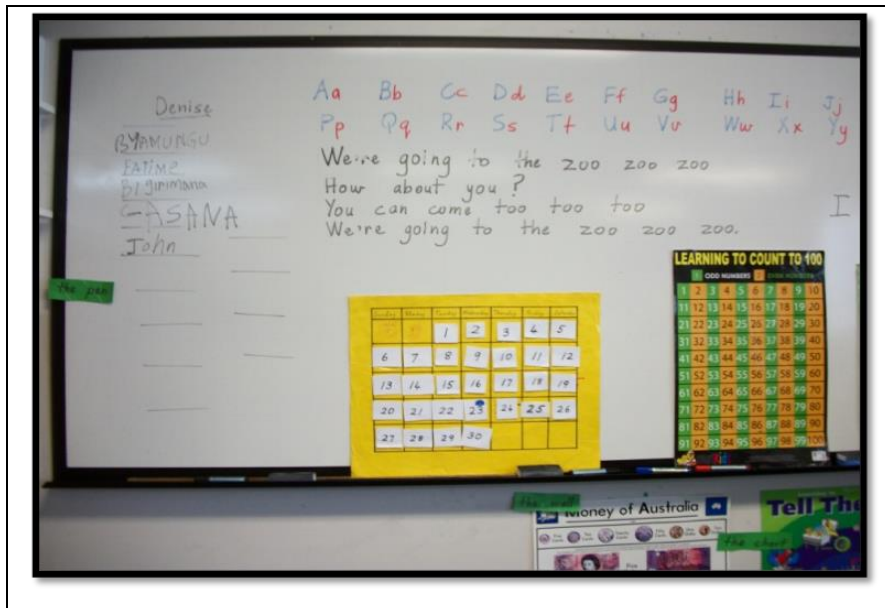


Figure 5.2 Practising a song

Employment of the activities such as the learner to use the scissors and cut the written dialogue out and match with the right picture shows the teacher's understanding of her learners' linguistic backgrounds; that necessity to develop subordinate skills such as 'Fine motor coordination' and 'print awareness' (Reimer, 2008) The teacher's focus on learners to develop what is called "print awareness" under this activity was to collect, and respond to the pictures with print that surrounded them to develop a sense for the uses of print.

5.3.3 Learners' participatory behaviours

During most of the writing activities, there was a high level of disengagement evident in some learners. These learners seemed to be frightened at the use of worksheets. Nine mature aged female learners who often sat together appeared frequently off-task, which was because of their inability to respond in English to the teacher's instruction or prepared worksheets. When they could not understand the instruction they often switched to their mother tongue. Most often they avoided being involved in writing activities as they were experiencing enormous difficulties to identify the letters of the alphabet and understand alphabetical order and form letters. In addition, they were not aware of how to hold a pencil and therefore could not draw a straight line. When they

were required to do the activities using the scissors, pens and pencils they spent whole time struggling with those items. As Cranitch (2010, p. 259) points out “these learners may have problems with their ability to concentrate or focus on a task; lack appropriate social behaviour; and have difficulty with simple tasks such as cutting and pasting due to a lack of opportunities to develop their fine motor skills”. These learners had never held a pen before and so needed to be given clay to exercise their hands and fingers to develop their fine motor control skills (Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3: Exercising to develop fine motor control skills

Although the teacher and the VTAs worked diligently to lift the learners' literacy skills, these learners were experienced considerable difficulty and were slow with following instructions, comprehending texts, and understanding the meaning of the words that they were required to read. Although they nodded their heads to indicate they understood the tasks the teacher gave, it seemed this was pretence, since when they came to do it they did not appear to know what to do. Frequently, they were given simple writing activities. These included some free formation of letters, copying of given words, writing simple sentences, matching words, completing word patterns and filling in forms after the teacher modelled what they needed to do. The next section provides samples of these refugee learners' writing tasks, which give profound insights into the challenge that both they and their teachers face in developing proficiency in English.

5.3.4 Learners' literacy outcomes

Although there is much research on how young children learn to read and write, both in L1 and L2, “there is still very little about our learners in our mainstream SLA research journals, conferences and books. Many mainstream SLA textbooks do not include any acknowledgement that LESLLAA learners exist” (Tarone & Bigelow, 2011, p. 6). This

situation is illuminated by the following samples of writing from the learning experiences observed in this research. They are reflective African LESLLA learners' performance in writing activities and formation of letters in English alphabet.

5.3.4.1 Samples of writing activities

According to the developmental stages of writing characteristics (Burt, Kreeft Peyton & Schaetzel, 2008; Gentry, 1982; Tarone, Bigelow & Hansen, 2009) the following six work samples were examined. These samples illuminate the context for the target group's English language learning observed in this research. They are reflective of these African NESB/ARL/ NLL1/NLL2 NESB learners' performance in writing activities and formation of letters in English alphabet.

Writing sample 1

Figure 5.4 shows writing sample 1 which was written by a pre-literate beginner-class learner in her fifties, who had never attended school or classes before. She is unable to form letters correctly. But she is aware that letters are made up of different shapes. Some of the letters are recognisable such as 'd', and 't'. Some of the symbols are invented. There is no directionality, but the learner has produced curves, lines, and circles to indicate the variability. This scrawled writing indicates that the learner perceives letters are made from some shapes. From the classroom observations it was clear that this learner had not yet made the graphophonic connection e.g. that the letters make sounds. Burt, Kreeft Peyton, and Schaetzel (2008, p. 2) cite Dowse (2004) and Hvitfeldt (1985) to note, “. . . literacy learners [such as these in this study] should be able to associate written symbols with meaning and to see patterns in the symbols. They may find letters and any graphical representations—maps, graphs, charts, even pictures—difficult to interpret”.

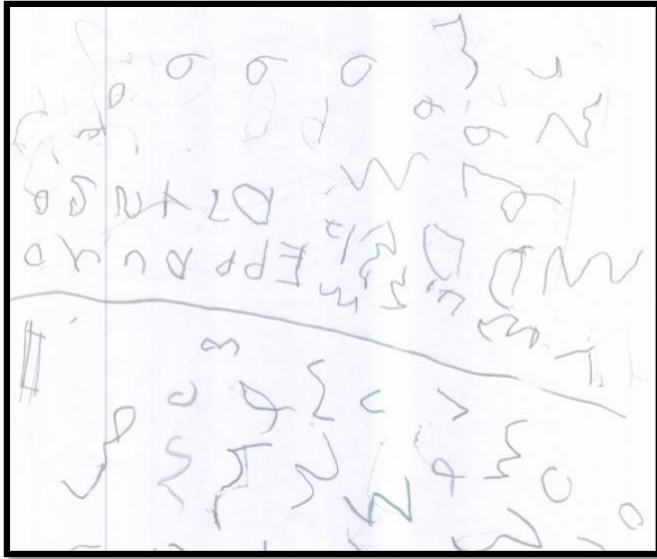


Figure 5.4: Writing sample 1 – free letter formation

Writing sample 2

Writing sample 2 displayed in Figure 5.5 is taken from a middle aged female learner whose formal schooling was interrupted when she was in grade 2. This writing demonstrates some awareness of the letters of English alphabet, and recognition of the shape of the letters and it reflects some command of the pencil so some fine motor control is developed. In other words she has the ability to address the representational features of the English alphabet. Also this learner tries to assemble three-letter configurations (consonant, vowel, consonant) based on the words she was given to practise (hat, bed, peg, dog, jug, bag, sun, wig hut, cap, pan, pen, bun). While this learner demonstrates concepts about print, writing in rows from left to right and was starting to comprehend the shape of letters she still appeared to struggle to present a full phonetic representation of a word. Inclusion of a numeral four (4) in the first line indicates this learner's lack of ability to understand the difference between letters and numbers.

Writing sample 3

Writing sample 3 as shown in Figure 5.6, is taken from a female learner in her late forties, who had never attended school before. She explained that she was under pressure from Government Social Security Support Service (Centrelink) to learn English and look for work. She had been in the CSWE pre-beginner class for more than the typical time of 10 weeks (three days per week). The writing task required the

learner to identify each picture and be able to say the word, and then write the word. It was a recall checking activity after the learners had been learning the vocabulary.

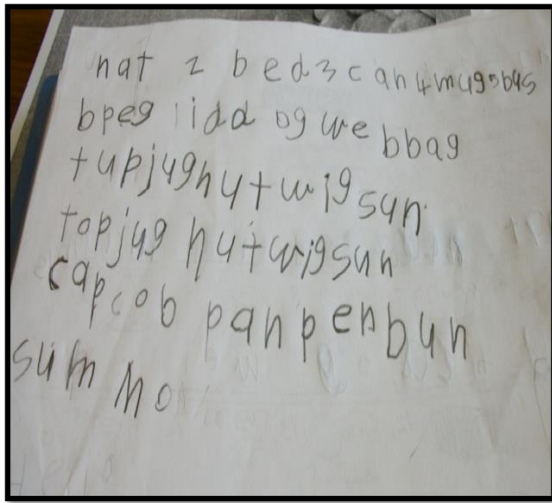


Figure 5.5: Writing sample 2 – writing in lines and letter formation

Check up Date: _____

Use Level Two word list (p83) to further check individual student's written spelling progress.

• say the name of each picture • write the word

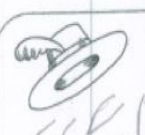
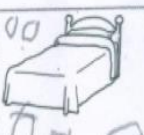
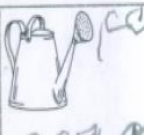
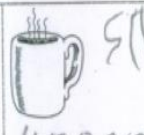









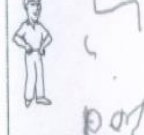


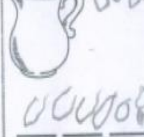
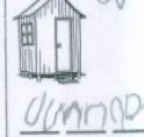
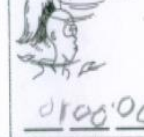

 Handwritten: <i>u u k</i>	 Handwritten: <i>u a a</i>	 Handwritten: <i>o o q q</i>	 Handwritten: <i>u o o o o</i>	 Handwritten: <i>A o</i>
 Handwritten: <i>Y q a r</i>	 Handwritten: <i>q q n i</i>	 Handwritten: <i>n n q q</i>	 Handwritten: <i>b o u v</i>	 Handwritten: <i>o u</i>
 Handwritten: _____	 Handwritten: _____	 Handwritten: _____	 Handwritten: <i>o o t</i>	 Handwritten: <i>q n n q</i>
 Handwritten: <i>a d i</i>	 Handwritten: <i>u u u o o</i>	 Handwritten: <i>u u n n o o</i>	 Handwritten: <i>o r o o o o t</i>	 Handwritten: <i>o o o o o t</i>

Figure 5.6: Writing sample 3 – say the name of the picture and write it down

Her inability to hold a pencil to write effectively shows her lack of fine motor skills to do so. Moreover, she took a long time to produce this sample. Her writing indicates directionality (all shapes are written from left to write) with more curves starting with some shapes and including letter ‘y’ and ‘n’. It contains more curves and circles at the end. This sample shows there is limited evidence that the learner is able to apply knowledge of phonics to sound out the words in order to write them down.

Writing sample 4

Writing sample 4, as shown in Figure 5.7, is also taken from another learner in the Pre-beginner class. She was also a non-literate and in her mid-forties. This task required the learners to match each picture of fruit and nuts to its written word, and then copy each word and place it under its picture. The volunteer tutor wrote the first word ‘mango’; and she repeatedly spoke it and identified it in the word list in the box. These words and pictures do not match in spatially except for the first word (top right, mango), making the task more challenging.

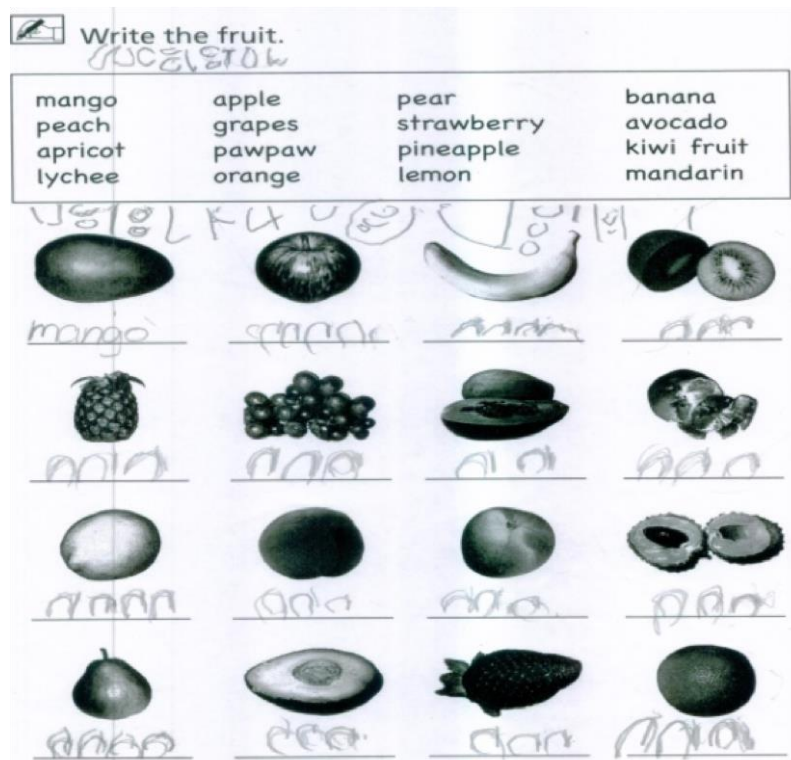


Figure 5.7: Writing sample 4 – match the picture and word and copy the word

This sample reveals that the learner had great difficulty reproducing the different letters. The formations do not show any one-to-one correspondence in the number of letters in a word. There is little ability to differentiate the various formations of the letters,

forming a 'p'. Since he needs to develop fine motor control to be able to manipulate a pencil the symbols do not closely resemble the words/data that the form requires.

Writing sample 6

Figure 5.9 shows an example of an attempt to copy Queensland printed text using the writing guide lines. Again this female learner had never been exposed to a formal school environment. In her early forties she had only just started to use writing tools in the pre-beginner class. Although the writing the letters between the lines was modelled, when she tried to copy the words she did not have the fine motor control to stay within the lines and was unable to match letter for letter in her attempt to copy.

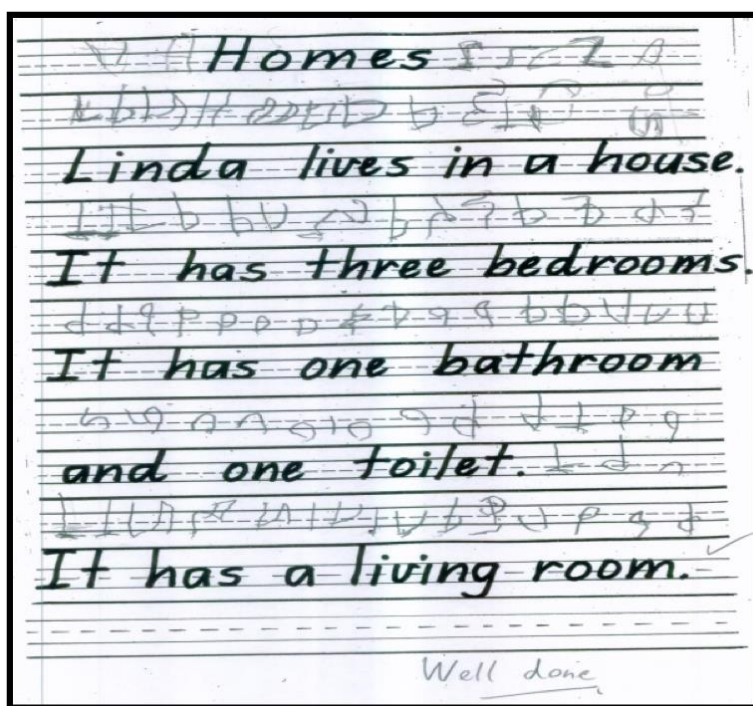


Figure 5.9: Writing sample 6 – copy the printed text

Although there are 'b's and 'd's evident they do not directly link to those letters in the words. However, this sample does show evidence of emerging control and matching with the first "It" and 'L' for Linda, and some connections with the formation of 'b' and 'd' being a combined line and circle shape. Overall these writing samples demonstrate the starting point for this target group of learners.

5.4 Summary.

This chapter has described the findings from an anonymous survey to AMEP/ESL teachers, the classroom observations from a pre-beginner CSWE class and focused

group interviews with teachers to document and analyse the learning needs, barriers and challenges of LESLLA learners by looking at how their prior experiences and current contexts affect their educational participation, acculturation, integration and citizenship process into Australian society. Classroom observations provided insights into the pedagogical approach and the participation behaviour of the target group of LESLLA learners come from non-English speaking African humanitarian backgrounds. Together with teacher survey and interview data the following observations were made:

(1) When “English only” instruction was implemented with this particular group of learners it not only prevented learners from comprehending the “teacher talk” but it also created a communication barrier that made it difficult for teacher and learner to negotiate with each other. For example learners never asked questions and the problem of understanding the L1 instruction and difficulties in asking questions were obvious. As a result learners became frustrated and unhappy.

(2) Most of the teaching and learning time (use of the 510-hours of free tuition) was spent to teach the learners basic concepts about print and the preparatory skills of ‘how to hold a pencil, how to write between lines and “how to learn”’.

(3) Importantly, the target group of learners had spent almost one third of their free hours of tuition in the program but had not yet learned to decode or encode any print. How these learners can attain level A1 of the Common European Framework, which is required to sit for the ACT, within their remaining free hours of instruction is a vital question.

(4) Although the teacher recognised “key gaps” in learner knowledge, including cognitive development and limited content knowledge of the world and Australian culture, there was a need to uplift their foundation skills, but given the limited authority, time and resources, the teacher appeared to be disempowered to address this problem effectively. This reflects the importance of having the necessary resources and support strategies and approaches to address the significantly different needs of this target group of refugee learners.

(5) The irregular attendance and lateness in arrival of many learners interfered with their ability to gain maximum benefit from the program. The teacher’s plan to systematically teach a well-structured program to support these learners’ language development was often thwarted by their ad hoc attendance. Although learners had reasons to justify their irregular attendance or late arrival, it cannot be ignored that this

is beyond institutional control. Thus it requires a conscious effort to clarify individual or practical learning goals to ensure that learners have a sense of purpose and success to complete the program and realise the importance of consistent attendance.

(6) The teachers emphasised the need to create an acquisition rich atmosphere to enhance learners' participation in the L2 learning process. In particular they advocated a relaxed, trustful, and emotionally safe classroom atmosphere, which was filled with consistent use of verbal praise, an absence of negative sanctioning, and considerable tolerance for the 'particular cultural behaviour' and 'tardiness' of the learners. For example, a teacher had been writing sentences on the whiteboard when Learner G3-3 entered the class one hour late and the teacher greeted "Good morning" without any acknowledgment of his late arrival, and continued on. (Field note extract, 26/10/12). This reflected the teachers' philosophy of learning in that they believed such an atmosphere would enhance learners' participation in the L2 learning process.

(7) The VTAs contributed their valuable time with good intentions to help both the teacher and learners in teaching and learning process. Each day there were two to three VTAs, who often worked on a one-on-one basis to assist the class. The learners seemed to depend on the assistance of VTAs. If their assistance and attention were not immediately available, the learners suspended their tasks, showing some frustration, and started talking to each other in their own language. They were often unfamiliar with the instruction of the teacher and any idiomatic expressions used by VTAs. Sometimes it seemed that their variable accent, use of colloquial phrases, intonation and speech rate during oral instructions prevented learners from fully understanding both simple and familiar tasks. For example, one learner had been struggling to find the letters to form a word. She raised her hand to indicate she needed help. A VTA responded by saying "*you need a hand, do you?*" The learner replied 'No'; however the VTA sat next to her and assisted as usual. Thus, the making of meaning did not occur in the initial exchange but the miscommunication was not acknowledged either.

The importance of Krashen's (1981) comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981) is raised in this instance. As he notes, for learners to develop their language proficiency, it is imperative for teachers to ensure their input is comprehensible to learners. Teachers of ESL learners need to be aware of their own English language use in the learning

situation, and model the language that is being taught, and avoid idiomatic expressions. For this group, in particular, they need to speak in short, simple, meaningful sentences, owing to the learners' problem of having very limited or formulaic English to comprehend the questions and instructions. However findings of this observation have several practical implications in designing teaching methodology and program management for L1 low literate learners, which is further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS OF REFUGEE LEARNER INTERVIEWS AND CASE STUDIES

6.1 Refugee learner interviews

This section describes the experiences of twenty LESLLA learners (Focus Group 4) participating in an AMEP CSWE pre beginner class delivered in a refugee welcome area. Overall twenty adult NESB refugee and humanitarian entrants both male and female participants, aged between 25 years and 55 years, from African backgrounds were included in the Focus group 4 interviews. The researcher was fortunate to be able to work through a refugee welfare officer who acted as interpreter for the study. He had been an AMEP student in the past and was from refugee background. He was a multilingual professional working in the refugee settlement program in the local area. Since he was well known to the participants and AMEP he was able to and interact with them easily and professionally. He shared the same African socio-cultural background characteristics as those of the participants, which was of assistance to the coordination of the research process.

It is worthy of note that it was often difficult to coordinate the selected participants with the scheduled timeframe, and keep the interpreter (research assistance) available. The other challenge related to the translation of English into Arabic and Arabic into English, then English into French and French into English. The languages spoken among this group were French, Arabic and Dinka. The researcher needed to rely and depend on words from the interpreter, which in return created a tension between validity and reliability of the data. But the researcher spent substantial time explaining the research project to the interpreter to counteract this. The following section provides profiles of the participants and analysis of their responses to the initial interview (see interview questions part 1 Appendix 4) from which is derived the following six themes: (A) Socio-demographic Background; (B) Education; (C) Employment and work experience; (D) Language skills; (E) Ethnic identity; and (F) Settlement.

The next section reports against these six themes, which overall, indicate that these participants came from different situations but faced the same pattern of uprooting from

their home country and ultimately the challenges associated with trying to integrate into Australian society.

6.1.1 Socio-demographic background

As shown in Table 6.1, the socio-demographic background of the 20 participants in Group 4 were all aged between 25 and 55 years and there were eight male and 12 females, all from African background. The group included 12 participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), two participants from Somalia and six participants from Sudan. These participants had been in Australia under the UNHCR regional resettlement referral and had been living in a refugee welcome zone.

Table 6.1 Socio-demographic background of Focus group 4

Gender	N = 20	Male (n=8)	Female (n=12)
Age group			
25 yrs +			3
26-30 yrs			3
31-45 yrs		4	3
46-55 yrs		4	3
Countries of origin			
DR Congo		8	4
Somalia			2
Sudan			6
Languages spoken			
Arabic		12	8
Dinka			6
French		8	4
Civil status (CS)			
Marital status	Single 3	Married 14	Widowed 3
Visa Status		Duration in Australia	
Refugee	11	1 -4yrs	15
Family stream	9	1-6 yrs	3
		1-8 yrs	2

All were permanent residents at the time the study was undertaken but had yet to achieve citizenship status, which would give them the benefits to vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum, apply for work in the Australian Public Service or in the Australian Defence Force, apply for an Australian passport and re-enter Australia freely and receive help from an Australian consulate while overseas

(Becoming an Australian Citizen, 2007, pp. 3-4). Some of these participants spoke two languages, for example participants who originally come from South Sudan were able to speak in Dinka as well as Arabic. Participants from Somalia were able to speak in Arabic as well as Somali.

6.2 Education

Four questions under Section B were designed to collect data to gather data on participants' previous education in home countries. As shown in Figure 5.6 participants had very little experience of formal schooling. Forty-five percent had no formal schooling experiences. Forty-five percent of participants were having two years or less experience of formal schooling. Only 10% of participants claimed to have five years or less experience of formal schooling. As defined in Chapter two, this group included pre-literate, non-literate and semi-literate levels.

Table 6.2 Educational background of the Focus group 4

Education in home country	N=20	Percentage
No formal schooling	9	45%
1-2 yrs of schooling	9	45%
3-5 yrs of schooling	2	10%
Further education	0	
Other	0	

6.2.1 Employment

Participants were asked about employment (C). Finding employment is one of the highest priorities for refugees resettling in Australia. “Despite [their] eagerness to participate in the Australian workforce, refugees and humanitarian entrants are overrepresented among the ranks of the underemployed, the lowly-paid, low-skilled, precariously employed and casualised members of the labour force” (Olliff, 2010, p.3). Descriptive data are shown in Tables 6.3 and 6.4. At the time of the study, only 45% of

this group of participants (9) had experienced working in Australia. Currently 30% of them (6) had been able to find work in the local area.

Table 6.3: Group 4 learners' current employment status

Question	Yes	No
1. Have you ever had a paying job in Australia?	45% (9)	55% (11)
2. Do you have a paying job right now?	30% (6)	70% (14)
3. What is your current job?		
Cleaning	5% (1)	Trolley collection
Fruit/vegetable picking	15% (3)	10% (2)
4. Job status.		
Casual	Part-time 10% (2)	On Call 20% (4)
	15% (30)	

Table 6.4 Participants current unemployment (n=14)

Participants currently unemployed (n=14)	Yes	No
5. Are you looking for work?	50% (10)	20% (4)
6. Are you having difficulties with finding a job?	70% (14)	
How long have you been unemployed?		
6- 12 months	1-2yrs	2 -3yrs
	2	6
		More than 3 yrs
		6
What kind of difficulties are you having finding a job?		Frequency
There are no jobs available in the city.		42.8% (6)
I lack Australian work experience.		100% (14)
My skills or experience are not accepted by Australian employers		100% (14)
I require citizenship status.		100% (14)
I have difficulties with the English Language		100% (14)
I do not have enough skills or experience for the jobs that are available.		100% (14)
I have experienced discrimination because of my age, gender, religion.		21.4% (3)
Other (please state)		No transport 50% (7)
		Children 64.2% (9)
		Pregnancy 28.5% (4)

At the time of the focus Group 4 interviews, 70% (14) participants were unemployed and had been looking for work. Four female participants (20%) of the group claimed that they were not looking for work as they were expecting babies.

All fourteen participants reported that they were having difficulties finding a job. As can be seen in Table 6.4, all participants in this group perceived that because they did not have Australian work experience, or overseas experience they were not recognised by the Australian employers. As well, the fact that they did not have citizenship status, a good command of English, or skills and experience to apply for the available jobs also limited their chances of finding work. They explained that they had to depend on government financial support (New Start Allowance or similar Social Security Benefits provided by Centrelink). Three of these participants said that they wanted to work and were actively looking for work but found it extremely difficult. They perceived ESL literacy difficulties and hidden discrimination issues in the host society prevented them obtaining employment. In general all participants stressed that they did not want live on welfare payments. In fact for most it was something they had not ever been exposed to before. Learner 13 said that, *“I have my family members back home in Africa they need money so I really need to work.”* *“Because there are many young people looking for work they don’t want to employ people like me”* (Translated Version). Learner 12 said, *“Centrelink money is not enough to pay rent and food; I have to find work”*. Learner 11 raised other issues noting that: *“. . . it is because of my dress no one would like to employ me. I can do cleaning jobs. But here you have to wear jeans and working shoes. I have never worn a pair of shoes in my life”* (Translated Version). This statement illustrates the clash of having to wear work clothes with her identity as a ‘Muslim female’. Additionally, 50% of participants (7) said that if they were provided with transport facilities to go to agricultural farms in the next township there were many working opportunities available for them. Learner 1 said that she used to work at a poultry farm located more than 100 km away from her home. She proudly said that she was paid \$100 cash per day. She considered it as a “huge payment’ for a day when she converted Australian dollars into Sudanese pounds, and then compared it with the Centrelink fortnightly payment. Then she emphasised that she could have worked for a long-time if she was able to access transport.

This illustrates how difficult it is for this target group since a combination of factors act against them obtaining employment. However, 64.2% (9) participants from this unemployed group noted that owing to their personal commitments, regarding their children, and the lack of childcare facilities, temporarily they would not be able to look for work.

6.2.2 Language and computer skills

When participants were asked about their language skills (D), first were asked to rate their personal reading and writing skills in their first language and then their English language skills and computer skills. They were asked to provide ratings on a scale starting at ‘poor’ (1), through to ‘basic’ (2), ‘satisfactory’ (3), and ‘good’ (4) to ‘very good’ (5). Table 6.5 provides a summary of their responses.

Table 6.5: Group 4 participants’ self-ratings of their L1 and L2 literacy skills

Language skills N=20	1	2	3	4	5
Reading skills in L1	85% (17)	15% (3)			
Writing skills in L1	85% (17)	15% (3)			
Mathematical skills	45% (9)	35% (7)	20% (4)		
Reading skills in English L2	85% (17)	5% (1)	10% (2)		
Writing skills English L2	85% (17)	15% (3)			
Speaking skills in English L2	70% (14)	15% (3)	15% (3)		
Computer skills	95% (19)	5% (1)			

In its submission to ‘National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults’ 2011, Adult Migrant Education service (AMES 2011, p.10) states, “. . . to create fair and equitable access for all Australians the National Foundation Skills Strategy should be directed at all adult Australians who need to develop foundation skills so as to access further training and/or higher level employment, while providing additional supports that ‘level the field’ for specific disadvantaged groups”. When taking a closer look at data in the Table 6.5 it suggests that the majority of participants in this study require a specially designed structured plan to develop their foundation skills. Eighty five percent of (17) rated themselves as having poor reading and writing skills in L1 and L 2. Also these data highlight that 95% of this group (19) report they have poor computer skills and only one participant rated as having basic computer skills.

