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Beyond Pastoral: The Role of Family in Second Language Learning Experiences of Adults

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Abstract:
Drawing on the growing phenomenon of transnational families with global networks, this paper presents findings from a longitudinal study in Yorkshire, UK. The study locates domains of English language use within conversations local to the families which connect across geographical borders. This paper also reports support for [English] language learning within an adult migrant context and reports on the role of family as interlocutors in second language interactions.

The movement of labour from ex-colonies to the UK (Pitt 2005) and to the United States of America following World War Two is well documented. These individuals were followed by their families (Rosenburg 2007) who settled in the UK, the US and increasingly, in other parts of Europe. The 1970s and 80s saw the next major movement of labour, particularly from the sub-continent, to the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia. Members of the same extended family often live and work in different countries. Evidence that English is the language of communication used by these families comes from a longitudinal study from Yorkshire, UK (Hann 2012a, 2012b).

However, in investigations of sites of second language learning such as classrooms, workplaces and online communities, the context of family as a site for language learning for adults is hard to find. Since individuals migrate to seek a better life for themselves and their families, and outside work and study to spend time with their family, the role of family in second language learning needs to be investigated.

A few studies report on positive and negative aspects of the pastoral role of families. Several studies also report on the role of peers in second language (L2) learning (Kormos et al., 2011) as well as the role of family in L2 learning for children (Kenner 2005; Kenner and Hickey 2008; Gregory 2008; Siraj-Blatchford and Brooker 1998; Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke 2008). However, textbook type publications in applied linguistics, for example anthologies by Davies and Elder (Eds., 2006) and Ellis (2008), are largely silent on the role of family in second language learning in the adult migrant context. On the other hand, adult learners of a second language in the target country, especially women, spend significant amounts of time in a family environment, especially during the first few years in their new country. Therefore, family members could be an important resource for language learning and social integration.

Drawing on data from a longitudinal, mixed method study in the UK, this paper shares findings which indicate the role of a specific sociocultural context - a multilingual family home - in the English language development of adult learners of English. The role of family (members) as supporters in a pastoral capacity has been reported to an extent, for example, by Williams and Burden (1997). The current paper locates this type of support within an adult migrant context and also highlights the role of family as interlocutors in second language interactions.

This paper begins with a brief description of the contexts in which English as a second language learners use English and the role of family around this. Data collection contexts for the study reported here are described, followed by findings from the study. Implications for the findings are discussed in the final sections of the paper.

English language learning and immigrants

In the UK, English as a second or other language (ESOL) learner communities tend to be "adults from settled communities of immigrants from the new Commonwealth and from fluctuating populations of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers" (Pitt 2005, p. 1) and are

considered to be bilingual learners of English (Roberts et al., 2007). Immigrants usually have to balance their needs to maintain links with their family, culture and language with demands to integrate or even assimilate into the host society while maintaining an economic presence (Hartnell 2006; Becker 2011).

It is recognized that while people may migrate for economic reasons and may go to formal lessons to develop their communication skills, they also use English in a *social context.* Kramsch and Whiteside (2007) call attention to the debate around language learning and language use ('knowledge as representation vs language as action' p.909). They suggest that traditional concepts of input, output and interaction be reconceptualised to recognise the socially mediated nature of interaction. Their discussion of fundamental concepts in second language learning research suggests that SLA happens not just in the mind but in the interaction of mind and social context.

Immigrant learners of the L2 live in the target language society with a view to settlement and in addition to economic lives, live social lives as well. They may have children, partners, and parents living with them in the target language country where the dominant language is not their first language. They may want to, and do, access leisure activities which could be passive (cinema, T.V.) or interactive (contact sports, bowling, cricket, etc.). They need language to participate in and contribute to society. It could be suggested that contexts of language use could be family, wider society (such as neighbours who are native speakers of English), work or leisure. Figure 1 illustrates the context/s in which ESOL learners are likely to use English.