While almost half (9) reported having poor mathematical skills, approximately a third (7) assessed themselves as having basic mathematical skills and a fifth saw themselves as having satisfactory mathematic skills. Those who reported having basic and

satisfactory levels of mathematical skills were mainly the male participants (9 of 11). The contrast between literacy and mathematical skills acquisition and the apparent gender factor suggests cultural background may marginalise females from managing finance and the role of the male regardless of language requires management of money. This is supported by Njuki and Sanginga (2013) who note that women's participation in African national educational systems is again biased against them because of the sociocultural and economic environments in Africa.

6.3 Computer usage

Interview question 2 focused on available opportunities for the interview participants to access computers because of the potential access to immediate language learning tools and people afforded by digital communication technologies today (Hubbard, 2008).

Almost half of the participants reported they had computers at home and had links to the Internet or email access, but they noted that their children only used these.

Similarly, nine of the participants specified they had never seen or used a computer before they arrived in Australia. Learner 11 and Learner 20, in this group, said they had no immediate need to buy a computer because they did not know how to use one.

However, two female participants in the 26-30 years age category claimed that they were saving money to buy computers since they were shown how to use the Internet and other resources at a local library workshop. Their straightforward association with local library suggests they had perceived that English language proficiency and the Internet access were necessary for them to learn and were also seen as a symbol of acculturation. Learner 4 stated:

“I am saving money to buy a computer. I think we can learn a lot using the computer. Can have good fun.”

Both of these learners were inspired by latest technology and expressed their eagerness to speed up learning in English so they could “chat” with their friends on “facebook”. Both of them proudly claimed that they had bought their own mobile phones, which they named as “little computers”. Learner 5 stated:

“When you can Skype or Chat you won’t feel that you are living in another country and you don’t have to cry anymore.”

6.3.1 Language and literacy instruction

Group 4 participants were interviewed about how they preferred to learn English. The results of their common views are shown in Table 6.6. They were keen to have their language and literacy instruction delivered by someone who spoke their home language.

Table 6.6: Group 4 AMEP learners' views on learning English

How I like to learn English	%	n
With a teacher who speaks my language.	90	18
With other students with same language level.	65	13
With my friends.	35	7
At TAFE College (AMEP)	30	6
With a home tutor.	30	6
At a community centre.	20	4
With a teacher who speaks only English.	10	2

In explaining how they would prefer to learn English the frequency that participants raised a preference was noted and this resulted in most respondents indicating multiple ways. Almost all (18) of the participants noted that they would prefer to learn English with a teacher who could speak their first language. The reasons for their preferences included several factors. The most important was that they would be able ask the teacher a question and gain clarification of meaning about what they were supposed to be learning. Their common perception was that a teacher who knows their language also has the ability to understand their culture and values. They explained they would feel more comfortable dealing with a teacher who would know them better because of the cultural understanding so this was perceived as making learning easier for both the teacher and learners.

Approximately a third of this group indicated that they liked to attend TAFE College to learn English, but no responses were received to express their willingness to be with other students with different language levels to their own to learn English (as they were in the AMEP). However, 65% (13) of the group's responses supported learning with students who had the same language level as themselves. Approximately a third of the group indicated the preferred to learn English with their friends, at AMEP in TAFE College and with a home tutor (which was a preference from adult female learners), while 20% (4) reported they liked learning English at their community centres and 30% were interested in learning with Home Tutors. Of note was the finding that eight male

participants in this group disliked the idea of receiving the Volunteer Home Tutoring Service (VHT) to learn English.

One of the male learners said that ‘going to TAFE’ made him feel much more comfortable rather than having to learn at home with a Volunteer Home Tutor. He said that he did not want to be humiliated in front of his children and wife by having to learn through a Volunteer Home Tutor (VHT) at home. Also a gender issue emerged in this discussion. It was revealed that most VTHs in AMEP in Australia are females (Masters, Murray, & Lloyd 2005). All eight male participants interviewed this study considered having a female VHT to teach a male at home is beyond their cultural expectations and it affects the dignity of the “man of the house”. This highlights the social norms and attitudes towards females by men in agricultural African societies, where mobility was low and most of the population lived in small villages (Familusi, 2012).

All participants were not in favour of receiving online services or learning via distance learning services offered by the AMEP, as most of them did not have any skills in digital communication technology or the resources to support their access.

6.4 Ethnic identity

It is well established that approaches to ESL pedagogy raise the importance of teachers understanding that each learner brings their own package of diverse sociocultural and linguistic experiences with them (Collier, 1987, 1989; Gunn, 2003; Moore, 2008; Thompson, 2003; Wright & Mahiri, 2012). Thus, this qualitative data collection (E) sought to better understand these learners through exploring their sociocultural backgrounds. The following questions were asked:

1. Do you belong to any ethnic associations in Australia?
2. Do you have close relatives in your country?
3. Are you able to get in contact with relatives in your country?
4. By what means do you get in contact (phone, email, letters)? _____
5. Are there other people from your *home country* living in this city?
6. Do the people from your *home country* organise social events such as dinners, dances or other group activities?

All participants were very proud to report that they were African by birth but came from different countries, although there were similarities and differences socially, culturally, linguistically and in terms of religious backgrounds. This group included 12

participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), 2 participants from Somalia, and 6 participants from Sudan. Eighteen of the twenty participants had their immediate family members living with them. At the time of the interview, two participants said their applications to bring their families to Australia from back home were still in progress. Almost half of the participants (9) said they had the opportunity to see their family and talk with them via Skype. They said the community leader would arrange this facility if their relatives had access to the Internet in their home country. All participants acknowledged that they had a strong community network around them. They all valued the support and assistance given by their community in Australia and said their leader was dedicated to bring African-Australian communities together by organising small projects and workshops. Also 10 participants appreciated the services provided by the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ). This was because; ECCQ provides Sexual health clinics free of charge and confidential counselling, testing and some treatments. No Medicare card is needed. The clinics also provide free interpreting services.

Learner 4 and 5 noted that each month African families get together and have small events where they share food and take part in cultural dancing, but they said that they did not want to be involved in those events. When the researcher asked why they explained that they did not like the pressure being put on them by elderly members of the community to preserve the African culture and traditions for next generation.

For example, Learner 4 who was 26 years old and single said:

“I like to be an Australian. I like to speak more English and show that I am so cool . . . I don’t want to wear African cloths and stay at home.” (Translated Version)

Learner 5 explained:

“. . . I respect my identity as an African and I do not want to change it. But I don’t want to carry it on my back. When you live in Australia you have to act like an Australian. If not you won’t get a place in the society.” (Translated Version)

In terms of identity, Learner 4 and Learner 5 had different ways of addressing their situation and explaining their views. This is in keeping with Wenger (1998, p. 153) who

states identity manifests “as a tendency to come up with certain interpretations, to engage in certain actions, to make certain choices, to value certain experiences – all by virtue of participating in certain enterprises.”

6.5 Settlement

To identify specific settlement experiences in relation to acculturation, housing, employment, services, belonging participants were asked following questions (F):

1. Do you have relatives close by?
2. Do you have friends from the same cultural and religious group?
3. Have you got your own house? What kind of housing is it and who helped you to find it?
4. How do you find government services around you?
5. Have you got Australians friends? How difficult has it been to develop relationships with Australians? Why?
6. How do you find living in Australia? Do you personally feel integrated into Australian society?

During this discussion some participants recounted their previous life experiences, which had been dominated by the terror of war, violence and destruction. Although the researcher deliberately avoided initiating such discussion, the participants raised these issues themselves, as they wanted to tell their stories. Almost three-quarters (14) were married, with the remainder being single (3) and three widowed. Apart from two of the married participants the others had their immediate family members living with them. Two married participants had applied to bring their families to Australia but their applications had not yet been processed. All three widowed participants had been living with their grown up children. One Sudanese widowed participant had her niece living in the local area but no Congolese or Somali participants in these interviews had any relatives close by in Australia. Twelve of the participants lived in the same suburb in the local area, while four reported that they were living in outer suburbs, where they did not have any friends or members from their community around them. The rest of the participants (4) had been living in different suburbs where public transport was available.

With respect to having friends from the same cultural and religious group, most of those interviewed (17 of 20) reported that they did have friends from the same cultural and religious backgrounds. Almost half of the participants (8) stressed that friends who shared a similar faith were more important than the friends who came from a similar cultural group. Three participants who followed the religion of Islam indicated an unwillingness to associate with Australian white people. When they were asked why one participant said: “. . . they are far away from our culture and religion.” It was difficult to drill down more deeply to expand on this answer because of the interpreting constraint. However, these participants themselves had difficulty in discussing cultural and religious values and differentiating between owing to their strong religious practices. The interpreter advised the researcher not to ask any personal questions related to the male participants’ wives as such questions may be perceived as intrusive and they may be easily offended. For example, he said you should never ask a Muslim man a question like “*How is your wife?*” or “*How is your wife and children?*” This is because they consider, as it is an insult to ask about wife or any other female member of the family. Also he further advised the researcher to avoid making statements such as “*Give my regards to your wife and children.*” or “*Say hello to your wife and children.*”

When housing was considered all but one participant reported that they lived in the private rental sector and were often in receipt of a government support rental allowances because of their low income. Only one participant owned a two-bedroom unit in the local area. Ten participants reported their community leader was involved in helping them find housing accommodation. Six participants admired people from their churches who helped them by being involved in negotiating with the real estate agents to find houses for them. Approximately three-quarters of the participants (16) perceived that real estate agents did not treat them fairly. One of them said that:

“I could not find a rental property for five months. I stayed in the community hostel with my six children. The real estate agents in the area hate applicants with many children.” (Learner 14). (Translated Version)

Twelve participants also reported that they had been on constant moves due to the inability to extend their rental agreements with landlords. They believed they were

being discriminated against by the private rental market. One female participant pointed out:

“Last year I changed to three houses in the area. First I rented a unit. A few days later I knew that the next-door person had phoned the Council and said that we were very noisy. We do our chanting every Friday. The next-door lady didn’t like hearing our prayers. Our chanting is meant to be noisy otherwise God won’t hear us. Anyway after the three months I found a house away from the town. One month later the agent said that the landlord was selling the house so we would have to vacate it. The third house I rented had no curtains and the agent said the landlord will fix it soon. During wintertime my son asked the agent about curtains. Then he said if curtains are fixed your rent will be increased by thirty dollars extra . . .” (Learner 14). (Translated Version)

Learner 16 revealed that the house he was currently renting was very dirty, had no heating or wood heaters, and had smelly carpets, and the oven was not working. When he was asked whether it had been reported to the agent he said; “No, I don’t want to lose this house. Moving is expensive and finding another place is difficult.” He elaborated:

“Every time when you move you have to spend a lot of money. It is very hard to get the previous bond money back. The real estate agents claim ‘that’ money for cleaning and ‘this’ money for fixing things in the house, and sometime send extra bills too. Once I received a bill for \$767.00 for fixing the gate. When I informed it to our community leader he told me not to pay as it was the landlord’s responsibility to fix the gate.” (Learner 16) (Translated Version)

Overall, all but one participant had experienced problems with the availability of appropriate housing for them. In particular, almost half of the participants (9) said that because they had many children responses from real estate agents were very disappointing. “If there is a house in the rental market we get the worst because no one wants that place to be rented,” said Learner 3. Another issue raised by Learner 1 and Learner 8 was that they could actually find a property in a suburb where most of the African families lived, because no Australians wanted to live next them. Also they reported that real estate agents would not provide a one-year lease. This added difficulty

to their lives because with the alternative shorter-term lease they were offered (three months or six months) they continually found themselves changing schools for their children.

These responses highlight that the availability of rental properties for these participants has become a serious problem due to discrimination, unemployment, large families and their low socioeconomic status. In addition, these discussions revealed that because of their low literacy skills or absence of literacy they were powerless to negotiate the rental market and obtain stable accommodation for the longer term.

With regard to their experience in accessing government services all participants reported that they were very grateful to the Australian Government's Australian Humanitarian Program and the Australian people for accepting them into the country, and providing assistance for them. They were unanimous in voicing their appreciation of the friendly support they received from the local government refugee-settlement program, and admired the kindness and friendly nature of the service personnel. Both government and non-government agencies had been involved in assisting them with regards to their initial settlement issues. These included assistance to engage in the local system; opening a bank account; getting a tax file number; enrolling their children at schools, completing Centrelink forms, and contacting them to employment agencies. Additionally, for eight participants (8) the services provided by the Salvation Army and Life Line were also perceived as very important. They said that for their initial settlement, items such as clothing, furniture and refrigerators were donated by the charity organisations.

All participants said that Centrelink was trying hard to make them financially independent and now they had been referred to recruitment agencies and job service providers appointed by the Australian government to actively seek employments. Learner 20 said that the job service provider prepared his resume and then placed him in a meat factory that was four hundred kilometres away from his home (see extract).

Twelve participants (12) pointed out the difficulty they had to get to the appropriate services to address their health issues. Mainly, with the language problem, they were often required to take a friend from their community, who could not speak English to see a General Practitioner (GP).

“They (job service providers) said that they provide money for travelling. But no busses are available to that area and I don’t have a car. And I don’t know how to drive. They said that if you don’t accept the job Centrelink will not give you any money for living.” Learner 20 (Translated Version)

They had experienced very difficult situations with this because they had difficulty in expressing themselves to convey their real ailment to the GP. They further said the situation could become really bad if they had an emergency situation with which to deal. They mentioned that they were aware of the opportunity to ask an interpreter for their services in hospitals but they needed to make an appointment in advance because they lived in a regional area.

Another participant (Learner 16) said that he was worried about his wife and children who he had left behind, and he needed to bring them to Australia. His application had been in the process for more than two years. He said that no one could help him except the Australian Immigration Department. Thus, these learners access to health services was impacted because of their low literacy skills as well as other issues of language, culture and location.

When discussing their access to Australian friends, no one reported that they had a very close friendship with any Australian people. But almost half reported how they had been supported and looked after by friendly Australians who lived in the local area. It was revealed that these participants were involved in the local church groups, which in turn indicated that religion was a very important source of social interaction for the group. Learner 6 explained that one elderly couple in the area has been looking after them for more than three years. Learner 6, stated:

“Australians are very friendly and genuine; even without asking they care about you. Mr and Mrs ‘X’ take my children to school and bring them home everyday. . . . During winter time they bought really expensive blankets for my children.”
(Translated Version)

The remainder of the participants had mixed feelings. They identified friendship in terms of providing both emotional and material support. Almost half of them believed that they did not have Australian friends, because of their inability to communicate in

English. This was seen as a major barrier preventing them from interacting with fellow Australians. Learner 1 was of the opinion that if she were fluent in English, building a relationship with Australians would not be a difficult matter. Interestingly, Learner 18, who had been in the area for more than four years, explained that it was difficult to build up a relationship with Australians as most of them stereotype refugees like themselves in a negative way so that they do not wish to make contact. She expressed considerable social isolation and often perceived that she was being rejected by the host society. This learner described as follows:

“Most Australians think that we came by boat to grab their money. They see us as troublemakers, offenders and robbers. We have not chosen to be here!” (Translated Version).

Learner 9 expressed her strong perception of racism that she felt she had experienced for long time.

“There is one clothing shop run by an Australian lady and whenever I enter that shop she pretends that she is busy and never looks at me or says ‘hello’ to my children”. (Translated Version).

Also discrimination, which prevents her interacting with Australians was an issue for Learner 7. She put her experience into words as:

“I have seen bus drivers help white ladies with children to get into the bus. They stop the bus get down and help folding the prams or strollers. They never offered me such assistance when I get into the bus with my four children. Now I don’t take the stroller to the town anymore rather I put my baby in my “Khanga” (sling to carry the baby on back). (Translated Version).

The extended conversation with these learners was very revealing. They were not hesitating to come to the researcher and hold her hand and express whatever they wanted to say using hand gestures. While they were able to use limited words such as ‘good morning’, ‘bye’, ‘I ‘me’ you, ‘see you tomorrow’, ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and don’t know they did not have the elaborated code. Most often they shook their head to say yes or

no. Sometime they used their L1 to talk to the researcher. However, their experience in the community suggests that their inability to communicate in English would have often been taken for granted.

“I often go to the Convenience Store next door. I don’t have a car. I do some shopping here. My son said that shopkeeper is charging me a lot and does not give the correct change. Because the shopkeeper knows that I cannot do calculation very well. Even I know I don’t know how to say it in English.” Learner 19 (Translated Version).

These interviews revealed the difficulties that this target group experienced when trying to do daily routine activities in the local community.

When asked how they found living in Australia and whether they personally felt integrated into Australian society, typically the participants referred back to their past experience of loss and hardship, first in their home countries and then in camps. This past experience reflected the strong gender-based roles and responsibilities of their culture. Female participants reported how they lived in terror without the effective protection of a male family member, as this left them open to gender-based violence in their relationships with family and community. It was not the intention of the researcher to refresh the memory of their bitter experiences or the devastating impact of their past but it seemed beneficial for those who volunteered their story and saw it as an important part of their view of how they arrived at their current situation. Male participants described how they struggled to provide for their families such as finding food and water for their children. Compared with their past trauma and hardship almost every one said that the challenges they encounter in settling into the Australian context was ‘nothing’ other than the language barrier. They reported how in comparison with the past living in the Australian community gave them a sense of security and a wealth of resources. For instance, Learner 10 said:

“I can sleep here well. I can eat well. I have enough water to drink. My husband and my children are with me. What else you want from life. I am happy here.” (Translated Version).

Learner 17 was also positive about life in Australia, stating:

“ . . . Those days we slept in holes dug under the floor. Now we have beds, blankets, and pillows to sleep and I don't see life is challenge in Australia.” (Translated Version)

Learner seven had a different perspective and said:

“The beginning was very bad. The worst days of my life. I miss my home. When I think of my village, my friends, I feel like going back home.” (Translated Version).

However, the notion of being integrated into Australian society was a difficult concept for participants to be able to express their opinions. When the concept was simplified by the interpreter as, “Do you think that you belong to Australia?” there were many negative responses. Almost all (18) participants perceived that they belonged to their home countries although they had been in Australia for a number of years. From their responses it appeared that they felt isolated and segregated from the dominant society. They related stories of rejection from Australians rather than acceptance, and exclusion rather than inclusion. When the researcher asked the interpreter to articulate the meaning of integration in terms of “successful settlement”, for example their ability to participate fully in the economic, political, social processes of Australian society the participants' responses reiterated a common view of not feeling that they belonged, which was supported by the impact of lack of proficiency in the English language, and cultural difference. Learner nine raised the issue of the importance of needing to feel that they were able to make a contribution to Australia rather than be seen to be dependent.

“I like Australia very much. But I don't feel welcome here. If I get an opportunity to show that we are here not to depend on them and we can contribute to Australia in many ways too I may feel belonging to Australia.” (Translated Version).

Learner two felt that she was always misled because she was unable to understand the language. She expressed her vulnerability as:

“When someone gives you a piece of paper and asks you to put your finger marks on

it how do I know what is going on? They might say that they take \$50 dollars from your account each week. That is the problem I have. Until I sort it out it I don't feel even I have a life here.”

She further noted that she could be cheated and misled by her children, because they were able to speak English very well and also read and write. Thus, she emphasised that she felt they belonged to Australia but not her.

Learner 20 saw himself as being isolated from the wider community and unable to interact because of the perceptions held by Australian people. His perceptions suggest that there is a lack of awareness and understanding in the local community with respect to the context of this target group and their cultural diversity. He noted:

“Australians don't want us to be here. They think that we are animals. Some white ladies look at us like we are animals.” (Translated Version).

Learner Four and Learner Five, who often had different perspectives on acculturation and integration perceived that that they were treated equally, and were offered the best service that fellow Australians enjoy so they felt that they did belong to Australia. They believed adaptation, settlement, and integration and citizenship were all personal choices for their group. Their responses reflected their personal strategies and a positive outlook on how they planned to blend into Australian culture, raising the issue of appearance first, though related to the more distinctive cultural nature of female dress compared with Learner 20's comment above.

Learner Four said that:

“First, I gave up wearing my traditional cloths here. If you wear and behave like an African others notice the difference and distance themselves from you. You must adopt the Australian culture and customs. I mean I am not asking you to go and get drunk in the pub. But you must behave like an Australian. Then no-one notices the difference and they will accept you.” (Translated Version).

Similarly, Learner Five explained:

“First learn to speak English, then you go and talk to people. Don’t wait till Australians ask, “How are you”. When you meet someone, you ask them, “How are you?” So together we can say this is our country.” (Translated Version).

However, for some respondents, there was a difference between belonging and integration. For Learner 20, achievement of material goods was raised as important for him to feel integrated. This suggests that the feeling of being integrated may relate to gender issues with this male learner linking integration to the ability to be part of a family and provide for it.

“If you have your family here, have your own house, own land, and have a job and have security, then yes, you can say you are integrated. But I don’t have anybody and I have nothing, I can’t apply for a loan to buy a house.” (Translated Version).

This quote also suggests that not having his family around him, his own house or employment has produced a feeling of helplessness and dependency, which highlights the imbalance of power between him and the wider Australian society, making him dependent for his daily needs. Others also noted the importance of being independent, rather than being dependent with their life seemingly under the control of someone (such as Australian government agencies). Learner Six stated:

“I don’t choose anything here. I have no freedom. Everything is decided by someone else. We have been living in the dark.” (Translated Version).

Citizenship status in this discussion was seen as a necessary precursor by all the participants in realising freedom of choice. Similarly, as the comments below show, having some control over one’s life was regarded as an essential component for particular aspects of integration.

“I am a still refugee in this country. If I receive the citizenship status I may not feel like this any more, because I will be an Australian Citizen.” Learner Two (Translated Version).

“To feel that I belong to Australia I need some sort of confirmation from the government. I don’t belong to my country and I don’t belong to Australia. If you have Australian Citizenship it will make you feel you belong and equal to everybody else”.
Learner 13 (Translated Version).

“I need to go back to Congo to see my parents. I need an Australian Passport. If I go there with the Australian passport everyone respects you and they don’t keep their hands on you.” Learner 12 (Translated Version).

For all these twenty participants gaining citizenship and having equality of opportunity in all areas of social, economic, civil and political life was seen as essential to their ability to feel Australian and be able to settle. However, they emphasised that without having the power of English proficiency they would not be able to participate in the workplace, school, hospital, bank and civic society. For example, voting in an election, applying for a housing loan and having an Australian passport were regarded as the functional aspects of integration.

6.5 Remarks

This section described the findings from the interviews with focus Group 4, NESB refugee learners who were recognised as having ISLPR ‘0’ (Ingram & Wylie, 1993; 1994; 1979/1999) and learning English as a CSWE pre-beginner in AMEP. Data collected through semi-structured interviews reinforces the findings of this research study in further highlighting the impact of their specific situation and special needs compared with other immigrants. These interviews show how they are struggling to conceive of a positive future for them and their families in Australia, although they are have moved to a ‘safe place’.

In general lack of or absence of literacy skills and Western style school/educational experience in their first language (L1) has impacted negatively on their ability to acquire English language proficiency (L2), as has their lack of digital literacy skills, which in turn prevents them from learning and addressing the broader and deeper understandings and other essential skills required to gain knowledge to pass the

Australian Citizenship Test. Figure 6.1 provides a summary of the key aspects that are impacted by their low levels of literacy or non-literacy or pre-literacy status.

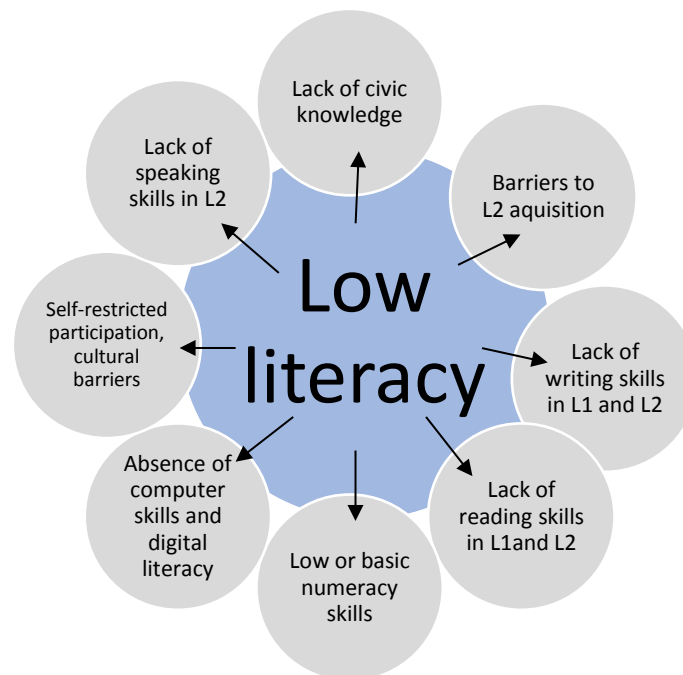


Figure 6.1: Summary of key aspects impacting on L1 literacy development of non-literate or pre-literate learners

Participants low level of literacy skills compound the basic needs and requirements that accompany the settlement process. For example, together an inability to communicate in English (low L2 literacy) with landlords or real estate agents, and not knowing tenant's rights and the Australian legal system, not knowing about the need for a pre-rental condition report for a rental property for instance, not understanding basic standard safety requirements, and/or having fear of loss of their tenancies (civic knowledge) results in some participants being exploited in their journey towards the settlement and integration. Also it became clear that these learners were forced into socialising with their own L1 group, thus creating a strongly bonded social network within the local community. This may be part of survival at this time but may also be detrimental to their motivation to participate in Australian society. The research is further triangulated in the next section through the results of eight case studies.

6.6 Findings from eight case study learners

This section deals with eight case studies of NESB African adult former refugee humanitarian individuals (Focus group five) who volunteered to talk about their experiences with integration into Australian society. Their stories reveal a wide variety of experiences during their formative years in their home countries. Each story involves the emotions of personal experiences, anxiety, disappointment, success and satisfaction. Common experiences that all shared were vulnerability, the differing degrees of severity and cruelty of war. They shared their personal trials and tribulations they faced in the challenges of integrating their lives into “the Australian way of life.” The fact is that they had been living in Australia for nearly a decade but they felt their voices had not yet been heard. The participants, who were all permanent residents in Australia, were representative of the different backgrounds referred to in this study as shown in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Overview of case study group background (Group 5)

Participant background features	N=8
African LESLLA learners from AMEP pre-beginner class.	2
African NESB low literate participant from the community with no language support or did not attend AMEP or any other language providers.	2
African former refugee humanitarian participants who sat ACT but did not pass the test.	2
African former refugee humanitarian participants passed the ACT.	2

Though a purposive sample, participation in these case studies was voluntary and depended totally on the willingness of the respondents. In addition, it was not the researcher’s or interpreter’s intention to collect sensitive information related to participants’ personal tragedies or personal lives. For example, when participants were asked whether they had attempted to undertake any education in Australia instead of answering directly, they started by narrating their life stories, drawing on the historical account of their journey to Australia. This appeared to be a natural process since what happened in the past was seen as having a serious impact on their present circumstances. Thus, it was important to listen when they freely and sincerely shared any aspect of their experiences in their description of their situation. As a result of this flexibility the participants willingly gave their background information related to their forced migration. Direct quotes taken from the interviews have been edited by the

interpreter without changing the essence of their words. The eight case studies are presented as vignettes structured around the following four areas with the key features of their three countries of origin presented first; participant profile; experience with literacy; current settlement issues; values attached to literacy and citizenship.

6.6.1 Southern Sudan

Nana and Veena are from Southern Sudan, which is a relatively large, arid and undeveloped country vastly different from living by Western standards. It has one railroad stretching from north to south. The largest ethnic groups inhabit the swampland of the Nile Basin, which is where the Dinka people live. Before the area was colonised by the British, life for the Dinkas was relatively peaceful but over native to the north of Sudan. Originally, they were nomadic, travelling in family groups living in temporary constructions with their cattle. However, because of war their cattle were destroyed and they had to leave their ancestral lands living a disrupted life on the move. For the past three decades there have been refugees, uprooted from their homeland by invaders (Alfred & Obarmchii, 2013). A study conducted by UNICEF in South Sudan found that sexual harassment, and child-to-child violence. In particular parental negative social attitudes towards girls' education, traditional early marriages and early pregnancy prevented female students' participation in further education (UNICEF, 2008).