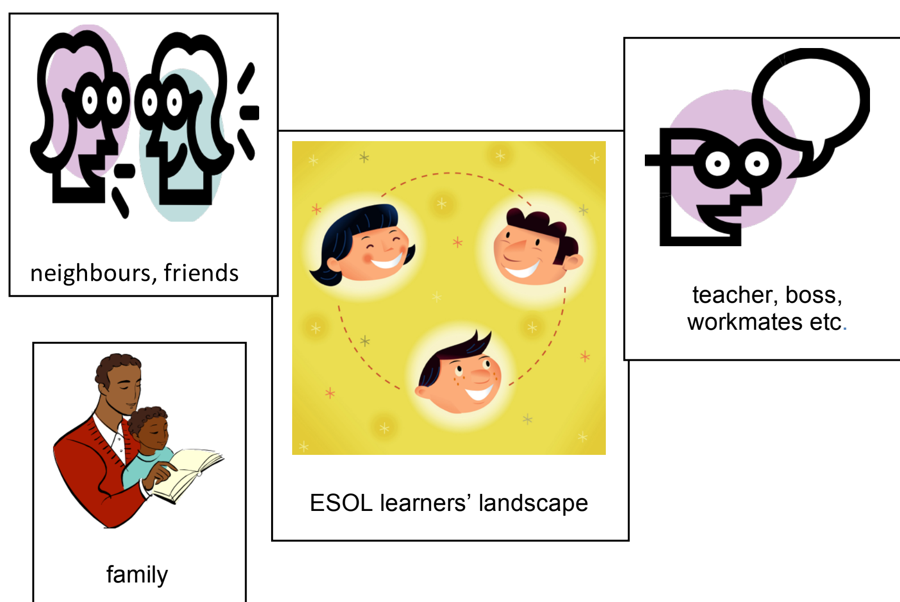

Figure 1 Social and cultural contexts: an ESOL learner's landscape. Based on Khanna et al., 1998; Barton and Pitt 2003; Rosenberg 2007; Ward 2007; DIUS 2008.

Second language learning and family

The role of family in *children's* language learning has been extensively discussed in literature, for instance, see Kenner (2005); Kenner and Hickey (2008); Gregory (2008); Siraj-Blatchford and Brooker (1998); Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke (2008). These studies show a dual role for adults in children's language and other learning – a direct role in terms of scaffolding so helping with homework. etc. and a pastoral or soft role by encouraging, providing conditions conducive to study.

Literature on the role of family in language learning of adults is focused more around this soft role. For instance, Kormos et al (2011) report people in their environment such as family, friends and peers as a major influence on a learner's motivation through encouragement and praise. Noels (2001) relates the influence of family to motivation and L2 learning. Williams and Burden (1997) report on the influence of family as well as significant others – parents, friends and wider family.

This influence has been reported in relation to desire to learn a second language. For instance, Williams and Burden (1997) and Kormos et al. (2011) report that the people in a learner's environment such as family, friends and peers are the key influences on a learner's motivation. A large study of secondary school students in Chile by Kormos et al (2011) found that family, friends and peers play a key role in goal-setting, attitudes and learners' beliefs as to whether they are able to learn a particular bit of language (self-efficacy beliefs), the effort they put in, as well as how much they persist in order to reach the goals they set.

Kormos et al. (2011) also considered the effect of milieu and included parental encouragement and praise reported earlier by Gardner and Lambert (1959) and Gardner (1985), within this concept of milieu. Noels (2001) notes the influence of family whereas Williams and Burden (1997) broaden this circle of influencers to significant others – parents, friends and wider family.

Literature addressing the role of family in the learning of adults is mostly in the contexts of higher and further education. Studies tend to suggest family responsibilities holding adults back from educational achievement (Becker 2011; Sutherland 2011). Other studies evidence the role of self-investment (Vaccaro and Lovell 2010) as well as the relationship between shifting home and class identities in adult female learners' investment in classroom learning.

A study from the discipline of population economics reports on relationships between English language proficiency of family members. Drawing on data on immigrant families from the 1996 Australian Census of Population and Housing, Chiswick et al. (2005, p. 243) found that 'learning takes place within the household'. They arrived at this conclusion by looking at the language proficiency of parents, the eldest and youngest child, and how each family member's ability in English influenced the other's. Chiswick et al's sample consisted of families where both spouses were born overseas and they found that 'within the typical household, both

husbands and wives, parents and children, have similar language skills' (ibid, p.249). Furthermore, their data showed that language proficiency of parents and children is linked: '70 per cent of fathers whose eldest child spoke only English at home also speak only English at home … ' Bilingualism in the children was associated with lower English proficiency in the parents - 'Where the eldest child speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English 'well', over 40 per cent of fathers are in the 'not well' or 'not at all' categories' (Chiswick et al. 2005, p. 249).

Chiswick et al. also reported that "there is a positive relationship between the unmeasured determinants of proficiency across family members … if for some (unmeasured) reason one family member acquires greater proficiency, the other family members learn from him or her … If language learning takes place at home, there is a spill-over effect, or externality, from one family member's investment in language training, namely, the improved language skills of other family members" (Chiswick et al. 2005, p. 264). However, this research by Chiswick et al (2005) does not take into account families where one spouse is already resident in the UK and may have been born and educated here, which is the case for many settled communities of migrants in the UK.

Given that being proficient in English is key to newcomers settling in and contributing to their host country, the study being reported here set out to investigate what learners think supports their progress in their second language learning. The research question was: What supports the progress of learners in their English Language Skills?

This paper reports findings from a longitudinal study in Yorkshire which investigated this question. Findings suggest an active role was played by family members in the second language (L2) learning of respondents. Here, it would be useful to note that the study set out to investigate factors supporting progress of L2 learners on work-based / vocational courses rather than the role of family in particular.

Data collection tools and contexts

The study was qualitative and longitudinal. Data were collected on four occasions from the same respondents, at the beginning, middle and end of their courses as well as post course. Respondents came from three groups of ESOL learners enrolled on vocational courses which included ESOL support. Data from twenty-eight respondents from the longitudinal phase of the study is reported here as these were complete data sets. The first point of data collection was a brainstorm and ranking activity (appendices 1 and 2) adapted from a NIACE/LLRC project at the University of Lancashire (Barton and Hodge 2007). A reason for choosing this tool was in case there was sample attrition or for some reason the participants did not want to continue with the study, so at least this data would be available. This tool was used once with each group at the beginning of the study. Thirty-three respondents took part in the Brainstorm and ranking (BS&R)

activity. The BS&R was followed up with semi-structured interviews (appendix 3). The bulk of data comes from repeat interviews with learners who participated in the brainstorm and ranking activity. These were twenty-eight learners and seventy six interviews in total.

Interview data were analysed qualitatively, drawing out categories or themes directly from the data (Bachman 2004; Silverman 2008). The themes were 'derived inductively from the data' (Dörnyei 2007 p.245). The analysis was carried out using NVivo (Lewins and Silver 2006; Silverman 2008). The data was stored in Nvivo, coded into smaller themes (free nodes) which were then gathered into broader themes (tree nodes).

Almost half the respondents (47.92%) were from Pakistan and most (86.21%) respondents were female. Less than a third (20.69 per cent) of the respondents had been living in the UK for 13 or 14 years, 13.79 per cent had been living in the UK for 11 or 12 years and 10.34 per cent had been living in the UK for one or two years. More than a third (7 out of 28) of the respondents had some experience of tertiary education in their country and another third (8 out of 28) had schooling up to secondary level. Apart from two respondents who were bilingual and biliterate, all respondents were at least trilingual and biliterate to varying degrees. All respondents were enrolled on vocational courses (childcare) or preparing for a vocational course (plumbing) at two FE colleges in Yorkshire. A quarter of the respondents (26.67%) reported being in paid employment at the time of the post-course interview.

Findings from brainstorm and ranking activity:

Responses from 33 participants added up to 101 factors in response to the question, '*What helps you make your speaking better*?' On analysis, these factors fell into five categories (Table 1, below):

Table 1 Factors Supporting Speaking Skills

Factors	**Example from data**
Word level strategies	'*Ask husband and children for spellings'*
In the classroom	'*Talking English in the classroom'*
Outside the classroom	*'speak English at home with children and family'* *'a British workplace where other employees speak English'*
Exploiting audio-visual media	'*Listen to news on TV/radio'*
Reading 1	*'read newspaper, magazines in English'* *'read story books'*
Reading 2	'*reading with children'*

Figure 2 below summarizes the results for all three groups.