Federal Republic of Somalia

Somalia officially the Federal Republic of Somalia, is a country located in the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia to the west, Djibouti to the northwest, the Gulf of Aden to the north, the Indian Ocean to the east, and Kenya to the southwest. For the past 20 years, this boomerang-shaped east African state has been one of the world's most troubled countries. Chaos and violence have reigned since civil war broke out in 1991, and several famines in the past decade have caused hundreds of thousands to flee. Somalia has witnessed internecine warfare and widespread insecurity. The country has been without a unified central government since the end of 1990, resulting in localised factional rivalry and fighting and the absence of the rule of law in many areas. The armed conflict and emergencies have caused a significant number of deaths and displacement within the population. It is estimated that there are 370,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia and a further 400,000 remain in exile in

neighbouring countries. Violence and suffering have affected communities in almost all parts of the country (Aljazeera, 2012).

In Somalia, families fleeing violence and famine travel by foot for weeks in search of food and water. About 80% of them are travelling without a male companion. They sleep outside in the open air. Many women are raped along the way, or even after they reach the refugee camps in Kenya. In spite of In Somalia, families fleeing violence and famine travel by foot for weeks in search of food and this, one mother told us, “I will sleep better at night, knowing my children have something to eat in the camp” (Aljazeera, 2012).

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo)

A vast country with immense economic resources, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) has been at the centre of what could be termed Africa's world war. This has left it in the grip of a humanitarian crisis. The five-year conflict pitted government forces, supported by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, against rebels backed by Uganda and Rwanda. Country situated in central Africa with a small length of Atlantic coastline, which is the third largest country (by area) in Africa. The name "Congo" refers to the river Congo, also known as the river Zaire. Though it is located in the Central African UN sub region, the nation is economically and regionally affiliated with Southern Africa as a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13283212>)

The DRC holds two major distinctions. First, it is the richest country in Africa in terms of mineral wealth: gold, diamonds, cobalt and chromium all exist in abundance. Second, it is the country in which the highest number of people – roughly, 4 to 10 million – have died due to war since World War II. (Source <http://intercontinentalcry.org/canada-in-the-congo-war/>)

It's the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a brutal conflict whose elements include the “dirty diamond” trade and other minerals, including gold, copper, tin and cobalt as well as spill-overs from the 1990s genocide in Rwanda, and the ruinous legacy of the decades-long western-backed Mobutu dictatorship. It is estimated that over the

last decade there have been four million deaths (<http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/1389>).

Over the past decade “hundreds of thousands have been raped, many of them gang-raped . . . In some villages as many as 90 percent of the women have been raped” (CBS News, January 13, 2008). Anneka Von Woudenburg, senior Congo researcher for Human Rights Watch, stated that rape is a method of terror: “This is not rape because soldiers have got bored and have nothing to do. It is a way to ensure that communities accept the power and authority of that particular armed group. This is about terror. This is about using it as a weapon of war.” The prevalence of rape and other forms of sexual violence is considered the worst in the world. In May 2011 the *New York Times* reported that a woman is raped every minute in the Congo. Aside from the severe physical and psychological trauma experienced by rape victims, sexual violence has contributed to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.

Table 6.8: Demographic background of case study participants

Name*	Year of arrival	Visa	Age in yrs	Country of origin	Gender	Marital status	Children	Employment		Prior schooling	Few years	Near secondary or above
								Before migration	After migration	No formal schooling		
Nana	2005	RHE	46-55	South Sudan	F	M	4	farmer	None			
Veena	2005	RHE	46-55	South Sudan	F	M	5	Farmer	None			
Meena	2004	Family	26-30	Somalia	F	M	4	None	None			
Zeena	2006	RHE	31-45	Somalia	F	W	2	None	None			
Ben	2006	RHE	31-45	DR Congo	M	M	9	Mining industry	Meat factory			
Zen	2006	RHE	31-45	DR Congo	M	W		Electrician	None			
Ren	2005	RHE Citizen	46-55	DR Congo	M	M	7	Animal park warden	RSPCA Ware house assistant Weekend egg collector			
Ken	2005	RHE Citizen	31-45 yrs	DR Congo	M	M	5	Congo river ferry operator	Meat factory			

*Names are pseudonyms.

6.6.2 Case study one – Nana

Personal profile

Nana –is a lively female in her early fifties born and raised in South Sudan. Due to the war she fled with her husband and four children escaping from local tribes and wild animals through Uganda and Ethiopia before ending up at a refugee camp in northern Kenya. They have been waiting 12 years with thousands of other refugees in the refugee camp and granted UNHCR refugee status and accepted by Australia in 2005. Nana and her family first settled in Nundah an outer Brisbane suburb in Queensland as her husband found work as a labourer in a Gravel Quarry Pit. Due to the great recession that hit in 2009 her husband lost his job. Her community leader supported her family to resettle in a regional city where many Sudanese immigrants used to live. Her husband is now in his retirement age and is receiving the Aged Pension. All her children have left home. They have a car but Nana does not know how to drive.

Experience with literacy

Nana has never been to a school in her country. She learnt many things in her life through oral traditions. Since her children left home, all her L2 literacy requirements rely on the members of her community. She has never made any effort to learn English as L2 related her children are looking after issues. She has never been worked in Australian context. Currently she is in her pre beginner CSWE class as she is required to attend English class at TAFE or she will not get her Centrelink payment. She doesn't feel that she is making sufficient progress in L2 learning.

Current settlement issues Nana lives in a remote neighbourhood with a large Sudanese population. Whilst this would provide community support, it also of course limited her ability to speak English. Her community is reasonably large and strongly established in the area therefore neither she is isolated nor acculturated. When she requires print literacy assistance such as paying bills filling Centrelink forms she gets support from the community. She spoke about the discrimination she faced because she could not understand legal and other important documents. She specifically emphasised her isolation and marginalisation. Nana regrets of not being able to go to

school and learn L1 literacy skills from her young age. Now she has realised that due to the constant political strife, civil wars, and a culture that forbids girls from attending school in favour of getting married, poverty, and a lack of educational resources all have contributed to become who she is today. But she admires what she has received here in Australia despite the negativity in the past and not being able to communicate in L2. Nana sees English as an important aspect of integration and assumed that coming to Australia would assist her to learn English. When she was asked whether she wanted to learn L1 and L2 in an informal environment such as at home with a Home Tutor from her community for success she said, "...I am too old to learn now. I can't cope in an English-only class. I don't know what other classmates think. For me, I think I'm old and it's difficult to learn a new language. People in my community will not laugh at me if I go to TAFE College and learn English. But if I start learning in my first language they may think that I am stupid. I am not going to work in an office". She put a hand over her mouth to hide her laugh.

Values attached to literacy and citizenship

She has not yet obtained the Australian Citizenship status. She is aware of the Citizenship Test and the advantages of being a citizen of this country but she has no intention to sit for the ACT. She said that she is fully aware of her lack of literacy level in L2 and she may not be able to make it happen rather wait till become 60 years old then she receives the citizenship status automatically. For Nana voting is not a big issue because she has not experienced it therefore don't see the relevance.

6.6 Remarks

Nana's case study explains the problem that most adult refugee and humanitarian entrants with literacy difficulties face in Australia. It presents an issue of dependency on a second party to fulfil their literacy needs. Learning a new language can be particularly difficult for an adult woman like Nana who never had access to formal education in her country. Even though Nana claims that she is not progressing in her class she is required to continue prove she learns English and looking for work in order to receive Centrelink payments. She appeared to reject the idea of becoming literate in their L1, preferring to focus on English literacy because English literacy has more status than L1 literacy.

6.6.2 Case study Two – Veena

Personal profile

Veena is a south Sudanese woman in her late forties. She was born in a village in the mountains in South Sudan. Her parents died in a landmine explosion when she just got married. South Sudan rebels were to forcibly recruit her husband so he do not want to get caught by the rebels and fled with his wife across the mountains to the south that they took 16 days to reach the nearest refugee camp. They have been living in the camp more than nine years where she gave birth to all her five boys. Veena said, “. . . we were so happy when we were given the approval of letter and travel document to fly to Australia in 2005”.

The opportunity to learn English was available to Veena when she first came to Australia. But “. . .my husband got work then here. My children were little, my second son often get sick with asthma I so I could not go to AMEP. Now my children are big. My husband is not working anymore. We live on welfare payments. Centrelink asked me to study English and look for work”. She is currently placed in the pre beginner CSWE class at AMEP to learn English.

Experience with literacy

Tragically, Veena was one of many Sudanese women who never been to a school before. Her parents want her to join in their farm. She has realised that maintaining Dinka ways and living in Australia with grown up children is difficult. She said “My children are not Dinkas anymore they are Australian.” Further she said that she likes going to AMEP. “. . . but the course is very difficult for me. Because I can’t understand anything what teachers says. Sometimes I ask help from my children then they laugh at me. Because they know the language they have power. No respect for us. That makes me so sad.”

Current settlement issues

Veena acknowledged that not being able to speak read and write in English left her in a state of dependency on her children or the members of her own community. She could not use basic services without involving a second party to represent her voice. Over the last few years she has been supported by her children and friends from the community to fulfil her and family literacy needs in L2. “When I need to go to school for children interviews I have to go with a friend who speak English. My children don’t I like that. Me too. I can speak little bit. I understand the meaning of most of the word but I still don’t know how to say things in English”.

Values attached to literacy and citizenship

Veena said, “if you can’t read and write in any language your world is empty. Learning English is so important. Then you can go to the bank, hospital, school, police and all the services, keeping your head straight because you have lot of power. If you can’t read and write you are nothing. Even your children are laughing behind your back. It doesn’t matter how long it will take all I want from my life is learning English. I want to learn it. I want to watch English movies and understand the stories. I have everything here good food good people but I am missing something big.” Veena was not serious about Australian citizenship or citizenship test. She had heard about the test but she was neither fully aware of the meaning of the citizenship nor the advantages of being an Australian citizen. She said that having an Australian passport is useless for her as she has no intention to return to her home country. “I have nobody there. This is my country now. I only need a little bit of English to do this and that. I don’t care whether I am a citizen or not. All I need is only English. Learn to talk to my doctor learn to go shopping and buy what I want without anyone asking me to do so.” When she was asked about her political rights she said, “I don’t care who governs the country as long as there is no war Australia is always better than mine.”

6.6.2.1 Remarks

Veena’s culture played an important role in the acquisition of her L1 skills. Her parents have devalued literacy for women and promoted her to join with them to

generate family income. Veena is determined to learn English and claims her inability to understand the L2 instruction. Can Veena become literate? Some of the most recent international research on adult language learners with limited or no formal schooling and low print literacy has emerged specifically addressing this population. According to Condelli, Wrigley & Yoon's study (2009, p.153), "...beginning ESL literacy students are not able to discuss options or articulate opinions to a deep level if they still struggle with even basic conversation in the new language. They may be able to understand a simple scenario presented to them, but they will be hard pressed to discuss the situation in detail or suggest more than the simplest course of action... By giving students a chance to use their own language in discussions, teachers can help students think about consequences. By mixing the use of English with opportunities to use the native language where appropriate, the learning of English can be reinforced".

6.6.4 Case study three - Meena

Personal profile

Meena is a very religious Muslim woman from Somalia who is in her late twenties. She has four children and arrived to Australia in 2004. Meena said that she is available for the interview if the interviewer is only a female. Therefore only researcher was able to conduct the interview at Meena's house. The researcher was welcome by a young, college-aged man at Meena's house. Few minutes later Meena appeared wearing a multi-colour long dress, which covered her whole body. Her face was framed by a brightly patterned silk scarf. Her fourteen-year old son, Safi, introduced himself and pretended that he was the man of the house as his father was away. Since the interview was in plain English Safi was there to help. Every time Meena made a mistake in her conversation or if Meena was not able to find the correct words Safi wanted to represent his mother with an accurate response and used a strong Australian accent. Meena and her husband Mohamed and his extended family used to live under the fear of violence and oppression from the civil war in Somalia. Some of his family members had been murdered because they did not serve the rebels. Life had been extremely difficult for Mohamed, but he escaped and moved to Australia as a refugee in 2001. He later sponsored his wife Meena and his

four children in 2004 on family reunion visa. Mohamed works in a vegetable farm in a remote suburb. Meena takes care of her children and looks after the family matters while Mohamed is at work. Mohamed had been working with current employer since he migrated to Australia. He owns a three-bedroom unit close to a school where his children were able to walk to school. Meena appeared to have only a small network of friends, who were all Arabic speaking Muslim women from her local community.

Experience with literacy

Meena had no formal school experience and she had learnt some communicative English through her children but found difficulties with reading and writing in English. She was required to register with AMEP within 12 months after her arrival so she enrolled at local AMEP where she had easy access to the centre. But she was not able to continue the program due to the mixed classes operated at AMEP. Meena said that it was her husband's decision. "We cannot meet or talk to other men while we are wearing the Niqāb (full veil that cover including face, hands and feet). If I am going to go out I need to wear the Niqāb then you can't talk to men or see them. There are many Muslim women who don't want to see men and talk to them. You know Muslim woman must stay at home, do cooking and cleaning and look after her family. It is a God given right," she said firmly.

Current settlement issues

Meena said she has no settlement issues. Also she didn't show any desire to access classes or learn English, as she didn't see learning English as a priority. She was asked whether she is willing to do a job in Australia. "What kind of job you can offer me?" She asked the researcher back. Researcher was in silence and realised the cultural and religious restrictions she has put on herself. "My husband and children know English more than me. He works, children go to school. They do their job. I do mine at home . . . that's all". She said she had no issues with her life. "My husband works. Children learn well. I have a house and a car. No troubles, no war here. What else you want from life?" She asked the researcher.

Values attached to literacy and Citizenship

Meena was not that impressed to talk about the integration or Citizenship in Australia. “. . . My husband doesn’t want us to be Australian. In our religion we have rules; we cannot change the Muslim way to the Australian way. Australians are drinking . . . kissing . . . no clothing. Uh! We see many bad things in their culture. We don’t watch TV. We don’t go to beach. We can’t go against our religion.”

6.6.4.1 Remarks

Meena is socially isolated and almost no interactions outside the home. Her religion and culture operate in such a way to determine whether she should prioritise learning English or practise the Muslim way of life at home. Her decisions and choices were also guided by the principles of her religion, which confine her in a subordinated position, with no voice of her own and no access to education. The authority of her husband, which is reinforced by Islamic principles and traditional norms, also mediates her needs within the domestic and public sphere. Maxamuud (2011) asserts, “Somali women’s role has been to provide all the labour necessary to ensure the daily survival of the family. In addition women were always responsible for preparing the family’s meals, breeding, caring for and educating children. Intellectual and social activities were usually the domain of the men. This disparity was also reflected in educational matters” (p.227).

6.6.5 Case study Four – Zeena

Personal profile

Zeena’s family was already struggling to survive on their farm in a remote village and affected by prolonged and agonizing drought. One night *the rebels came and murdered her husband because he refused to give money that they asked. After that journey* was over 100 kilometres long, all on foot in the stifling heat, without food-water, she fled with her two sons on foot to find refuge in Djibouti camp. At that time her youngest child was only two years old. Having spent nine years in the camp

Zeena and her two children were granted refugee status by UNHCR and accepted by Australia in 2006.

Zeena recalled the memories of the days of her initial settlement in the local area. “...When we first came, government and my community helped me a lot. They took extra care of me because I am a widow. They bought everything we need for the house. Only thing they didn’t buy me was a car. I am sure if I could drive they buy me a car too” she smiled with a heart full of gratitude.

Experience with literacy

As a child in the agricultural setting her educational advancement was determined by her gender thus she was excluded from access to a formal school. In the camp she was given the opportunity to learn English but she was not able to continue due to the care of her children.

Zeena didn’t use her free AMEP tuition hours to learn English, as she had to look after her youngest child and no means of transport. As she didn’t register within twelve months time of her arrival her offer to use free English classes has been cancelled. She said, “It was too far from here to travel by bus. It cost a lot of money. English is extremely difficult for me. Simply I don’t understand... Whenever I have to deal with Centrelink or real estate agent, bank, doctor I have to accompany my friends. Now they have no time to take me to offices to fill out forms. I think they had enough.” Zeena admitted that even when she had good friends, accessing health services was difficult and there were times that she couldn’t get them. In emergency situations it is terrible. I was so sick with a back pain one day I couldn’t get my usual friends so I asked another friend she agreed to come with me. She tried to explain to hospital staff but they were struggling to understand. They just checked me and sent back home. I went to GP with my son later and got an X ray and later GP said that I had problems with arthritis.

Current settlement issues

I need assistance to learn and to be independent, and not have to continue to seek help from my children or friends. When I came here I want to learn English and get a

job. I can do farm work very well. I am still strong. I am looking for work. I don't care if they give me a job to collect garbage or sweep the road. Centrelink payment is not enough. I have to pay rent \$ 360 per week. I am so lonely. I don't want to change the house. It cost more money." Zeena continued. I have missed my opportunities to learn earlier days. Whole day I do nothing at home and I am nothing," said Zeena.

Values attached to literacy and Citizenship

Having experienced with the problems associated with English literacy skills Zeena has motivated her to be independent and move on with her life. When she get someone to talk behalf of her she said, "I am so embarrassed ... we owe Australia a lot. I will do anything I can do- to pay back for that. I am a hard-working woman. I can lift- I can dig I can grow I can walk thousand miles without food. But here nobody care about it- if you can speak English if you behave like an Australian, if you wear jeans you get a job here ...again it is my fault, I put myself down and did not find a jobs at the very beginning. When I wish to work there is no work".

6.6.5.1 Remarks

Lack of affordable public transport has proven a barrier to Zeena maintaining attendance to AMEP. However she indicates pressure attached to cost of living (Rent \$ 360 P /W) is difficult to bear. As such, it is important to note that her willingness to learn English and access to employment are extended attempts to integrate into Australian society. Language barriers that Zeena experienced require in-depth analysis in order to support her settlement issues. For example as Zeena was not able to communicate properly she got her friend to do the job. Even though she was able to communicate with the hospital staff they were not able to understand her friend's English (could be her accent) so patient (Zeena), hospital staff and her friend were stuck and nothing happened. The fact that Zeena's situation adequately not explained and doctors were not able to make a right diagnosis so she was sent home without proper treatment. Zeena's case highlight the policy implications regarding the 'Access and Equity Framework' (Access and Equity Reports) for service providers. Also, Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare and in July 2008, Zeena had the right to a qualified interpreter during her visit to hospital or GP, such as discussing

medical history; treatments; test results; diagnosis; during admission or assessment. Because she was not aware of that information she was not able to organise it. The Australian Government provides the national Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) through DIAC. “TIS is unique. Australia is the only country in the world with a federally funded translating and interpreting service that provides a national, twenty four hour, seven-days-a-week telephone interpreting service” (DIAC, 2013, p. 277).

6.6.6 Case study Five-Ben

Personal profile

Ben wanted to be an engineer but the circumstances in the country (DRC) prevented him pursuing higher studies. He had to leave his near secondary education to join the Mining Industry as his family was struggling with poverty. He worked as a labourer for Canadian company that employed Canadians for superior work and Congolese for miner work. He exposed to English speaking environment thus speaks reasonably good English. In the meantime he got married and lived with his extended family.

Due to the political and ethnic tensions that were fostered through years of Western-backed dictatorship Ben and his family experienced incredible hardship and awful conditions in Congo. They joined other locals who fled Congo and reached to a refugee camp in Zimbabwe. He and his family spent five years until he accepted by Australia in 2006. Ben and his family live in a remote country town closer to his work place. He is a father of nine children. Some children were born in DRC and some children in Australia.

Experience with literacy

Ben who immediately looked for work here in Australia said “I felt useless I didn’t get calls for interviews. However he said that he could not understand Australian English for while. He tried to keep himself busy as he assumed that his reading and writing skills in English needed to be improve so he continued receiving AMEP tuition. However before he completes his CSWE level two an employment agent referred by the Centrelink found a job for him in a local meat factory.

Current settlement issues

Currently Ben works in a meat factory. “. . . I am not happy with this job. This is not my area. I love to work in the Mining Industry. To work in a meat factory you don't have to have qualifications. But in the Mining Industry there are specific procedures that you need to follow up. I keep applying for jobs. But I have to have something to go on.” When he was asked whether he has any particular settlement issues to be addressed he said he would like to move into a better house with good living conditions but it is very hard for him to find a house as he got many children. Ben said, “. . . even I got this house after making 24 applications. Real Estate Agents could not get any of the landlords to rent us a house near the city. Finally one kind real estate agent asked me not to mention the number of children I have. That's how I got this house.” My landlord doesn't cause me trouble because he lives in overseas. We don't use council water so landlord doesn't find any excess bills. So we are safe.

Ben wanted to get enrolled for a Certificate Course in Engineering at TAFE College to make his dream come true. He said, “ It is just a dream. Course fee is quite high and cannot afford at the moment. I have many mouths to feed rather than studying at this stage. ”

Values attached to literacy and Citizenship

When he was asked about the citizenship he said, “for me Citizenship is the freedom. If you can talk to someone freely you are a citizen. If not you are stranger. I cannot talk to people freely yet. I need to learn a lot. “Citizenship test is very tough. I sat for twice but no luck. I need to learn a lot about the country and culture values. Not knowing the facts you can't do the test.” Australia is a good country but I would like to go back to my country one day I don't know when but I will. I need to have my own passport. Our passport is just a paper (travel document) Refugee it is useless. When I went to bank to open an account the person in the bank did not know what it is. Further he said “I don't think that we receive the same treatment as Australians. I have been treated differently in many places it is because of my colour. They think that we are slaves. Law is written in the books and papers, but in practice it's quite different. It is not today or tomorrow that we will reach equality.

6.6.6.1 Remarks

Ben's story indicates the sense of being discriminated in many occasions. Most probably unsatisfactory interactions by housing accommodation or his passport issue with the bank would have caused Ben to conceptualise that he was ill treated and he would have taken it as a form of discrimination. However Ben's case study highlights the size of African refugee families is an obstacle to securing appropriate housing and gaining access to private rental houses. Experiences of discrimination faced by refugee and humanitarian housing market are noted by Evans and Gavarotto (2010) as “. . . African community members experienced disempowerment in their attempts to secure housing. This was commonly attributed to a lack of suitable housing, housing insecurity involving frequent moving, and difficulties communicating with the housing sector. Decisions about where to move were perceived as outside of the individual refugees' control.” Further they highlight the discriminatory practice used by real estate agents and landlords. For example even though telephone interpreting service is reserved for real estate agents when communicating with refugees who have limited English language skills they take it for granted to exploit people agreeing to leasing arrangements that are unfair or illegal (Evans & Gavarotto 2010).

The other side of the story is also quite different. According Miraftab (2002):

to establish whether or not discrimination takes place in the private housing market would require a systematic examination beyond this study's agenda. The point, however, is that whether real or perceived, refugees' belief that discrimination exists against ethnic minorities can trigger self-exclusion, itself an effective obstacle to obtaining decent housing. This mechanism operates when visible minorities, convinced of the presence of discrimination, do not explore all options, but instead limit their housing search to the vicinity of similar people, doubling up with friends and relatives, or taking the first offer available. The perception of discrimination leaves ethnic minorities in desperate straits, which can result in their renting lower quality units.

Many refugees are not honest about the size of the family when negotiating housing contracts. According to Miraftab (2002), a significant problem for refugees (similar to Ben's case), as they searched for housing, was the mismatch in size and

configuration between the rental housing stock, both private and public, and the characteristics of refugee households. Neither private nor public rental housing is designed for large families. Dwellings with several bedrooms are usually built to be owner-occupied, but rental units are intended for small families and have only two or three bedrooms.

6.6.7 Case study six – Zen

Personal profile

Zen came from a Village called located in the Equateur province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Zen fled his country over a decade ago, after his parents were assassinated, because his father belonged to a particular tribe that made the situation dangerous for Zen. He explained, “One day I heard many gunshots. I began running in all directions. Later I found that rebels raped and then shot my wife and sister-in-law dead. After that they set fire to our house with the bodies still inside.” A week later, Zen joined a group of people from his village and set out on foot looking for the nearest refugee camp. After receiving refugee status Zen arrived to Australia in the mid 2000s. He is still receiving treatment for the post-traumatic disorder and he said he always feel happier when he shares his story.

Experience with literacy

Zen had undergone eight years of formal school in Dongo in DRC and had spent nine months learning English in Australia. He was interviewed in English. He said his deepest desire is to find a decent employment in Australia. His previous working status as an electrician has prevented him having low position. He finds life in Australia lonely. He characterised himself as a poor learner and said, “my English is not good - I am too old learn”.

Current settlement issues

Zen has occupied himself in a fairly a peripheral position as a language learner because of his limited reading and writing skills. Also failure to find work has

prevented him forming a social network. Also ongoing treatment for his psychological issues has contributed him to be more isolated and becoming integrated with the Australian community. It during the course of conversation Zen voiced his frustration in his lack of success in the job market. “I have applied for many jobs. They don’t send me even a letter to say that they have received it. I go to the recruitment agents very often as Centrelink asked me but there is no luck. They say my English is not good enough. They want me to go to a meat factory or go for a cleaning job. I don’t like to do that type of job. I feel so bad. This is not me. My doctor said she can give me a medical certificate. So I don’t have to work. I want to work. I want to meet people and contribute to this great country.”

Values attached to literacy and citizenship

Zen did ACT twice: first version and second version but he has been unsuccessful. “I am going to sit for the assisted test next time. Hopefully it will work. I have to go back home and find a woman for me. I need a passport. I am so lonely. If I am a citizen I can bring her here quickly. Only problem is this test is so difficult. I read everything about Australia in our version of the citizenship booklet. For some questions I know the answer. But I don’t know how to read or it in English. When you need to translate it into English it is very difficult...very difficult. You know what? I think even Australian citizens find this test is hard. I forget things very easily. But I think Australian government don’t like to see us living as Australian citizens. The treatment we get from Australian government is like this “...they dress up us (refugees) beautifully but they don’t take us anywhere.”

6.6.7.1 Remarks

According to Eisenbruch (1991), clinical experience in many western countries suggests that, even after an initial period of increased well being, some refugees seem to become alienated from the host society, and either retreat into a troubled private world or show antisocial behaviour. Their experience of their illness is culturally determined, but their illness may not necessarily be a disease. Zen’s case study has shown that post-traumatic stress disorder has had a significant impact on his integration outcomes. Qualitative research by Porter and Haslam (2005) found that the experience of loss in resettlement has been accounted for a significant amount to

mental health outcomes among refugees. Individuals who had decreases in their socioeconomic status in resettlement have worse outcomes. Similarly study by Colic-Peisker and Walker (2003) found those who report a loss of meaningful social roles are unemployed or facing economic hardship or report being socially isolated. In this study Zen situates his desire to work in basic human terms. The need to feel valued is implicated in his case. He said, “I have expertise skills that both I and this country cannot use now”. He refers to the fact that he has made many job applications but has not been successful. Although the reasons given for his unemployment may be true, need to prove his prior experience, as an electrician constitutes a real difficulty, as does attaining an adequate level of English. These are recognised challenges that Zen would have addressed to overcome of his perceived lack of success. It is unfortunate that Zen did not have access to the information necessary to follow an appropriate course that match with his previous work experience at TAFE College.

6.6.8 Case study seven – Ren

Personal profile

Similar to other case studies that have been carried out so far, Ren’s past also is marked by bitter truth, horrific violence and invisible scars of war. Ren is an energetic tall man in his early fifties, an animal lover and worked as an Animal Warden in one of the national parks in Congo until year 2000. One evening in January year 2000 the world turned upside down for Ren and his wife as their eldest son was captured by rebels. With nowhere to go, no food, nothing but taking their five boys they walked through the forest, crossed the rivers through the blistering heat walked over more than 100 miles to reach to a refugee camp.

In year 2005 Sanctuary Australia Foundation sponsored Ren and his wife including his five boys to Australia. For their duration of the sponsorship period This organisation supported Ren and his family by providing living expenses, rent, utilities, clothing, furniture and other household goods, locating interpreters, selecting a family physician and dentist, assisting with applying for Medicare, enrolling children in school and adults in language training, helping in the search for

employment providing orientation with regard to banking services, transportation, etc.

Experience with literacy

Ren has completed grade 10 in his home country. When he was in Congo, he used to work with a team of researchers who only speaks English. He speaks English with confidence. When he arrived here he found no major problems with English literacy related activities however he said that, “Initially I couldn't understand Australian accent, radio, television or the people around me. Not only did I feel uncomfortable when speaking, but I constantly had lack of words.”

From the beginning, Ren and his wife actively participated in the English Language classes at AMEP. - He completed the Certificate II in Spoken and Written English in two terms and moved up to the Certificate III where Ren was taught how to make a resume and cover letter to apply for a job, networking the job market and interview preparation what to say in a job interview. He decided to find a part-time or casual job to gain local experience and practise more English.

Current settlement issues

During the initial stage of the settlement Ren didn't understand anything about Australian culture, geography, or politics. However, Ren encountered no major difficulties when interacting with primary service providers. Ren found a job as a warehouse assistant for two days a week and as an Animal Carer at local RSPCA for three days per week. During weekends he goes to a farm to collect eggs. He is well settled in the area.