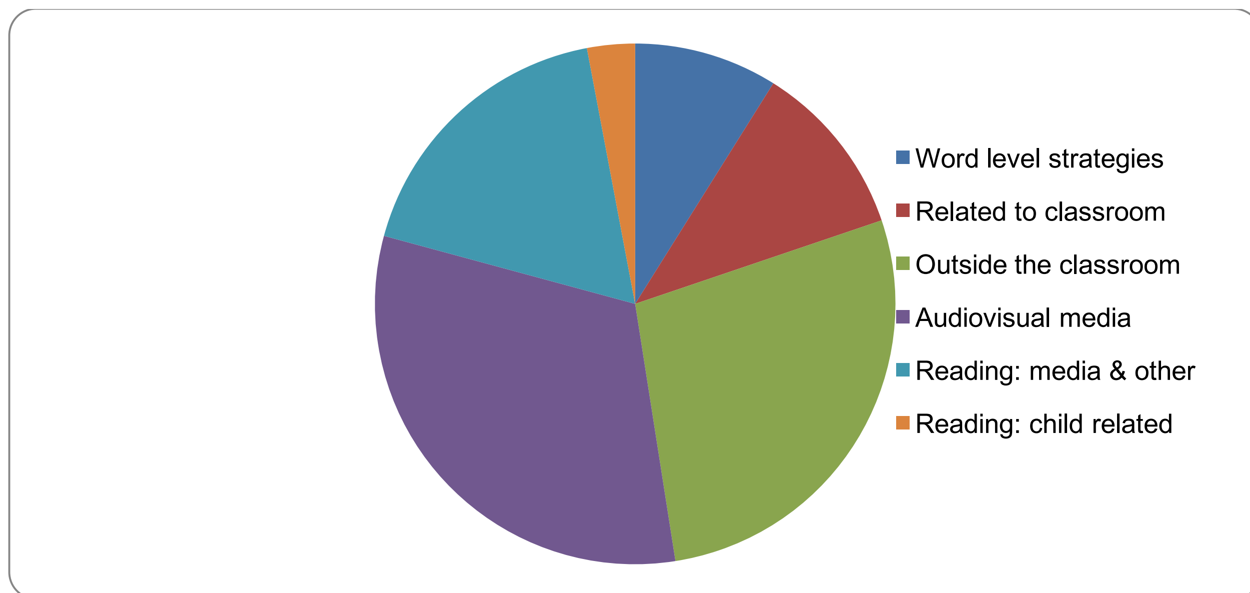

Figure 2 Brainstorm activity findings for all participants.

A frequency analysis of the factors cited by respondents showed that of the 101 factors reported, activities/practices outside the classroom were cited 81 times. This included interaction with their families. In the ranking activity, two out of three groups of respondents ranked speaking English at home with children and family and having an English girlfriend or wife as the top ranking factor which helps to improve English.

Data and findings from interviews

The first level of analysis in relation to factors supporting progress of these ESOL learners suggested three themes. These corresponded to the learning experience component of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2009), particularly the role of the environment in learning a second language. Respondents talked about how they exploited their environment for language learning opportunities. The role of family members had a strong presence in the data. For instance, in interviews with three males and one female, the role of family was mentioned 191 times while the classroom was mentioned 84 times in the same interviews. Often the classroom was not mentioned spontaneously whereas family was. Just one respondent, from a total of 28, did not refer to family when talking about factors supporting his progress in English language skills. He did not have any extended family living nearby either.

Participants described their interactions in the L2 with family members in detail, showing how they used these encounters to scaffold their own learning of English, rather than just simply reporting using English with family members. They described their interactions in English with adults in their family, particularly spouses, in detail and mostly without prompting. This role was presented as that of interlocutors and supporters.

One of the ways respondents' new families motivated them to improve their English was by providing practical support. This support ranged from family members acting as L2 interlocutors to not preventing the respondents from accessing English language and vocational courses: "mujhe roka naheen" (did not stop me).

The bulk of the interaction in English, the target language, was reported as having taken place with family members - 225 references across four waves of interviews. Spouses accounted for eighty nine of the 225 references to family in comparison to the classroom which was mentioned eighty four times in seventy six interviews. More proficient respondents[1] referred to family 198 times, compared to sixty references to the classroom.

Family members mentioned in the interviews included:

- Children and husband
- In-laws: parents-in-law or sister-in-law
- Members of the extended family (brother-in-law, sister-in-law)

Members of the extended family were mentioned by female respondents only. Male respondents talked about interaction with spouse and children only. Most respondents lived with their spouse and children, two were single parents and lived with their children. A small number lived with members of an extended family. These single unit families lived within a local and global network of extended family which included in-laws as well as the respondents' own families.

From the descriptions of the respondents, many of their family interlocutors seemed to be proficient users of English as they had been born in the UK and had been educated within the educational system in the UK. Family interlocutors and respondents did not have the same L1 in all cases.

Home and family

Respondents talked about English use at home with reference to interactions with their children and husband. The respondents also mentioned in-laws in relation to their use of English. These were parents-in-law or sister-in-law, though some respondents also talked about brother(s)-in-law when talking about using and learning English. It is interesting to note that extended family

[1] English language proficiency was measured through a rating scale developed for the study with experienced ELT practitioners. The rating scale drew on language from the interviews to develop measures for proficiency.

relatives were mentioned by female respondents only. Male respondents living with their families talked about interaction with spouse and children only. Although exploring this limited reference to family members is beyond the scope of this study, this would be worth investigating in a subsequent study. At this point it would be useful to remember that 86 percent of the respondents were female.

A picture emerges of most respondents living with their husband and children and the two single parents living with their children. However, these single unit families lived within a network of extended family which included in-laws as well as the respondents' own families. Respondents talked about seeing their parents-in-law as well as sisters and brothers-in-law daily, either for meals or just dropping in to each other's houses. They also talked about using English in telephone conversations with family in the US and East Africa.

Respondents described their language environment in their **homes** with adults who may or may not share their L1 while the respondents themselves were not expert speakers of English. From the data, it seems that the adult interlocutors range from being L1 users only to proficient to expert users of English.