Values attached to literacy and citizenship

Ren is proud to be an Australian citizen now. He said “...last year I sat for the ACT. It is a pretty tough test ‘mate’. My mentor (Sponsor) referred me to Mr xxx to have a practise test done. Mr xxx taught me the resource book in my own language. We discussed so many things about Australia then he taught it in English. Then he made me to constant practise, practise and practise. First time I was unsuccessful . . . But

second time . . . here I am . . . A citizen now” When he was asked whether he feels that he is integrated into Australia now he said, “. . . Yes! Yes! . . . I am integrated; I am doing three jobs. My children are learning well. They are not Congolese anymore. They are Australian. My big boy is in the Basketball team he is already one of their best players. I am always at work but on Sundays I go to church with my family. I never fail to attend in school meetings, interviews, and weekend sport games and when there are calls from my community (Congolese) meetings. I never miss those. The thing I really miss is our way of living here. Family and social relationship are different. In the morning I used to run and I meet people in the street. I used to say ‘Good morning.’ But here it is different before I look at them they look at another direction. So how can I greet them?

6.6.8.1 Remarks

According to Spenser (2003, p.6), “Integration is not simply about access to the labour market and services, or about changing attitudes or civic engagements; it is a two-way process of adaption by migrants and the host society at all of those levels.” By looking at another direction street people are trying to ignore the individual efforts of Ren to greet them. Then not only integration acculturation also needs to see as a two way process. While Ren is adapting to the host society at the same time it is required that the host society or community accept them as well.

The other important point in the case of Ren is he learnt L2 more efficiently as he is literate in his first language. This fact has been researched by Cummins (1983, 1986) for many years. Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis suggests that first language literacy promotes second language acquisition, and first language literacy skills are likely to transfer to the second language. “...The reasoning behind this is not difficult to accept; reading is a conceptual skill that a person learns only once. Once a student can read, no matter what the language, that skill can transfer to another language. Reading involves sound-symbol relationships and the association of meaning with printed material” (Vinogradov, 2001).

Also Ren’s story highlights the understanding of the importance of learning regardless of the fact that he had the same conditions that other refugees face. Since the other cases have been discussed so far were not used to education, it was easy for

them to abandon it and to stick to their domestic responsibilities or place the responsibility on culture religion or the system for not taking the opportunity for education that they were offered to be educated in Australia. In contrast, Ren who studied up to grade ten understood the importance of learning and attempted to pursue similar career paths as he had had in DRC, using his qualifications as an animal warden when he first arrived in Australia. His subsequent developments in doing three jobs indicate different strategies to cope with his life in new country. With his education, he had the ability to adjust effectively to his new environment, get employment, be socialised acquire social status and enjoy other social privileges. Ren participated in his children school activities as well as he engaged in his community activities. These activities alleviated his integration process well and in turn profited him individually and financially.

Chiswick et al. (2005) finds the occupational rate of individuals such as Ren to a U-shaped pattern that illustrates where refugees, immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds and for less-qualified immigrants are positioned on the occupational ladder when they first arrive in their host countries. They tend to enter lower paying occupations than they were in their mother country, and subsequently move into higher paying occupations. This "...U-shaped pattern of occupational mobility" is more pronounced for lower qualified immigrants with less transferable skills, and appears to be a stronger pattern in Australia than in the United States. Research conducted Carrington et al (2007) confirms that, after overcoming initial barriers, high motivation levels and aspirations of refugees achieve a rapid convergence in earnings with other migrants and the native population and they are more likely to invest in country-specific human capital (e.g. education, training and citizenship).

6.6.9 Case study eight-Ken

Personal profile

Ken, who is 43 years old tall man, said that he never wanted to go out without his beautifully embroidered *Kufi* on his head. He appeared older than he is and kept little interaction with the researcher, however he was comfortable with the interpreter who spoke in Arabic. Once a Perry Boat operator in Congo River did not want to

reveal much about his forced migration and careful enough to provide limited answers to given questions. Ken arrived in Australia in March 2005 with his wife and then two children on refugee and humanitarian Visa (now he has three other Australian born children). Currently he works in a local meat factory as a full time permanent meat process worker. He lives in a remote suburb. Recently he passed the Assisted Australian Citizenship Test and waiting to receive Australian Citizenship certificate at a ceremony.

Experience with literacy

Ken has basic skills in reading and writing in Arabic language, as he received Arabic instruction in Koranic school in DR Congo. Ken has gained reasonable level of spoken English during past few years but claims he has limited skills in reading and writing in English.

Current settlement issues

Having experience as a Ferryboat operator in Congo he said that he had a very decent life. He said that he prefers to change his work but no one offers him a job therefore he has to stick on to the one he already got. He said that there are no opportunities to improve his literacy skills in L2 in the meat factory.

Values attached to literacy and citizenship

Ken said that he does not feel that he is a member of the society but he often feels that he is excluded from the society. As a Muslim he said he might never be able to accept the culture or way of Australianness in his lifetime. Ken has passed his citizenship test recently. Researcher was confused with his contradictory claims that he has limited Literacy in L2 but he passed the test. Then the interpreter asked how he understood test questions. "...I didn't understand any. You go and do the test. Tick the boxes as you feel. Then definitely you will fail. Do it again you will fail again. But don't worry you have another chance - third time someone in the office will show you the right box to tick. That is what you called the Assisted Test." This comment was made sarcastically because it was implied help would be given.

6.6.9.1 Remarks

One can easily see that issues of validity and reliability are problematic in the assessment of the “Assisted Test” for citizenship received by Ren who failed to generate valid interpretations of a text. Without making any interpretations of text meanings Ren was assisted to pass the ACT is likely to provide an intimidating way of bridging the gap between the ACT and L2 literacy difficulties experienced by would be citizens. Although the given responsibilities, ethical behaviour and the professional standard of the “test witness” who conducted the assessment of Ren open opportunities to discuss the various facets of language testing however in this context It questions the issues of validity, reliability and fairness (Spolsky, 1981; Palmer 1996; Bachman 2000; Hughes, 2003) of the ACT. Even though one could argue that “literacy difficulties have “softened” or reduced by the assisted test it is necessary to see whether Ren acquired the competences necessary to pass the ACT. If we look at the relationship between citizenship and integration of Ren it appears “great deal of disagreement about what constitutes integration, how one determines whether strategies for promoting Integration are successful, or what the features of an integrated society are” (Atfield, Brahmhatt, & O’Toole, 2007, p. 12.)

6.7 Summary

This chapter has described the findings from interviews with former refugee and humanitarian entrants from a pre-beginner CSWE class, and presented case studies of eight to examine their perceptions of their experience in working towards passing the ACT. Chapter seven will address the research questions with the discussion of the main findings and their contribution to knowledge, and before the conclusion of the dissertation the implications of the research for policy and practice will be made and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

A substantial body of work on adult second language acquisition (SLA) does exist, but most studies either involve adults with at least ten years of education in their country of origin or do not isolate level of native language education as a variable” (Craats, Kurvers, & Scholten, 2006, p. 9). This acknowledges most research studies have been carried out involving ESL learners who have acquired a significant level of literacy skills in their first language rather than on ‘adults who have not acquired L1 literacy skills as children. For example, except for a few studies (Bensman, 2012; Condelli & Wrigley, 2009; Kurvers et al. 2010; Tarone & Bigelow, 2005; Thomas & Collier 2003; Young-Scholten, 2004), there is an apparent research gap. Moreover, there is limited research concerning ecological approaches to studying acculturation, integration and acquisition of literacy skills in English among humanitarian refugees. This chapter discusses the findings of the research in light of the research conceptual framework and in particular Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development (1979; 1994; 2001) to address the three research questions. The basic concept of the ecological framework represents the influence that each ecological context exerts on the individual’s development as well as the individual’s power to effect change in each ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Through the use of the process-person-context-time model (Bronfenbrenner, 2001), this study explored how the interaction between the context and numerous other variables impact on the acculturation, integration and citizenship of Adult NESB African former refugee and humanitarian entrants with limited or no print literacy skills in L1 and L2.

First, the chapter reviews the summary of the research and then it categorises key findings under the six systems of ecological theory; individual system, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Following on this outline, the chapter answers the first research question to discuss the barriers to refugee integration. The second research question addressed the theoretical aspects of

integration and acculturation, while the third question focused on how the target group might best learn English and develop their participatory skills at the local level to make recommendations for program design. This final chapter then draws together the study's contribution to knowledge, presenting the implications and recommendation to policy makers to exempt L1 low literate immigrants from the Australian Citizenship Test. The target group for this study were unable to reach the required level of literacy skills in L2 in an optimum timeframe. Finally, the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research are considered.

7.2 Summary of the study

On the political level, the term 'integration' received much attention in 2007, when the Australian Citizenship Test was introduced to ensure immigrants' integration and the development of community cohesion. Basic knowledge of English language, Australian history, culture and civic education, together with four years of residency were pre-conditions for prospective citizens to be eligible to apply for Australian citizenship (DIAC, 2008; RCOA, 2008). Refugees from the African continent make up more than 30% of the Humanitarian Program's annual intake. African refugees in Australia predominantly come from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan. While these countries are not homogenous they share the same features and characteristics (RCOA, 2010b; DIBP Fact Sheet 60; Refugees from Africa). As discussed in Chapter one, due to the increased intake of humanitarian refugees from African countries, and given the profiles of African refugees with poor education, poor health, poor language skills and a history of brutalisation and trauma from years of civil wars and experiences in refugee camps (Joyce et al., 2010), upon arrival they struggle with initial settlement needs such as acquiring English, looking for work and obtaining accommodation. Although Australian settlement services provide many services such as English language tuition through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and interpreting and translating, through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), still many services have not been able to address the multiple needs of this group of humanitarian refugees (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010).

AMEP is the largest settlement program, which provides up to 510 hours of free ESL instruction to immigrants across Australia and funded by the federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). Currently, The AMEP is delivered by Navitas English Pty. Ltd. that has been contracted by DIAC through a competitive grant process. AMEP is required to work within a national framework, focusing on Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE) at various proficiency levels, including a preliminary CSWE beginner stage that acknowledges the low literacy levels of some learners (NSW, AMES, 2003). The program varies in composition from region to region, depending on the resources and numbers of enrolments. The changing AMEP client demographic is mostly marked by the refugee background groups from Africa that make up approximately 71% of the program in 2003-04 compared with 33% in 2008-09 (AMES, 2013, p.14).

In 2011, the previous labour government announced the Strategic Settlement Framework, which included a major re-design of humanitarian settlement services, including the AMEP, to achieve better outcomes for migrants and humanitarian entrants. It is argued here that these reform moves were invisibly connected to the idea of reducing welfare dependency and, to encourage humanitarian refugees to improve their economical status by themselves (AMES 2013, p. 14).

In its investigation of African humanitarian refugees with low L1 literacy this research analysed the Australian Citizenship Policy that surrounded the introduction of the test, and its relationship to the concepts of social integration, acculturation and language testing through the study of the experiences of a sample of this subgroup living in the RWZs. Hence, this study explored their journey from their native country to citizenship status through the ‘vehicle of integration’, and sought to identify how the ACT impacted on achieving their goal of citizenship in Australia. The research aimed to provide insights into how Australian policy in relation to this subgroup of migrants impacted in practice, in terms of delivering the most appropriate support for refugee and humanitarian entrants, and maximising their opportunities to become active Australian citizens. In a mixed methods approach, the participants were identified as African NESB adult learners between 25 to 55 years of age and as the most vulnerable group, their lack of capability to become integrated

into Australian society and the challenges involved were revealed. They were broadly recognised, by the findings of an anonymous ESL teacher Survey (n=30) and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with a local sample of ESL teachers (n=10), observations of AMEP classes, and focused interviews with refugee ESL learners (n=20). In addition, 8 African NESB RHEs non-citizens and citizens were purposively selected to examine their individual experiences, to reveal their literacy difficulties, and the problems and processes associated with social integration. Thus, this study focused on how African Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants (RHEs) from non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB), who begin with limited or no print literacy skills in L1 and limited literacy skills in the English language (L2) attempted to integrate into Australian society. The research sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the barriers and success factors that impact most on humanitarian NESB refugees, who have limited literacy skills, in becoming acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?
2. How do humanitarian refugees with little or no literacy in their first language best acquire proficiency in English and become acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?
3. How can NESB humanitarian refugee learners with limited literacy skills in their first language best be assisted to develop a feeling of belonging/their new cultural identity and become citizens within an appropriate timeframe?

7.3 Key findings

Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's phenomenological perspective (Figure 7.1), findings of this study have been categorised in Table 7.1, which projects small group of adult African NESB humanitarian refugees' challenges, explains through the study of ecological factors, could either hinder or facilitate their acculturation and participation in economic, social, cultural, and political domains. Through the research approach and the function of the conceptual framework the relationship between. The Figure 7.1 shows the concepts underpinning this study and indicate (a) each "concept has a history, (b) each concept "usually contains "bits" or components originating from other concepts", (c) "all concepts relate back to other concepts", (d) " a concept is always created by something (and cannot be created from nothing"

(Jabareen, 2009, p. 50), (e) each concept is “considered as the point of coincidence, condensation, or accumulation of its own components” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991, p. 20, cited in Jabareen, 2009, p.50), (f) each concept must be understood “relative to its own components, to other concepts, to the plane on which it is defined, and to the problem it is supposed to resolve” (Deleuze & Guattari in 1991, p. 21, cited in Jabareen, 2009, p.50), and the overall structure and the relationships within and between it. The dotted line represents how the whole system is in motion and vibrating. These concepts affect the learner on different levels, in keeping with Bronfenbrenner’s model of individual, micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono levels (Chapter two).

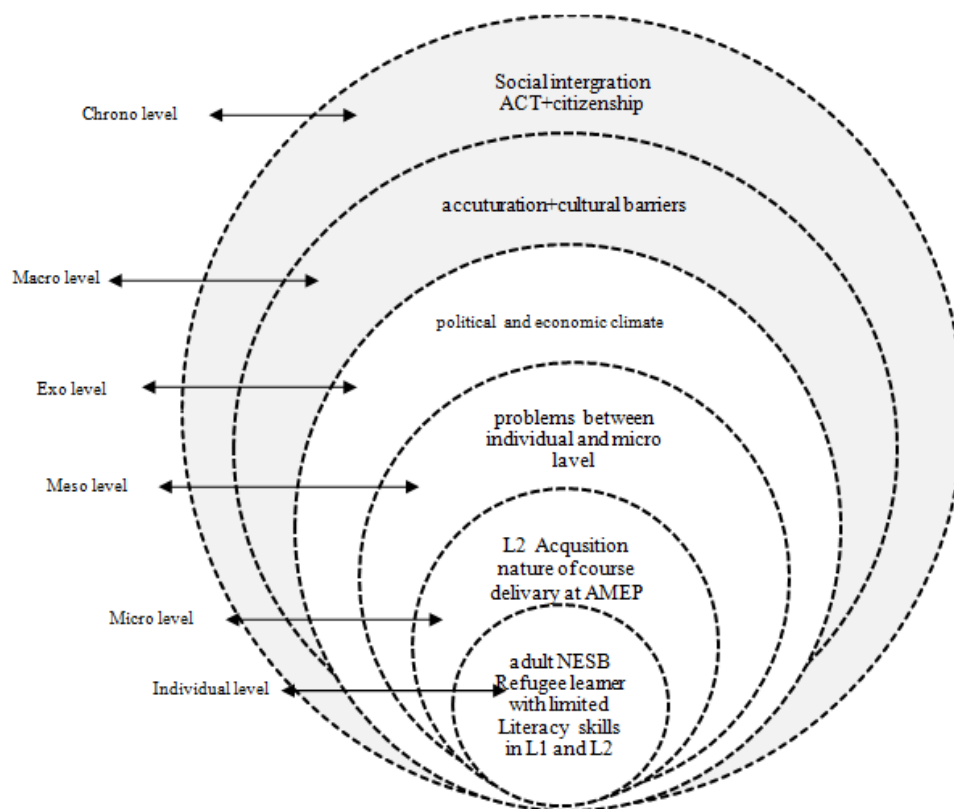


Figure 7.1: The relationship between the research design and the conceptual framework of the study

Table 7.1: Overview of key findings under the ecological framework

Ecological system	Key findings
<p>Individual system Adult African and, forced migrants age, personality, nationality or ethnicity</p> <p>Health Education: zero or limited literacy skills in L1 mainly due to no or interrupted schooling in early years.</p>	<p>Barriers Being an adult learner, being female, being a African (visual appearance) Feeling of embarrassment due to lack of education, skills and competence, withdrawal from social interaction, poor physical and cognitive abilities, personality traits, resilience, lack of achievement, lack of motivation and clear expectations. Depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Have not had the opportunity to develop the social and cultural understandings, metacognitive skills and learning strategies. L1 Linguistic and conceptual knowledge cannot be transferred into English. Learning the linguistic and cultural attributes of L2 is challenging. Lack of knowledge about the civic law in the host country.</p> <p>No exposure to technology and computer literacy</p> <p>Success factor(s) Feelings of security (no war, no violence enough food), peaceful living, and tolerance as a result of experienced hardship.</p>
<p>Microsystem Strong bond with African community, Contacts with local settlement service, interpreters, Real-estate agents Centrelink, health services, church, charity services, AMEP,</p>	<p>Barriers Inability to communicate in L2 formed bonded network with similar ethnic group. Strong correlation between own community. No proper housing available, segregation from white community. Pressure from Centrelink to find employments, irregular attendance. Not acculturated fully into host society. Lack of availability of interpreters. AMEP pedagogy ‘English only approach’, limited hours of free tuition, no bilingual assistance or bridging framework.</p> <p>Success factors Support from ethnic, religious and charity organisations, family and friends, and charity support. Non-threatening classroom atmosphere, emphasis on preparing for literacy, e.g. fine motor control, handwriting, availability of child care at AMEP.</p>
<p>Mesosystem Relationship between AMEP pedagogy and learners?</p>	<p>Barriers Lack of focus on cognitive/metacognitive strategies, science, older pre-literate/low- literate learners, lack of cultural knowledge and information processing capacity of</p>

metacognitive abilities	cognitive processes. Only English approach, no bilingual ESL teachers. ESL curriculum does not strictly follow literacy education. Gap between teaching instruction and the linguistic level of the learner makes more dropouts and program leavers. May achieve the required level of skills to go the next level.
Exosystem Political and economic climate Welfare dependents, regional residents (remote living)	Barriers Lack of Infrastructure, lack of cultural/political knowledge. lack of employment opportunities due to low literacy skills in L2, Success factors Availability of social benefits,
Macrosystem Cultural values of home environments Religious values and beliefs Gender Racial and ethnic compositions	Barriers Social status in home; ‘male as the head of the family, women should look after children and family, women should not drive’. Dress code (for employment), female learner requires a female teacher Attitudes such as ‘Female should not exceed the education level of men’ and ‘men cannot have individual leaning instruction from a female teacher at home. Racial and discriminative composition of host environments. Xenophobia, social stigma: e. g. African refugees live on taxpayers’ money. Excluded by the society.
Chronosystem Policy impact and time <u>AMEP new Business model (2011)</u> Australian Citizenship Test (2007)	Barriers Focus on the labour market, not focused on time and appropriate teaching approach to cater for the special (high) needs of participants. Feeling of pressure no time or opportunity is given to continue language learning. Required level of literacy for ACT cannot be achieved within 510 hours of AMEP tuition. These learners are prevented from becoming citizens in a time frame optimum to their needs. Do not have feeling of belonging, no equal rights: voting, not eligible to apply for an Australian Passport or housing loans or sponsor a family member. If travel back home no consular assistance is provided while overseas.

In summary, the findings reveal:

1. Adult African NESB humanitarian refugees with no or limited literacy skills in L1 are a unique group and their integration and acculturation have been

- complicated by many factors but mainly the barrier of acquiring the English language and risk in not being able to achieve their citizenship status on time.
2. Intending citizens living in regional areas are not being offered a clear and encouraging path to citizenship education.
 3. People in this subgroup could be potentially locked out of their future participation in the socioeconomic process, if their literacy requirements are not addressed now.
 4. Pedagogical practices in AMEP exacerbated by these refugees' life experiences and personal histories are not inviting for this group to be integrated into Australian society.
 5. The curriculum enacted in the AMEP may lack an appreciation of the theory of transferring literacy skills from L1 to L2 for literacy skills related to decoding tasks of reading and writing to transfer (Cummins, 1981).
 6. Former humanitarian refugee immigrants' problems regarding L2 acquisition, acculturation, integration and citizenship cannot be analysed through a common lens or framework using a comparative perspective with identical patterns of behaviour that may apply to other migrant groups.
 7. NESB/African former refugee and humanitarian immigrants with no or limited print literacy skills in L1 and L2 should be treated as unique by extending Berry's acculturation framework (1997) and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and through paying greater attention to the multi-level factors affecting integration, acculturation and citizenship.

7.4 Discussion

The ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) explains variations in human development as a result of 'Person' and 'Context' across 'Time'. This theory helps in recognising how low literate immigrants settlement problems arise, and what factors may contribute to their integration into mainstream society through biological and environmental factors. This research recognised the barriers as well as success factors that affected their integration and citizenship into Australian society. Key findings represented in Table 7.1 show that the most participants in this study found resettlement in Australia a hard struggle. Owing to lack of English language proficiency the focus group of five (hereafter the target group) often had experienced

the negative impact on the socioliterate relationships that prevent their integration, (what Bialystok, 2001, termed as “ticket of entry” into society): “the currency by which social and economic positions are waged” (p. 152). Their responses frequently included literacy connections under the themes of education, housing, healthcare, transportation and citizenship related to their current situations. They believed that not being able to speak or write in English language was their main problem as they were required to rely on interpreters, members of their own community and sometimes their neighbours. So they frequently had to depend on a second party for their literacy needs, typically requiring such a second person to accompany them to schools, doctors, hospitals, Centrelink and other service providers, to allow them to communicate their needs. Some participants said they had to compromise their parental role for this, such that their children had become so powerful by being proficient in the host country language that respect for them was undermined and they found it difficult to discipline them.

7.4.1 Barriers and success factors to acculturation and socially integration

Research question one asked, “What are the barriers and success factors that impact most on humanitarian NESB refugees, who have limited literacy skills, in becoming acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?” First research question was focused on the primary qualities of individual, micro, meso, macro and chrono factors that facilitate or hinder acculturation and integration (i.e., how they functioned as protective or risk factors), how they functioned together to influence individual participation in the formal and informal life of the Australian society, and how each factor or combination of all the factors controlled the acculturation and participation that shapes integration. The application of the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) can help explain variations in human development as a result of the ‘Person’ and the ‘Context’ across ‘Time.’

7.4.1.1 Individual System

Study of the acculturation and integration process of the target group discovered that they were influenced by the considerable pain of their memories of their history involved in the settlement context. All of the cases had their own story and bitter

experiences of war, violence, trauma of death, the loss of immediate family members, separation, inability to be in close contact with their home country, uncertainty about their loved ones in their homelands and many more sensitive issues relating to their personal lives. Having to resettle in Australia, whether it was satisfying or regretted, their capacity to acculturate or integrate into Australian society was mainly being determined by the features existing in their individual system (see Table 7.1). These included being an African NESB adult, being a forced migrant or a humanitarian refugee, experiencing gender adoration or gender inequality, having poor personality styles, poor health and psychological disorders, and having a low level of education or no literacy skills in their L1. Therefore, this group played a potential negative role in adjusting their inner disposition compatibility to the social and cultural requirements of the host society. These facets related to the individual in varying degrees and in turn prevented access and opportunities as part of the process of acculturation and integration.

Being an African NESB adult

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2009, p.176) found that the integration of humanitarian entrants into Australian society is more problematic in every aspect, due partly to their refugee status with traumatic, pre-arrival experiences but also to the considerable cultural distance between Australia and their countries of origin. Visibility based on race (skin colour, physical and facial features), or accent and publicly observable cultural differences such as attire (often to do with religion, e.g. Muslim hijab) make immigrants distinct in the Australian (western, English-speaking) social context and its predominantly white population. Meanwhile Ndhlovu (2013, p. 2) describes how the extensive media coverage of dark skinned Africans (particularly those originally from Sudan), symbolises them as 'problematic' and 'non-desired'. This may generate stereotyped perceptions about all African people. The following statement made by one of the participants of the target group confirms this. They had been in the area for more than four years thus providing a good example of that.

Most Australians think that we came by boat to grab their money. Because we are dark they see us as troublemakers, offenders and robbers. We have not chosen to be here!
(Learner 18 -Translated version)

However, their life experiences were influenced not only by their ‘visibility’ but also by other factors, which had a cascading impact on their acculturation and integration. These were age, gender and identity, low level of education and personality.

Age

Mature aged participants faced significant difficulties in learning. This acknowledges the theory that mastery of a second language declines with increased age, thus this group’s potential for participation can be negatively impacted in this way. According to Berry (1997, p. 21) individuals begin the acculturation process with a number of personal characteristics of both a demographic and social nature. In particular one’s age has a no relationship to the way acculturation will proceed. This may account for adult immigrants often experiencing difficulties in acquiring an understanding of the values, culture, custom, and language of the host society that is required for integration. For example Nana (Case Study One) reflects on how she has perceived her age as a negative factor to learn L2:

I am too old to learn now. I can’t cope in an English-only class. I don’t know what other classmates think. “For me, I think I’m old and it’s difficult to learn a new language. People in my community will not laugh at me if I go to TAFE College and learn English. (Nana, Cased Study One)

Learning also can be understood in the biological sense, as the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) refers to the idea that the ability to acquire language is related to age. Proponents of this theory (Chomsky, 1965; Lenneberg, 1967; Penfield & Roberts, 1959) argue that there is an ideal period of time to attain a language and “is limited to the years before puberty after which, most probably as a result of maturational processes in the brain” (Moskovsky, 2001, p.1). Therefore, it could be assumed that as most participants had no formal primary schooling, and did not receive the opportunity to stimulate their learning faculties in the brain during the maturational process, this ability has disappeared in the brain, (Moskovsky 2001).

Gender and identity

Fielding (2011) notes, “African educational systems in general and higher institutions in particular have been characterised by highly ingrained structural inequality” (p. 1), where girls have often been marginalised (Bhana et al., 2009). From this insight we can understand why Veena’s (Case Study Two) gender played an important role in

the acquisition of her L1 literacy skills. Her parents had devalued literacy for women and promoted her to join with them to generate family income. Veena is determined to learn English but claims her inability to understand the L2 instruction is a major barrier. This confirms that 'gender' can be a barrier to education causing missed opportunity to learn, and so preventing her learning L2 literacy skills. Also Meena (Case Study Three) withdrew from her English language course in response to the unavailability of a class only for females, and to respect her religious commands. Acknowledging her personal identity, she was positioning herself as 'a Muslim religious female'. This example ties well with Integrated Threat Theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) that focuses on the conditions that lead to perceptions of threat. "When resources are scarce, the group, which is threatened by the lack of resources, finds itself motivated to compete for the resources in order to maintain its identity as a group or to achieve its goals" (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006, p. 363).

Low level of education

Informal discussion with the target group, whose majority of participants had come from rural backgrounds, revealed how their lives had been disrupted by war. Most of the schools had been closed or had not operated, and the main income was based on farming. In the meantime the female participants had entered into arranged marriages, which was common in their culture. They believed having children was more important for women compared with becoming educated. As seen in Chapter six, Table 6.2, forty-five percent had no formal schooling experiences. Similarly, 45% of participants had two years or less experience of formal schooling. Only 10% of participants claimed to have five years or less experience of formal schooling. Examination of Table 6.5 shows that 85% (17) rated themselves as having poor reading and writing skills in L1 and L2. Also these data highlight that 95% of this group (19) had poor computer skills and only one participant rated herself as having basic computer skills. "For those adults with minimal or no schooling experience, the need is primarily centred on their lack of literacy skills (including English language), often complicated by the fact that many are not literate in their first language. As noted earlier, not being literate in one's first language creates serious challenges for learning literacy skills in a second language" (Benseman, 2012, p. 5).

Personality

As Berry (2001) explains personal traits can play a significant role in the process of integration and acculturation. Immigrants who possess certain personality characteristics such as attributed motivation, high achievement and accomplishment motivate them to impress others and they are more willing to take risks and challenges. For example, Learner four and five had a natural desire to be acculturated by adopting the Australian way of life. They displayed more integrative motives to be acculturated, while demonstrating their motivation for learning the English language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991). The following two extracts reflect the strategies they employed to be acculturated into the host society.

I like to be an Australian .I like to speak more English and show that I am so cool . . . I don't want to wear African clothes and stay at home. (Learner 4-Translated Version)

I respect my identity as an African and I do not want to change it. But I don't want to carry it on my back. When you live in Australia you have to act like an Australian. If not you won't get a place in the society. (Learner 5-Translated Version)

Both learners show paradigmatic explanations of their success as immigrants, which is in keeping with Maslow's human motivation (1943). Thus, they showed how they attempted to develop a new cultural identity by psychologically accepting features of the dominant culture.