"Yah, my husband and my both childrens … no my children was born here, husband's from India" (Fehmida)

"my husband, he came from Pakistan bu' he didn't live in Pakistan when he was about four year, he moved to … in a Dubai so he didn't live in Pakistan … he's English is so so good [laughs]", (Naima).

The children in these households were born in the UK and may not have the same L1 as adults. These children were learning their heritage language as well as English. This can be a rich – or complex – language environment to live and learn in. Respondents talked about using English in their homes:

"*My children er speak in er English and me and my husband in er Gujarati"*, Fehmida, talking about language use in her household.
Jyoti talked about who spoke English in her household: "*Yah, my husband and my both childrens … no my children was born here, husband's from India"*.
"*Yeah, my husband and my daughter … I have three daughters and they all … whenever I speak Urdu give me answer back in English"*, Momina, responding when asked who else in her house spoke English.
"*My children and my husband [smiles] err … my husband, he came from Pakistan bu' he didn't live in Pakistan when he was about four year, he moved to … in a Dubai so he didn't live in*

Pakistan ... he's English is so so good [laughs]", Naima, responding when asked who else in her house spoke English. Note here that Naima's children were born in the UK.

Types of L2 interaction with family members:

Two types of interactions with the extended family were reported. The first was interactions in English which helped them develop their own skills in English. An example of interactions which helped respondents develop their own English comes from Naina who says:

"*I speak English with me nephews, two nephews ... we talking about ... I ... I read a story for them and play together ... we doing painting, sticking and gluing nn ... pattern ... If they are good, at weekend I give them star and they'll be happy"*.

This echoes the experiences of Mai, one of Norton's subjects who talked about how she developed a relationship with her nephews which was better than her relationship with her brother. Mai's relationship with her nephews revolved around Mai looking after their meals and emotional needs and the nephews helping her with her English (Norton, 2000).

The other type of interaction with family members served a motivational purpose. Respondents reported being motivated to improve their English because of something said by a member of the extended family. Maleeha talks about how a remark from her father-in-law on an occasion where the extended family were sitting together, encouraged her to improve her English:

"I remember when I came here and I used to remain very quiet and all the cousins of my husband they are speaking and my father-in-law, he used to notice this thing that she is quiet, and he used to say, as a joke, "Oh you should speak in Urdu because someone else is quiet now."

Maleeha also had a 'contract' with her sister-in-law whereby her sister-in-law would respond to Maleeha only if Maleeha spoke in English. Throughout the interview, Maleeha talked fondly about her spousal family and how her father-in-law gave her an opportunity to work in the family business, a carpet shop where she answered the phone and handled paperwork where all the other workers were male.

Role of family members

Data gave insights into the role of family members as teacher/interlocutors, examples are shared below. This role ranged from family member (spouse) showing confidence in respondent's ability to actual scaffolding of language. Here, spousal confidence is referred to as spousal efficacy, drawing on Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy.

*" Erm, a few days ago I went to surgery and er I wanted to go to the reception and ask about my appointment and my husband went with me. And er when I got there my husband said, "Ok, go and ask the lady then, I'm staying here." And then I thought, yes, my husband know [sic] now I can do this" (*Maleeha)
*"… sometimes I got er work from college and I ask my husband can you help me, he says, "No it's your work, you have to find out". So after that I tried to find … Internet or use … books or anything and when […] my teacher ……… said you did well then I feel happy and then I tell my husband … oh … my teacher said you did well, he said "I know you can do it [laughs] so why you ask me?" (*Romana).

Another role played by family members was scaffolding the English produced by respondents.
"*……………………. if I can't explain anything he can help me like … speak like this nor like this but sometime … I feel embarrassed and he said no, he said … if you talk with me I can help you ………………….. sometimes I, I prefer to speak … my mother tongue but he persuade me, you know, he said no [it's] …. good, if you speak with me*, *I can help you …………..*" (Naima).

Respondents also reported being provided with a kind of scaffolding where they were answered in the L2 even when they spoke in L1 to family members: *"And they all whenever I speak Urdu give me answer back in English"* (Momina). Multilingual families often adopt a language policy in terms of which language is used when and with whom, however, a language 'policy' at home wasn't reported by respondents.

The importance of exposure to and practice in the target language is highlighted by, among others, Spolsky (1989) and DeKeyser (2007). These examples of family members providing support through encouraging exposure to and practice in real life and college contexts suggests active promotion of target language acquisition. Spolsky (1989) also suggests that 'the language learner can have exposure to and practice in the target language in *two* qualitatively different settings:

a) 'the natural or informal environment of the target language community

or b) 'the formal environment of the classroom' (in Norton 1995, p.14).