7.4.1.2 Microsystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1989, p. 227), the microsystem represents a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by a developing person in a given face-to-face setting which has particular physical and material features, and systems of belief. The immediate contacts in the target group's microsystem included a strong bond with their own ethnic community and exposure to AMEP. Additionally, support services such as local settlement services, interpreters, contacts with real-estate agents, Centrelink, health services, school, church and charity services were all reported. These aspects are discussed below.

Strong bond with own ethnic community

Since the target group established a strong network with their own community, they were generally well integrated, very close and well networked into the local African community compared with the host community. Many had close contacts with the community leader who provided social assistance with information, advice and support. In regional areas, living in a close-knit community provided them giving mutual support to each other. Many participants in the target group had been settled in the one neighbourhood or close to each other, and friends and family members, who previously arrived before them, thus creating one ethnic majority group in one area, for example, Toowoomba in Queensland and Launceston in Tasmania (RCOA, 2013). This paradigm again defines the regional and rural refugee settlement program (McDonald, et al., 2008, p.14) that the “family reunification” provision granted humanitarian entrants to be resettled in rural and regional Australia.

Services providers

Immediate service providers included in the participants ‘microsystem’ were local settlement services, Centrelink, interpreters, health services and contacts with the real-estate agents, church and charity services. These service providers received appreciation as well as some dissatisfaction in the participants’ responses. Local settlement and Social Security (Centrelink) services, local community groups, church and charity services were identified throughout the research process as being majorly supportive and helpful for the initial settlement of the focus group. Almost everyone admired having the opportunity to settle in Australia. While greatly appreciating being in a safe environment that free from violence and war, and having a secured payment to survive on fortnightly basis, most participants compared their life before with after their arrival in Australia. However, some participants responded that they felt uncomfortable with the services they received initially. For example, one participant described how he had received a lot of information for his initial settlement but later he did not receive any support and was unable to remember all the information initially given.

Social security (Centrelink)

Almost all participants in the focus group interviewed were dependent on the social security system for their living. Although they highly appreciated the income support by the government they believed in the importance of working to support themselves

and their families back in Africa. Concern about the inadequacy of these payments was highlighted with the increased cost of essential needs such as house rent and electricity bills. Also they were concerned about the pressure to find work applied by Centrelink processes, while they were trying to learn English in the AMEP. In particular, male participants reported feeling pressure from Centrelink affiliated job search providers to take low-skilled work in remote locations that were inaccessible by public transport. While gaining employment is important stress was caused by the dilemma of trying to acquire the language yet take time out to fulfil job search processes.

Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS)

The focus group showed that there was awareness of the translating and interpreting service (TIS) available for them, however twelve participants (12) found inadequacies. They pointed out that, for instance in the situation of health care there could be a negative impact if interpreting was incorrect. For example, Zeena from case study four described how she was so sick with a back pain one day and she was unable get her friends as usual to help her so got a different friend to go to hospital with her. She tried to explain to hospital staff but they were not able to understand Zeena's friend. They just checked Zeena and sent her back home. She went to her general practitioner with her son later, and through an X-ray the GP diagnosed problems with arthritis. Language barriers that Zeena experienced require in-depth analysis in order to support her settlement issues. This demonstrates that serious limitations exist in the delivery of health services, which could lead to misdiagnosis and culturally inappropriate treatment of this group.

According to Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare in July 2008, Zeena had the right to request a qualified interpreter during her visit to hospital or GP, such as discussing medical history; treatments; test results; diagnosis; during admission or assessment. As the government advertises the "Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) . . . is unique. Australia is the only country in the world with a federally funded translating and interpreting service that provides a national, twenty four hour, seven-days-a-week telephone interpreting service" (DIAC, 2003, p. 277). But to receive the service from an interpreter in a regional or rural area an appointment should be made in

advance. This explains that a person in Zeena's context will be helpless in an emergency situation in expressing the incident or real ailment to the doctors.

Real estate agents and housing

Obtaining secure and affordable housing is an important part of the integration (Burns, 2010; Liddy, Sanders, & Coleman 2010). However, most participants in this study reported that they had difficulty finding housing and accessing real estate agents. This is in keeping with the findings of Evans and Gavarotto (2010, p.11), who noted that, "African community members experienced disempowerment in their attempts to secure housing. This was commonly attributed to a lack of suitable housing, housing insecurity involving frequent moving, and difficulties communicating with the housing sector." For the participants in the present study it was revealed that there is a shortage of affordable rental housing in the area and as a result they were pushed away from the city where the supportive networks were not in place. However, the issue of discrimination emerged with regards to real estate agents and private landlords in the rental application process. The notion of "ghettoisation" of African people from white Australian people emerged in discussions. For example, one participant explained when she inquired about a rental property, which she had observed had been vacant for several months the landlord told her that it was no longer available. Yet she also observed that later it was inspected by a white lady, who subsequently became the tenant. As noted in Chapter six, some participants were not aware of the tenancy law or their rights and responsibilities as a tenant. For example, due to the apparent lack of understanding of the occupancy rules in a housing complex, Learner 14 performed her weekly religious rituals that included high pitched chanting. The next door neighbour reported the incident to authorities (perhaps due to the lack of understanding of the culture of the Learner 14, and the intolerance of the noise). As a result Learner 14 had to vacate the property after receiving a short notice by the landlord. Thus, a combination of cultural and education factors can negatively impact on attempts to integrate into the community, but this incident also highlights the two-way approach that is necessary for acculturation and integration to work. Immigrants cannot do it alone.

Recent studies (Berta 2012; Dawes & Gopalkrishnan 2013; Evans & Gavarotto 2010) highlight the discriminatory practice used by real estate agents and landlords. They have noted issues such as inability of use the English language properly by RHEs and their lack of understanding of the law have been taken for granted by landlord and real-estate agents to exploit them in agreeing to leasing arrangements that are unfair for the tenants. As shown in the Chapter six, Learner 16 provides an example of how real estate agents and land lords exploit the people who cannot speak English very well and who are not aware of the civic law in Australia. If Learner 14 was able to speak well and knew the real estate agent he would not have requested expensive replacements where the tenant was not responsible. A reaction to this perspective on exploitation or discrimination in relation to rental accommodations is clearly evident in the case study of Ben, who is a father of nine children. Ben said, “even I got this house after making 24 applications, real estate agents could not get any of the landlords to rent us a house near the city. Finally one kind real estate agent asked me not to mention the number of children I have. That’s how I got this house. My landlord doesn’t cause me trouble because he lives overseas. We don’t use council water so landlord doesn’t find any excess bills. So we are safe.” This raises the need for more conversations to address the concerns of real estate agents and landlords together with the development of stronger support strategies. In addition, as the most recent government study on refugees, housing, and neighbourhoods in Australia (Flatau et al, 2014) reports, the significant problems for the real estate agents and landlords are the size of the house and the number of occupants (similar to Ben’s case). In Australia neither private nor public rental housing is designed for larger families. Dwellings with several bedrooms are usually built to be owner-occupied, but rental units are intended for small families and have only two or three bedrooms. Miraftab’s (2002) research in the Canadian context suggests that many refugees are not honest about the size of the family, again, similar to Ben’s case, because public or private rental houses are not designed for larger families.

Non-profit organisations (Charity services)

Involvement of local faith based and non-government organisations were identified as playing an important supportive role in the initial settlement of the target group. Participants admired assistance provided by these services, such as delivering food and utilities, escorting children to school or doctor. The Salvation Army and Lifeline

were recognised as umbrella organisations that had been initially supporting them, providing basic household and materials for them to settle in the local area. Regardless of participants Muslim or Christian religious backgrounds they accepted the services of faith based organisations equally. Christian Africans indicated that such faith-based organisations helped them to feel Australia was like their home such that they could maintain their religious values and worship. On the other hand, Muslim African participants expressed no opinion regarding this.

AMEP

As discussed in Chapter One the AMEP is the Australian Government's largest settlement program, which plays a major contribution in facilitating the integration and economic participation of migrants and Humanitarian Entrants in Australian society (AMEP, 2014; DIBP, 2014). However, findings from this research revealed the obstacles the refugees encountered, while receiving language instruction at AMEP. As a volunteer and an observer the researcher experienced how AMEP CSWE framework influenced both pedagogy and practice, and how pre-beginner CSWE learners are positioned within the framework. As it is currently structured, "the 'English-only' classroom was not the setting most preferred by this group of beginner learners and so the belief that the 'English-only' classroom is a perfect classroom for learning English should be challenged" (Ma, 2009, p. 78).

The target group in this study faced significant challenges and often struggled for not being able to understand teacher's ESL instruction. They could not communicate with or ask questions of their teacher, nor read or write in English. Findings from classroom observation and learners samples of work provide strong evidence of these pre-literate and low-literate refugees inadequate preparedness to begin to learn English. Besides lacking fine motor skills development to hold a pencil, their lack of early education and literacy in their first language sets them apart from others with L1 literacy and some education experience. This group lacked what Craats, Jeanne Kurvers and Young-Scholten (2006, p. 13) termed as 'language awareness or metalinguistic awareness' that cover a range of skills such as the alphabetic principle and the phonological, lexical, syntactic and textual skills, such as segmenting words into syllables or phonemes, phoneme manipulation and segmenting sentences into words. Clearly, they have not demonstrated metalinguistic awareness in their L1 nor understanding of what constitutes a word, thus were not able to recognise linguistic

forms in English (L2). As Jessner (2008, p. 275) explains, they need to have: “the ability to focus on linguistic form and to switch focus between form and meaning” . . . [this knowledge is] “made up of a set of skills or abilities that the multilingual user develops owing to his/her prior linguistic and metacognitive knowledge”. Identification of this serious gap in foundation learning experience is consistent with the survey results and the responses from the interviews with ESL teachers as well as learner participants. It justifies the necessity for these learners to be assisted in learning their L1 as these learners clearly belong to a special category. Like Gunn (2003, p.38) experienced in her literacy project, the research found such ‘non-literate students being left behind’. Combined with interruptions to pursue work the lack of foundation for second language acquisition, and lack of bilingual teachers or aides placed this group in a very difficult and depressing situation when they aspired to becoming citizens, knowing they needed to pass the test.

7.4.1.3 Mesosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (2005) the mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings in the microsystem and the developing person. For example relations in this context participants’ Mesosystem include AMEP pedagogy and participants’ meta-cognitive abilities {(Microsystem =AMEP pedagogy) + (Individual system =Meta cognitive abilities)}. Mesosystem here calls attention to the significant role of learners’ metalinguistic awareness and literacy skills, which they should have been acquired in early childhood in a formal learning context, and the roles and vital advantages of metalinguistic awareness in second language acquisition (Cummins, 1978, 1991; De Bot & Jaensch, 2013). Since the target group participants are adults and L1 low-literate there is a significant language gap between L1 and L2 therefore they had no learning experience to scaffold or to reflect on their own learning. Thus, in the words of Wrigley (2008, p. 173), “. . . in failing to consider educational backgrounds [of the focus group] and degrees of literacy in the native language, the current system limits the effectiveness of services and ‘cheats’ groups at either end of the educational spectrum.” As Gambaro (2012, p.2) identifies, another impact of current policy is financial and points to the need for more effective allocation of resources to overcome the situation for this target group.

In 2012/13, the AMEP cost the Australian taxpayer more than \$220 million – that’s not a small number in anyone’s language. Under pressure from the Coalition, Labour was forced to admit that in 2010/11, 54 per cent of AMEP participants who were issued with certificates did not have functional English proficiency. A further 14 per cent of participants were issued with certificates of completion just for turning up. It is beyond me as to how anyone could consider a 68 per cent failure rate for a \$220 million program even remotely acceptable.

7.4.1.4 Exosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (2005) the exosystem in ecological theory involves the experiences in another social context, where the individual does not have a prominent role. For example, a female adult humanitarian refugee who lives in a farm or in a distance suburb is unable to attend the AMEP to learn English as there is no public transport available. As seen in the Table 6.1, participants’ exosystem defines the political and economic nature of the target group. Barriers included were lack of infrastructure, and lack of employment opportunities due to low literacy skills in L2. Table 5.2 also shows, at the time of the focus Group 4 interviews, 70% (14) of participants were unemployed and had been looking for work. Four female participants (20%) of the group claimed that they were not looking for work as they were expecting babies. As well, the fact that they did not have citizenship status, a good command of English, or skills and experience to apply for the available jobs also limited their chances of finding work. They explained that they had to depend on government financial support (New Start Allowance – or similar Social Security Benefits provided by social security services).

The research confirms that owing to barriers imposed by social, cultural, economical and political factors and limited support services in rural and regional areas, refugee and humanitarian entrants’ participation in the socioeconomic process can be hindered (FECCA 2012, Rural and Regional Settlement). As with Fozdar and Hartley’s (2012) Western Australian study of 76 humanitarian entrants and 22 service providers lack of literacy in English also impacted negatively on obtaining a driver’s licence and ultimately prevented them from being equipped to integrate into the Australian way of life.

Lack of Infrastructure

As described by several teachers at the ESL teacher interviews irregular attendance, insufficient childcare facilities, and lack of adequate housing impacted negatively on learner participation in the ESL learning process. The most frequently cited outcome were irregular attendance in AMEP due to the lack of transport. Learners were unable to reach the class on time because of lack of public or private transport available for them. As already noted, not having an Australian driver's licence was generally linked to the inability to do the required written test in English. ESL teachers' interview responses revealed additional barriers to attendance in AMEP as the priority of keeping compulsory appointments with Centrelink social security requirements and also unemployment, healthcare and family and childcare commitments or lack of services.

Unemployment

It has been shown that all participants, except one male participant who was nearly at retirement age and one female participant who was expecting a baby, were willing to undertake any type of labour work in the local area. Mainly they wanted to have the financial independence so that they could support their families in Africa. As reported in the Chapter six there were high rates of unemployment amongst all refugee participants in this study even after many years beyond their arrival in Australia. At the time of the study they were solely depending on government support (social security benefits from Centrelink).

In keeping with other recent research (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Fozdar & Hartley, 2012; Ibrahim, Sgro, Mansouri, & Jubb, 2010) this research confirms that the most common reasons and barriers facing this group continue to hold back this group's goal to become active Australian citizens, gaining work and becoming acculturated and integrated into society. Gambaro (2012,p. 2) reinforces that poor language skills produce poor employment outcomes, which ultimately traps such immigrants into welfare dependency and creates a sense of failure from the perspective of the refugees themselves and also the wider community. She notes how this situation then creates pressures on social cohesion,

pointing out the fact that 83.5 per cent of refugees are still on some form of Centrelink benefit more than five years after arrival in the country.

7.4.1.5 Macrosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1989) the macrosystem, represents "the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exo-systems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context" with specific reference to the "belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems" that for a developing person "can create or constrain developmental opportunity" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 228). As in Table 7.1 the macrosystem of the focus group participants consists of the cultural values of home environments, religious values and beliefs, gender beliefs and racial and ethnic compositions. Their importance is explained below.

Cultural values

Emerging from the study was the finding that the refugees' cultural values and cultural behaviours pertinent to the macrosystem level indicated some negative effects on their ability to integrate and acculturate. The study's findings reflect, as Hiruy and Mwanr (2013) point out, the need to consider that African cultures are typically based on a strong sense of community, collectivist values and human relations, that involve a sense of pride and value over material possessions. This was in evidence, for example, in informal discussions with participants where some participants had control of family relations, and it was the cultural norm that a male was the head of the family, a woman should look after children and family, women should not drive. This has also been pointed out by Farah (2007, p. 6) who states: ". . . for Horn of Africa men, their traditional values . . . place the men as the head of the family giving them significant responsibility and control over their family and environment".

In terms of the social status and space in the society it was noted that participants' collective social participation and behaviour (for their own welfare possibly due to the language incompetency) established a strong picture of high ethnic identification in the mainstream society on the other indirectly segregated by themselves from wider society. For example except two female participants in this study other female participants, often maintained their traditional dress code, cultural behaviour creating space for themselves to regain what had been lost in home countries. They never want to undermine their home culture, traditional values, such as respect for teachers and elders, body language, taste in music, food and hair style thus culturally, materially and psychologically deeply involved in demonstrating their identity in the classroom and elsewhere. This pattern of behaviour in turn was encouraged by the language incompetency, xenophobia or, intense fear or dislike of white people, their customs, culture and values, continuous contacts with religious groups and co-national.

Religious values and beliefs

Compared with Western nations, Islamic societies prove highly conservative on issues of sexuality and gender equality, including support for egalitarian roles for women in the home, workforce, and the public sphere. Islamic societies are also far less tolerant towards issues of sexual liberalisation, as reflected in their attitudes towards issues such as abortion, divorce and homosexuality (Inglehart & Norris, 2009, p. 4). At an individual level such traditional norms appear to be fundamentally incompatible with acculturation and integration into modern Australian society for some females and male participants. For example, Meena, Case study three, did not attend English language classes, as the classes are mixed gender, which was not allowed by her cultural beliefs and values. Not only had that she encountered restrictions through intra-family relations, she also struggled to deal with the Australian Western culture that seemingly allowed kissing, drinking, sexual permissiveness, and swearing. By being obedient to her husband and following the traditions of Islam, in its principles and practices, Meena had a fixed identity that denied her opportunity to learn in AMEP. Meena is socially isolated and has almost no interactions outside the home. Her religion and culture operate in such a way to determine whether she should prioritise learning English or practise her Muslim way of life at home. Her decisions and choices were also guided by the principles of her

religion, which resulted in no access to education. Her domestic and public sphere needs were also mediated through the authority of her husband, which was reinforced by Islamic principles and traditional norms. From her perspectives religiosity is a highly valued source to maintain the happiness of the family. A second example was Learner 11, who viewed the prospect of becoming financially independent being prevented because of her highly religious clothing. She stated: *“It is because of my dress no one would like to employ me. I can do cleaning jobs. But here you have to wear pants and working shoes. I have never worn a pair of shoes in my life”* (translated version). From a cultural and education perspective she did not understand the fact that her dress code could be a health and safety hazard in the certain employment environments.

Discriminative and racial composition of the host community

Participants in this study highlight the practices of indirect discrimination in the public space. For example, Learner 9 said: *“there is one clothing shop run by an Australian lady and whenever I enter that shop she pretends that she is busy and never looks at me or says ‘hello’ to my children”*. Another ‘colour’-based instant of discrimination, experienced by Learner 7, outlined the situation where she noted: *“I have seen bus drivers help white ladies with children to get into the bus. They stop the bus get down and help folding the prams or strollers. They never offered me such assistance when I get into the bus with my four children. Now I don’t take the stroller to the town anymore rather I put my baby in my “Khanga”* (sling to carry the baby on back) (Learner 7-Translated Version).

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) highlight these effects of ‘visible difference’ in relation to employment outcomes stating:

. . . their disadvantageous ‘visibility’ in the Australian environment, based on their physical appearance and accent, cannot be changed. It is clear that prejudices triggered by ‘visibility’ translate into discrimination in employment, although it is hard to establish the scope of this phenomenon hidden under the layers of ‘politically correct’ discourse by employers, as well as the unwillingness of most people to report discrimination (p. 223).

Additionally, the consultations with community members and other stakeholders including government, non-government and community organisations, service providers and academics to review human rights and social inclusion issues regarding African Australians (Australian Human Rights, 2010) also found that ‘having a visibly different appearance’ did impact upon everyday experiences of the vast majority of African Australians. These findings are also reinforced by the most recent study undertaken by Ndhlovu (2013) with the African community in Melbourne. As he states: “. . . colour blind racism explains how contemporary racial inequalities and attitudes are reproduced through practices that are subtle, institutional, and appear non-racial on the surface” (p. 3). Further he quoted one of the participants in his study who indirectly raised his or her voice against racism stating: “. . . We can’t become Australian because we are too tall, we are too dark . . . we are always too something to be Australian” (p. 7). Using the findings from the present study and the evidence from previous research, the researcher concurs with Ndhlovu’s view (2013, p.11) that it is “. . . a gloomy picture ‘ ‘ ‘ [when one considers] the possibility of black African cultural identities being accepted and recognised as an integral part of being Australian”.

7.4.1.6 Chronosystem

As discussed in chapter two Bronfenbrenner (1979) added a time based dimension that influences the operation of all levels of the ecological systems, which refers to both short- and long-term time dimensions of the individual’s experience over the course of a lifespan, as well as the socio-historical forces that impact on lives. Therefore the chronosystem of an individual may be represented in three phases by the changes that have occurred, are occurring and will be occurring in the individual’s life. As indicated in Figure 4.1 in chapter four the Australian government policy also changes over the time, and politics of power impact on the different groups in different ways.

AMEP new business model (2011)

In 2009 the Government announced the Strategic Settlement Framework, which set out new directions for the reform and strengthening of Australia’s settlement services. These were implemented in 2011 and included a major re-design of humanitarian settlement services. The AMEP was to “better align these critical

programs with the needs of migrants and humanitarian entrants,” i.e. to achieve better outcomes for clients (AMES, 2013, p. 1). In collaboration with the AMEP the new business model made changes to the Australia welfare system policies with the aim to on “provide incentives to work for those who are able to work” and “support social and economic participation through measures that build individual and family capability” (McClure, 2014, p.19). This new policy assumed that ‘restrictions’ on welfare payments would cause welfare recipients to actively search for work. Job Services Australia (JSA) is an organisation contracted to deliver employment support services for government welfare dependents under the Employment Services Deed 2009-12 (RCOA, 2012, p.1). Clients are assessed on their needs and barriers to employment and then, in conjunction with the client (job seeker), JSA develop an Employment Pathway Plan (EPP) which maps out any training, work experience or additional assistance a service user might need to find sustainable employment (Finn, 2011, p.14). Job seekers who do not have English language proficiency are required to learn English as soon as possible and enter the workforce. The EPP stipulates certain activities that the job seeker must participate in, with the condition that failure to attend may affect Centrelink payments (RCOA, 2012, p. 8).

Interviews with both ESL teachers and target group participants revealed one of the factors prevent regular attendance and continuation of the AMEP is the pressure from Centrelink as they are required to seriously be active in job network participation while learning English at AMEP. This obligation had become more important than attending AMEP to learn English because if they did not participate in the required job related activities their income support payments would be cancelled. However, as RCOA (2014) further claims many key factors are not taken into consideration by the welfare reform, which include:

barriers such as limited English proficiency, lack of Australian work experience, limited knowledge of Australian workplace culture and systems, limited access to transport, affordable housing close to employment, pressures of juggling employment, domestic responsibilities (a particularly significant issue for women), lack of appropriate services to support employment transitions, the impacts of past trauma on health and wellbeing, downward mobility and the pressure to accept insecure employment, which result in

underutilisation of skills, lack of qualifications or difficulties with recognition of qualifications (p. 2).

Thus, the target group in this study provides a good example of the challenge of such barriers. Furthermore, this policy appears to not give weight to the extensive research linked to English proficiency and employment, identification and assessment of prior education and learning, and the many barriers specific to refugee and humanitarian entrants. As Gambaro (2012) points out: “apart from its \$220 million price tag, what is most galling about the extremely poor results being produced by the AMEP program is that . . . the consequential negative flow-on effects from such a diabolically underperforming program still persists with the same clunky template approach to service delivery” (p.1).

Citizenship policy 2007

Citizenship is a complex topic to navigate, with its manifold definitions, overlapping contexts, and sometimes contradictory connotations” (Goodman, 2009, p.14). As discussed in Chapter three, the ACT policy, introduced by the Howard Government in 2007, works as a barrier to the focus group participants, attaining citizenship. Due to the lack of required literacy skills in English language the focus group participants were not able to apply to take the ACT. Government’s concern about the weight on social cohesion and integration as a policy objective is important though it could be questioned in the light of this research whether testing language ability for citizenship for the category of immigrant at the focus of this study is appropriate since the length of time necessary to ever get to the stage of English proficiency necessary seems to undermine the objective of integration. The research findings confirm that the required level of literacy for the ACT cannot be achieved within the given free 510 hours of AMEP tuition. There is also the additional factor of refugees being able to attend a citizenship education program similar to the “Let’s participate” program that ceased after the introduction of ACT (2007) and was available at AMEP for these learners. However, even if there is such program available, the medium of instruction and its success will be questionable for this group depending on the pedagogical approach e.g. would there be bilingual teachers or teacher aides to introduce and explain concepts of citizenship. A further barrier is the time involved. If bilingual support is provided with L2 instruction, the question remains as to how long it would take for them to understand the citizenship concepts under test and

acquire the test taking skills. This would be another pressure to impact on job search as well as learning the language, thus policy would need to reconsider what model might best suit this category of learner.

7.4.2 Acquire proficiency in English, acculturation and socially integration

Research question two asked “How do humanitarian refugees with little or no literacy in their first language best acquire proficiency in English and become acculturated and socially integrated into Australian society?” The research shows that there is not an easy answer to this question as it needs to take account of the low starting point for this group and the context trying to become integrated into Australian society and the social, economical and cultural issues involved. Thus, not surprisingly, the fundamental principle put forward by most teachers in this study was the lack of learner capital in the L2 acquisition process. The fact that focus group participants did not receive formal education during the formative years of schooling caused them to lack many skills, behaviours and experiences, knowledge, specific vocabularies, understandings of register and genre, cultural backgrounds to scaffold their understandings of the world, and learning strategies that considered to be the fundamental skills needed to process content (Miller, Mitchell, & Brown, 2005, p. 23). As ESL pre-beginner classroom observations showed this category of learner was generally unaware of the teacher instruction in the classroom since they could not understand the language (only English was in use), and initially they were unable to participate in the learning process as active learners. When these learners did not know how to hold a writing implement or as evident in Figure 7.2, how to form letters or words of a consistent size, or how to write them on the lines of lined paper (lacking fine motor control, foundation skills or enabling skills), and most importantly when the AMEP curriculum is not focused on improving metacognitive skills the question arises as to how learning is facilitated and how ESL teachers can develop their literacy competencies. These ‘enabling skills’ are not included as a part of the language proficiency continuum (Moore, 2007; Wigglesworth 2005) and “[they] are not presently formally assessed in the AMEP curriculum” (Moore, 2007, p. 27). As a result “a good deal of pre-literate learners’ 510-hour English language entitlement is spent learning and practising them” (Moore, 2007, p. 27). If the

learners ‘enabling skills’ had been formally pre-assessed as a part of a proficiency continuum they would not have been placed in English proficiency language classes but rather a bridging foundation program appropriate to their needs. Then the development of a comprehensive framework that embedded into AMEP curriculum to improve foundation skills would become the first and foremost requirement to be considered “as a valid step in the chain of events that comprise literacy development (Moore 2007, p. 27). If not ESL teachers in this context find it difficult to take ownership of the learning and achievement of such low literate learners.

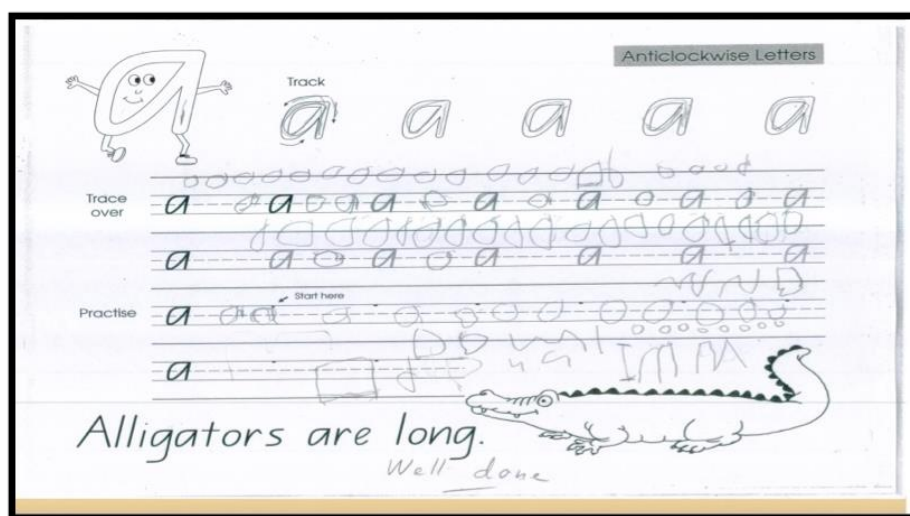


Figure 7.2 writing sample of preliminary CSWE learner

L2 Acquisition versus acculturation

Second Language Acquisition among immigrants is a complex, multidimensional process. How one acculturates may influence how well one acquires the dominant language as well as how well one adapts to the majority group’s culture (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2006; Masgoret & Gardner, 1999). The importance of language in the role of acculturation has been explored by Schumann (1986; 1990) in his acculturation model. According to Schumann (1986, p. 379), “. . . the learner will acquire the language only to the extent that he [sic] acculturates”. His research (1976; 1986) on acculturation examines the social and psychological contact between members of a particular group and members of the target culture as a predictor of the amount of English language they acquire and use. In his words he sees acculturation as “the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language (TL)

group” (Schumann, 1986, p. 379). In one way, Schumann maintains the social and psychological integration parallel to the acquisition and use of English to measure the degree of acculturation to the host culture. He argues the degree of social exposure and patterns of social structure of the host society either promote or inhibit the language contact between L2 learner and the host society, and thus affect the degree to which members of one group learn the language of another. The more interaction (i.e., social/psychological closeness) a group has with the target group, the more opportunities will result for the group to acquire and use English. Conversely, less interaction (i.e., social/psychological distance) results in less acquisition and use of English. According to Berry’s Quadric-modal acculturation model (Berry, 1980; 1984), individuals with better language skills would be more likely to exhibit the characteristics of better acculturation. Thus acculturation is believed to be helpful in L2 acquisition or L2 acquisition believed to be helpful in acculturation that indicates the absence of a logical argument similar to the “chicken or egg”. However this study provides evidence that low level of English language proficiency made focus group participants socially and psychologically distant from the L2 speaking community. As Díaz-Rico and Weed (2006, pp. 245-247) point out L2 learners may not wish to be acculturated into the mainstream culture rather, they may remain separate from it. Perhaps he or she may adopt a pluralist view on acculturation or completely or partially may be isolated from dominant culture. Therefore, how one acculturates may depend on the individual goals of the learner. However, if the acculturation is an important factor in successful L2 acquisition, it is more important that learners are exposed to mainstream culture and learn acculturation strategies so that they are able to acquire the second language and practise it.