Data from the study reported here suggests we reconsider traditional definitions of the target language community and consider the L2 opportunities offered by multilingual families. While this paper does not suggest the "deinstitutionalisation of knowledge" (Kramsch and Whiteside 2007, p. 911), in keeping with Kramsch and Whiteside, it draws attention to knowledge and resources present with and in use by L2 learners outside the institution.

From the descriptions of the respondents, many of these family interlocutors seemed to be proficient users of English as they had been born in the UK and had been educated within the educational system in the UK. Apart from two, all respondents reported more interactions with family interlocutors than classroom interactions. Outside the classroom, most interlocutors reported were family members – spouses, children and members of the extended family. These findings can be considered within the doubts expressed by Kramsch and Whiteside (2007) about the privileging of the native speaker as a model for English language learners.

To sum up, findings seem to suggest that spouses provided opportunities for practice in the L2 by offering to be interlocutors and respondents also invited input in the L2 from spouse-interlocutors. It can also be said that family interlocutors have a dual role – that of providing support as well as practice in the L2 and finally that interlocutors can have a positive or negative effect on motivation to speak in the L2. These findings have implications for the quality of input in the case of family interlocutors whose proficiency in English was not known. Second language acquisition literature discusses quality of input (DeKeyser 2007; Barkhuizen 2007) but mostly in the context of students on a study abroad year or international students in a target language environment. Earlier, Firth & Wagner (1997) had put forward interaction outside the classroom as 'learning processes in their own right' (in Kramsch and Whiteside 2007, p. 909). This suggests a need to investigate the quality of input, the nature of the interaction with, and feedback from, interlocutors outside the classroom, particularly family interlocutors as 'it is precisely the nature of the interactive practice that may be the most important determiner of proficiency gains' (DeKeyser 2007, p. 214) in the context of settlers in their new country.

References to family - possible explanations

While exposure to and practice in the target language are recognised factors in improving proficiency, barriers to interaction with native speakers are well documented. These include concepts of who is considered to be a "legitimate speaker" (Bourdieu 1977), agency and L2 speakers being positioned as inferior and helpless (Bremer, Roberts et al. 1976; Norton 1995, 2010). Several themes emerge here which are briefly discussed below.

Legitimate speakers and interlocutor availability

The relationship between identity, language choice (use) and language learning is well documented (Bourdieu 1977; Weedon 1997; Norton and Toohey 2001, Yihong 2007; Norton

2010). In the context of this paper, it would be useful to note that there tends to be tension between migrants' needs to maintain links with their birth culture and language and to integrate or even assimilate into the host society (Hartnell 2006).

Block suggests that being assigned this deficit identity (Norton 1995) and lack of co-operation from native speaker interlocutors (Bremer et al. 1996) "might cause immigrants to retreat permanently and avoid contact with the majority ethnic group, effectively narrowing the number of social circles and communities of practice in which a French language identity might develop … as regards being judged and assessed rather than engaged with in conversations, the net effect for migrants might simply be to give up on possible contacts with speakers of the target language and to seek refuge, speaking to friends and family in the L1" (Block 2010, p.81).

It could be suggested that respondents may have felt a greater legitimacy to speak with family members and contrary to what Block suggests, chose to speak in the L2. Respondents used affordances (van Lier 2009) in their family environment to practice with interlocutors more likely to "engage" in the "conversations" suggested by Block (2010, p.81) they need to improve their English.

This feeling of legitimacy to speak with family members relates to the concept of agency, particularly Flowerdew and Miller's (2008) creative discursive agency. In a study which considered social structure and individual agency in language learning through a narrative enquiry of the life histories of three young engineering graduates in Hong Kong, Flowerdew and Miller (2008) found that the subjects invested in their language learning by creating 'discursive opportunities' (p.217) outside the classroom. They did this in various ways including choosing English as the language of emails to correspond with friends and family.

Language brokers: power and status

Learners chose to interact in the L2 with family members including their children even though using the L1 would have been easier and efficient. This may relate to an affective element as Norton (2000) reports in her study on the power relationships related to language and gender in one of her respondent's – Mai's - household. Norton suggests that as Mai's English improved so did her status in the family for two reasons, one was that she could communicate with her nephews in English which their mother could not and also Mai began to act as a 'language broker' (ibid, p. 77) between the different generations in her family. In addition to practicing their English, a reason for my respondents interacting in English could be to maintain their status as parents in a position of power.

Following from the data and discussions above, it could be suggested that the role of family in language learning of adults has 3 dimensions:

- Pastoral (which could be positive or negative) e.g. family members supported participation in language and vocational courses
- Motivational- respondents needed English to speak with family members and to interpret for other family members for instance with medical professionals
- Interactional where family members acted as interlocutors

Implications for family Interlocutors:

While research tells us about the value of feedback and the qualities of a good language learner, it is difficult to locate anything which addresses the qualities of a good interlocutor. Classic debates in SLA tell us about the role of input in second language acquisition and it is a useful source for suggesting principles of effective interaction, as well as qualities of input in spoken interactional contexts, that supports learning in L2. Drawing on theories of input (Krashen, 1985) and output (Swain 1985) it could be suggested that interlocutors in the family should be made aware of the value of input which is:

- direct, that is family members acted as interlocutors
- comprehensible (Krashen 1985)
- simplified if needed
- delivered at a rate of speech which allows input to be comprehensible for the second language learner (Conrad 1989)
- followed by feedback which could be positive and affirming or suggest improvement (White 1987)

Drawing on literature about the interaction hypothesis (Long 1983), some further guidance for family interlocutors could be to:

- Modify or simplify what they are saying as the interaction takes place rather than pre-modifying what they are going to say before the interaction takes place.
- Both family interlocutors and L2 learners need to be comfortable with giving and receiving corrective feedback.
- Negotiate times or topics for L2 interaction. They may also find it useful to negotiate when the purpose of L2 interaction is purely for communication and when the purpose could be a combined one of communication as well as L2 development. Constant focus on language development could put a strain on family life.

Although the above suggestions draw on discussions on input, output and interaction hypotheses, it would be useful to remember that, so far, published sources have discussed the

implications of these hypotheses for instructional contexts only and assume that there will be opportunities for interaction between NS (teachers) and NNS (learners). When considering input outside the classroom, we need to consider who is participating in the language learning space: friends, family members or are these instrumental interactions with health professionals or gas and electricity personnel. We also need to consider if these interlocutors are native, proficient or expert speakers of English. The discussions on the input, output and interaction hypotheses do not comment on (unequal) power balances in interactional contexts. For instance, see above for discussions around legitimate speakers, power and status.

Implications

So can this support from family members for adult ESOL learners be harnessed and communicated to families of other ESOL learners? Family support can be affirmed and celebrated by inviting families to end-of-year presentation ceremonies as well as end-of-term parties. Vignettes of support from family could be shared and also how that resulted in a particular kind of success. For instance, the story of a more independent spouse/partner who in turn was able to support other family members, could be broadcast on community radio. There is some evidence of this happening on a local television channel in Yorkshire, UK.

Although a parent/child relationship is very different to that of adult relationships such as spouses, Wolfendale (1983 in Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke 2008) suggests that parents 'provide primary (survival) needs of children, emotional support and endorsement (secondary) needs … the environment for exploration and hypothesis testing, protective environment, models of language, behaviour etc., transmission of knowledge and information about the world …' (ibid, p.102). The data for this study has shown that the role of spouses and spousal families for respondents has been similar. Spouses and spousal families seemed to provide shelter and resources for food for respondents, meeting their primary survival needs and also seemed to meet secondary needs such as emotional support and endorsement. It can also be said that through L2 interaction, spouses and children seemed to provide an environment for exploration and hypothesis testing for learning English and also perhaps provided models of English. However, as said earlier, since the proficiency of family interlocutors was not known, it is difficult to say how useful these models of language were. The data from respondents does not seem to reveal evidence of spouses and spousal families providing models of behaviour, transmission of knowledge or extending respondents' information about the world.

Second language courses could make families feel welcome by recognising cultural differences in the ideas about the role of education, and particularly, the teacher. A sense of belonging to the educational setting could be encouraged by making family members feel that they have a role in the L2 learning of their new family member and that their role is appreciated. Diverse backgrounds can be valued through acknowledging different festivals, languages, etc. A

booklet or family guide could be developed which outlines, among other things, the time commitment involved in the language/vocational course and how family members could help as interlocutors.

Space could be made for learners' families and partners at the site of educational settings. This could be a café space, a café in a library or an internet café where ESOL learners and family members could spend time together chatting to other learners and their families or doing some activities. As suggested above, families can also be invited to end-of-year presentation ceremonies and parties.

Respondents talked about interactions in L2 with family members. However, English language materials contain no direct examples of language for 'family talk'. The language presented in ESOL and EFL materials is for interacting with neighbours, officials, etc. Materials used in the classroom, and particularly by those for use outside the classroom, need to reflect and exploit the role of the family as supporters and interlocutors.