English only approach

Research in the field of second language acquisition (Brown, 2001; Nunan, 2004, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001) provides an explanation of why a certain theory should be applied in the curriculum. Understanding the theory helps teachers to better appreciate the results of their teaching, and it is especially necessary when immigration brings ethnic and linguistic diversity such as the challenge the teachers were faced with in this study. Brown (2001, p. 17) explains, “against the backdrop of the previous 19 centuries, a glance through the past century or so of language

teaching gives us, ironically, a rather refreshingly interesting picture of varied interpretations of the "best" way to teach a foreign language". Thus, given the wealth of theory and models (Brown, 2000; 2007, Ellis & Wulff, 2014) relating to second language pedagogy, the acceptance and application of one certain theory, linked to the curriculum, is not an easy concept to support for these L2 learners. Although advocates of the monolingual approach believe that "the teacher, who is a native speaker, is the best embodiment of the target and norm for learners" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 194), comprehensible L2 input is a necessary condition for SLA (Krashen, 1982); the learner should be exposed to authentic language communication (Ellis, 1984). However, one can question whether these practices are possible and enabling with pre-, low- or non-literate L1 learner in the pre-beginner classroom. In the language learning process learners need to be able to act as code breakers, text participants, text users, and text analysts to develop their literacy skills (Luke & Freebody, 1997; Freebody & Luke, 2003). These four roles are perceived as "integrating practice" (Freebody and Luke, 2003, p. 57) and involve important metacognitive processes, and require the development of high level and critical thinking skills. As classroom observations showed, the learners in this study received systematic, repetitive L2 basic reading comprehension and writing instruction, under circumstances where they were not able to either comprehend instructions or explanations given in the L2 to enable their active participation in the lesson. They were unable to ask questions since teachers did not speak their first language. As Phillipson (1992, p. 191) noted the biggest problem with L2 instruction is that "it is impractical" for specific groups such as the pre-beginner class in this study. Because these learners have not been exposed to early learning in a formal school environment they have not developed cognitive and metacognitive strategies and the language used for learning (O'Neill, 2013), which are acquired over time through many years at school (Miller, Mitchell, & Brown, 2005, p.23). This is borne out by Bigelow and Schwarz (2010, p. 9) who emphasise that "formal schooling provides particular skills, possibly used primarily in formal school settings, and the combination of thinking and performance skills is a reciprocal relationship that permits learning in a formal classroom setting."

Negative L1 and ESL acquisition

The ESL teachers interviewed in this study revealed that many refugee learners drop out without completing the beginner level of English. The writing samples displayed in Chapter five suggest that the target group in this study have a distinctive obstacle at hand in being able to access the next level of the CSWE curriculum and the textual world outside of the AMEP classroom. Research on second language acquisition indicates that lack of or negative L1 literacy skills create difficulties with learning an additional language (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2009; Cummins, 1984; Krashen 1982). “The less education one has, the more difficult it is to profit from formal education, where organisation and thinking skills and school-based skills are needed to succeed” (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010, p. 9). As with early childhood good literacy teaching practice learners becoming literate in their L1 beginning with a rich concept, vocabulary and experiential based program (Louden, Rohl, Barratt Pugh, Brown, & Cairney et al., 2005). In keeping with Florez and Terrill (2003, p. 3) statement, these “literacy learners need to understand that texts have a beginning, a middle, and an end; that English is read from left to right and from up to down; and that written words can represent a story, just as pictures do. They need to be ready to learn, to see patterns, and to associate symbols with objects.” Thus, a program for this category of learners needs to be sufficiently well resourced and incorporate a pedagogical approach that is able to bridge their impoverished education background and reduced the associated stress barriers to learning.

Metalinguistic awareness

Jerome Bruner, who has made a significant contributions to human cognitive psychology and cognitive learning theory in philosophy of education refers cognition as a mental activity that include the faculties of thinking, remembering, learning and using language (Bruner, 1960). The function that monitors and controls the mental actions, and learning processes is called metacognition (Olson, 2008; Thompson et al., 2011). “Metalinguistic awareness is a trained skill requiring knowledge of specific terms and ways of talking and thinking about language” (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010, p.10). According to Jessner (2008, p.275) metalinguistic awareness is “the ability to focus on linguistic form and to switch focus between form and meaning”. Research on L1 and L2 acquisition highlights that significant differences

exist at different levels of metalinguistic awareness between L1 literate and L1 non-literate learners (Castro Caldas, 2004; Castro-Caldas et al., 2009; Ostrosky-Solis et al., 2004). Specifically, Ostrosky-Solis, et al (2004) found that a literate adult activates specific regions in the brain to remember words but non-literate adults do not. They point out that this means learning to read and write an alphabetic script changes the language network in the human brain. This supports Cummins (1979) Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis in arguing the fact that ‘literate’ and ‘non-literate’ learners have different brain functions. Thus, it is important for SLA in the case of this learner group that pedagogy accounts for their starting point and teachers are adequately prepared to teach at this level. It also highlights the critical importance of the way language plays a part in the instructional process and in the need to teach the metacognitive skills, thus calling into question the “English only” approach or “Immersion approach” for this group, when literacy learning in their L1 is shown to be a critical facilitator of learning L2.

The Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis

As discussed in chapter two, in the process of L1 acquisition, one develops important cognitive competencies, which can be used successfully when learning a second language. Cummins (1984) summarises this in his “Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis” that argues that an interrupted development of L1 (especially if children do not learn to read and write in their first language) is a negative indicator for second language acquisition, and those who are literate in L1 “make stronger progress in acquiring literacy in L2” (Cummins, 2000, p. 173). Cummins (2000, p. 191) further argues there is a “central processing system” in the brain, which plays an executive role in literacy development. In supporting this, Clark (2000) points out everything acquired in the first language such as cognitive skills, literacy development, concept formation, analysis, synthesis, language learning strategies and subject knowledge will transfer to the second language (p.185). Thus, the learners in this study who lack these strategies are undoubtedly seriously disadvantaged and it might be argued that their experience in AMEP should be completely revisited with regards to pedagogical approach. It may be argued that LESLLA learners, similar to the learners in pre-beginner classes in this study, who have not yet interacted with

aspects of language learning that require them to decode or encode print do not have any invested learning available to transfer to acquire a second language. This, in spite of the relevance and argument for the underpinning philosophy of English only instruction to facilitate their SLA how this group who do not have any print literacy skills in L1 could be facilitated to learn English requires special consideration with long term goals.

Bilingual instruction

Multiple studies provide strong evidence that quality bilingual programs have been influential in developing language skills and building academic achievement generally (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Thomas & Collier, 2001, Tarone, Bigelow & Hansen, 2009). Findings from both the ESL teacher survey and the responses from ESL teacher interviews strongly recommended that L1 instruction would be an appropriate pedagogical approach for low- or non-literate L1 learners. This is necessary, first to develop cognitive skills and foundation skills then to allow them to move forward with L1 and L2 instruction until learners are able to maintain English only instruction. This approach has gained support over the past decade (Benseman, 2012; Bigelow & Tarone, 2011; Condelli, Wrigley, & Yoon, 2009; Murray & Wigglesworth, 2005) as research has provided evidence of the benefits and value of the use of L1 instruction for L1 low-literate learners. For example Condelli, Wrigley, and Yoon (2009) explain:

Beginning ESL literacy students are not able to discuss options or articulate opinions to a deep level if they still struggle with even basic conversation in the new language. They may be able to understand a simple scenario presented to them, but they will be hard pressed to discuss the situation in detail or suggest more than the simplest course of action . . . By giving students a chance to use their own language in discussions, teachers can help students think about consequences. By mixing the use of English with opportunities to use the native language where appropriate, the learning of English can be reinforced (p.153).

This also concurs with a study of learners with highly developed cognitive skills; the introductory French course initiated for university students in Australia Rolin-Ianziti

and Varshney (2008) assert “the exclusive use of French in instruction was not only a sign of teaching excellence but also beneficial to learning the language” (p. 255). This indicates that no matter the level or the age of the learner with bilingual instruction the learner can comprehend and follow the lessons more easily and negotiate the pedagogy as a text participant to be actively engaged in the leaning process. It will be most appropriate to the learners who are struggling in L2 to communicate with the teacher. However when the content and method function according to tight organisational rules the teacher lacks the flexibility to move beyond the specified curriculum and approach to fulfil the linguistic needs of the learners. The ESL teachers in this study during interview pointed out that they were in a difficult position being required to work within the current AMEP policy context. For example one of the ESL teachers said:

“Learners who are literate in L1 speed up the processing of L2 quickly. Use of L1 instruction will be beneficial for the low literate learner. AMEP really should have a vision for effective L1 instruction as it is the key for these learners to be successful in achieving the basic literacy skills in L2. The system is slow to consider, discuss, and fund the bilingual programs that show success. I mean simply I don’t have the power to know how to make it happen. I am just a teacher. AMEP really should have a vision for effective L1 instruction as it is the key for these learners to be successful in achieving the basic literacy skills in L2” (Teacher, ACT 9).

This quotation highlights the fact that ESL teachers have been equipped with pedagogical techniques but they have been affected by the political nature of the educational policies, guidelines and framework in the system, by “prevent[ing] them from developing their expertise in ways relevant to their local community needs” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 84). Additionally, this indicates that ESL teachers are not actively involved in ESL educational policy development. Describing herself as ‘just a teacher’ indicates the role of teacher is one of passive policy implementer of the government policy. This highlights ESL teachers have no power to make decisions to select the most appropriate approach to deliver the language programs or change the curriculum or teaching methodology according to the language needs of the learner, and to offer a bilingual approach would require additional resources or other bilingual teachers. So, according to the results of this study English only instruction does not fit with LESLLA learners such that a more holistic approach is required to prepare them ‘how to learn’ first, and to enhance the development of their fine motor

skills enabling to enable them to improve their coordination skills, before being able to manipulate a pencil on paper. Throughout the process attention needs to be paid to their L1 literacy learning and at appropriate times for both L1 and L2 basic concepts about print, environmental print and the various underpinning skills and cueing systems, including graphophonic cues/sound-symbol relationships need to be introduced. Similarly, ESL teachers and teacher aides need to be prepared to teach in a more adaptive, bilingual mode according to learners pre-assessed needs.

Why metacognitive skills are important?

Metacognition has been defined by Hennessey (1999, p. 3) as “an awareness of one’s own thinking, awareness of the content of one’s conceptions, an active monitoring of one’s cognitive processes, an attempt to regulate one’s cognitive processes in relationship to further learning, and an application of a set of heuristics as an effective device for helping people organise their methods of attack on problems.” Metacognitive skills facilitate a learner to retrieve and deploy such strategies in similar but new contexts (Kuhn & Dean, 2004) in order for learners to acquire new knowledge through developing adequate mental constructions (Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006). When this happens the learner is said to stimulate the “black box” (McKeown & Gentilucci, 2007) and becomes the locus of control rather than being a passive participant in the process of learning (Kurvers & van de Craats, 2007). In an attempt to catch this behaviour the learner is then said to be able to address learning with regard to gaining insight, through information processing, use of memory, by perception and through encountering and using the role of prior knowledge, and learning experiences to convert or produce new learning outcomes as an organised information processor (Kuhn & Dean, 2004; Schraw et al., 2006, Thompson, 2011). From this theoretical perspective it is reasonable to say that “it is time to open a door that has been firmly shut in language teaching for over a hundred years, namely the systematic use of the first language (L1) in the classroom” because “the first language can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 users rather than something to be shunned at all costs” Cook (2001, p. 402). Thus, this research reinforces these researchers’ claims and fully supports the need for radical changes to SLA pedagogy, and particularly for this group.

7.4.3 Citizenship, developing a feeling of belonging and cultural identity

The third research question asked, “How can NESB humanitarian refugee learners with limited literacy skills in their first language best be assisted to develop a feeling of belonging/their new cultural identity and become citizens within an appropriate timeframe?”

According to Fielden (2008. p. 4), “. . . the re-emergence of local integration as a durable solution cannot be attributed to a single factor. Indeed, the political, economic and social conditions that allow for such a solution are many and varied.” If the practical application of the ecological approach to individual lives is considered, “. . . it is difficult to clearly identify specific catalysts for the local integration process, as each example seems to take place under different circumstances” (Fielden, 2008. p. 4). While the necessity for integration cannot be ignored as an important policy, the researcher questions whether the need to pass the citizenship test as a requirement to be integrated is an appropriate policy objective for this subgroup, or whether the test acts as a desirable mechanism to make them integrated or can validate their integration into Australian society.

Overall, what is highlighted in this research is the focus groups’ experiences of belonging to the Australian society appear to be mixed, tending to be more excluded than included in the wider Australian society. The Australian Citizenship Test policy and the contradictory nature of the ESL program clearly have a large impact on the potential integration of the focus group participants. The results of this policy, in practice, reflect an unhelpful, unhealthy and narrower interpretation of citizenship that becomes punitive for the group studied here. The ACT policy creates a strong barrier and for this group tends to hinder their potential to follow a logical path to be integrated. The written ‘Determination for the Approval of a Citizenship Test’ (Bowen, March, 2012) (Appendix 10) stated ‘The Course-Based Test’ (see Figure 7.3, Part C, Item 37) for those who have failed the citizenship test, however no Course Based Citizenship education program is available for any of the English language program provided in the RWZs. As published by DIBP (2014) course based citizenship programs are operated only in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne. Since this group of refugees have not yet developed their learning skills, metacognitive skills,

and the macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, they have not yet acquired sufficient knowledge of English literacy skills to be able to exist independently. With their current low level of literacy they are not able to even think of sitting for the Australian Citizenship Test.

IMMI 11/088

Part C. The Course-Based Test

Eligibility Criteria for the Course-Based Test

36. A person seeking to participate in the Course-Based Test must:

- (a) satisfy the eligibility criteria for sitting the Standard Test at paragraph 1 of Part A; and
- (b) have failed the Standard Test or Assisted Test (or combination of both) three or more times, or have been assessed after one or two test failures by a test administrator based on consideration of their individual circumstances, as suitable for participation in the Course-Based Test.

NOTE: Persons may be eligible to undertake the Course-Based Test, but may choose to sit the Standard Test or Assisted Test (if eligible). Once they have commenced a Course-Based Test, they may not be able to return to attempt the Standard Test or Assisted Test.

Description

37. The Course-Based Test will comprise a total of no more than 20 hours of tuition provided by an organisation that is contracted to provide services under the Adult Migrant English Program.

38. The Course-Based Test will comprise seven sessions including five sessions with assessable tasks.

39. The Course-Based Test will be delivered in English.

40. The Course-Based Test content and assessment tasks will be derived from the content of the testable section of a resource book designed to help people prepare for Australian citizenship. Each assessment task will include questions focusing on different parts of the *testable section of the resource book*.

Course-Based Test Locations

41. The Course-Based Test may only be available in certain locations in Australia.

Figure 7.3: Amended Citizenship Act-2007/2009

(Bowen, March, 2012, p. 10)

To achieve the required level they need to reach at least CSWE level 3 or 4. The question is whether they are able to reach those levels or not – is this a feasible goal. In this regard the nature of the English language development programs points to the link between time and ESL acquisition emphasising the theory behind second language acquisition and a significant pre-condition for succeeding in SLA within a nominated time period.

Various reports (Moore et al., 2008; RCOA, 2014b) have questioned the adequacy of the number of hours of English language education provided by AMEP for LESLLA learners in Australia. As the findings of the study demonstrate both ESL teachers and learner participants were of the opinion that the allocation of 510 hours of free ESL tuition is insufficient. According to past studies, on average it takes two to five years to reach English conversational fluency or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), and four to seven years to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) depending on other factors such as age, attitude, motivation, literacy level in L1, and degree of exposure to L2 (Cummins, 1981). Based on Thomas and Collier (2003) it could be said that the average native English speaker gains approximately ten months of academic growth in one ten-month academic year. In comparison, ESL learners outgain the native speaker by making 1.5 years' progress in English for six successive school years. Thus, in order to have skills that are equal to native English speakers, ESL learners need to achieve nine years progress in six years. This suggests that policies that assume rapid acquisition of English within a set time period are unrealistic for this group of learners. As teacher G2-10 in this study noted “. . . some students need an individual approach and more time to improve their fine motor skills,” because individuals continue to build foundation skills¹ over a lifetime. Although professionals in the field have noted this, there is a lack of agreement to on the kind of intervention support required. For example, in response to the Review of the Adult Migrant English Program Discussion Paper, the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA, July 2008), which is the peak body of TESOL professional associations in Australia, stated:

If the AMEP is to remain directed to assisting settlement, the main issue at stake in this discussion is ensuring stable, quality post-AMEP ESL provision. This provision should include a diversity of options, for example, for clients to return to ESL classes when they realise further tuition needs, provision for low and high English proficiency levels and to meet different social, educational and employment needs. By this, we do not mean that ESL programs should not be linked to other educational, training and employment programs but rather that ESL provision should not be managed as some kind of offshoot of adult literacy or labour market preparation (p. 8).

However, in comparison with the current linguistic state of the focus group participants and level of English literacy required by the ACT, if age level and the other traumatic background factors are taken into account it could be argued that by the time the focus group participants become proficient in English language they may have reached the ‘time’ when citizenship will be automatically granted. That is aged 60 years. Narrating the frustration of this outcome one could question “who is responsible for this group’s rights and missed opportunities of their lives within this time period?”

Case study narratives in this study show that participants’ journeys from Africa to Australia present a paradigm shift in their lives. Political events forced them to move from their country of origin. In this sense, the politics of the country of origin as opposed to the politics of the receiving country have had an important role in influencing their lives and the politics of the receiving country influence the nature of the opportunity for them to reconstruct their lives, including, educating or resourcing them to learn English language

The Future

In the research literature, the most ubiquitous interest has been in what barriers and structures prevent successful integration. As Björk (2011, p. 28) explains, “. . . the point is not . . . to provide exhaustive definitions for integration, but to focus on the quite specific context.” Policy is needed that focuses on how best to assist and promote integration and citizenship for this group based on these research findings. It needs to reconsider the exclusive nature of the current citizenship test and the possibility of change to flexible alternative assessments together with consideration of how the AMEP curriculum can be designed to promote learner needs regardless of starting point. Currently, this group appears detached and distended from the wider community and their struggle to learn the English language is predictably lost or turned into an extended and complex one under current offerings. In this sense considerations need to be based on a common framework that values “. . . security, equality, respect, co-operation and unity, and engages in bonding, bridging and linking relationships” (Rudiger, 2006, p. 4) to improve the group’s civic engagement and acculturation.

Civic engagement

As Wrigley (2008, p.171) points out “participation in adult education is the primary tool for acquiring the language of a new country, developing cultural competence, and gaining the knowledge and skills necessary for ongoing education”. Instead of attempting to achieve integration or social cohesion through the current approach it may be more effective and less costly to achieve it locally by promoting participation and dual allegiance that could prevent externalisation. As Wrigley (2008) emphasises:

There must be programs specifically designed to address the needs of those who have never learned to write or who have only basic literacy skills in the native language. Such programs must not only teach literacy but must also seek to teach the cognitive academic skills associated with schooling. It must provide the kind of background knowledge normally acquired in school, particularly knowledge in civics, math, and science that is necessary for success in training and in academic work and is often required to help children with their homework (even in elementary school). Merely teaching English literacy, functional life skills, and English conversational skills may not be enough to help lift undereducated immigrants who are new to English out of poverty and into the economic mainstream (Wrigley, 2008, p.175).

In keeping with Wrigley their civic participation may be linked to the notion of encouraging policy developers and curriculum designers to have a common vision as a necessity for keeping the educational wheels turning for this group, which in turn highlights a momentum of linguistic and social activities that advocate inclusion of local context and culture. Within this there would be a need for access to ethnic languages through the local community. Appropriate measures would need to be taken to facilitate their integration into the wider Australian community. In order to bring their skills forward and to develop their confidence, the design of a conceptual support network that signifies the attainment of sufficient knowledge for the purpose of integration is necessary. This is further explained in the following section.

Network for Integrating Low literate Adult Immigrants (NILLAI)

Network for Integrating Low literate Adult Immigrants (hereafter NILLAI) is a conceptual approach designed by the researcher as a result of this research. It may be

applied in any RWZ at the local level. Besides taking account of the findings of this study it acknowledges other related research (Broadbent et al., 2007; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Flanagan, 2007; McDonald, et al., 2008; Taylor & Stanovic, 2005; Stevens, 1998) conducted in Australia with similar groups. NILLAI is a network that manages the commitment and involvement in decision-making processes of all stakeholders in the host community, and includes the participation of low-literate immigrant groups. The rationale behind this is that developing a community-based team approach could bring together the diverse range of individual knowledge, human resources, including the immigrants themselves, into collective knowledge that can transform higher quality decisions and solutions (Zenk, Stadtfeld, & Windhager, 2010). The assets and resources that stakeholders possess, the actions they take, and the reception and support given to this minority group would be the key determinants of successful integration to overcome the challenges identified here (Kallenbach et al., 2013). Importantly, as Zenk, Stadtfeld and Windhager (2010, p. 6418) note, the thinking behind this is based on ensuring that stakeholders work together, “collaborating in organised relational patterns to collectively accomplish their intended objectives.” The framework is also focused on building a network that local stakeholders can easily input and provide support to promote linguistic, social and cultural integration of low-literate immigrants. To do this they would encourage refugees in the local area to participate in a range of community projects with a range of support mechanisms designed to facilitate meaningful authentic learning experiences and practical, useful skills.

Principal body

The NILLAI would nominate the local government (city councils or shire councils) as the key figure in a particular Refugee Welcome Zone, which has made an official commitment in principle to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community as the key figure in this framework (RCOA, 2014a). This means that when considering the duty to promote integration, local governments would take account of the needs of the humanitarian entrants they welcome. It should be noted that the AMEP has already been privatised to Navitas’ corporation, therefore local government would be identified as the ideal authoritative figure that could trace multiple stakeholders to constitute the future of the NILLAI.

AMEP with all its knowledge presents as a key community resource and an asset to any new initiative such as the NLLAI team.

Consultative or advisory committee

According to Katz et al (2004, p. 308-311) a social network consists of a set of actors and the relations between these actors is important to develop and clarify. These actors may be individuals, groups, organizations, or societies that span a broad range of disciplines. Rudiger (2006) and Togeby (2004) identify how the actors, together, can employ the mechanism of community capacity building to enhance the community cohesion and encourage active participation of the new community members. Thus, local government should make a collaborative approach to the creation and implementation of learning and literacy projects that involve professionals in the field of ESL (from universities, AMEP/schools/TAFE, service clubs), leaders of ethnic minority groups, health professionals (doctor/nurse/health-educator/psychologist), representatives from refugee settlement services, Centrelink, library, financial institutions, employment consultants, counsellors, interpreters/translators, social workers, multicultural officer, police personnel, real estate consultants, and most importantly leaders from non-profit or faith based organizations and a team of volunteers/service learners. Subsequently, this 'community' will be officially recognised as NILLAI to form a team that has the capacity to analyse the challenges and problems that refugee and humanitarian entrants' experience and find strategies to decide and define the group's needs. Strategies are outlined below:

NILLAI will:

- focus and pursue UNHCR's protection strategies and register the refugee group referred by UNHCR to the local area to protect and assist them through comprehensive solutions including settlement, integration and naturalisation on shared vision of goals, philosophy, and methods;
- formulate a mission statement to define its goals to work with local, state and federal government, regional institute, with regard to low literate refugee learners' problems with access to basic services and to protect their rights to promote Australian government's commitment to the UNHCR;
- focus on delivering more than one agenda that broadens the scope of projects and provides multiple outcomes not only to increase the literacy levels in L1 and L2, but to

improve the computer related literacy skills that needed to meet the demands of real life situations providing guidance on how to navigate the existing system;

- create initiatives to approach the target group in a professional but friendly manner with greater cultural sensitivity to maximise the benefits through focusing on the previous trauma related background with a sympathetic and empathetic approach, particularly with respect to, for example, gender related issues with female participants, a person with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and isolated widows;
- promote, and foster social interactions and act as a cultural ice breaker by organising enrichment activities and multicultural activities to bring people together; generate a sense of security and identity, change hostile integration and influence the unity in the community and the attitudes of the wider community to prevent self-segregation;
- update media publications to communicate widely about their programme, display the foundations to address barriers to learning in order to encourage high levels of participation and actively strive to maintain momentum in the participation;
- create fun activities such as personal development workshops and for example fashion parades to discuss the standards of dress codes in different situations, and makeover workshops to highlight the importance of appearance and hygiene;
- provide for the acquisition of workplace literacy skills to address the under-representation of refugee participation in the job market;
- train a team of volunteers with instructions and practices according to the government educational, philosophical, and legal framework, to support the program with regular supervision;
- conduct evaluations of its effectiveness regarding the NILLAI's philosophy and goals, including recognition of members' contributions, and gather data on outcomes, for example, using team members' satisfaction, participant satisfaction and learner satisfaction and attendance statistics;
- engage language experts in NILLAI to develop a bilingual adaptive program to present language, citizenship and work skills education, and education in general, with community involvement, to maintain and encourage the value of learners' own life experience and knowledge, to set achievable short-term and long-term learning goals, and to develop plans for reaching those goals. Adopt a common purpose to promote acquisition of literacy skills in L1 and opportunity to transfer those skills into L2 literacy acquisition, employing creative, authentic pedagogies.

Bilingual education program

The research findings have established the need for changes to pedagogy and these learners' access to bilingual teachers and aides, and community members. This can be assisted through community involvement and include extra-curricular activities as well. Through local council records it is possible to decide the population of a particular ethnic community. Multicultural officers would be able to contact the leaders or prominent personnel in a particular ethnic group to discuss the language needs of that group, and recruit people on a volunteer basis to offer L1 and L2 lessons. This recruitment can be done under the guidelines of professionally qualified educators who are willing to provide initial training to approach low literate learners to support L1 Literacy skills. Volunteers need to be supervised and be rewarded and their knowledge and service need to be updated regularly. This might be achieved through a system of mutual benefit where certificates are given in recognition of skills. Tertiary students may be involved as service learners, where their input is linked to their project-based learning.

Primary phase

During the primary phase the consultative team would develop a conceptual framework in keeping with Figure 7.4 to highlight the type of interventions they would need to undertake to develop community relations, organise welcome sessions and introductory workshops. During the introductory session there would be interviews for diagnostic and priority assessment. The consultative team or a case officer would analyse and establish a profile for each family or person with refugee experience based on the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory of Development (1994), which analyses the socio-cultural background, education, number of years of education in home country, experience they have encountered as a former refugee, and literacy levels in L1 and L2. This analyses the individual and micro-system-levels required to assess gender-specific issues and mental health status, which are relevant to the individual. The purpose of this assessment is to design successful interventions to address the basic needs and high priorities. Through the subsequent consultation, the following priority information gaps shown in Table 7.2 will be identified for each participant in the program.

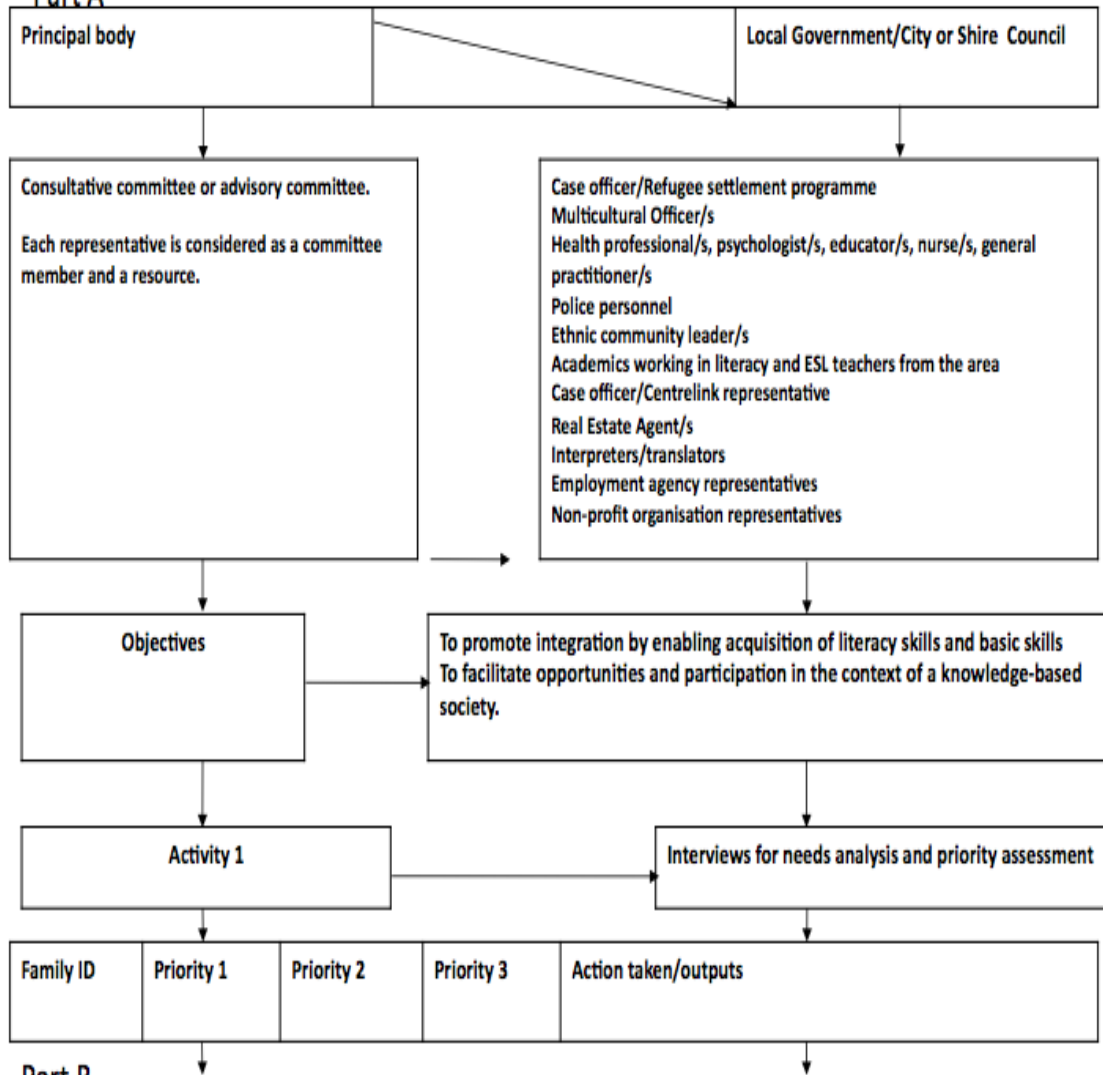
The priority list would be recorded and rotated gradually after the necessary actions are taken to address the top priority first. Middle level priorities would not be addressed until the top priority was completed.

Table 7.2 Sample priority information gaps chart

Family ID	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Action taken	Outcome
A	Housing issues	Child care Schools	Learning English L2 literacy	Referred to the Real Estate Agent and Centrelink	Priority 1 solved Finance support from Centrelink for bond money Two bedroom unit found.
B	Language training programs	To learn how to drive.	To obtain employment.	Referred to language learning assessment.	Referred to bilingual language program.
C	Mental health and trauma related issues				
D	Employment				
E	Transportation				

Network for Integrating Low literate Adult Immigrants (NILLAI)

Part A



Part B Network for Integrating Low literate Adult Immigrants (NILLAI) *Continued*

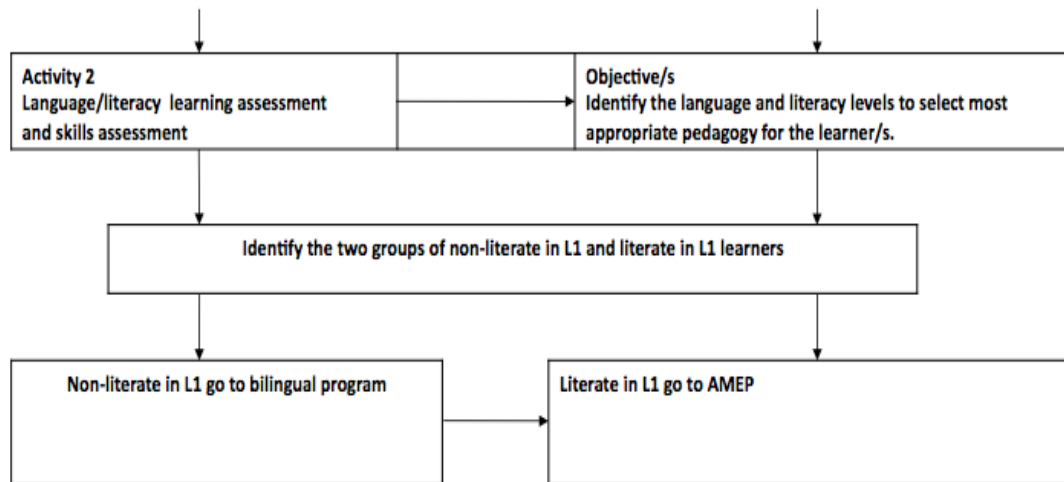


Figure 7.4 Conceptual of network of NILLAI model of integration

However, it should be noted that despite the model framework, NILLAI will face challenges and obstacles in trying to link refugee populations and resource networks upon the absence of sufficient funds, for example, registering, negotiating with governments fundraising and transportation. On the other hand the development of a strong cohesive network with a strong theme of volunteering and service learning opportunities has the capacity to use government resources most efficiently and create mutual benefits among members.

Secondary phase

The secondary phase in this framework will assess literacy levels of the participants. A short reading and writing interview test in their first language and English language will determine the participants' literacy levels. It will be conducted by teachers and community members with appropriate language abilities, either bilingual or in combination. Following assessment the refugees' learning pathway will be designed, including the learning pace, learning mode and teaching approach based on each individual profile. Those who are literate with L1 will be referred to the AMEP and those who are not literate will be referred to the Bilingual Education Programme (BEP). Thus, NILLAI will continue its activities depending on the needs arising in the context. One of the main objectives of NILLAI is to maintain the program involving multicultural events, cultural awareness workshops, and community learning experiences to address more broadly the various issues on a regular basis. In summary, Figure 7.5 illustrates the refugees' problems and Figure 7.6 provides strategies to address them.

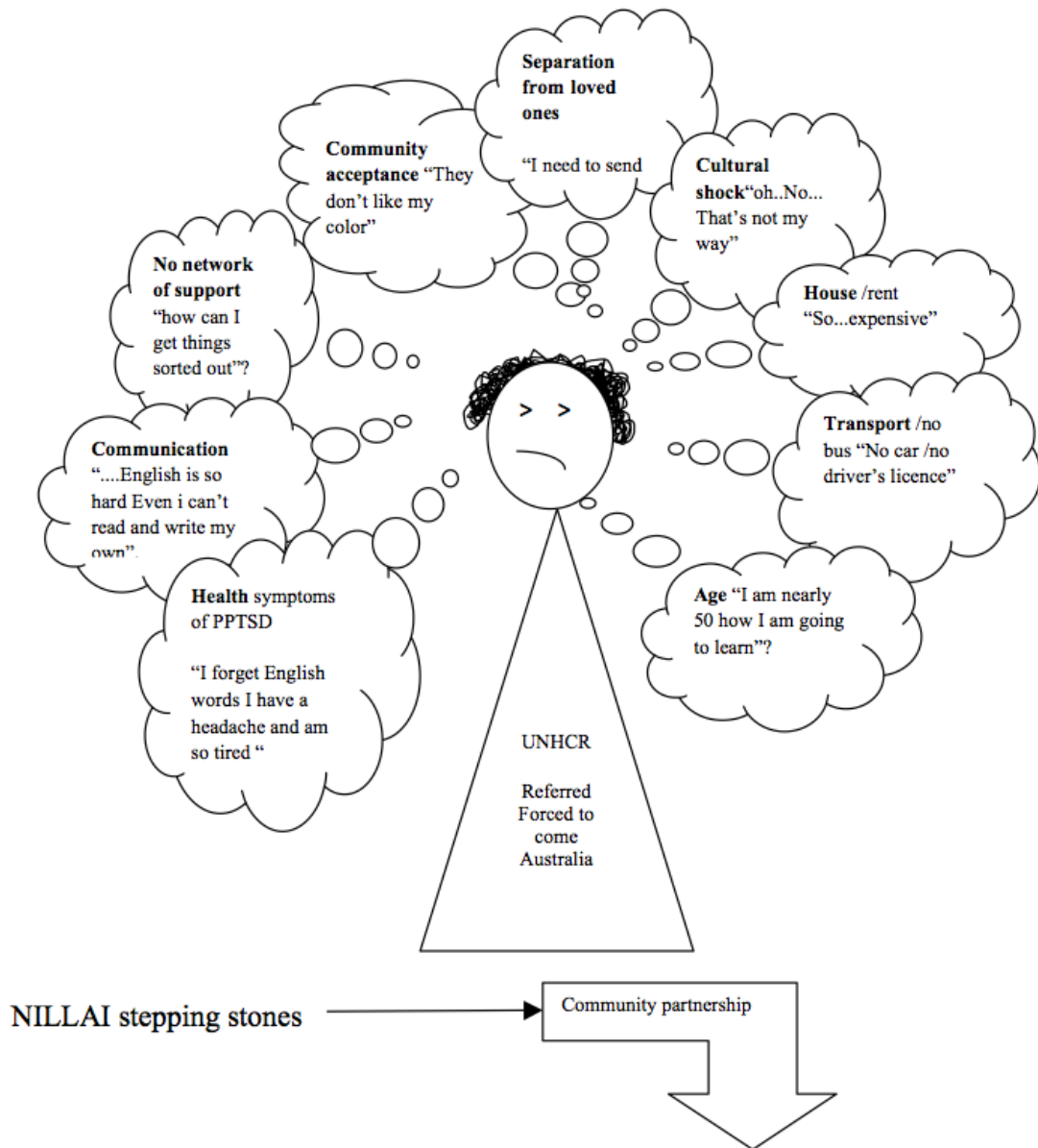


Figure 7.5 Problems of refugee settlement

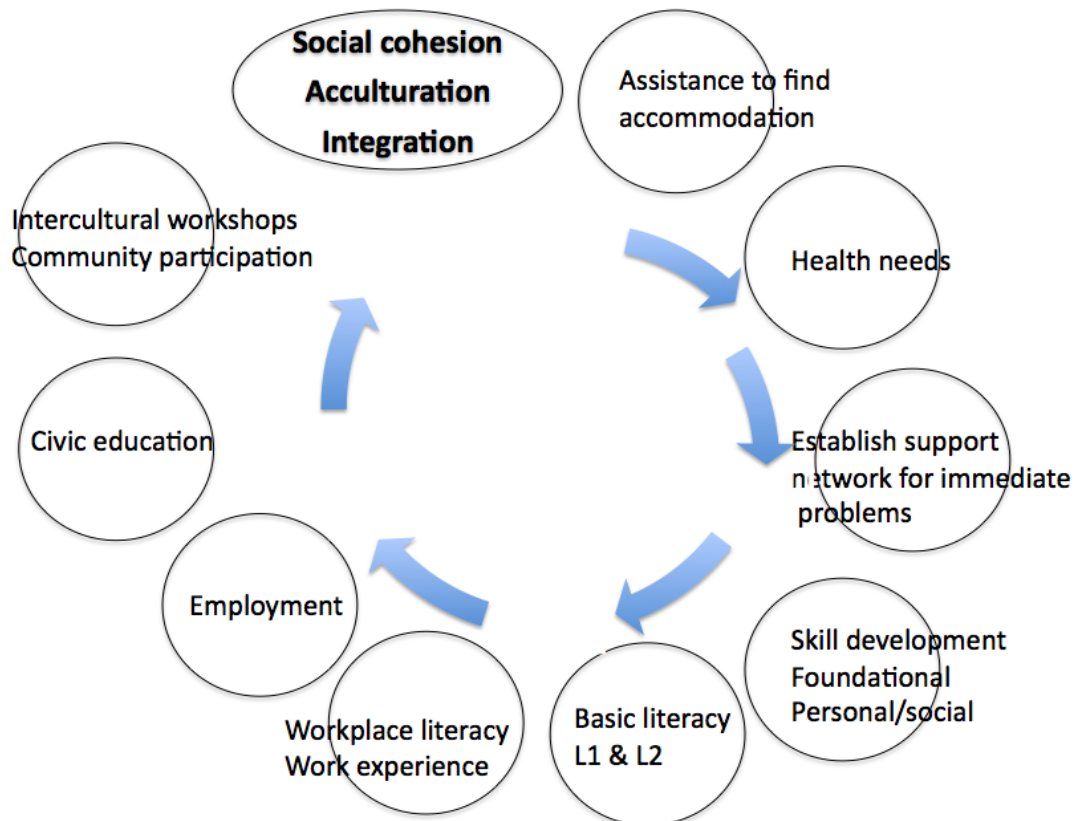


Figure 7.6: Strategies to address immediate and long-term problems of refugee settlement

These stepping stones are not apparent in the study but are proposed as a necessary structured guide to allow freedom of movement of the target group.

Target outcomes

Findings of this study show that, when it comes to participation in the social network the target group experienced a range of barriers mainly due to the lack of language proficiency in English. The gap between service providers and the communications by refugees in this subgroup constitutes the major reason for their self-exclusion from the wider Australian society. Target outcomes of an employment of a framework such as NILLAI, in a broader sense, will provide this group, who have little opportunity to attend to their individual needs, with the means to have their integration into Australian society at local level addressed. Thus, major outcomes of NILLAI will be:

- Low literate refugees access to community engagement via the formation of NILLAI social networks that provide opportunities for them to built relationship within wider community.

- Cross-cultural engagement outside of the ethnic group building unity in society at the local level.
- Availability of high levels of support ensuring refugees' access to a broad range of services, programs and networks to address their immediate and long-term settlement issues.
- More culturally sensitive programs in place, providing a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- Acquisition of survival skills, knowing how to learn and exposure to social media and computer literacy skills.
- Increased mobility to participate in non-local as well as local networks that enable the seeking of employment.
- Understanding of values and culture of the Australian work place and the society
- Decreased self-exclusion; promotion of equal access and increased desire to learn the English language, and participate.
- Increased quality of life, satisfaction and economic productivity.

It is emphasised that the implementation of the NILLAI framework presented here, solely depends on the needs of the target population.

7.5 Contributions to knowledge

This thesis is focused on the role of language in the Australian citizenship test developed in 2007 to assess the immigrants' integration to Australian society. Given the importance of the term integration and knowledge of the history, culture, sports and civic participation of the Australian society a language test was implemented, when taken with the analysis of the citizenship test results, it shows the contrast between the high failure rates of refugee and humanitarian background people and success of the applicants from English speaking countries. As illustrated in the conceptual framework (Figure 2.1 in Chapter two) integration of the humanitarian refugees was analysed through the themes of L2 acquisition, acculturation, integration, citizenship education and language testing, which allowed this study to examine the problem in a new and different way to look more holistically at the particular refugee group at the centre of the research. Thus, the research builds on the existing knowledge in the field and expands it from the point of view of a deeper understanding of citizenship policy and its implications, the challenge and action

required for teaching ESL to low-literate and non-L1 literate learners, and the impact of these refugees' backgrounds and journey that makes their cases deserving of more tailored and creative, community-based treatment. In providing a model of action it provides strategic advice to inform both policy and practice, and ultimately to improve services to the low literate refugee population, which will benefit the community as a whole. The mixed methods approach that included case study provides strength of the data through the ESL teacher survey, observations of teaching practice in the pre-beginner classroom, ESL teacher and refugee learner interviews, that included their voices, together with cases studies of refugees, thus, triangulating the data. In addition, the research contributes the following to explaining and improving the situation of low-literate refugee immigrants.

An apparent logical ambiguity in the formation of Australian citizenship test policy for the purpose of integration, which involves the phenomenon of the historical White Australia Policy. The ACT has not widely recognised the general social problems, social inequality and individual variances thus place dominant approach to the less privileged group in the society.

Examination of the interrelations within the 1951 refugee convention, the integration of refugee and humanitarian entrants to the host country language, social cohesion and testing language skills for citizenship, versus policy makers' lack of efforts to operate a course based education program in the refugee welcome zones, reflects the contradictory nature of the citizenship policy. Thus, the finding of the study contribute to unmasking the exclusionary construct of citizenship education, and help to fill the gap in the existing literature to identify the relationship between the citizenship test and integration.

The study's findings throw new light on ESL pedagogy that is appropriate for this target group of low literacy learners with little or no literacy in L1. It provides evidence to support pedagogical change from the currently established "English only approach." It also justifies a more creative approach to developing learner social capacity through a broader and deeper community-based approach. "Facilitators of adult learning need to become familiar with their students' backgrounds: their home countries and cultures, their reason for migrating, their prior educational background,

and their current literacy objectives” (what they want to become literate in, in order to do) (Mccluskey, 2012, p. 57).

Previous studies in the ESL classroom in Australian context (Chau, 2001; Gunn, 2003; McPherson, 2007; Murray, 2005; O’Grady, 1987; Taylor, 2000) have researched “. . . the first language interactions used by learners as they participate in cognitively demanding activities in their second language. Within this framework it is argued that, where the first language is shared by the learners, it can function as a psychological tool” (Wigglesworth, 2005, p. 6). More specifically, this line of thought emphasises adoption of L1 instruction or assistance in the pre-beginner class for enhancing cognitive development and enabling LESLLA learners to adapt to new learning requirement. Gunn (2003) provides insight for example as “beginning to read and write, bilingual support from peers, bilingual assistants and the learners’ communities, and a curriculum that builds upon the learners’ experience and capacity. What we as teachers have to do is ‘walk in their shoes’, and be willing to make substantial adjustments in our assumptions and methodologies – perhaps for a prolonged period” (p. 52). Aligned with this view, “language teaching using generic programs and materials, not designed with particular groups [or their needs] in mind, will be inefficient, at the very least, and in all probability, grossly inadequate” (Long, 2005, p. 1). Thus, as Gonzalez and Darling Hammond, (2000, p. 7) highlight, the attention for professional development that “connect[s] theory and practice in tightly integrated ways” is required sooner rather than later. In accordance with the assumption that such changes will formulate as an innovation strategy in the future, the NILLAI framework was designed to suggest alternative ways of capability and foundational skills development of the LESLLA learners before they start learning English at AMEP. In this regard NILLAI proposes a practical framework for managing the participants steppingstones towards integration. Indeed, through this participation at different levels it will contribute to develop the concept of inclusion.

7.6 Implications and recommendations for theory, policy, and instructional practice

The implications of this study are interrelated. Based on the literature review and the findings it could be said that as a result of lack of L1 and L2 literacy skills, social

integration of the refugee participants occurs at very low levels and a sequence of barriers and challenges lead them to generate their exclusion from the wider society. The impact of having no or limited L1 and L2 literacy skills combined with individual social, political, cultural and religious factors, simultaneously prevent exploration and building up of relationships that constitute a desirable degree of participation in the social activities.

7.6.1 Theoretical implications

Pursuit of the problem of integration through the application of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Human Development (1979, 1994, 2001), the significance of Berry's Acculturation Theory, and Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis, laid the foundation to examine the integration, acculturation, L2 acquisition and citizenship of NESB low-literate refugee and humanitarian immigrants into Australian society. The implications of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Human Development allows any professional “. . . beyond the simple labels of class and culture to identify more specific social and psychological features” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Combined understandings of both Berry's Acculturation Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory and interdependence and interaction of each level of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system provide a framework to better identify the disadvantage group as in this study and develop new models to serve them. Thus, both theories can be used by any professional person who works with immigrants to analyse their settlement problems and address specific needs and challenges. For example, understanding of ecological theory will allow ESL teachers to find gender-specific issues in course levels, health practitioners to find cultural barriers for treating gender related health issues; social security personnel to find out why some people do not accept employment in areas where public transport is not available and so on.

7.6.2 Practical implications

Based on the classroom observations it could be said that without a strong assessment process, low literate learners are placed in and exposed to irrelevant teaching methodology where their needs are not addressed. When immigrant learners are

enrolled in AMEP there must be an assessment process to detect the learners L1 literacy level and foundation skills to place adults with limited or no literacy in their L1 in separate stream where they could develop their learning skills and foundation skills. Most teachers have recognised the changing demographics of their learners but programme designers have not adapted the established content and pedagogy (as in this study) that is needed to address the language needs of LESLLA learners.

Under the “current neo-liberal, market-based ideology, and a certain degree of ignorance concerning the complexities of second-language (and literacy) acquisition” (Roach & Roskvist, 2007, p. 47), the AMEP curriculum remains focused on the ‘English only approach’ and as the work samples from LESLLA learners in the study show there is a strong human need to shape the AMEP curriculum and service delivery for the LESLLA population to address their literacy needs are subjected to argue cognitive legitimacy in this approach. Moreover, findings of the study suggest that when the functional contributions of the English only approach are shown not to work for this group, the AMEP is shown to be not fully coping with its goal. Evaluation processes should direct an explicit concern to identify the consequences of the application of the only English approach to all clients. Firstly, this advice is derived from the examination of interrelations among the elements laid on the individual, micro-, meso- and exo-systems of the participating refugees. Secondly, this was raised by both ESL teachers and the target group participants themselves through their growing dissatisfaction with the use of the English only approach. The shortcomings found in relation to using English only in the pre-beginner classroom relate directly to Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis that argues for the survival and linguistic requirements of LESLLA learners to be addressed.

In addition, classroom observation and learners work samples show “the importance of receiving adequate training to be able to recognise and address the needs of low-educated adult English language learners” (Mccluskey, 2012, p. 56). This research also raises the issue of ESL teacher professional learning in keeping with Vinogradov and Liden (2008, p. 133) who state: “. . . the lack of adequate training for LESLLA instructors is both real and severe. Inadequate training brings clear and negative consequences for our LESLLA learners and a level of frustration to LESLLA teachers, teachers who are trying everything in their toolboxes but are still struggling

to find classroom practices that are effective” (cited in McCluskey, 2012, p.59). Thus, there is a need for twofold reform – one in recognising alternative pedagogies and the other ESL teacher preparation. In articulating the implications for training and professional learning advice to teachers is presented in Table 7.3

Table 7.3 Key implications for professional learning

Alternative pedagogy	ESL teacher preparation
Develop a comprehensive understanding of LESLLA refugee learners’ linguistic needs in general.	AMEP Navitas should provide time and other resources for ESL teachers to access professional development on LESLLA refugee learners’ learning needs.
Development of assessment criteria to detect the L1 literacy level.	AMEP Navitas should provide a comprehensive understanding of the diversity of the refugee learners’ educational background.
Design of additional program to develop fine motor skills associated with using writing implements and forming letters.	AMEP Navitas should train ESL teachers or volunteer teachers in developing fine motor skills and learning strategies prior to entering pre-beginner class.
Design of appropriate supportive classroom activities.	AMEP Navitas should maintain regular workshops or seminars to update the teachers’ understanding of culture, values and histories of refugee learners so they are able to create appropriate worksheets. For instance, teachers need to be aware of some grocery items such as cereal, sausages and material items such as slippers or shoes, mobile phones and computers that are new to refugee learners.
Implementing bilingual instruction in classes.	AMEP Navitas should seek community network support to offer additional help and assistance to develop L1 literacy skills and provide L1 instruction in the pre-beginner class.

7.6.3 Policy implications

The argument put forward by this study is that the Australian Citizenship Test has a discriminatory impact on NESB adult low literate with L1 and L2 and there is no fixed formula for them to be integrated through the motivations/demands of the citizenship test. According to Plutzar and Ritter (2008, p. 6), “. . . testing illiterate people is difficult and unreliable”. The uncertainty of citizenship for this population

is argued because the existing citizenship testing procedure is designed for only literate people. In addressing this issue, findings of this research conveys the important finding that people who do not have L1 literacy skills need to be exempt from taking the ACT in its present forms. Following the survey results and Citizenship test results this study reveals the government has failed to implement the course based citizenship education program (which is designed for low literate learners) in RWZs, where refugee families are more concentrated. As previously discussed this course only offered in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth where no easy access to people live in other areas (DIBP, 2014).

The research shows that the same policy that was designed to incorporate the citizenship practices and procedures has changed its legitimacy by obscuring government support to low literate immigrants. Moreover, following the literature review on the citizenship test results it can be concluded that, the ACT favours citizenship applicants from English Speaking countries and excludes low literate applicants from NESBs who are LESLLA learners. It also violates the principles of language testing and assessment processes that address the validity, reliability and test fairness in language testing. In this regard this study confirms the criticisms emerging from the recent debate that has taken place on language testing for citizenship, since the introduction of the ACT. This includes Farrell (2010), Mcnamara and Roever (2006), Mcnamara and Ryan (2011) in the Australian context, Blackledge (2009) and Shohamy (2009) in the British context, and Slade (2010) from the Dutch context, and similarly, Möllering (2010) in Germany.

7.7 Methodological limitations and future research

This mixed methods study is employed by a convergent parallel design that allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data directly from the ESL teachers and NESB adult refugee learners with no or limited print literacy skills in L1 and L2. By using a survey interviews, classroom observations, and case studies this study gathered a detailed analysis of the integration of a less researched marginalised group.

Weakness of this study lies in the small sample size. Only 30 ESL teachers were surveyed and 10 ESL teachers were interviewed due to lack of willingness, time

constraints and accessibility. It was difficult to access large groups of humanitarian refugees due to the language barriers however 20 refugee participants were interviewed and eight refugees participated in case study interviews. Learner interviews were reliant on a translator and although keen to act in this position it is not guaranteed that as a community leader some learners may not have been so forthcoming. However the study is strong in the way the different research instruments were used to triangulate the data. Overall this study shows boundaries occurring between language and integration and language testing and citizenship.

The findings of this research demand the need for additional exploration into the L2 acquisition by adult NESB refugee learner with no or limited print literacy skill in L1 and L2 and passing the citizenship test to be integrated into the wider Australian society. As forced migrants to the country they have been striving to learn English because they need citizenship is be able to settle with the same rights as other Australians. Current research or statistics do not adequately represent this population who arrive from countries where there has been war, ethnic, political or religious persecution, famine and poverty and have divergent educational backgrounds. A more comprehensive study with equal numbers of participants and observation with bilingual assistants in the ESL classroom would have been beneficial with research questions such as; how long does it take for a LESSLA adult to become literate in L1? How long does it take for a LESLLA adult to achieve the L2 literacy level required by ACT? In addition exploration of how many refugees and humanitarian entrants have refrained from applying for citizenship because English language is required.

7.8 Concluding remarks

By combining the three worlds of linguistic, cultural and socio-political, researcher concludes that refugee population from NESB African background face significant barriers to participatory citizenship. Researcher's intellectual journey with this population has made her realise that each former refugee individual has a world on their own. Researcher may never be able to realise how heavy the traumatic experience, settlement issues, language problems, cultural issues, religious restrictions, family, health and income problems each one of them had been carrying

on their shoulders all those years. Their physical past of the foreboding and viscerally violent challenges would still be visible and heard.

The researcher has come to realise by decreasing the tensions in which these people live can only benefit their L1 and L2 progress, so she paid attention to the development of the NILLAI framework and to has offered to provide them with a more balanced and objective approach to solve their daily conflicts. With wider eyes researcher is still searching for the answers for the question of how this population be prepared for the citizenship test desirably. Although dimensional division of integration, SLA, citizenship education and language testing is separated each dimension currently reforms negative connotation to reflect the idea that naturalisation or ‘becoming a citizen’ for the low literate immigrants is an academic achievement. Thus, “. . . it remains unclear what the consequences of repeated failure of the citizenship test will be.” However, “. . . it is likely a level of stigma will attach to those communities that continue to have high failure rates” (Fozdar & Spittles, 2009, p. 511).