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Appendix 1: Brainstorm and Ranking (BS&R):

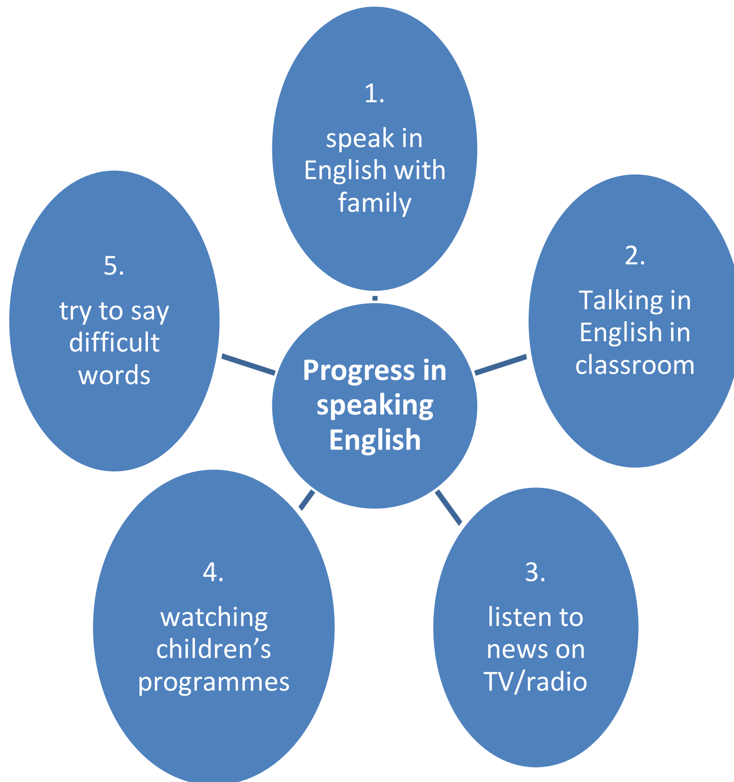
Each group of learners were given 15 minutes to brainstorm and write and display the following on the wall: factors which they thought helped/supported them to learn English. They were asked to do this individually and write one factor per page. Next they were asked, in two groups, to agree on five top factors and put these in a spider gram. Finally, as groups, they were asked to rank order these in order of effectiveness.

Brainstorm and Ranking Procedure

Working individually, please:

1. Write factors which you think helped/supported you to learn English without consulting the others.
2. Write ***one*** factor on each sheet.
3. In two groups, agree on five top factors and put these in a spider gram. Number these 1 to 5 in order of importance.

Appendix 2: Ranking activity with group 1



Appendix 3: Interview Guide

Interview guide:

Can I ask

1. Your Name____________________________________

2. Can I ask about your experience of learning/speaking English (in and outside UK)?/ living in UK?

If they were born in the UK/had all their schooling in UK, next five questions may not be needed.

3. Have you always lived in the UK? Since when?

Ask questions 4-7 only if not answered in response to 2.

4. Have you been to ESOL classes before________________

5. Where____

6. How long______________________________________

7. Any examinations taken________________________________

8. What languages do people use in your house ___________

Probe a bit more – if respondent mentions people using English at her home, ask: is this helpful to your progress? How? Does it hinder your progress? How?

9. Can you tell me how you use English in your daily life_____

10. Do you feel you have enough English to *live* in UK_______?

11. Do you feel you have enough English to *work* in UK_____**?**

12. If not, could you please tell me how lack of English effects your work life? Personal life?

13. Do you think you have enough English to get you a job? If yes, what kind of job?

14. Do you think your present level of English is enough for your everyday needs? E.g.

work

children

transport

health

any other?

15. Can I ask you about your experiences of learning English? *Probe: What/who helped?*

What/who didn't?

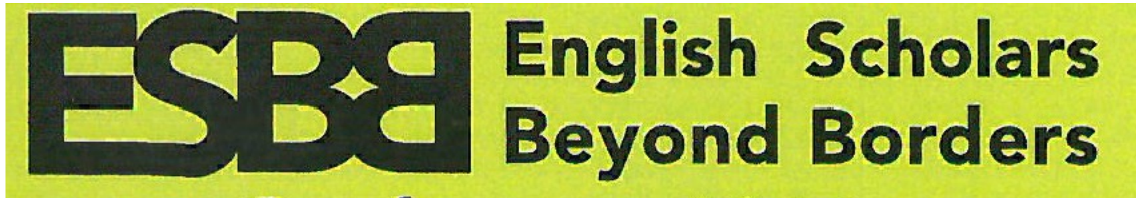
What have you done to help yourself?

What else/more would help?

If they don't mention college/classroom, then ask…

teacher

venue



other students

resources

16. How did you feel when it was difficult for you to speak? Strategies for overcoming this hurdle? Yours? Others?

Can I just check:

17. Did you learn any other languages ___________

18. Which languages can you speak____________________

19. Which languages can you read______________________

20. Which languages can you write______________________

20. Is there anything else you would like to say?___________________