End notes

Foundation skills need to be continually built and updated in response to changing contexts – new workplaces, new technologies, and new responsibilities. For this reason, all education and training programs need to support the development of associated and underpinning Foundation Skills (which was the original intent of built in, not bolted on” (Roberts & Wignall, 2010, p.10).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Anonymous ESL teachers survey to AMEP providers in RWZ

A. Social Demographics/Background

1. Place a cross to convey gender				Male	Female
2. What is your first language?					
3. Do you speak any other languages? If YES please write each language and choose the rating that best describes your general proficiency? * 1 means formulaic usage; 2 means conversational usage; 3 means advanced usage				Yes	No
Language					
Rating*					
4. What language do you speak most often at home?					
5. What is your ethnic origin (<i>cultural heritage</i>)?					
6. Which age group are you in now?		25 yrs or less	26-30 yrs	31-45 years	46-55 years
7. In what country were you born?					
8. For how long have you lived there?				Years	Months
9. Which ESL professional qualification/s do you hold? Please tick all that apply					
Short Course Cert. TESOL	Graduate Cert. ESL	RSA, CELTA or equivalent	Diploma in TESOL/TEFL	Post Graduate Cert. ESL	Masters in TESOL or equivalent
10. Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify					

B - AMEP

1. How long have you been teaching English language in AMEP?		Years_____	Months_____		
2. Which level of English language teaching have you been engaged in for AMEP? Please tick ALL that apply.					
Preliminary CSWE	Certificate 2 CSWE	Certificate 4 CSWE			
Certificate 1 CSWE	Certificate 3 CSWE	Citizenship education			
3. Have you got learners from refugee background in your class?		Yes _____	No_____		
4. With your experience in general how would you rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the language and other skills of learners at Preliminary CSWE level (please circle your selected rating for each item.)					
	1=poor	2= basic	3=satisfactory	4=good	5=very good
Reading skills in English					
Writing skills in English					
Speaking skills in English					
Listening skills in English					
Numeracy skills					
Ability to cope in the classroom					
Computer skills					
Cooperative skills					
Ability to interact with native speakers					

C - Professional development	Yes	No
1. Have you had specific training or support to teach the refugee learners		
2. In the last 12 months have you attended any in-service training or workshop related to ESL teaching to refugee learners?		

3. In the last 12 months have you attended any in-service training or workshop related to recently introduced citizenship education content to AMEP curriculum?		
4. In the last 12 months have you received any materials or resources related to recently introduced citizenship education content to AMEP curriculum?		
5. In the last 12 months have you taught any lessons related to recently introduced citizenship education content to AMEP curriculum? If Yes briefly write down the topics of the lessons. -----		

D - Gaps and challenges

Please rate the extent to which the following strategies and services for refugee background students are working well for your students when 1= not working at all, 2=needs substantial improvement, 3 = working very well, 4 = extremely successful, N = Not offered as a service or strategy (please circle your selected rating for each item.)					
	1	2	3	4	N
(a)Provision of different classes and sessions to cater for different levels of language skills					
(b)Provision of specialist support for refugee learners with low literacy skills.					
(c) Provision of individualised ESL programs that cater for specific needs					
(d) Provision of bilingual support for refugee learners with little or no formal education.					
(e) Provision of learning support for taking the Citizenship test.					
(f) Engaging refugee learners in experiences where they use real-life written texts involving news, shopping and daily financial and communicative transactions.					
(g) Provision of a wide range of resources to support refugees'					

understanding of Australian culture.					
(h) Provision of a wide range of resources to support refugees' understanding of Australian citizenship education.					
(i) Please list gaps and challenges you encounter with adult refugee learner and strategies and services that you believe are working well for them 1. 2 3					
(j) Please list strategies and services that you believe should be introduced to enhance your refugee students' timely acquisition of English and/or Citizenship knowledge 1. 2 3					

E - Computer access

Do students have access to computers?			Yes		No		
If Yes, please rate how often students are involved in computer-related activities. Please circle your selected rating for each item.							
1=Never	2= Rarely	3= Sometimes	4= Often		5 =Always		
Students			1	2	3	4	5
a. Access computers only when they go to the computer lab.							
b. Practise keyboarding.							
c. Learn to search the Internet.							
d. Learn to send and receive e-mails.							
e. Compose written texts in Microsoft word.							
f. Complete computer-assisted multiple choice activities.							

g. Complete language learning activities on the computer.					
h. Interact via e-mail through an intranet or class network.					
				yes	No
2. Are you aware of any of your students from refugee background having computers at home?					
3. Do you know if any of your students from refugee background have access to the Internet from home?					
4. Do you contact students from refugee background via email?					

F- Citizenship education

1. To what extent has the new Citizenship curriculum been implemented in your centre? Please circle accordingly.	Largely	Just begun	Not yet begun
2. To what extent has the Citizenship Education begun to have an impact on your students' learning? Please circle the letter that indicates your choice.			
<p>(a) The majority of refugee learners are now more engaged by the new Citizenship course.</p> <p>(b) Few learners are now engaged by the Citizenship course.</p> <p>(c) They have shown no interest to learn yet.</p> <p>(d) Other, please specify _____</p>			
3. What has been the main benefit of including the new Citizenship curriculum in AMEP?			
<p>(a) The focus on concepts and processes has made Citizenship more engaging</p> <p>(b) Citizenship is now recognised as a 'proper subject'</p> <p>(c) It will help student to pass the Australian citizenship test</p> <p>(d) Citizenship lessons are now more active and relevant to students</p> <p>(e) It has helped us argue for discrete Citizenship lessons, taught by specialist teachers</p> <p>(f) Other, please specify _____.</p>			
4. What are the main areas of need that your centre still faces in order for the Citizenship course to thrive?			

<p>You may tick more than one area.</p> <p>(a) A team of specialist Citizenship teachers.</p> <p>(b) Discrete Citizenship lessons.</p> <p>(c) Support from the federal and local government.</p> <p>(d) Support from coordinator and senior management.</p> <p>(e) More help to make Citizenship more active.</p> <p>(f) More help with assessment.</p> <p>(g) Other, please specify _____</p>
<p>5. What further support would you require for teaching Citizenship education content within the AMEP Program? You may tick more than one kind of support.</p> <p>1. More guidance on assessing students' progress in Citizenship.</p> <p>2. More guidance on managing a Citizenship content with AMEP curriculum.</p> <p>3. More guidance on implementation of Citizenship content to AMEP curriculum.</p> <p>4. More guidance on using digital media in Citizenship lessons.</p> <p>5. More guidance on establishing cultural aspects into AMEP Curriculum.</p> <p>6. More guidance on the wider aspects of Citizenship education, for example culture, values.</p> <p>7. Other (please specify).....</p>
<p>7. In your experience, generally how informed are immigrant and refugee learners about the citizenship education system in Australia?</p> <p>Poorly informed () Adequately informed () Very well informed ()</p>
<p>7. When you do think is the best time to educate them about the citizenship in Australia?</p> <p>(a) Before arriving in Australia.</p> <p>(b) On initial arrival in Australia.</p> <p>(c) When a learner enrolls in the Adult migrant English program.</p> <p>(d) Other, please specify.....</p>
<p>8. Do you find that generally refugee learners will have an accurate understanding of citizenship issues within</p>

the Adult Migrant English Program? Yes () No () Please list the three most important reasons for your choice.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

9. Do you find that generally refugee learners from humanitarian background acquire an accurate understanding of Australian cultural issues and values when they learn at Adult Migrant English Program? Yes () No () Please list the three most important reasons for your choice.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

10 Based on your experience, what recommendations would you make to better educate refugee learners with limited literacy in their first language?

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 2 Individual interviews with ESL teacher-participant

Focus Group 2 (N=10) –Teacher Interviews

Interview questions for ESL teachers

Adult Migrant Education Program

1. Why refugee learners lack print literacy skills in general?
2. What kinds of problems, barriers and challenges do learners from refugee backgrounds experience in learning L2?
3. What kinds of problems and challenges you face when working with learners from refugee background?
4. What approaches you have taken to address the language needs of refugee learners who have no literacy skills in (L1) first language and (L2) English language?
5. How long it will take refugee learner who has no literacy skills in L1 to reach Basic English literacy level required by the Australian Citizenship Test?
6. What do you recommend in long term to the learners from refugee background with low literacy skills to develop their literacy skills?
7. In the long term, how can refugee background learners with low literacy skills be helped to develop an understanding of citizenship in Australia?

Appendix 3 Classroom observation chart
Observation Form

Date:	Teacher:	Subject:
		No. of students:

Interaction

Action	Yes	Occ.	No	Comment
Learner welcomed at the door.				
Learner settle purposefully.				
Class settled, register taken.				
Distribution of resources/books managed effectively.				
Other				

Curriculum content

Action	Yes	Occ.	No	Comment
Re-cap on work from previous lesson.				
Learning objectives shared / clearly reinforced/ revisited.				
Lesson generated.				
Listening Speaking Writing Reading L2 Basic skills				

Pedagogical approach

Action:	Yes	Occ	No	Comment
Teacher explanations are clear.				
Effective use of Q and A.				
Opportunities for effective learner talk (pairs/groups/ feedback to class).				
Pace is maintained and learners are on task.				
Learners grouping is managed and, where appropriate, effectively engineered.				
Activities are appropriate to the learner needs.				
Evidence of differentiation.				

Effective use made of different learning strategies.				
Marking is evident (target setting).				
All learners involved in activities.				
Teacher intervenes and monitors progress of learners.				
On-going assessment evident (peer/self/teacher).				
Appropriate and good quality resources used.				
Learners are appropriately supported where a				
Learners make good progress both in the lesson and in the unit of work.				
Learners are aware of current levels/grades).				
Teaching is well informed, confident, engaging, stimulating, challenging and precise.				
Language occurrence.				
Time management effective.				

End of the lesson

Action	Yes	Occ.	No	Comment
Achieved learning outcomes.				
Homework is set.				
Class dismissed in an Orderly fashion.				
Comments on Classroom Environment				
Strengths of the Lesson			Areas for development	

Appendix 4 Individual interviews with refugee student participant

Refugee Settlement Interview Schedule

Focus Group Four

- Recap of initial meeting.
- Verbally assure the confidentiality and anonymity.
- Remind participants interviews will be recoded and notes will be taking during the session.
- Assure participants that they have a choice to answer or not to any of the questions asked and terminate the interview at any time if they wish.

A. Socio-demographics/background

1. Place a cross to convey gender. Male Female
2. How long have you been in Australia and What type of visa you hold?
Years _____ Months _____ Visa class _____
3. What is your marital status? Single ___ Married ___ Separated ___ Divorced ___
4. Do you have children? No () Yes ()
5. What country were you born?
6. What language did you first learn as a child? _____
- 7 Do you speak any other languages? No () Yes ()
8. What language do you speak most often at home? _____
9. What is your ethnic origin (*cultural heritage*)? _____
10. Which age group are you in now?
(19-25 yrs) ___ (26-30 yrs) ___ (31-45 years) ___ (46-55 yrs) ___ (56- 75 yrs) ___

B. Education

1. Did you go to a school before you came to Australia? No () Yes ()
2. If 'Yes' what is the highest grade you have completed? IF 'No' go to Question Part C.
3. Have you done any further education? No () Yes ()
4. If Yes, what course _____ If No, Can you tell me why?

C. Employment

1. Have you *ever* had a paying job in Australia?
2. If No, Go to Question 5
 - a. If Yes, What was the first job you had in Australia?
3. Do you have a paying job right now?
4. What is the job? _____

5. Are you working on Casual ____ Fulltime____ Part-time____ Contract____ basis?
6. Are you looking for a job right now (*i.e .currently unemployed*)?
 - a. If ‘Yes’ for how many months have you been looking for a job?
7. Are you having difficulties with finding a job?
8. If ‘Yes’ What kind of difficulties are you having finding a job?

1. There are no jobs available in the city.	
2. I lack Australian work experience.	
3. My skills or experience are not accepted by Australian employers.	
4. I require citizenship status.	
5. I have difficulties with the English language.	
6. I do not have enough skills or experience for the jobs that are available.	
7. I have experienced discrimination because of my age, gender, religion.	
8. Other (please state)	

9. How do you get around? Walk___ Bus___ Own car___other
10. Do you get any benefits from Centrelink? No () Yes ()

D. Language and other skills

Can you please explain your skills and abilities in following areas

Skills related to language	Poor	Basic	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Your reading skills in L1 (first language).					
Your writing skills in L1.					
Your mathematical skills.					
Your reading skills in English (L2).					
Your writing skills (L2) .					
Your speaking skills (in English).					
Your computer skills.					

2. Do you use a computer?
 1. Do you have a computer at home? No () Yes ()
 2. Do you have email access at home? No () Yes ()
 3. Do you have Internet access at home? No () Yes ()

4. Now can you please tell me how you like to learn English?

1. At TAFE College.	
2. With other students with different language levels.	
3. With other students with same language level.	
4. With my friends.	
5. At a community centre.	
6. With a home tutor.	
7. With a teacher who speaks only English.	
8. With a teacher who speaks m y language.	
9. Online.	
10. By distance learning.	
Other:	

E. Ethnic identities

1. Do you belong to any ethnic associations in Australia?
2. Do you have close relatives in your country?
3. Are you able to get in contact with relatives in your country?
4. By what means do you get in contact (i. e. phone, email, letters)? _____
5. Are there other people from your *home country* living in this city?
6. Do the people from your *home country* organise social events such as dinners, dances or other group activities?

F - Settlement

1. Do you have relatives close by?
2. Do you have friends from the same cultural and religious group?
3. Have you got your own house? What kind of housing is it and who helped you to find it?
4. How do you find government services around you? Are they friendly? And supportive?
5. Have you got Australians friends? How difficult has it been to develop relationships with Australians? Why?
6. How do you find living in Australia? Do you personally feel integrated into Australian society?

That was my last question. Thank you very much for taking the time to be interviewed about your experiences as a refugee in Australia. Your answers have been very helpful. As I said when we started, your name will never appear with any of your answers. Since we are interviewing several other people across the state, it will never be possible for anyone to find out who said what.

[GIVE RESPONDENT (if necessary) \$..... for expenses, issue receipt]

Contact Information:

[Record all contacts (date/person contacted/address and/or phone number/outcome)]

Location of Interview:

Interview Length: (minutes)

Name of Interviewer:

Name of Interpreter:

Interview Assessment:

Very easy to complete/Somewhat easy/Somewhat difficult/ Very difficult

Why was interview difficult?

If interpreter required:

Interpretation appeared to be very successful/somewhat successful/ somewhat difficult/very difficult

[IF YES] Why was interpretation difficult?

Were other family members present during interview? Yes /No

How useful was this?

Strengths	Weaknesses

Appendix 5 Interview questions for case study participants

Refugee Settlement Interview Schedule

Focus Group Four

- Recap of initial meeting
- Verbally assure the confidentiality and anonymity
- Remind participants interviews will be recoded and notes will be taking during the session
- Assure participants that they have a choice to answer or not to any of the questions asked and terminate the interview at any time if they wish.

A. Socio-demographics Background

1. Place a cross to convey gender. Male Female
2. How long have you been in Australia and What type of visa you hold?
 Years____ Months____ Visa class _____
3. What is your marital status? Single___ Married___ Separated___ Divorced___
4. Do you have children? No, Yes
5. What country were you born?
6. What language did you first learn as a child? _____
- 7 Do you speak any other languages? No () Yes ()
8. What language do you speak most often at home? _____
- 9What is your ethnic origin (*cultural heritage*)? _____
- 10 Which age group are you in now?
(19-25 yrs)___ (26-30 yrs) ___ (31-45 years) ___ (46-55 yrs) ___ 56- 75 yrs ___

B - Education

5. Did you go to a school before you came to Australia? No () Yes ()
6. If 'Yes' what is the highest grade you have completed?
 If 'NO' go to question Part C.
7. Have you done any further education? No () Yes ()
8. If Yes, what course _____ If No, Can you tell me why?

C - Employment

9. Have you *ever* had a paying job in Australia?
10. If No, Go to question 5
 - a. If Yes, What was the first job you had in Australia?

11. Do you have a paying job right now?
12. What is the job? _____
13. Are you working on Casual ___ Fulltime___ Part-time___ Contract___ basis?
14. Are you looking for a job right now (*i.e. currently unemployed*)?
- a. If 'Yes' for how many months have you been looking for a job?
15. Are you having difficulties with finding a job?
16. If 'Yes' What kind of difficulties are you having finding a job?

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2. I lack Australian work experience	
3. My skills or experience are not accepted by Australian employers	
4. I require citizenship status	
5. I have difficulties with the English Language	
6. I do not have enough skills or experience for the jobs that are available	
7. I have experienced discrimination because of my age, gender, religion	
8. Other (please state)	

9. How do you get around? Walk ___ Bus ___ Own car ___ other

10. Do you get any benefits from Centrelink? No () Yes ()

D - Language and computer skills

Can you please explain your skills and abilities in following areas

Skills related to language	Poor	Basic	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Your reading skills in L1 (first language).					
Your writing skills in L1.					
Your mathematical skills.					
Your reading skills in English (L2).					
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Your computer skills .					

2. Do you use a computer?

1. Do you have a computer at home? No () Yes ()
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2. With other students with different language levels	
3. With other students with same language level	
4. With my friends	
5. At a community centre	
6. With a home tutor	
7. With a teacher who speaks only English	
8. With a teacher who speaks my language	
9. Online	
10. By distance learning	
Other:	

E – Ethnic identities

1. Do you belong to any ethnic associations in Australia?
2. Do you have close relatives in your country?
3. Are you able to get in contact with relatives in your country?
4. By what means do you get in contact (ie. phone, email, letters)?_____
5. Are there other people from your *home country* living in this city?
6. Do the people from your *home country* organise social events such as dinners, dances or other group activities?

F - Settlement

1. Do you have relatives close by?
2. Do you have friends from the same cultural and religious group?
3. Have you got your own house? What kind of housing is it and who helped you to find it?
4. How do you find government services around you? Are they friendly? And supportive?
5. Have you got Australians friends? How difficult has it been to develop relationships with Australians? Why?
6. How do you find living in Australia? Do you personally feel integrated into Australian society?

That was my last question. Thank you very much for taking the time to be interviewed about your experiences as a refugee in Australia. Your answers have been very helpful. As I said when we started, your name will never appear with any of your answers. Since we are interviewing several other refugees across the state, it will never be possible for anyone to find out who said what.

[GIVE RESPONDENT (if necessary) \$..... for expenses, issue receipt]

Contact Information:

[Record all contacts (date/person contacted/address and/or phone number/outcome)]

Location of Interview:

Interview Length: (minutes)

Name of Interviewer:

Name of Interpreter:

Interview Assessment:

Very easy to complete/Somewhat easy/Somewhat difficult/ Very difficult

Why was interview difficult?

If interpreter required:

Interpretation appeared to be very successful/somewhat successful/ somewhat difficult/very difficult

[IF YES] Why was interpretation difficult?

Were other family members present during interview? Yes /No

How useful was this?

Strengths	Weaknesses



Vineetha Hewagodage, BEd, MEd,
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Cover letter to ESL Teachers and Consent Form for voluntary participation in the research survey USQ Ethics approval H10REA134

“Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners’ naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency”

Dear Colleague,

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: *Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners’ naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency*. This study constitutes my PhD research, which I am undertaking through the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland. It aims to find out about how learners from refugee background are integrated into Australia and how they benefit from the Adult Migrant English Program. You have been selected because as a teacher in this program we value your experience and views on the nature of humanitarian refugees’ first experiences in Australian society. Your participation in the research will help illuminate the issues and challenges involved in humanitarian refugees’ learning of English and their acculturation process from the teacher’s perspective.

I can assure you that completion of this *Survey* is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time and under these circumstances all your data would be destroyed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research and the nature of the *Survey* or about being in this study, or would like additional information about participation, I can be contacted on 0435 615 418 or email <hewagoda@usq.edu.au>. You may also wish to contact my supervisors Dr Shirley O’Neill (07) 4631 2977 <oneills@usq.edu.au> and Dr Ann Dashwood on 07 4631 1806 or <ann.dashwood@usq.edu.au>.

To confirm your participation please complete the attached consent form and return to me along with the attached *Survey* in the *Reply Post Envelope* supplied to the address below. I thank you in advance for your interest and assistance with the project. Without the help of people like you, this important research on refugee learners could not be conducted. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely

Vineetha Hewagodage BEd (GU); MEd (USQ)
PhD Candidate (USQ), Room G 422, Faculty of Education,
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba /Australia
Phone: +61 7 46315406; Home 4696 8001
Email: hewagoda@usq.edu.au

Consent to participate in Interviews for the research study *Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners' naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency.*

I (please write your full name here) **agree/do not agree** (please circle according to your choice) to take part in the survey for the research project entitled *Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners' naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency.*

I understand that:

- Participation is completely voluntary.
- I will not be personally identified in any research reports.
- I can decide to withdraw from this project at any time my data will be destroyed.
- Data will not be used for any purposes other than this research.
- Data will be kept in a secure place at the University of Southern Queensland.
- I will have the opportunity to receive a short report of the findings.
- I can contact the Ethics Committee at the University of Southern Queensland if I have any concerns regarding this study.

Participant Name:

.....

(Please print)

Participant Signature:

.....

Contact details:

Phone:

E-mail:

Appendix 7 Cover letter to ESL teachers and consent form for voluntary participation in the research interviews



Vineetha Hewagodage, BEd, MEd,
PhD Student/USQ/Toowoomba
hewagoda@usq.edu.au

Cover letter to ESL Teachers and Consent Form for voluntary participation in the research interviews USQ Ethics approval H10REA134

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You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: *Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners’ naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency*. This study constitutes my PhD research which I am undertaking through the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland. It aims to find out about how learners from refugee background are integrated into Australia and how they benefit from the Adult Migrant English Program. You have been selected because as a teacher in this program we value your experience and views on the nature of humanitarian refugees’ first experiences in Australian society. Your participation in the research will help illuminate the issues and challenges involved in humanitarian refugees’ learning of English and their acculturation process from the teacher’s perspective.

I can assure you that participation in interviews is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time and under these circumstances all your data would be destroyed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research and the nature of the interview or about being in this study, or would like additional information about participation, I can be contacted on 0435 615 418 or email <hewagoda@usq.edu.au>. You may also wish to contact my supervisors Dr Shirley O’Neill (07) 4631 2977 <oneills@usq.edu.au> and Dr Ann Dashwood on 07 4631 1806 or <ann.dashwood@usq.edu.au>.

To confirm your participation please complete the attached consent form and return to me at the time of the interview or by post to the address below. I thank you in advance for your interest and assistance with the project. Without the help of people like you, this important research on refugee learners could not be conducted. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely

Vineetha Hewagodage BEd (GU); MEd (USQ)
PhD Candidate (USQ), Room G 422, Faculty of Education,
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba /Australia
Phone: +61 7 46315406; Home 4696 8001
Email: hewagoda@usq.edu.au

Consent to participate in Interviews for the research study *Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners' naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency.*

I (Please write your full name here) **agree/do not agree** (please circle according to your choice) to take part in interviews for the research project entitled *Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners' naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency.*

I understand that:

- Participation is completely voluntary.
- I will not be personally identified in any research reports.
- I can decide to withdraw from this project at any time my data will be destroyed.
- Data will not be used for any purposes other than this research.
- Data will be kept in a secure place at the University of Southern Queensland.
- I am free to choose whether my interview is audio-taped.
- No audio-tape will be used for any purposes other than transcription of the data and its analysis.
- I will have the opportunity to receive a short report of the findings.
- I can contact the Ethics Committee at the University of Southern Queensland if I have any concerns regarding this study.

Participant Name:

.....

(Please print)

Participant Signature:

.....

Contact details:

Phone:

E-mail:

Appendix 8 Letter to humanitarian refugee learners and consent for voluntary participation in the research interviews



Vineetha Hewagodage, BEd, MEd,
PhD Student/USQ/Toowoomba
hewagoda@usq.edu.au

“Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners’ naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency”

Invitation to join a Research Project USQ Ethics approval H10REA134

Dear.....

I am inviting you to join my project. It is about what works best to help refugees when they come to live in Australia. I would like you to tell me your opinion about the kind of help refugees need to learn English and settle down with their family. If you agree to be in the project you need to tell me by signing this consent form below.

I understand that:

- I am a volunteer in this study and I can stop being in it any time
- I will not be identified in any reports
- If I stop being in the study all my data will be deleted
- My data will not be used for anything except this research
- My data will be kept in a safe place at the University of Southern Queensland
- I will have the chance to discuss the results with you.

I (Please write your full name here)

agree/do not agree (please circle according to your choice) to take part in this study.

.....

Participant Signature

Appendix 9 Letter to seek the institutional approval for access to AMEP classroom observation



Vineetha Hewagodage, BEd, MEd,
PhD Student/USQ/Toowoomba
hewagoda@usq.edu.au

“Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners’ naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency”
USQ Ethics approval H10REA134

Dear Programme Coordinator/ Class teacher (CSWE pre Beginner Classroom)

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: *Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners’ naturalization depends on their acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency*. This study constitutes my PhD research, which I am undertaking through the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland. It aims to find out about how learners from refugee background are integrated into Australia and how they benefit from the Adult Migrant English Program. Your program at XXXX Tafe College has been selected as I value experience of your teachers and views on the nature of humanitarian refugees’ integration into Australian society therefore I seek your approval and assistance to conduct a part of this research at your premises.

Your participation in the research will help illuminate the issues and challenges involved in humanitarian refugees’ learning of English and their acculturation process from the teacher’s perspective thus approval is sought to access to interview both ESL teachers and learners from CSWE pre-beginner classroom.

Procedure

If you take part in this study, AMEP teachers and Pre beginner learners will be interviewed. In addition, CSWE pre beginner classroom will be observed to gather data on how the learners and the teacher use their cultural knowledge to achieve literacy success in the classroom. Also interview sessions will be audio recorded, classroom space will be photographed and samples of students work will be collected. This study will not affect normal classroom activities and time will be negotiated convenient to the teachers and learners who are willing to participate in this study.

Confidentiality

The audio-tapes, photographs and all other information that is obtained during this study will be used with pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the program location, teachers and learners.

I can assure you that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time and under these circumstances all your data would be destroyed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research and the nature of the study or about being in this study, or would like additional information about participation, I can be contacted on 0435 615 418 or

email <hewagoda@usq.edu.au>. You may also wish to contact my supervisors Dr Shirley O'Neill (07) 4631 2977 <oneills@usq.edu.au> and Dr Ann Dashwood on 07 4631 1806 or <ann.dashwood@usq.edu.au>.

To confirm your participation please complete the consent form below and return to me along with *Reply Post Envelope* supplied to the address below. I thank you in advance for your interest and assistance with this study. Without the help of people like you, this important research on refugee learners could not be conducted. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely

Vineetha Hewagodage BEd (GU); MEd (USQ)
PhD Candidate (USQ), Room G 422, Faculty of Education,
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba /Australia
Phone: +61 7 46315406; Home 4696 8001
Email: hewagoda@usq.edu.au

**Consent to Interview teachers /learners and observe CSWE pre beginner
classroom for the research study**

*‘Hanging in the balance: When refugee learners’ naturalization depends on their
acquisition of cultural knowledge and English language proficiency.’*

I (Please write your full name here) **agree/do not agree** (please circle according to your choice) to take part in this study and the above student has my permission to access/interview/audio record/photograph/interview/collect samples of students work as indicated above.

By signing this form I understand that:

- Participation is completely voluntary.
- I/teachers/students/the program will not be personally identified in any research reports.
- I/teachers/students/ will decide to withdraw from this project at any time and my data will be destroyed.
- Data will not be used for any purposes other than this research.
- Data will be kept in a secure place at the University of Southern Queensland.
- I/teachers/students have the opportunity to receive a short report of the findings.
- I/teachers/students can contact the Ethics Committee at the University of Southern Queensland if we have any concerns regarding this study.

AMEP Coordinator

Class Teacher (CSWE Pre beginner

classroom)

Name: (Please print)

Name: (Please print)

.....

.....

Signature:

Signature:

Contact details:

Contact details:

Phone:

Phone:

E-mail:

E-mail:

Appendix 10 Determination for the approval of a citizenship test
(The full determination may be accessed at:
www.citizenship.gov.au/_pdf/section23a-determination.pdf)

IMMI 11/088



Commonwealth of Australia

Australian Citizenship Act 2007

**DETERMINATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF A CITIZENSHIP TEST
(SECTION 23A)**

I, *CHRIS BOWEN*, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, acting under section 23A of the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* ('the Act') hereby:

1. REVOKE Determination Number IMMI 11/029 signed on 4 April 2011 approving three citizenship tests: a Standard Test, an Assisted Test, and a Course-Based Test, for the purposes of subsection 21(2A) of the Act; AND
2. APPROVE, as provided in the Attachments, three citizenship tests: a Standard Test, an Assisted Test, and a Course-Based Test, for the purposes of subsection 21(2A) of the Act.
3. This Determination includes Attachments 1, 2 and 3.
4. Attachment 1 sets out definitions for the terms, 'test administrator', 'course convenor', 'service delivery partner (SDP) test administrator', 'test invigilator' and 'testable section of the resource book', in addition to; the eligibility criteria for sitting the Standard Test, the Assisted Test and the Course-Based Test, specifies what amounts to successful completion of each test, and other matters relating to the tests.
5. Attachment 2 sets out the questions (and the multiple choice answers to them) from which the questions for those sitting the Standard Test and the Assisted Test will be drawn.
6. Attachment 3 sets out the Course-Based Test assessment tasks and their correct answers.

This Determination, IMMI 11/088, commences on 24 March 2012.

Dated *01 March* 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Bowen'.

Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

[NOTE: Section 23A of the Act provides that the Minister must, by written determination, approve a test for the purposes of subsection 21(2A) (about general eligibility for citizenship). A determination under section 23A must also specify what amounts to successful completion of the test and may also cover any other matter related to the test the Minister thinks appropriate.]